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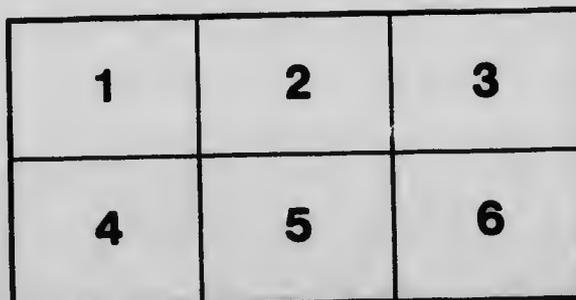
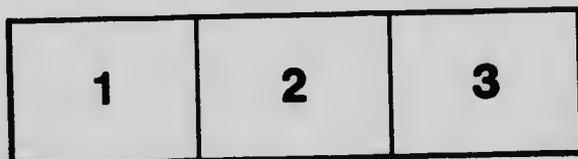
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THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF
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IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY: A
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THE THACKERAY COUNTRY.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF WILLIAM
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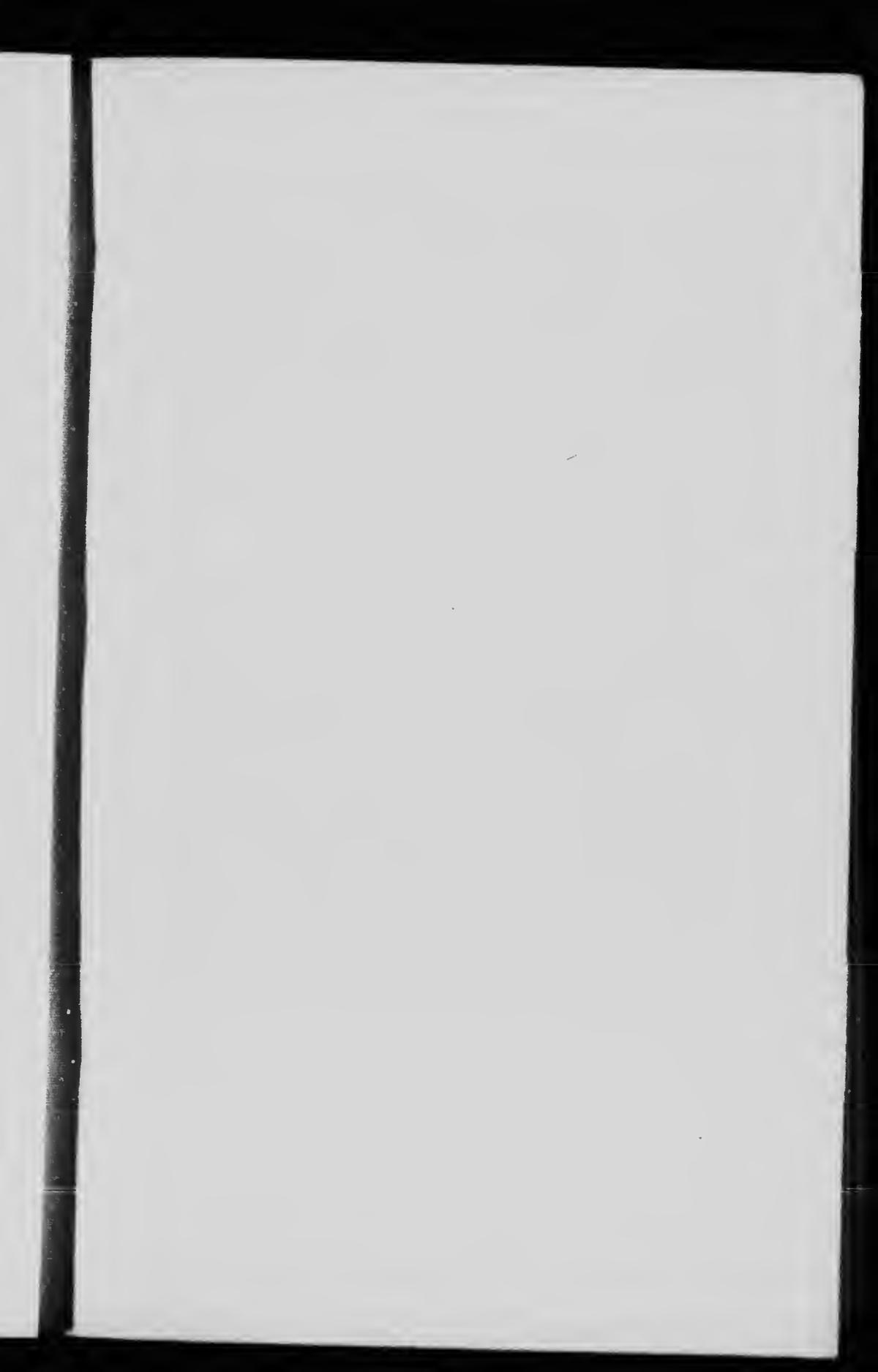
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SOCIETY AT TUNBRIDGE WELLS IN
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.





WILLIAM COBBETT
(WITH PORTRAIT OF HAMPDEN)
From an engraving by J. R. Smith

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF
WILLIAM COBBETT
IN ENGLAND & AMERICA
BASED UPON HITHERTO UNPUB-
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MELVILLE. WITH THIRTY-TWO
· · · ILLUSTRATIONS · · ·
IN TWO VOLUMES. VOLUME TWO

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THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF
WILLIAM COBBETT
IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

VOL. II.

A

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF WILLIAM COBBETT IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

CHAPTER XII

COBBETT'S CORRESPONDENCE (1807-1808)

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, January 23, 1807.

. . . We intend putting William to a school at Salisbury, but I am resolved he shall waste none of his precious time upon the "learned languages." He reads and writes very tolerably well now; and, if I live so long, I hope to see him able to do *something* in the way of usefulness, in the space of five years from [now]. He has learnt to *course* already! *To-day again* (for we catch every fine open day) we had a course surpassing anything I ever saw in all my life. We were hardly upon the common when we found a hare *sitting* (a very rare thing upon heath); all the rest, namely, William, Frederick, and my man, took their stations in such places as enabled them to follow the dogs and to see the course, whichever way she might take. I then went and started her. We had a course of 30 turns, at least, and, after a very long and most beautiful course, we had the pleasure to see her save her life by darting to the copse with Princess not 12 feet behind her. The dogs were terribly cut and strained; but they will be well again before you and Mr. Murphy come.¹

¹ Add. MSS. 22906, f. 241.

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, February 9, 1807.

Send me Twenty Pounds by return of post, or half by each of the two next posts after you receive this. What you say of the dinner does not at all surprise me. I enclose the Irish letter, under cover to Lord Folkestone this day. Attend to my alterations and omissions in it. I also send the letter about Anstruther. Both to be inserted this week *without fail*. It was Mr. Paull who gave me the information. I will never take any statement of his again. I will read my copy in future, if possible. I propose that when you come here you should come by the Gosport coach as far as Warnford and there stop all night; that my man should go and meet you and stay there that night with the dogs; and that William and I should join you in the morning and have a day's coursing upon the manor of my Lord Clanricarde, who has given me free liberty to course upon his well-stocked manor. We were there last Saturday, and found 9 hares.¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, Friday, February 13, 1807.

I have got *all* your letters, and the letter of the 10th would have come in due time had it not been for another neglect of the post-master at Bishop's Waltham. If he neglect once more, I complain against him.

Mr. Hesketh is going to Southampton, and I send this by him together with 6 Letters upon the "Learned Languages." I have numbered them agreeably to my plan; and I would have them stand according to their numbers. You will be so good as to put the words "LEARNED LANGUAGES" at the head of each of them, and No. 5 wants a *correct* and *full* extract of the passage

¹ Add. MSS. 31126, f. 1.

alluded to, placed at the head of it, with turned commas. They all want reading and pointing; and No. 7 wants some little corrections, agreeably to the wish of the writer. I think you will be delighted with No. 5. If the pedant had been retained on my side, he could not have served me more effectually. I thank you for all your hints; and, in my next, I shall give you a list of points upon which I shall want information. I shall write again on Sunday. I shall certainly *harbour* no witness, and so I tell Mr. Paull by this day's post.¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, February 25, 1807.

As to Whitbread, his plan is of the John Bowles kind.² I had heard of it long ago. It is the foolishlest and the wickedest that ever was heard of. Damn them, they would put badges upon us all. The poor are yet *too free* for them. They want to have them all tar^{red} to their hands like chickens that they may devour them at pleasure. No: while God gives me health and I retain my personal freedom, I will never be silent for one moment upon this most important and alarming topic. But is Hewlings really become a contractor with government? Why, he will soon begin to bellow for "social order and religion," though he told me he was "a perfect materialist." Come, come; you must jest. What the devil should he contract for, except it be speeches? I really have a good opinion of him. He was very bold in expressing his dissent from the opinions of others, which is always a good sign. That he is not proof against Bond Street and Rotten Row, I may believe; but which of them is?³

¹ Add. MSS. 31126, f. 2.

² Whitbread introduced a Poor Law Bill into the House of Commons on February 29, 1807.

³ Add. MSS. 22906, f. 249.

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, April 10, 1807.

What you told me about Mitford's report has given me some uneasiness, on account of the *trouble* that *prosecutions* would give me ; but as to *the House*, the damn'd House, I set it at defiance, if it will only confine its vengeance to its own villainous powers. It is not, however, worth while to *make* any inquiries. It would be a good jest for the Whigs to begin to prosecute now. I'll assure you, I was most cursedly afraid of them *before*. Howick is a perfect Bashaw ; and apostates are proverbially persecutors. God knows I need say no harm of either party. They furnish me with ample quantities of good and true censure of one another. I am deeply impressed with the necessity of *caution* ; but, if they are resolved to plague, plague they may. Should anything of this sort happen, I am determin'd to *plead my own cause*, be the consequence what it may. That one should live in this state of jeopardy every hour is mortifying enough ; it is, indeed, a political hell ; and damn'd be the man who does not rejoice to see the fall of those execrable apostates that stirr'd not one inch to free us from it ! They are down forever, and that, I dare say, their new friends are now convinced of. What may arise I know not ; but worse cannot come. This talk of prosecution has exasperate'd me against them beyond measure ; and my own safety shall be the only standard of my vengeance. Villains ! They profess liberty ; they set their hired scoundrels to write me and truth out of countenance ; and the moment they feel the weight of my lash, they talk of the *law*, that law against which they have so much inveighed, which they know to be so unjust, and the administration of which they know to be so basely partial ! ¹

¹ Add. MSS. 22906, f. 271.

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, Friday, April 17, 1807.

. . . As to the *motion*, I have been, this day, so un-governably enraged, that I have actually been unable to sit down to write or to becalm my mind into a state for reflecting. And the cause has not been the less efficient on account of the trifling interest which it involves. For, when I consider all the circumstances, I cannot bring myself to b[r]oc; this instance of flagrant neglect, and, I must say, ingratitude, on the part of Mr. Reid. On Tuesday he wrote me an account of his excessive care with respect to the much *prayed-for trees*. He informed me of his great kindness in going, in his own proper person, to see them brought to town, and that he was just then going to *see* them put up in the waggon. On the same day, you write me, that they are *gone off*. They are *not come*, they never were put in the waggon; and, my firm belief is, that the whole story on his part was a sheer falsehood. Twenty times, if once, I begged of him to *see* them in the waggon, reminding him that the holes had been dug *in the Lawn* for 3 weeks. But may I perish if I do not match him for it. I am by no means obliged to Mr. Clewer. I do much more to oblige both of them. But I'll stop; and, as to the former, were it not for his sister's sake, and that just at this time, too, he should never set his foot in my house again.

Now what I have to request of *you* is this; to say not a word of my complaint to either of them; but to tell Mr. Reid that *I do not want* any of the things mentioned in my memorandum of yesterday; to take that memorandum and execute it for me on Monday or Tuesday next, and to send the basket by the Southampton coach, notifying to me when you have done it; and, lastly, to get *the dog* from Mr. Reid, to get a collar, with

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"William Cobbett, Botley, Hants," upon it, from a saddler that lives near the top of the Haymarket, on the left-hand side going down, who sold me 6 collars last summer; to buy a 1s. 6d. chain; to have the dog kept at your stable and well fed until Tuesday next, and then to see him safely put *into* Attfield's waggon, as I have this day written to Mr. Attfield about it, and he will give his man particular directions. I send, on the other page, a note for Mr. Reid for the delivery of the dog to you. I have spoken to my wife about it, who participates in all my feelings upon the subject. I charge you to do this, as you value my friendship. Say not another word to him, but merely deliver him the note. If you cannot go for the dog yourself, send a trusty person with a *chain*, or string, to fetch him to you.

P.S.—Damn the trees. I do not want them now. Once more, be sure you say nothing to him about the contents of my letter. Consider that this is of importance to the peace of my family.¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

SOUTHAMPTON (*with Mrs. B.*), August 6, 1807.

You will see that my motto for *this* week was too apt to my purpose to be dispensed with on any terms. Your extract is excellent; but it must not go in *with the list*; for, if the Attorney General (who[se] disposition that way must be admirable) can make the motto apply to the list of the present Parliament, he would take away our lives; which we must not let him do, if we can avoid it.²

¹ Add. MSS. 31126, ff. 7-8.

² *Ibid.*, 22906, f. 307.

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THE HEAD of the POLL, or the Wimbledon Showman & the Puppet
Pub. May, 1807, by Walker & Cornhill.

WILLIAM COBBETT AND SIR FRANCIS BURDETT
From a rare caricature, May, 1807, in the collection of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, November 27, 1807.

The rise in the paper is a very serious thing; but I have no other way of facing it, except by economy, if I *can* increase that. We have not drunk six glasses of wine since you left us. Almost all the money I draw is expended in preparations for planting, and in making a new footpath along the side of my farm, in order to stop up the one that passes *through* it, and which is an injury to the estate of £500 amount. In short, I am drawing 5 pounds at a time to add 50 trees at a time to my real property; and, unless I do it now, I lose years of my life, which it is now too late to do. These pecuniary pinches give me great uneasiness at times; but they will cease before it be long; and, if it please God to preserve my life, they will cease much about the time that my grand planting scheme will be actually completed. There is here a little coppice, which, I think, will have to be sold, and which I intend *you* shall have. It has as many young oaks in it as will be worth 1000 pounds in 15 years' time, and suppose it can be bought for 120 pounds, the *underwood* will pay the interest of the money. It is on the side of Curdrige Common. Smith is the present owner of the coppice. I have given him an *accommodation* bill at 2 months for £100. I mention this merely to apprise you that I shall have the money from him to meet it. I do not mean to buy the coppice of him *now*; but I am sure it can be had at any time; and I am very desirous that you should have an inch of land that you might set your foot upon, and say, "This is mine." But, pray, never talk to *any one* about these matters.¹

¹ Add. MSS. 22906, f. 334.

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, Sunday, February 28, 1808.

The *saw* was not so very pressing a matter. It may come next week, but the book, which I mentioned first, and that I wanted most, is not come. It is Pontey's *Profitable Planter*, everlastingly advertised by Harding, and in his catalogue. Budd says not a word about it. Then the two books that are come are worth just nothing to me. Who would not have thought, from the advertisement, that I should have found plans for building "huts" and "labourers' cottages"; good *practical* plans? The devil a bit. Nothing but damned things of *taste*, and not at all for utility. Mr. Clewer and I want to build three or four cottages, with mud walls, to come to about £20 each; and we thought *Atkinson's* book was the thing, but it is a mere collection of views; things of taste, taken from *old* cottages and small farm-houses. I must, therefore, trouble *you* to go to Harding's and look at "Barber's designs for farm-buildings, cottages, &c., with the mode of building in Pisé, &c. &c." We want to have some guide as to plans and as to materials, which may, possibly, save us half the expense. If you find the book to be such as we want, let Mr. Budd get it.

I enclose your 2 hand-bills. You will see what number of copies I want of each, that number being mentioned upon the top of each respectively. You will be so good as to send them by *Tuesday* night's mail-coach, and my man (who surpasses even his recommendation) will be at Southampton on Wednesday morning.

The letters now enclosed, for insertion this week, will make about ten columns, though I shall, probably, send another letter to-morrow or next day. I shall

finish Roscoe this week; and, in finishing him, I think I shall, collaterally, silence a good many others who were beginning to prattle about peace.

ANSWERS TO YOUR LETTERS

I have recd. *ten pounds* from you, in your letter dated 25 Feby. and *ten pounds* before, in your letter of the 17th Feby.

It must provoke some persons to see the stir which my writings do *still* make, though they can no longer relish them. We, thank God, stand upon ground very different from that of *faction of any sort*.

The note was at *eight* months, then; for I *know* it is due on the 7th of March. I enclose a letter for Mr. Hughan, which you will read first, and then deliver to him.

Thank you for sending the prints to Mr. Colnaghi. It will please William very much to be informed that it is done.

The 1st Number of the *Debates* looks delightfully well. Pray say to Mr. Hansard¹ everything that is civil, on my part, in return for the books, which he was so good as to give me, and which are very valuable, particularly the Public Records. He certainly is the only *gentleman* printer that I have ever had to do with.²

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, March 9, 1808.

. . . I see all the conduct of Cox and Baylis³ in its proper light; and the matter is just as I expected, except

¹ T. C. Hansard, the printer of *Cobbett's Parliamentary History* and *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates*.

² Add. MSS. 31126, f. 31.

³ Cox and Baylis, of Great Queen Street, London, were some time the printers of *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates*.

that I could not have supposed them to be so unjust as to lay the fault upon you, when the whole of it was theirs. They had no more right to consider the Petition an official paper than they have to consider my Summary in that light. It was not *marked* and *numbered* as the official papers are. The case is this, as the Vizier of Oude used to say to Wellesley and his myrmidons, they are outrageous at having their plunder cut off; or, rather, at being compelled to *do something* for all the profits they derive from me; and they think you the principal cause of my new system. Now mark me; if you can get Hansard to take the *Register*, he shall have 1., if not, I will, I think, try Brettell. Speak to Mr. H. unless you are sure it will not do. Let me hear from you on the subject by the *parcel*.¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, Sunday, March 20, 1808.

The Timber, for which I expected to get £2000 and was in hopes of getting a *little* more, fetched £2670!!! I send you enclosed £150 in cash, in order to assist Mr. Bagshaw; the rest of my deposit money I keep here to prevent my drawing a draft or two on Mr. Bagshaw, and to supply my wants here for a couple of weeks. Never did anything sell better, and my *Timber-yard* has, in this very sale, paid for itself. The trees now sold have fetched £1000 more than I paid for them. The timber *remaining* is worth £1000 more than I gave for the *whole*. I am proud that I have managed the whole of this business without any *advice* from anybody. I had no puffer at the sale, as is usual. I dined with the merchants; I then told them that the auctioneer was in possession of what I was resolved to have, if I sold; and then I left them till the sale was over. I wish you

¹ Add. MSS. 31126, f. 33.

not to make mention of this matter to anybody. My friends would talk of it for my good, as they would think; but I wish it not to be talked about at all. During the week I shall send you up the bills to carry to Mr. White. I will cut no more timber at present. What I have now done disfigures nothing; but I will not *strip* the estate. If Dr. Mitford or any one asks you, say the timber sold *very well*. I shall say just that. The purchasers have *not bad* bargains. The timber is so very good, and so heavily loaded with bark. There is not a single dead top in the whole 382 trees.¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, April 10, 1808.

I send, by the Gosport mail, a parcel of copy. Go to the Committee by all means. Let us suffer no little slights to interfere with our public duty. That is the way with those only who are actuated by selfish motives. I shall be in *town* on Thursday night next or on Saturday night. The former will, I think, be the day. If I find all to be *good men and true*, we will make such a stir as has not for some time been made. All the gentlemen whom I met with are loud in Sir Francis Burdett's praise. His motion about the cashiering of officers has gained him thousands of valuable friends. So bent was I upon calling for a purgation of that damned House, that I was resolved to petition alone, if any one would have presented my petition. The nation is heart-sick of it. It is impossible for both factions united to calumniate our motives, if we proceed as we ought, and do not mix with men of bad character. There is one *Hunt*, the Bristol man.² Beware of him! he rides about the country with a whore, the wife of another man,

¹ Add. MSS. 31126, f. 34.

² Henry Hunt (1773-1835), Radical politician.

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having deserted his own. A sad fellow! Nothing to do with him. Adieu.

P.S.—I will write to Sir J. Astley. I am very sorry for his misfortune indeed. I want very much to see some man who has planted upon a large scale. Cutting upon a large scale is the order of the day here.¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, April 12, 1808.

This day the most wonderful thing which I have met with in my whole wonderful life has happened to me. A gentleman came to see me this morning from London, to show me and to consult me upon the publication of a work upon *metaphysicks*. He appeared to be a very learned and very accomplished man, and so I find him upon some hours of conversation; and, would you believe it, he then discovered himself to me, and I found him to be the same whom I left in England, 23 years ago, a *fifer*, in the recruiting party that I belonged to! This has occupied me the whole day. He was about two years younger than myself, and I have thought and talked of him ten thousand times, having had a most affectionate regard for him. I, therefore, send you nothing; but I will make up for it to-morrow. You shall see my old acquaintance when I get to town.²

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, May 13, 1808.

The particulars of my purchase are these. The land consists of 87 acres, land tax redeemed, and taxes at an old rate, of course scarcely anything. 67 acres of woods,

¹ Add. MSS. 22906, f. 372. This letter was subsequently the cause of trouble to the author. See vol. ii. p. 142.

² Add. MSS. 22906, f. 375.

5 acres of water meadow, and 15 of arable land—the whole in a ring fence, and lying close at the back, from one side to the other, of the Manor of Fairthorn, driving trespassers and poachers another half mile from me. The price of the land was £1350: much cheaper than Fairthorn, but not quite so good. The timber was valued at £1870, of which about £1000 may be cut next spring, and, indeed, ought to be cut, if I had millions of money. I made a lumping offer of £3000. And we met at 3000 Guineas, to be paid in notes at 2, 4, and 6 months. I wrote to Mr. Hughan for his help, and he has promised it me. Mr. Hounsdon is in town, confined by business, so that we have not actually exchanged papers; but it will be done very soon, and I shall date my notes from the day that I draw them.

I have this day sent off my man Compton to Major Cartwright's with two Norman cows. But I write about it to the Major himself. He will probably give you a draft for the money. If so you will send it to Mr. Baker, of whom I bought the cows. Or, perhaps, the best way will be to send Mr. Baker the draft.

Dr. Mitford will send to you a *dog* for Mr. Rose of Croydon. I have told Mr. Rose that you will apprise him of it; or, which will be much better, send off a *man* with the dog immediately, and Mr. Rose will pay him.

Now, as to the *dinner*, it is dreadfully distressing for me to go; for, the season being so backward, has thrown the oak-cutting into this week and the two succeeding ones, and you will easily guess how necessary my personal attendance is while it lasts. Yet I will go, if alive and well; but I must go up on Sunday, and come back on the *Tuesday*; for I cannot be longer absent. I have many reasons for going as well as for staying; but the former prevail. I have not sold my second lot of timber, that I had marked while I was in London. When I came to see it again, and to consider, that the 300 that would have sold for a thousand pounds, were gaining in

growth above £150 a year, I could not bring myself to commit such flagrant murder of property. The new purchase has upon it about 6000 trees that now cost me from a shilling to half a crown apiece, and that in 20 years' time will be worth 3 pounds apiece at the very least. This, I think, is the best way of insuring a fortune for children.¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, May 19, 1808.

Only the day before yesterday I was bent upon going to town for the 23rd, and had written to Mr. Housden of Fontington to meet me there about the farm. But now I find that it cannot be, without an inconvenience and risk, which I am sure no friends would wish me to incur, especially as my journey would produce little more than my own gratification at witnessing the assemblage of so many public-spirited men. You know very well that *this* is my *harvest*, and that this year I have a ten-fold harvest. I allude to the oak-tree cutting, which must be done while the sap is in the flood of its spring or not at all, and the bark, you will observe, is of the little *thinners* that I am cutting upon my own account, worth three times as much as the timber. In the average of years this sap season lasts a good month; but the very extraordinary backwardness of this spring, and the very rare hot weather that has come on after it, has made the season last only three weeks, a fortnight of which has already past. Owing to this I, who waited till the several companies of fellers had finished the great timber, am obliged to fall to work on Saturday, instead of waiting till next Tuesday; I am compelled to set 60 men on at once, and, as mine is a work of *thinning*, it will require my *constant attendance* from the time the men begin till they leave off. I must be with them to

¹ Add MSS. 22907, f. 7.

mark the trees; to see the effect of taking out some before we take out others; and, in short, the health and growth as well as the future beauty of 100 acres of the finest woods in England depend upon my personal attendance between Saturday and Wednesday next. Nothing ever was more pointedly perverse; but I trust that all those who wished me to attend the dinner will be convinced that I ought not to leave home at this time.

I am of opinion, too (and I should like to hear what the Major says of the matter), that I am of most weight as a *spectator* and *comment maker*. This way my word and opinion pass for a good deal; but I am not clear that whatever good I could do as an *agitator* would not be more than counterbalanced by the loss of weight in the other character. I know it is the opinion of Sir Francis,¹ that to put me in Parliament would be to lessen my weight; and, really, I think that the same reasoning will apply to the other case. In fact, one cannot *act* and *write* too with so much advantage. The way in which I am most able to aid the cause of the country is to sit quietly here, and give my sincere and unbiassed opinions upon all that passes which appears worthy of particular notice.

In the copy last sent you there is a phrase, "Old G. Rose." Upon second thoughts it may as well be left out. It is, perhaps, right to cease to use that and the like phrases. One puts them down under the influence of indignant feelings, but they, probably, do more harm than good.²

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, June 11, 1808.

. . . I enclose two letters, one for Dr. Mitford, which you will be so good as to send off, by post, on Monday (and without fail), and one (the address of which I leave

¹ (P) Sir Francis Burdett.
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² Add. MSS. 22907, f. 10.
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blank) for Mr. Nichols, in the neighbourhood of *Odiham*. The address of this gentleman I have forgotten, but *Budd* knows it well; and I will thank you to carry it to him; and let him direct it and send it off on *Monday*, be sure. These letters are to inform Mr. Nicholls that I and Mrs. Cobbett shall sleep at his house on *Thursday* night next, and Dr. Mitford that we shall be at his house on *Friday*. On *Sunday* or *Saturday* we go home by the way of *Micheldever*, and take the boys with us. *Louis* will come (by a way that I shall direct) about the 30th; for, on the 20th, the men come to put up *the Portico*, and, until that is done, I should not like to add to the family. Pray tell Mr. Hansard this; and tell him besides that I should be greatly obliged to him for his candid advice as to *what shall be done with Louis*.

You had better defer *your* visit to us until melons are ripe; that is, the middle of *July*; for, until then, we shall not be comfortable; and we can see nobody but you and *Murphy* and such-like bachelors this summer.

As to the *West India* proposition, if it come in a proper shape, and leave me perfectly and *expressly* at liberty to do and say what I please, I do not know that I should regret it; but I think you are deceived. Men suffer to go unrewarded support that is derived from the operation of *principle*. It is quite a matter of indifference to me. You know that what I wrote proceeded from pure conviction of its truth, and from that zeal which is natural to me. I am delighted beyond measure that we have succeeded. I am sure the question has been decided by me; and that, too, in opposition to *the whole of the press*. It must give *Hughan* not a little satisfaction to see the result of our endeavours. Their enemies have experienced a defeat more complete than any that I recollect to have witnessed upon any occasion.

The poor little girl of *Mr. Clewer's* died this morning after a week's illness. This is a most happy release to

both child and parents. Pray send off a messenger to John Clewer, *as soon as possible*, with the enclosed letter. Only think: just about 20 years has this poor creature wailed through life! To be sure, she had no *mental* torment; but her bodily sufferings were terrible.¹

William Cobbett to Lord Folkestone

October 9, 1808.

MY LORD,—Thank you kindly for both your letters. It is, indeed, a damned thing that Wellesley should give the lie direct to the *protesting* part of the statement of his friends. How the devil will they get over this? Now we have the rascals upon the hip. It is evident that *he* was the prime cause—the only cause—of all the mischief, and that from the motive of thwarting everything *after he was superseded*. Thus do we pay for the arrogance of that damned infernal family. But it all comes at last *to the House of Commons*. The corruptions of that infamous [? place] sent them out, and we are justly punished.²

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, November 12, 1808.

The Prospectus³ did not, owing to my being out, come to hand till *last night*. I will endeavour to dispatch it to-morrow, tho' it should not be done in such haste. I shall take care to make it appear to have grown out of the History, so that the air of *book-making* may not be taken by any of our operations.

I must confess that I am less pleased with this thing than I should have been, if it had remained solely in your

¹ Add. MSS. 31126, f. 40.

² *Creevey Papers*, i. 89-90.

³ The Prospectus of *Cobbett's State Trials*, the first volume of which appeared in the following year.

hands. I very much question whether Mr. H[owell]'s¹ taste is so good as your own; and I am quite sure that we shall derive no *comfort* from any connection with an *author*.

But it is too late to *reflect*. We will go on as well as we can. Only mind to be always upon your guard against letting him assume anything like a dictatorial tone. *Keep up your own consequence*; for I know that your modest merit is not very well calculated to resist the encroachments of conceited importance. Curse it; this is something new to us. Be sure to tell him none of our political secrets. Suffer no inquiries into our affairs. Let him see no copy of mine, or my correspondents'. Tell him of none of our intentions about anything. I know how easy it is for any one to worm himself into your unsuspecting breast; and, therefore, I give these cautions. I think I perceive in his letters a rather *consequential* air. But I am resolved to have no partner, nor any one to give me advice, except yourself. We have gone on so happily, and so advantageously, by ourselves, that I am really in a state of alarm at the prospect of admitting anything like an associate. It must not be, by God.

I will send the Prospectus by to-morrow's post, if possible; for it is by no means to my liking in its present shape. My alarms may be groundless; but I am convinced of the necessity of great caution. God bless you!²

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, November 25, 1808.

I have sent the draft to Mr. Hounsam; but how the devil came you to think that he was a *parson*? I have run my pen through your Revd., but, I dare say, it will

¹ Thomas Bayly Howell, the editor of the *State Trials*; subsequently he took over the publication, which is now better known as *Howell's State Trials*.

² Add. MSS. 22907, f. 76.

be of no consequence. The meeting at Winchester was very large, and consisted of almost the whole of the people of considerable property. Rose and his son were deterred from appearing at the Castle. The *speech* was infinitely better than the *report*. I made use of no *notes*, except as far as related to the *sums*. Not the smallest hesitation from beginning to the end; and, owing to the strength of my voice and the clearness of my articulation, every word I said was heard by the man the most distant from me. The effect was very great. I spoke $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour with very little interruption indeed; notwithstanding I spoke to a party assembly hostile to me, as far as party could influence men. I wish you could have seen how *little* the *great* looked after that speech had been made! They went up to the Castle swaggering and in crowds; they came sneaking back in ones and twos. Many of them had the *meanness* to compliment me upon my speech. I was invited to dinner by several; but I went to my Inn and dined with Mr. Baker, another neighbouring clergyman, and Dr. Mitford; and then set off home. No: be in no alarm about my hazarding my reputation and happiness by standing as a candidate for this county, or for any other place. That I never will be. If any body of electors, anywhere, have a mind to choose me, without giving me any trouble, I will serve; but at this time I have not the least desire for that; on my *own* account, I should wish not; but I am, in such a case, not to consider myself only. I feel that I should have *power* to serve with great effect; and I shall never, I hope, be backward to make any useful sacrifice. But I never will *ask* anybody to elect me. The boys have met me at Winchester [*illegible*], and it is no bad school for them. While I was waiting, I saw, in the crowd, several persons from the neighbourhood of Farnham, whom I had never seen before since I was their playmate. I saw many to whom I used, when a boy, to make a very low bow. Ld. Temple came and

shook hands, even *after* the speech; and I must say that I think Mr. Herbert a very modest young man. In one part of my speech an attorney of the Rose party, who stood just under the window, made an attempt to excite a clamour; but I fixed my eye upon him, and pointing my hand down right and making a sort of chastising motion, said, "Peace, babbling slave!" which produced such terror amongst others that I met with no more interruption.¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, November 29, 1808.

When at Winchester, I met the boys; and, as I thought that Johnny looked poorly, I brought him home. Very luckily; for he has now the *measles*, or *Scarlet fever*, we do not know yet which; but he seems to be doing pretty well. For fear the same disorder should be at work in William, I have just sent Robinson off to bring him home too.

This has bothered me to-day, and prevented me from doing anything, together with the visit of Lord Folkestone, who sets off by-and-by, and who will leave me franks for to-morrow.

He has written to Bagshaw for the *Trials*, and is in extasies at the cleverness of the Prospectus, from which, he says, all the world will form a favourable opinion of the work. It is, between ourselves, a *lucky time* for it to make its appearance.²

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, December 7, 1808.

As to Howell, I always was afraid of him. I know that he is what the French call *un homme à grandes pretensions*; as, indeed, all your *authors* are. Damn

¹ Add. MSS. 22967, f. 81.

² *Ibid.*, 31126, f. 47.

them, they think that every book that is printed is so much money ready coined. They take the price, the full retail price, of a volume, say a guinea and a half, then they take the number of copies, and hence they reckon that the bookseller has so many guineas and halves in his drawer the moment the book is printed. You cannot beat this out of their brains. They will have it so. Then they are full of their college conceit, which is so intolerable that I would sooner have dealings with an old lecherous woman that would be t(r)earing open my cod-piece fifty times a day. With such people a *partnership* would be, for you and me, a most comfortable thing. I greatly approve of the scheme of a "fag"; and, as to expense, 4 guineas a week would be cheap. But he must *work* and be obedient. This would be the plan. There is no fear of any one to beat us, if we can go on; but I should not wonder if Howell were to try some such thing with another bookseller. I think you might *advertise* for a person. Let the address be well disguised; and engage no one who would not be *quite* under your control. I would sooner give an additional guinea a week on the score of *obedience* than on the score of *talent*, though there must be considerable talent too. If you can get rid of H. I shall be very happy. I know what your *college* gentlemen are. They always have, and will have, the *insolence* to think themselves *our betters*; and our superior talents and industry and power and weight only excite their envy. I am heartily sorry we ever had anything to do with H. All this may *blow off*; but I shall never have confidence in him. Depend on it, he thought I offered him *too little*. Depend on it, though, I'll engage such an offer was never before made in the world. *Go* to him no more. *Send* to him no more. Say nothing to him till the Part has actually appeared. Get an amanuensis, and leave me to give him his *cong e*. What! £2400 certain not enough for the editing of such a collection! Damn his college inso-

lence! What apology can he possibly make? Why, the whole of the copy ought to be now *in hands*. Pray, do not depend upon him for anything. I take it, he is watching for the shoes of the worthy old Baron, whom I will certainly write to upon the subject after a time. I will write to the Major [Cartwright] and to Holt White upon the subject of the Trials. Two better men there are not in all England. The Major is the very best writer that I know, though he has scarcely a drop of blood in his veins. Oh, that my mind, at his age, may be like his!¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

ALRESFORD, Friday, December 9, 1808.

DEAR SIR,—You have done very right about Mr. Howell. I am afraid he will not suit us; but if we get along for a Part or two, we shall be the better able to do without him, and he the less able to play us any trick. From his not writing to me, I should suppose him to be dissatisfied with my offer; but I am quite resolved upon that point. Not another farthing shall he have from me. I will stipulate for a great *store* of copy; and I will, most assuredly, tell him, that any failure, on his part, will at once put an end to the bargain.

I tell you what would be a good thing. To get made out by him, as soon as possible, *a list of all the trials* that are to come into the work, placed in their proper order, and set off as they [are ?] to come into volumes. In your conversations with him, take [care] to provide yourself with information as to the *sources* of information. We shall find him fail us, sooner or later, from one cause or another; but, if we can get out two or three volumes first, we shall, by that time, be able to set him at defiance. He always seemed to me to be a little *screely* fellow. Sharp and clever, but feeble of body, and not very

¹ Add. MSS. 22907, ff. 87, 88.

strong of mind. *When* the devil could he be? I am afraid he is an opium-eater. As to Davenport, the little fellow is absolutely worse than a feather, or a dead leaf, as to unsettledness. The return of a pheasant, or hare, to its place of feed is as uncertain as are the movements of Davenport. He will never do to be dependēd upon for anything.¹

William Cobbett to Thomas Bayly Howell

ALRESFORD, December 9, 1808.

I have been in great anxiety on account of the 1st Pt. of the Trials, Mr. Wright having informed me, in answer to my inquiries, that, on account of your absence from town, he had his fears about the punctuality of its appearance.

A letter from him, just received, informs me briefly that "all's well," which, I trust, is the case; but I confess to you, that my uneasiness, on this score, is far from being wholly removed, and the more so as I have not had the pleasure to hear from you, in answer to my proposition relative to the pecuniary part of the arrangement, a proposition which, from my knowledge of the vast difference between it and those generally made to literary gentlemen, I did flatter myself would have been thought worthy of a speedy answer. When I have an opportunity of answering your next, I will take occasion to state to you fully my opinion as to the mode to be pursued, in the *providing of copy beforehand*. Printing offices are expensive concerns, and their operations must not be exposed to the casualties of ill-health, or of any other sort. Want of a *store* of copy would make the work cost me twice as much as it ought to cost, and would, indeed, run away with the greater part of the profit. Glad to hear that your indisposition has not been very serious.²

¹ Add. MSS. 22907, f. 90.

² *Ibid.*, 22907, f. 91.

CHAPTER XIII

PROSECUTION BY THE GOVERNMENT (1809-10)

The Duke of York and Mrs. Mary Anne Clarke—The War Office scandal—Colonel Wardle brings the matter forward in the House of Commons—Cobbett in the *Political Register* supports Wardle—Organises a public meeting in the county of Southampton to applaud Wardle—The Government anxious to proceed against Cobbett—"Local Militia and German Legions"—The Attorney-General files an information against Cobbett—Cobbett prepares his defence—The trial—Sentence—Subsequently transpires that Cobbett offered to stop the *Political Register* if he was not brought up for judgment—His address "To the readers of the *Register*."

THE connection of the Duke of York, then Commander-in-Chief, with the notorious Mary Anne Clarke had long been a matter of common knowledge, but it was not until the beginning of 1809 that there arose the scandal occasioned by the sale of commissions in the army, the proceeds of which were pocketed by the courtesan. On January 27 Colonel Wardle, M.P. for Okehampton, brought forward in the House of Commons a motion against his Royal Highness, and Cobbett, always eager to assist in redressing abuses, took an active interest in the subject.

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, January 29, 1809.

I wonder you had not written me a line to give me your opinion about Mr. Wardle's *capacity* of proving the facts. This is an admirable fellow. I will perform a

pilgrimage to see him. Oh! the damned thieves! "A Jacobinal conspiracy!" Damned, hell-fire thieves!¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, Friday, February 3, 1809.

The sole object of this is to tell you, that, if the *printed evidence* can be got out in time, I will have a *double Number* next Saturday. I will spare nothing to have *all* the evidence, at full length, in the *Regr.* as fast as it can *possibly* be got out. The 1st charge is *proved* to *my* satisfaction. There can be no doubt in the mind of any impartial man.²

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, February 12, 1809.

The Duke must go, I think; but I wish the villains had the boldness to adopt a different course. So Perceval has *now* thought of bringing in a Bill to *prevent jobbery!* I thought that Paxton said it was "all a libel."³

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, March 17, 1809.

As to the *division*, I am not at all surprised at it, and I cannot say that it has excited my *regret*. The whole thing was wrong on the part of Wardle. He should have had a motive for decided *clear corruption*, or *no motive at all*. This was my opinion and my advice from the first. As to *Wilkinson*, and his *hint*, it is not so *indifferent* to me. And I wish you to write to-morrow to give me *every particular* upon the subject. I do not mind the power of the House; but of the Atty. Genl.

¹ Add. MSS. 22907, f. 335.

² *Ibid.*, 31126, f. 52.

³ *Ibid.*, 31126, f. 55.

I do; though it would be better to meet that than disgrace. Wardle has done great good. He is never to be enough praised. But pray give me an account of what Wilkinson said, and of all you have heard upon that head. Only think of the *boiling of blood* that this white-washing will give rise to!¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

Very well about Wilkinson, and, I think, it is impossible that anything of the sort can be attempted. But it would be folly in the extreme to be caught *napping*, as it were.

The *military* club is, indeed, a choice thing. This is what one has to expect. Now who will say that the government is not *military*? Here we find the army leagued for the support of corruption. It was easy to see that it would come to this. The struggle is at no great distance. The point, whether a military government or not shall rule this country, must soon be settled. You know I long ago asked what the *government* must be, if this was to be a *military country*, and the king was to have the *absolute command of the military*? The truth is, however, that this club is *packed*; it does not speak the sentiments of the officers of the *army*, who do duty. It is a club of rascals, who, like Clavering, live in London, and get on by intrigue.²

Cobbett, who by his support in the *Register* had greatly strengthened Wardle's hand in his Parliamentary proceedings, was instrumental in organising a Requisition to the High Sheriff of the County of Southampton "to call a Meeting . . . at Winchester . . . to afford us, and the Inhabitants of this County in general, an opportunity

¹ Add. MSS. 31126, f. 55.

² *Ibid.*, 31125, f. 56.

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of publicly and formally giving our thanks to Gwyllym L. Wardle, Esq., M.P., for his upright and public-spirited conduct, during the recent inquiry before the House of Commons; and also of expressing our sentiments upon the subjects of that inquiry."

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, April 9, 1809.

As to the meeting, I and Mr. Houghton, with a requisition, signed by 69 Freeholders and other Landholders, whose land is worth more than *half a million of money*, went to the Sheriff, Blackburn (of word-eating memory), who said he would "*consider*" of it. "*Le Roy s'avisera*," you know. But, if the rascal attempt his *veto*, we are prepared for a most delightful exposure of him; and we will have our meeting too, in spite of his truth, the *time* of which I will let you [know]. The villain skulked out of the back-door as we approached the front. Oh! we have a delightful tale to tell of his *High Sheriff*, if he refuse to do his duty.¹

The High Sheriff reluctantly granted a meeting, which was held at Winchester Castle on April 25.

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, April 7, 1809.

To-morrow I will write to you from Winton. We shall there see what the damned Whigs are at. Oh! yes, your nice young man, Mr. Hubert, will "take an *active part*," will he? I like that mightily, when he and his gang see that we should do it so much better without their dirty, selfish interference. They will do one thing, however, and that is, if they attempt to palm any of

¹ Add. MSS. 31126, f. 60.

their party stuff upon us, they will be most damnably roasted. If they be "*regenerate*"; if they come up to *our spirit*, it will fare tolerably well with them; but, if not, they will find that I have not preached in vain. Oh! damn them! They could not *prevent*, and, therefore, they would fain *marr*.¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, June 23, 1809.

DEAR SIR,—I desire you to say to Budd² that, if I have again reason to *suspect* a *premature sale* of a number of the *Register*, I will never suffer him to have the sheets again until the news-man's hour. My mind is made up as to this point. I have not time to answer Mr. Hansard's letter; but I beg you to assure him that I am satisfied the fault was at Mr. Budd's.

The robbers are damnably mad. I beat them in point of *anecdote*. The "*Important Considerations*"³ has surprised everybody. Great fuss was made with it at Southampton, where there is still one sticking up in one of the churches. A gentleman, who told me this yesterday, came to offer, on the part of some friends at Southampton, a subscription of a *hundred pounds* for the purpose of distributing my last letter through the county. I declined it, for reasons that appeared to satisfy him; but I could not help being pleased with the offer. I have several letters congratulating me upon my triumph; especially one from *Ld. Folkestone* and one from *Mr. Palmer*. I have another thing or two to mention one of these days, which will make the robbers damned mad again. The robbers have absolved me from all obligations of secrecy or delicacy. You see, their great object

¹ Add. MSS. 22907, f. 144.

² One of the publishers of Cobbett's works.

³ *Important Considerations for the People of this Kingdom*, by William Cobbett, 1803.

is to make the world believe that I am a *low* and *insignificant* fellow. I must, therefore, take care to counteract them. I will, in one way or another, work in anecdotes continually to show how *great* a man these robbers have thought me. I will work these things into parentheses, so as not to make set articles of them. I will show the documents to Sir Francis [Burdett], and when he has seen them, it is really worth considering, whether the publication of documents from the *War Office*, partially selected for the purpose of blasting the fame of a political writer, is not worth mentioning in the House of Commons. I will give him the real documents to carry in his hand. Not only my letters, but the original answers, signed by Sir George Yonge and by Old Gould.¹

The independence of the *Register* was a thorn in the side of the Government, and the Law Officers of the Crown were on the watch to find something in that periodical that would enable them to proceed against the editor. Cobbett realised that he was in danger of prosecution, and, apart from a very natural distaste for prison, he realised that he could serve his cause better while he was at liberty. Sometimes when he had written a very virulent article he would tone down some sentences that he had written in the heat of composition, and more than once he wrote to Wright telling him to be sure to read the proofs carefully, and soften any expressions that he deemed too strong. Months passed without Cobbett committing any indiscretion which the Government could turn to their advantage, but presently Cobbett's indignation got the better of his caution, and in the issue of the *Register* for July 1, 1809, appeared the now famous article which gave them their opportunity.

¹ Add. MSS. 31126, f. 65.

LOCAL MILITIA AND GERMAN LEGION

"The mutiny amongst the LOCAL MILITIA, which broke out at Ely, was *fortunately* suppressed on Wednesday by the arrival of *four squadrons* of the GERMAN LEGION CAVALRY from Bury, under the command of General Auckland. Five of the ringleaders were tried by a court-martial, and *sentenced to receive 500 lashes each*, part of which punishment *they received on Wednesday*, and a part was remitted. A *stoppage for their knapsacks* was the ground of complaint that excited this *mutinous* spirit, which occasioned the men to surround their officers and demand what *they deemed* their arrears. The first division of the German Legion halted at Newmarket on their return to Bury."—*Courier* (ministerial) Newspaper, Saturday, 24th of June, 1809.

See the motto, English reader! See the motto; and then do pray recollect all that has been said about the way in which Buonaparte raises his soldiers.

Well done, Lord Castlereagh! This is just what it was thought your plan would produce. Well said, Mr. Huskisson! It really was not without reason that you dwelt, with so much earnestness, upon the great utility of the *foreign* troops, whom Mr. Wardle appeared to think of no utility at all. Poor gentleman! he little imagined how a great genius might find useful employment for such troops. He little imagined that they might be made the means of compelling Englishmen to submit to that sort of *discipline*, which is so conducive to producing in them a disposition to defend the country at the risk of their lives. Let Mr. Wardle look at my motto, and then say whether the German soldiers are of *no use*.

Five hundred lashes each! Aye, that is right! Flog them; flog them; flog them! They deserve it, and a great deal more. They deserve a flogging at every meal-

time. "Lash them daily, lash them duly." What, shall the rascals dare to *mutiny*, and that, too, when the German Legion is so near at hand! Lash them, lash them, lash them! They *deserve* it. O yes; they merit a double-tailed cat. Base dogs! What, mutiny for the sake of *the price of a knapsack!* Lash them! flog them! Base rascals! Mutiny for the price of a goat's skin; and, then, upon the appearance of the *German soldiers*, they take a flogging as quietly as so many trunks of trees!

I do not know what sort of a place ELY is; but I really should like to know how the inhabitants looked one another in the face while this scene was exhibiting in their town. I should like to have been able to see their faces, and to hear their observations to each other at the time.

This occurrence at home will, one would hope, teach *the loyal* a little caution in speaking of the means which Napoleon employs (or rather, which they say he employs), in order to get together and to discipline his conscripts. There is scarcely any one of these loyal persons who has not, at various times, cited the *hand-cuffings*, and other means of *force*, said to be used in drawing out the young men of France; there is scarcely any of the loyal who has not cited these means as a proof, a complete proof, that the people of France *hate Napoleon and his government, assist with reluctance in his wars, and would fain see another revolution.* I hope, I say, that the loyal will, hereafter, be more cautious in drawing such conclusions, now that they see that our "gallant defenders" not only require physical restraint, in certain cases, but even a little blood drawn from their backs, and that, too, with the aid and assistance of *German troops.* Yes; I hope the loyal will be a little more upon their guard in drawing conclusions against Napoleon's popularity. At any rate, every time they do, in future, burst out in execrations against the French for suffering themselves to be "chained together and forced, at the point of the

bayonet, to do military duty," I shall just republish the passage which I have taken for a motto to the present sheet.

I have *heard* of some other pretty little things of the sort; but I rather choose to take my instance (and a very complete one it is) from a public print notoriously under the sway of the Ministry.

The Attorney-General, Sir Vicary Gibbs, at once filed an information against him in the Court of King's Bench.

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, Sunday. July 22, 1809.

But now I have a most serious business to impart to you, and that is that I hear, from Mr. White,¹ that the hell-fire miscreants are about to prosecute me for the article about the *flogging of the local militia*. What I wish you to do is to go to *Mr. White* and ask him,

1. Whether the thing be *certain*?
2. What is to be done in it *by me*, in the first instance?
3. At what time it will be required for me to be in town to give bail?
4. *When* the trial will take place?
5. Of what nature is the bail that I must give? It

is quite useless to *fret* and *stew* about this. I must meet it. They may, probably, confine me for two years; but that does not kill a man, and may, besides, produce even good effects in more ways than one. But the main thing is to be *prepared* for the thing. There is a *possibility* of *acquittal*, though they push their malice to its full extent. Let us, therefore, be prepared; let us take all proper precautions, and then wait the chapter of accidents. Your better way will be to show this part

¹ Mr. White, William Cobbett's solicitor.

of my letter to Mr. White, and, pray, thank him most heartily, in my name, for his kindness in giving me the information. Be very particular in ascertaining the point, whether the prosecution be *actually proceeded on*; for, if not, it is very material for me to know that on *Wednesday*. What I would do, in case of imprisonment, is this. I would make F. Reid come and take charge of my lands, &c. I will, *even now*, cut off all expenses of horses, dogs, &c., so as to make up for the loss; and I would have such a plan of economy as should enable me to have my family near me, if possible, without any additional expense.

Thus, you see, my mind is made up to the thing. I care for nothing that they can do. I would certainly *defend myself*.¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, November 20, 1809.

Be sure to tell Hansard, or any of them from me, that I hold the thing in contempt, that I am no more afraid of the rascals than I could be of so many mice. And, really, if we have an *honest jury*, it will be a famous thing altogether.²

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, December 4, 1809.

I naturally feel a great deal of anxiety; but let me beg of you, in your reports to me, not to endeavour to lessen [it] by any flattering prospect. I wish to have the real state of the case; to see the danger and everything just as they are.³

¹ Add. MSS. 22907, f. 177.

² *Ibid.*, 22907, f. 215.

³ *Ibid.*, 22907, f. 220.

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, December 10, 1809.

I shall go to Mr. Cochrane Johnstone's in Alsop's Buildings, who has there been so good as to order a bed to be prepared for me. But he is here to-day, and, we have been thinking, that, as he will want me here for better than a week to come, I had better not go to town *until he does*. We have *now* settled upon this. I shall, therefore, not leave home for town [until] about *ten days hence*. This will keep me from home on Christmas-day; but that I must submit to. I shall, in my next, give you some directions as to the information that I shall want; for, at all events, I must be *prepared* for a struggle with the damned rascals. . . . All I want is law and justice; and then I triumph. But against a damned predetermination all the truth and all the talent in the world are nothing.

I enclose a letter from *Mr. White*, the contents of which must be attended to. Tell me what ought to be done, and I will write upon it to Mr. Hughan. But there must be no delay.

I enclose a letter for insertion *this week*. You will see that it is a complaint of a Whig against me. I shall let it go without any comment. I think one ought to throw a little into that scale now. The Whigs are not such enemies of *civil liberty* as the other set. In your next give me your *opinion* as to what is the public feeling as to a *change*; and what you hear about the *force of parties*; whether you think that the *ins* will go nearly to be outvoted; and how you think people now feel upon the *Catholic Question*. The state of Ireland is most alarming; but such is the blind stupidity of many in England, that I do really fear that there will be no measure of conciliation until it be too late.

My wife is a great deal better, and has been *walking*

out to-day. I am, *between ourselves*, pretty confident that she is now *ill of the Doctor*; or, at least, very little else.

P.S.—The letter for Mr. White you will have *addressed* properly and sent off without delay—without one day's delay. He is at *Devizes*, but let the address be *exact*. My kindest respects to Ld. Cochrane. Tell him I have been at Portsmouth, and have heard some pretty stories there. All the damned rascals are *back-biting him*. Grey, mother Grey's husband, I mean, told Johnstone, with a very *grave face*, that he heard that Ld. C. was going to publish upon the *C. Martial*, and that he (Grey) as a *friend*, hoped most sincerely that he (Johnstone) would persuade his nephew not to do it; for that, if he did, it would complete the ruin of his character in the navy. J. told him that his nephew was a judge of what his own honour demanded. If the rascal had said as much to me, by heavens I could have given him a slap in the jaws. This damned reptile is one of the protégés of old Jarvis. Ld. C. will tell you all about mother Grey and her littering, and how dearly that littering was paid for by the nation. I do hope that my Ld. Cochrane will not only publish *now*, but that he will continue to appeal to the nation against these villainous abuses.¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, December 31, 1809.

. . . What I want information about relative to the approaching trial is, in the first place, a reference to all the debates which you know anything of against *foreign troops*. If these debates are in those volumes of the *History* which I have already, it will be sufficient for you to refer me to them. You said that Mr. Bosville had a

¹ Add. MSS. 31126, ff. 70, 71.

list of instances of those countries who had fallen under a defence by foreign troops. Can you get it from him? It would do for a mere *enumeration* in a speech. Arguments against a mercenary army apply equally well to *foreign* troops. I shall think of other matter in my next. I will prepare everything *here* against the 23rd; and, as soon as we find that the cause *is* to come on, I will set off for London, and continue there till the cause be over. In the meanwhile I will arrange a defence in *my own way*. If we have an honest, I mean an *impartial*, jury, I am no more afraid of Vicary than I am of a fly.

P.S.—I can arrange nothing about the books till I know more about the trial. All my plans depend upon that.

A happy new year to you! ¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, January 8, 1810.

I enclosed you two letters yesterday which, I hope, you have found an opportunity of sending off. I have read the trial of Tooke all through, and also his other trial, in the case of Fox's action against him. Really, I do not wonder at Sir F.'s attachment to him. Never did man show such courage and so much public virtue! What villains he had to deal with! His life is a history of the damned hypocritical tyrannies of this jubilee reign. I shall profit a good deal from this reading; but mine must be a defence of a different sort: less of law-knowledge, and more of a plain story and an appeal to the *good sense and justice* of my hearers. I do not know that I mentioned the following things to you before.

¹ Add. MSS. 22907, f. 231.

PROSECUTION BY THE GOVERNMENT 39

1. That Number of the *Courier*, which contained the article that I took for a *motto* to the flogging article.
2. Those Numbers of the *Post* and *Courier* which, as you told me, contained an exhortation to prosecute me.

Indeed, we should have files of these papers for the last eight months ; for I must dwell upon the endeavours to excite *prejudice* against me. We must neglect, in short, nothing that can be done with a fair chance of effect.

Now to another matter ; and that of great interest to me also. I am resolutely engaged, after long putting off, in a complete arrangement of my pecuniary affairs. North has got from Morgan 2250 *dollars* for me, but I must *write to him* before he will send the amount. What, however, I am now about to do is to pay off *every soul in Hampshire* up to this time, and with a resolution not to have another bill in any man's books upon any amount. To do this will require 350 pounds, part of which (100) I shall want on Wednesday. The rest as soon as may be. To raise this you and Mr. Bagshaw must find the means ; and, when I go to town, all my accounts shall be put upon such a footing as they have never before been. I now feel the necessity of this more strongly than ever. Indeed, it is become indispensable to the quiet of my mind.

Mrs. Cobbett is a great deal better. Indeed, I do hope that I may pronounce her to be recovered.¹

*J. Swann*² to John Wright

ENSHAM, January 22, 1810.

I have received yours of Saturday inclosing Drafts for £886, 1s. od., which I hope to be able to procure

¹ Add. MSS. 22907, f. 234.

² A merchant who supplied the paper for the *Political Register*.

Bills at two months for (deducting the £215 which you have of mine in hand) and will send by the time you mention if possible; it would not be in my power to get Cash, for on Saturday next my Excise Duty will be £1100, and two other large payments to make this week will put me to my wits' end to raise the wind.

With respect to the Paper, I admit that a great part of what you have recently had was not so thick as it should be and certainly it was contrary to my wish or intention. I will, however, make it out by sending some considerably thicker, a supply of which you shall receive in a fortnight; it would be very easy to avoid mistakes at the printers if we put a distinguishing mark on the wrappers of those Reams intended for the State Trials.

I think the volumes of this work make a good, handsome, thick book, the 4th of mine is full as thick as the first; indeed, they all appear very uniform, but machine-made paper from being so smooth and firmly compressed will not make so bulky an appearance as the old manufacture; but then for all purposes but that of *Book-making* this is an advantage; it would be no difficult matter indeed for us to increase the apparent thickness without adding to the weight, but the paper would not handle so well. In comparing the late volumes of the *Register* with the former ones, did you note that we have exceeded the dimensions latterly; the best way to judge of the difference is to weigh one of each before the edges are cut. You objected to our lessening the size any, when I spoke to you some time ago and inform'd you that we had got it longer than usual.

I cannot help feeling anxious for our Friend on the prosecution of the Atty. Genl., though I have little fears but he will get through it. Most people whom I have heard speak on the subject think that it will be injudicious in Mr. Cobbett to plead his own cause, perhaps he has relinquish'd that intention. Pray give him my best respects; he has my most hearty good wishes, and as far

as lies in my power I will render all the service I can; if it should be his fate to visit Gloucester I shall make a point of going to see him often. I hope Mrs. Cobbett is well, pray inform me when you write.¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, January 30 (*Calves' Head Day*), 1810.

DEAR SIR,—I have written to C. J. [Col. Joliffe] to-day, and am quite surprised that he did not get a letter from me yesterday. Upon reading the paper, one would think that the *malignant ones* could not remain in power many weeks. But one cannot tell much about it, without being a little more near to the spot. How are they to stand an inquiry *at the bar of the House*? A hundred facts must come out that we are not yet aware of. I do not yet know whether they have given a *notice of trial*, formally; but I think they will; and I think so because, as you see, their *malignity* predominates over every other feeling and consideration. They feel the deep wounds I have given them; and they lose sight of everything but *revenge*. I really do not know which I ought to *wish* for: a *trial* or a *nolle prosequi*. My *character* and *fame* call for the former; but then my *health* and my *dearly beloved family* call for the latter, or for anything which shall preclude the chance of a villainous sentence. However, I am, really, rather indifferent about the matter. You and my Ld. N. will, by this time, have seen a good deal about *foreign troops*. William has been *very ill*, but is better to-day. God bless you.²

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, Sunday, March 25, 1810.

DEAR SIR,—Your letter, this day got, contained the best and most agreeable news that I ever received in

¹ Add. MSS. 22907, f. 238.

² *Ibid.*, 22907, f. 244.

my lifetime. We have all, I and my wife, 6 children, and every soul in the house, drunk Mr. Perry's health. I made even little Suzan lisp out the words. Pray give my kindest and most respectful compliments to him; and tell him that I do not only most heartily rejoice at his success (which, by the by, does not surprise me), but beg leave to present him my sincere thanks, in which, I trust, I only participate with the rest of the Gentlemen connected with the press. Nothing but the *necessity* of attending to my concerns here this week would have prevented me from returning to town *immediately*, in order to endeavour to urge in person what I request you to urge for me; namely, a public dinner at the Crown and Anchor of "*the Friends of the Liberty of the Press*," at which we ought to pass a *vote of thanks* to Mr. Perry, and to *proclaim some principles* that may be of the utmost importance in future. Now is the time for us to assert our rights, and the respectability of our profession and character. It is an excellent time for taking revenge upon the tyrants of the Mare's Tail Whig.

Mr. Perry has done more good than any man of his time, and it is for us to profit from it. Pray make known my idea about the dinner; and, as soon as you can, let me know the result. I do not think I can leave home till about *Sunday next*. But let me hear from you again upon the above subject without delay. I shall tell the Post Boy to call for the parcel to-morrow; but the best account of the trial must come from the *Morning Chronicle* itself.¹

The case was heard on June 15, 1810, in the Court of King's Bench before Lord Ellenborough and a special jury. Cobbett defended himself, but not then being

¹ Add. MSS. 22907, f. 253.



Francis Place

FRANCIS PLACE

FRANCIS PLACE

After a drawing by Daniel MacLise, R.A.

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accustomed to public speaking was, according to all accounts, dull and unimpressive and at times absurd. "He made a long defence, a bad defence, and his delivery of it and his demeanour were even worse than his matter," Francis Place noted in his unpublished *Autobiography*.¹ "He was not at all master of himself, and in some parts where he meant to produce great effect he produced laughter. So ludicrous was he in one part that the jury, the judge, and the audience all laughed at him. I was thoroughly ashamed of him, and ashamed of myself for being seen with him. . . . I never saw Cobbett but once after his trial. He called on me in a few days, but I was unable to congratulate him on any part of his conduct. I never spoke to him afterwards." Place was probably all the more annoyed because Cobbett had not followed his advice. "You must put in the letters you have received from Ministers, members of the Commons from the Speaker downwards, &c., about your *Register*, and their wish to have subjects noted," he had told him. "You must then ask the jury whether a person so addressed must be considered as a common sower of sedition, &c. You will be acquitted; nay, if your intention should get about, very likely they will manage to stop proceedings."² As it was, the Lord Chief-Justice summed up dead against him, and the jury without retiring found a verdict of guilty. On July 9 he was sentenced to pay a fine of £1000, to be imprisoned for two years in Newgate, and at the end of that time to enter into a recognisance to keep the peace for seven years, himself in the sum of £3000 and the two sureties in the sum of £1000 each.

¹ Quoted in Wallas, *Life of Francis Place*, p. 117 n.

² De Morgan, *Budget of Paradoxes*, p. 119.

Readers of the issue of the *Times* for July 9, 1812, must have been surprised to find printed therein, over the signature of "A Fellow Sufferer under Unjust Persecution," a letter in which it was stated that Cobbett had made an offer to stop the publication of the *Register* if they would not bring him up for judgment. At the time of the trial nothing had been heard of this proposal, and now when it was revealed on the day of Cobbett's release it was thought to be a *canard* set on foot by some enemy. This impression was strengthened by Cobbett's categorical denial in the next number of the *Register*. Yet the charge, if charge it can be called, was true: Cobbett had made such an offer to the Government through John Reeves of the Alien Office, and he did prepare a Farewell Address to be printed in the *Register* in case his offer was entertained.

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY [undated].

I found Mrs. Cobbett very well, and quite prepared for what had happened. She bears the thing with her usual fortitude; and takes hourly occasion to assure me that she thinks I have done what I ought to do. In this she is excellent. She is the only wife that I ever saw who, in such circumstances, did not express *sorrow*, at least, for what the husband had done; and, in such cases, *sorrow* is only another word for *blame*. Nancy was a good deal affected, but she soon got over it. If I had but about three weeks for preparation I should face it better; but I must settle things here as well as I can. Dr. Mitford will tell you *what has been suggested to me*, and what (if anything) will be done in consequence of it.¹

¹ Smith, *William Cobbett* (ed. 1878), ii. 119. This letter was evidently written shortly after Cobbett reached Botley.

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, Monday, June 25, 1810.

To-morrow I shall send to Mr. Reeves not only my statement of claims to indulgence, but also my *farewell article*, which, when he has shown it, he will hand to you. Proceed at once with the index, &c. &c., for this is to be the last number. I found all at home pretty well. God bless you.¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, Thursday, June 26, 1810.

I now enclose you all that part of my article which will touch upon the dropping of the *Register*. I will, in what I send you to-morrow, speak of the *remaining works*, and will endeavour to do it well. I am obliged to you for your attention to the main affair. I write to R. to-day with a *copy of my article*. I hope it may succeed. . . .²

(Enclosure)

TO THE READERS OF THE "REGISTER"

As I never have *written merely for the sake of gain*, and as I have always held it to be a base act so to write, upon political subjects, or, more correctly speaking, to take a part in the war of politics merely with a view to emoluments, or the means of a livelihood, I cannot, of course, after what has taken place, think it proper, let the pecuniary loss be what it may, to continue any longer this publication; and, therefore, with this present Number, which also concludes the Volume, I put an end to it for ever.

¹ Add. MSS. 22907, f. 279.

² *Ibid.*, 22907, f. 281.

I hardly think that any statement of my reasons for doing this can be necessary to anybody; for, it must be manifest that, if the Work was continued, *it could not be what it has been*, and, of course, it would no longer meet with the approbation of those by whom it has hitherto been approved of. It is manifest that, if continued, it must take quite a new tone and manner, nay, that its matter must also be changed; that, in short, it must be nearly, if not quite, the exact opposite of what it has hitherto been; and, therefore, those who have most highly valued its existence must, of course, be the most desirous that it should now cease to exist.

I know that there will, nevertheless, be enough persons to say *that I have deserted the Cause*; but, I shall ask, *whose cause?* It is, I presume, meant the cause of the *Public*, or the *People*, or the *Country*, give it what name you please. Well, if the putting a stop to this Work be an injury to the country, let it be recollected that it is *the country* itself who have condemned me. Let me here, for the sake of having the transaction upon record, first insert the Charge against me, in the words of the Information.

[Here was inserted a copy of the Information.]

This charge was not DECIDED upon by the Attorney-General or by the Judge (Lord Ellenborough): but by a JURY; that is to say, by *my country*. This Jury was composed of the following persons:—

[Here was given a list of the Jury.]

This Jury, without a minute's hesitation, said GUILTY. Now, therefore, it is exceedingly impudent, or, at least, exceedingly stupid, to accuse me of *deserting* the cause of *the public*, that public itself having, by its representatives, the Jury, condemned me, and, in effect, put an end to my writing; unless, as I before observed,

I could, as a mere trader in paper and print, be content to vend *Registers* of a description totally different from those which I have hitherto published. This decision against me proves that *the* country does not wish for a continuance of my labours, and that it approves of those things which have appeared to me injurious to it : accordingly it has, by the mouths of Mr. Rhodes and the others of the Jury, declared *that I ought to be punished for my writings*. With what face, then, can any man, belonging to that same country, pretend to reproach me with having now *deserted the cause of the country* ? I will not attempt to disguise my extreme disappointment and mortification at this decision against me and my writings ; but I am quite satisfied, that there is no man of common sense who will not clearly perceive, that it not only justifies the step I am now taking, but demands it at my hands.

It is barely possible that some one may accuse me of deserting the cause of *the Press*. This, however, can hardly be. Two or three of the newspapers called upon the Attorney-General to prosecute me ; one expressed its *hope*, about three months ago, that the Attorney-General would not forget me, and that the prosecution *was not dropped* ; and in no one publication in the Kingdom has there appeared, so far as I have seen, a single word in my defence, or even in the way of apology for me. What am I to conclude, then, but that *those who conduct the press disapprove of the liberties I have taken* ; that they look upon my writings as being of *too free a nature* ; or that, at any rate, they, for some reason or other, *do not think my labours of any public utility*. Very well. This may be very true. It may have been just and wise in these conductors of the press to act in this manner. Either, however, the conduct of the press towards me and my writings has been unjust and foolish in the extreme ; or the conductors of the press must rejoice at the cessation of my labours ; and,

therefore, for *them* to reproach me with *desertion* is, I think, scarcely to be expected. On the contrary, I suppose, their readers will, for the next nine days, be amused with the expression of their exultation, in endless variety of shape, from that of a two-column paragraph to that of a one-line pun. Amusing as this will be to others, it will not be less so to me. I, by anticipation, heartily wish them joy of their triumph, and leave them, without the smallest particle of envy, in full possession of all the honours and all the happiness attached to their profession. To that profession I, this day, *cease to belong*; and in laying down this publication, the like of which, as to effect upon the public mind, has never been seen in England, I have only two declarations to make: the first is, that from my pen *solely* have proceeded *every article* published in this work under the head of "Summary of Politics" (whether signed with my name or not), and in the form of "Letters," signed with my name; and that no other person has ever, in any degree, assisted me in any of those articles or letters. The second is that, as I never, since my name was first announced to the public as a writer, have published anything under feigned name, or, indeed, no name at all, so I never will do it. And to these declarations I will add that I NEVER WILL AGAIN, UPON ANY ACCOUNT, INDITE, PUBLISH, WRITE, OR CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS, ANY NEWSPAPER, OR OTHER PUBLICATION OF THAT NATURE, SO LONG AS I LIVE.

These last two declarations I think it necessary to make, and that, too, in the most clear and positive terms and most solemn manner; because I foresee that, from various motives, attempts will be made to cause it to be believed that I am the author of what, in fact, I know nothing about. I lay down at the height, at the very pinnacle, of its circulation a work which has long found its way into every part of the civilised world; and it is very natural for me to be anxious to guard against the mortification of becoming the reputed author of

productions of which, possibly, any man ought to be ashamed.

My calumniators will not revel unrestrained; but their revelling will be of short duration. There will no longer be any rational object for their labours. By the act of mine this day, I take the ground from under them. Any of the notorious falsehoods that have been uttered against me, I have never noticed from any motive other than that of preventing the Cause, in which I stood forward, from suffering through me; and, therefore, I shall neither, now nor hereafter, take the smallest notice of such falsehoods. I myself know them to be falsehoods. That knowledge is easily imparted to all those on whose esteem I set any value; and, as to others, if there be any such, who feel a certain nameless delight in believing that a man who has more talent than themselves has less virtue, why let them enjoy that delight: it may make them a little better pleased with themselves, and it cannot possibly do me any harm.

WM. COBBETT.¹

BOTLEY, June 26, 1810.

Wright subsequently stated that on Wednesday, June 27, he called on Reeves and asked him to say whether or no Cobbett was to be called up for judgment, and added that unless he received a positive assurance that the proceedings would be dropped, the *Register* would not be discontinued. A satisfactory answer not being forthcoming, Wright, according to his own account, wrote to tell Cobbett what he had done, "and implored him not to sacrifice character and fame and fortune without the probability of securing freedom in return." That in the main Wright's statement was true is proved by Cobbett's reply:—

¹ Report of the action Wright *v.* Clement for libel, 1819, pp. xiv.-xviii.

*John Reeves to William Cobbett**Wednesday, June 27, 1810.*

DEAR SIR,—I have your letter with the inclosure ; and I have left them both in the hands of Mr. Yorke. He will see what can be done on the subject with Mr. Perceval.

If the Government should feel themselves so circumstanced that they cannot hold their hand, but must direct the Attorney-General to proceed according to his notice, on Thursday, you will still have the benefit of your measure in the eyes of the Court. No doubt, they will take such a sacrifice into consideration ; and it is in their power also to postpone their judgment to Michaelmas Term. There are, therefore, two chances ; one with the Government, the other with the Court ; and both grounded on the same principle. I hope one may take place, if the other does not.

You shall hear from me again to-morrow. I go on Friday or Saturday to Oxford, and shall be there all the following week. So I shall be out of the way of negotiation soon.—Believe me, dear Sir, yours ever most truly,

JOHN REEVES.¹*William Cobbett to John Wright**BOTLEY, June 28, 1810.**I shall leave home next Wednesday morning.*

I got your coach letter *last night*. I have now your letter of yesterday, and also that of Mr. Reeves, which I *enclose for your perusal*. No ; I will not sacrifice *fortune* without securing freedom in return. This I am resolved on. It would be both *baseness* and *folly*. Your *threat* to R. was good, and spoke my sentiment exactly.

¹ Report of the action *Wright v. Clement* for libel, 1819, p. x.

I have not time for telling you my plan now; but, let it suffice, that really, from the bottom of my soul, I would *rather* be called up than put down the *Register*.

Now, therefore, unless, *before* you get this, you know for a *certainty* that I am not to be called up, *suppress the article sent you*, stuff in something just to fill up *one sheet*, and put the little *notice* I now send you at the head of that sheet. Leave me to manage the rest. In conversation with *any* one, say you *do not know* what I intend to do; that it will depend upon circumstances, and the like. Never fear. Do thus, and all will be well. God bless you.

P.S.—When you have done all the rest about suppressing the Farewell Article, and inserting the Notice, now sent; or, indeed, *as soon as you receive it, send* the enclosed letter to Mr. Reeves. Do not go by any means. If you have, *before you receive this*, got certain intelligence that I am *not* to be brought up; then, of course, you will *keep* the letter to Mr. Reeves.¹

William Cobbett to John Wright

BOTLEY, Friday, June 29, 1810.

If you have received my letter of yesterday, you will, of course, have altered the publication; you will have cancelled my *abandoning article*, and have put in the Notice. It is from fear that my letter may have miscarried, that I now send off Mr. Finnerty express to acquaint you with the purport of it. . . . Lest any accident should have taken you out of the way, I give Mr. Finnerty a note to Mr. Hansard and one to Mr. Bagshaw.²

The matter was allowed to drop for some time after Cobbett's denial, but it was revived in the issue of the

¹ Add. MSS. 22907, f. 283.

² *Ibid.*, 22907, f. 285.

Times for November 14, 1816, whereupon Cobbett again dealt with the matter in an article which he printed in the *Register*.

Walter says that I made a proposition to the government to this effect ; that if the proceedings were dropped ; that is to say, that if I were *not brought up for judgment*, but suffered to remain unmolested, *I would never publish another " Register" or any other thing*. Now, George, suppose this had been *true*, had I not a *right* to do this ? Was there anything dishonest or base in this ? I was under no obligation to continue to write. The country had done nothing for me. I was in no way bound to sacrifice myself and my family if I could avoid it. I was in the state of a soldier surrounded by an irresistible enemy ; and has a soldier so situated ever been ashamed to ask his life and to accept it upon condition of *not serving again during the war ?*

I might let the thing rest here. This answer would be complete were I to allow the charge of Walter to be *true* ; but the charge is basely false. *No proposition of any sort was ever made by me, or by my authority, to the government*. The grounds of the charge were as follows : a few days before I was brought up for judgment, I went home to pass the remaining short space of personal freedom with my family. I had just begun farming, and also planting trees, with the hope of seeing them grow up as my children grew. I had a daughter fifteen years of age, whose birthday was just then approaching, and destined to be one of the happiest and one of the most unhappy of my life, on that day my dreadful sentence was passed. One son eleven years old, another nine years old, another six years old, another daughter five years old, another three years old, and another child nearly at hand. You and Perceval might have laughed at all this. It was your turn to laugh then ; but the public will easily believe that, under the apprehensions

of an absence of years, and the great chance of loss of health, if not of life, in a prison, produced nothing like laughter at Botley! It was at this crisis, no matter by what feelings actuated, I wrote to my Attorney, Mr. White, in Essex Street, to make the proposition stated above. But fits of fear and despair have never been of long duration in my family. The letter was hardly got to the post office at Southampton before the courage of my wife and eldest daughter returned. Indignation and resentment took [the] place of grief and alarm; and they cheerfully consented to my stopping the Letter. Mr. Peter Finnerty was at my house at the time; a post-chaise was got; and he came off to London during the night, *and prevented Mr. White from acting on the Letter. . . .*

If I am asked how it happened that Walter came in possession of my having written to Mr. White the letter which was recalled by Mr. Finnerty, I answer that I cannot tell; but that I suspect that it was communicated to him (with a suppression of the recalling) by a wretch whom he *knows* to be without an equal in the annals of infamy, not excepting the renowned JONATHAN WILD, and which wretch I will, when I have time, drag forth, and hold him up to the horror of mankind.

The vigorous onslaught on Wright was doubtless the result of Cobbett's belief—a belief probably well founded—that his erstwhile business associate had betrayed him. There were further developments of this matter, which will presently be dealt with.

It has been stated again and again that Cobbett's offer to the Government damned him for all time. That his political opponents should have endeavoured sedulously to convey the impression that he was henceforth a discredited man is easy enough to understand, but why should any one else have formulated this theory?

"I cannot agree with those who said that such an offer would have been an unparalleled act of baseness," Lord Dalling has written. "In giving up his journal, Cobbett was not necessarily giving up his opinion. Every one who wages war unsuccessfully retains the right of capitulation. A writer is no more obliged to rot uselessly in a jail for the sake of his cause than a general is obliged to fight a battle without a chance of victory for the sake of his country. A man, even if a hero, need not be a martyr."¹ This is the common-sense view, and the one that has now come to be generally accepted. What disgrace attaches to Cobbett in the matter was not in making the offer, but in denying that it was made. What, then, was the explanation of the denial? Can he within two years have forgotten? This, unlikely as it seems, was probably the case. He could not have forgotten that he intended to make the offer; indeed, in his explanation in the *Register* (January 4, 1817) he states that he wrote the letter containing it; but he may, by one of those curious lapses to which all are subject in time of stress, have afterwards entirely forgotten that the letter was not stopped by Finnerty, and that Reeves wrote him a letter which, be it remembered, he sent off at once to Wright. To believe that Cobbett lied deliberately is very difficult, firstly, because he was not in the habit of lying, and, secondly, because he who fought against tremendous odds all his life, and never turned his back on a foe or fled from the most doughty opponent, was not likely to lose his courage from fear lest he should add to his burdens.

¹ *Historical Characters*, ii. 143.

CHAPTER XIV

IN NEWGATE (1810-1812)

Cobbett faces imprisonment boldly—But in his writings dwells upon the drawbacks incidental to it—The conditions of imprisonment in 1810—Comfortable lodgings obtainable—Visitors allowed to call—His gratitude for kindness shown to him—Permitted to pursue his work for the *Register*—"Paper against Gold"—The imprisonment ruined him—Carries on the education of his children—His letters to his family at Botley and other correspondence—He finds that he has been defrauded by Wright and other business associates—His release in July 1812—Entertained at dinner by Sir Francis Burdett—An awkward *convetemps*—Reception at Botley.

COBETT faced imprisonment with the same courage that at other times he brought to bear against minor troubles, but he did not disguise from himself the fact that his withdrawal from the outer world would, to say the least, be vastly inconvenient.

The blow was, to be sure, a terrible one; and, oh God! how it was felt by those poor children! It was in the month of July when the horrible sentence was passed upon me. My wife, having left her children in the care of her good and affectionate sister, was in London, waiting to know the doom of her husband. When the news arrived at Botley, the three boys, one eleven, another nine, and the other seven years old, were hoeing cabbages in that garden which had been the source of so much delight. When the account of the savage sentence was brought to them, the youngest child could not, for some time, be made to understand

what a jail was ; and when he did, he, all in a tremor, exclaimed, " Now, I'm sure, William, that Papa is not in a place *like that!*" The other, in order to disguise the tears and smother his sobs, fell to work with the hoe, and chopped about like a blind person. This account, when it reached me, affected me more, filled me with deeper resentment than any other circumstance. . . .

Every one regarded it as a sentence of *death*. I lived in the country at the time, seventy miles from London ; I had a farm on my hands ; I had a family of small children, amongst whom I had constantly lived ; I had a most anxious and devoted wife, who was, too, in that state which rendered the separation more painful tenfold. I was put into a place amongst *felons*, from which I had to rescue myself at the price of *twelve guineas a week* for the whole of the two years. The *king*, poor man ! was, at the close of my imprisonment, not in a *condition* to receive the *thousand pounds* ; but his son, the present king, punctually received it "*in his name and behalf*" ; and he keeps it still.

The sentence, though it proved not to be one of *death*, was, in effect, one of *ruin*, as far as then-possessed property went. But this really appeared as nothing, compared with the circumstance that I must now have *a child born in a felons' jail*, or be absent from the scene at the time of birth. My wife, who had come to see me for the last time previous to her lying-in, perceiving my deep dejection at the approach of her departure for Botley, resolved not to go ; and actually went and took a lodging as near to Newgate as she could find one, in order that the communication between us might be as speedy as possible ; and in order that I might see the doctor, and receive assurances from him relative to her state. The nearest lodging that she could find was in Skinner Street, at the corner of a street leading to Smithfield. So that there she was, amidst the incessant rattle

of coaches and butchers' carts, and the noise of cattle, dogs, and bawling men ; instead of being in a quiet and commodious country-house, with neighbours and servants and everything necessary about her. Yet, so great is the power of the mind in such cases, she, though the circumstances proved uncommonly perilous, and were attended with the loss of the child, bore her sufferings with the greatest composure, because at any minute she could send a message to, and hear from, me. If she had gone to Botley, leaving me in that state of anxiety in which she saw me, I am satisfied that she would have died ; and that event taking place at such a distance from me, how was I to contemplate her corpse, surrounded by her distracted children, and to have escaped death, or madness, myself ? If such was not the effect of this merciless act of the Government towards me, that amiable body may be well assured that I have *taken and recorded the will for the deed*, and that as such it will live in my memory as long as that memory shall last.¹

Fortunately, incarceration in Newgate in those days did not mean the same thing as it did later, and Henry Hunt went so far as to say that Cobbett's sentence was "not much more than living two years in London in lodgings."² Indeed, with money the condition of the prisoner could be much alleviated, and, indeed, the actual imprisonment merely reduced to confinement within the limits of the prison. Thus, for twelve guineas a week, Cobbett secured a private suite of rooms, where he could put up his wife and some of his children for weeks and months together. Visitors, too, could be received at all hours from twelve in the morning until ten at night, and many persons came to see Cobbett,

¹ *Advice to Young Men* (ed. 1837), pars. 168, 169, 301.

² *Memoirs*, iii. 20.

including Lord Cochrane, Burdett, Major Cartwright, and Baron Maseres, who "always came in his *wig and gown*, in order, as he said, to show his abhorrence of the sentence."¹ He never forgot those who showed him kindness at this time, and to a stranger, Timothy Brown, of Peckham Lodge, Surrey, who came to see him in Newgate, he expressed his gratitude later in the dedication of one of his books written during his second visit to the United States.

You were one of those who *sought acquaintance with me* when I was shut up in a felons' jail *for two years* for having expressed my indignation at seeing Englishmen flogged, in the heart of England, under a guard of German bayonets and sabres, and when I had on my head *a thousand pounds' fine and seven years' recognizances*. You, at the end of two years, took me from the prison, in your carriage, back to your house. You and our kind friend, Walker, are *even yet* held in bonds for my good behaviour, the seven years not being expired. All these things are written in the very core of my heart; and when I act as if I had forgotten any one of them, may no name on earth be so much detested and despised as that of your faithful friend and most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Further, no objection was raised to Cobbett pursuing his literary labours, and from Newgate he sent forth his usual contribution to each number of the *Political Register*. While he was in prison he began his series of vigorous attacks on paper-money—"this vile paper-money and funding system, this system of Dutch descent, begotten by Bishop Burnet, and born in hell."² His first

¹ *Rural Rides* (ed. Pitt Cobbett), i. 351.

² *Ibid.* i. 261.

article on the subject appeared in the *Political Register* for September 1810, and again and again he tilted against the system, to which he ascribed most of the evils of the time. He contended that the Bank of England would never again pay in gold, or in paper, at par, until the interest on the Funds was reduced. Subsequently he collected his articles in a volume, entitled *Paper against Gold, and Glory against Prosperity* (retail price 20s. in paper money).

Though Cobbett would do his literary work as well inside Newgate as elsewhere, the imprisonment spelt ruin for him, since it was impossible for him to control the many details of a large farm through the medium of letters written at a distance of about seventy miles from the spot. He did his best, however; he engaged a bailiff; he drew up time-tables of work for the sixteen men in his employ; and he entreated his brother-in-law to return to England, and take charge of the Botley establishment. Cleverly enough, too, he contrived to make his absence from the farm a medium for the education of his children, who came turn and turn about to stay with him.

Book-learning was forced upon us. I had a farm in hand. It was necessary that I should be constantly informed of what was doing. I gave *all the orders*, whether as to purchases, sales, ploughing, sowing, breeding; in short, with regard to everything, and the things were endless in number and variety, and always full of interest. My eldest son and daughter could now write well and fast. One or the other of them was always at Botley; and I had with me (having hired the best part of the keeper's house) one or two, besides either this brother or sister; the mother coming up to town about

once in two or three months, leaving the house and children in the care of her sister. We had a HAMPER, with a lock and two keys, which came up once a week, or oftener, bringing me fruit and all sorts of country fare. . . . This HAMPER, which was always, at both ends of the line, looked for with the most lively feelings, became our *school*. It brought me a *journal of labours, proceedings, and occurrences*, written on paper of shape and size uniform, and so contrived, as to margins, as to admit of binding. The journal used, when my son was the writer, to be interspersed with drawings of our dogs, colts or anything that he wanted me to have a correct idea of. The hamper brought me plants, bulbs, and the like, that I might *see* the size of them; and always every one sent his or her *most beautiful flowers*; the earliest violets, and primroses, and cowslips, and blue-bells; the earliest twigs of trees; and, in short, everything that they thought calculated to delight me. The moment the hamper arrived, I, casting aside everything else, set to work to answer *every question*, to give new directions, and to add anything likely to give pleasure at Botley. *Every* hamper brought one "*letter*," as they called it, if not more, from every child; and to *every* letter I wrote *an answer*, seal-up and sent to the party, being sure that that was the way to produce other and better letters; for, though they could not read what I wrote, and though their own consisted at first of mere *scratches*, and afterwards, for awhile, of a few words written down for them to imitate, I always thanked them for their "*pretty letter*"; and never expressed any wish to see them *write better*; but took care to write in a very neat and plain hand *myself*, and to do up my letter in a very neat manner.

The paying of the workpeople, the keeping of the accounts, the referring to books, the writing and reading of letters; this everlasting mixture of amusement with book-learning, made me, almost to my own surprise,

find, at the end of two years, that I had a parcel of scholars growing up about me ; and, long before the end of the time, I had *dictated many Registers* to my two eldest children. Then there was *copying* out of books, which taught *spelling correctly*. The calculations about the farming affairs forced arithmetic upon us ; the *use*, the *necessity*, of the thing led to the study. By-and-by, we had to look into the *laws* to know what to do about the *highways*, about the *game*, about the *poor*, and all rural and *parochial* affairs. I was, indeed, by the fangs of government, defeated in my fondly-cherished project of making my sons farmers on their own land, and keeping them from all temptation to seek vicious and enervating enjoyments ; but those fangs, merciless as they had been, had not been able to prevent me from laying in for their lives a store of useful information, habits of industry, care, sobriety, and a taste for innocent, healthful, and manly pleasures.¹

William Cobbett to his Daughter Ann

KING'S BENCH, July 6, 1810.

MY DEAR LITTLE GIRL,—I have no time to write at any length to-day. I have got your pretty letter of yesterday, and William's, and a great comfort they are to me. I am very comfortable here ; but here I shall not remain after Monday, or, at least, I suppose so, which I do not care for. I have received and am receiving all sorts of civilities and acts of kindness, and want *nothing* but my *family* ! I hope that dear Mama will *not* come up till *after Tuesday*. It will be very unfortunate and distressing if she does. All will go on well if dear Mama will but continue happy and well. I send her a thousand kisses and some to all of you. God bless you. I will write an answer to all letters

¹ *Advice to Young Men* (ed. 1837), pars. 302-303, 305.

to-morrow. God bless you. I do not "worry" myself about you; but I cannot yet cease to think of you more than half my time. I slept last night like a top. God bless you.¹

William Cobbett to his Daughter Ann

STATE PRISON, NEWGATE,
Tuesday, July 10, 1810.

MY DEAREST LITTLE GIRL,—Last night poor Mama came here, accompanied by Miss Crosby, Mrs. Stewart, and Mr. Cartwright. She could not be kept away, though I had sent Mr. Wright and Mr. John Clewer to her for the express purpose of keeping her away, for a day or two, until I should be somewhat settled, and until her mind should be duly prepared for the terrors of this scene. But nothing could prevail. She had got the notion that I was ill, or that I was, at least, very low-spirited; and to come she was resolved. Fortunately, before she came, Mr. Wood, the Sheriff, had arrived, and he behaved to her with great attention and kindness. When she found, which was really the case, that I was not only well but perfectly comfortable, and that I had eaten a very hearty dinner, she seemed quite happy, and so she will be, for she cares for nothing in this world but my happiness and that of her family. Oh! my dear child, how much do we all owe to her! How good she has been to us all! I verily believe from my soul, that she would think nothing of her life, if the loss of it could secure our happiness. Yet how brave she is in the hour of her trouble! How many are the ways to which she resorts for the purpose of cheering me up! There never was her equal in this world; and I am sure that all my dear children will endeavour to reward her for her goodness. I shall not see her again until to-morrow, being engaged to-day in putting my

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

room to right, and in making all necessary preparations for future labour.

I know of no one who appears to be so much affected at what has happened as Mr. Wright is. He is terribly cut. I have enough to do to keep him from sinking. But this all arises from his regard for me. Those who know your Papa best love him most; and thus has it always been, and always will be, in spite of the base calumnies of his enemies.

In the course of a week I expect to be what I shall call *settled*, and then my dear William must come to help me to labour. I will not write or read by candle-light, but will make him do that for me. What a blessing it is to have such healthy and clever and sober and sensible and industrious and dutiful and affectionate children! The miserable, malignant, poisonous wretches who hate me have no such children. Their race is rotten in carcase and limbs as well as in heart. They are eaten up with infection from the top of their senseless heads to the bottom of their lazy feet.

My pretty Nancy, you must now take the Judge's sentence, as you find it in the newspapers, and read it to the boys, and point out *what it is*. Tell them what to think of it; and tell them how good the final consequences of all this will be to us. Put good spirit into them. Make them see my enemies in their true colours, and God knows you need do no more. Explain to them *who* and *what* these enemies are, and *why* they are my enemies.¹

William Cobbett to Thomas Creevey

NEWGATE, September 24, 1810.

. . . You will easily guess that I have little time to spare; but the fact is, that I seldom do anything after two o'clock, when I *dine*. The best way, however, is

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

to favour me with your company at *dinner at two*, and then the day may be *of your appointing*, I being always at home, you know, and every day being a day of equal favour. . . . I give beef-stakes and porter. I may vary my food to mutton chops, but never vary the drink. I think it is a duty to God and man to put the Nabobs upon the coals without delay. They have long been cooking and devouring the wretched people both of England and India.¹

Ann Cobbett to Lieutenant Reid

BOTLEY HOUSE, January 12, 1811.

. . . I have been home about three weeks, after spending three months in Newgate, which, after all, let me tell you, is no such very bad place. Papa has got three as nice rooms in the Keeper's house as you would ever wish to live in, but he does not have them for nothing, though.

Mama and William spent their Christmas and New Year with Papa, Aunty and the rest of us spent it here, but we are to spend the Wedding Day all together in town. My Uncle Tom will also be with us.

Papa has been engaged (all the time he could spare) ever since he has been there in looking over and settling his accounts with Messrs. Wright, Budd, Bagshaw, &c.² And he has not got half through them yet. And, by the by (indeed he says so himself), we may all be very glad that he was shut up in a prison on that very account. For he never would have had courage enough to look over accounts that he had not set eyes on for 6 or 7 years, and he now finds that he is worth *thousands* that he never knew anything about, and if he had not searched into everything, never would have known anything

¹ *The Creevey Papers*, i. 134.

² Cobbett's printers.

about. Now, you know, that is all a *secret*, but the former gentleman is rather in a mess: how he will get out of it I do not know; but Papa means to wash his hands of him entirely.¹

The two *Registers* a week go on swingingly.

Daddle is grown a very fine girl, and is a very pretty one too. Susan is the most admired of the two, and, upon my honour, if I do not get out of the way before they are grown up (which I am pretty certain not to do in this dull hole) I am sure I never shall.²

William Cobbett to his Daughter Ann

NEWGATE, August 7, 1811.

MY DEAREST NANCY,—I have had the opening of the business with the *arbitrator*, and the Rogue, when he came to the pinch, after 7 weeks to *explain*, was obliged to explain that his charges were *all false*. He asked for *another day or two* to prepare some further charges; but the Arbitrator seemed very much averse to allowing him any time at all. Wright had the impertinence to deny having had the money from Mr. Mellard; but begged for time to inquire. I made a discovery of *another sum*, which he denied flatly; but which I shall, I am pretty sure, prove upon him.

He had his two new attorneys with him; but his Old Bailey pleader is not to come till the last. The rogue's attorneys seemed ashamed of him, and well they might. The matter will soon be settled.³

¹ It is unnecessary to enter into the various ways in which Cobbett had been defrauded by Wright, and one instance must suffice. "Howell was not to have a shilling until 800 copies of the 'Trials' were sold, and only 700 copies were sold in all. Yet Wright has paid him over £1400" (The Cobbett MSS.).

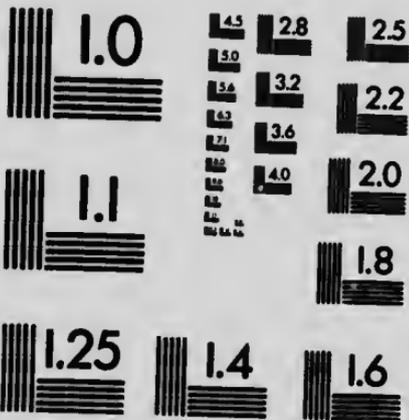
² The Cobbett MSS.

³ *Ibid.*



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William Cobbett to his Wife

NEWGATE, August 19, 1811.

MY DEAREST LOVE,—I thank you for your letter. . . .
 And now, my dearest Nancy, I do hope that you will make yourself easy for a little while longer. I must repeat to you my advice about wearing less flannel. Pray do leave off some of it. It rubs you, and it scrubs you, all to pieces. I am sure it does you harm; and I hope you will tell William to tell me that you have left off the *Breeches*, at any rate. I do not like to see you with *waistcoats* and *breastplates*; but the *Breeches* is the worst of all. Now, pray mind what I say about these nasty *Breeches*.¹

William Cobbett to his Wife

NEWGATE, October 25, 1811.

MY DEAREST LOVE,—The letter which I have just received from Botley has sunk my heart within me. All is unhappiness! All is wrong! All is misery! And for what? Because a man comes and talks to you about the reports of a villain that no man of reputation believes; a villain who, in a few days, will be condemned to pay me thousands of pounds when he hoped to pay me nothing; a villain who has committed several distinct acts of *felony*, either of which would transport him; a villain who has but ten days before he will stand exposed stripped of all his coverings; and will be in jail for debt, if for nothing else, in a few days after.

As to Lord Cochrane, he believes nothing W[right] says *against me*. He only hopes that, at last, I shall find reason to think less bad of him. He has explained himself fully to me upon the subject. His words were: "W. has served me very much in my *election*; he has

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

always been very obliging to me; and I must confess that I do not like to turn my back upon him in the hour of his distress; but I have never suspected, Cobbett, anything unjust in you; and if, at last, it shall appear that W. has been guilty of an intention to wrong you, I will give him up at once. All I beg is, that you will not ask me to decide against him too hastily. In the meanwhile, be assured of my unshaken confidence in your honour and integrity, and rely upon my unalterable friendship, whenever it can be of use to you." This is what he has said to me, and with this I am, for the present, perfectly satisfied. Besides, there are no stories of Wright that have produced any impression on my friends. Mr. Bosville, Sir Francis, Mr. Brown, who are all acquainted with the whole thing, see it in its proper light; and ten days puts an end to all the trouble attending it.

Therefore, by all the love you have for me, I beg you to think nothing at all about the matter, or, at least, not to regard it as a thing to give either you or me any uneasiness. A man that is *guilty*, and who suspects that his guilt will be made known to any one, is always sure to run to that person *to get his ear beforehand*, especially if that person be one whom he can impose upon. W. has taken care not to go to *Mr. Phillips or Mr. Brown*. He knows that they *understand books of accounts*. He knows that he cannot *deceive* them. He knows that they understand what it is to commit acts of embezzlement. He has not been near Mr. Phillips for these six months past. He is in a most deplorable state; and would be amply punished, even if I were to let him alone.

Why, therefore, should you *fret* and *worry* yourself upon this subject? Why should you thus *make* unhappiness out of nothing at all? You do not seem to consider, that to see you do this gives me so much pain that it is a source of bitter unhappiness to me; and that, after receiving such a letter as that of to-day, I

am fit for nothing for many hours. I beg of you not to set your mind to work thus to make misery for yourself and for the husband you so tenderly love, and who so tenderly loves you. Wright's conduct is villainous; but it does not tarnish or touch my character. I am not the first man who has trusted a villain, nor shall I be the last.¹

William Cobbett to his Wife

NEWGATE, November 1, 1811.

MY DEAREST LOVE,—The letter that I have just got from Botley has sunk my heart within me. I declare that I feel as faint and as sick as if I were really going to faint. My soul was never so sunk as it is at this moment. Do not thus harass my mind, I beseech you; or, at least, do not do it at this time. I have no human being to speak comfort to me. I have been anxiously labouring to provide for our comfort and happiness; and do not tear my heart in pieces; and that, too, for nothing at all! Now, will you spare me? Will you have compassion on me? I could cry like a child at the receipt of these letters. They kill me by inches.

I wish to God that you never had renewed your acquaintance with Baker.² That man is both *fool* and *liar*. What does he mean by *tithes of Fairthorn*? And what does the blackguard mean by *offering to rent my tithes*? He is a scoundrel, and so I will tell him. How can I owe any tithes for Fairthorn? The thing is as foolish as it is false. . . . For God's sake, drive Baker from you, if you do not mean to be driven mad.

For God Almighty's sake have a little *patience* with all these things. I am here getting on very well. Mr. Margrave and Wright's accountant have *agreed* on a

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

² The Rector of Botley.

debt due to me of £7000. . . . My *Register* goes on excellently, and, please God, I will have no claims and no debts of any sort. I hope that this will quiet you. For my sake, for your children's sake, for my life's sake, be tranquil, and do not make such a *serious matter* of every trifling thing.¹

William Cobbett to his Son William

NEWGATE, November 12, 1811.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—I have got your letter of yesterday morning about your Mama's coming to London and then about her not coming so soon and then about her coming sooner and then about her not coming at all perhaps. What do you mean by sending me a letter like this? Do you mean to let me see how senseless a letter you can write? Or was the object of the letter to put my mind into a state of such complete confusion that I should not know what to do, what to say, what to expect, or what to guess at? If this was your object, you succeeded wonderfully well. But mind what I say; *never write me such another letter as long as you live.* Your letters of late have been so full of blunders, so full of self-contradictions, so full of bad spelling, so full of blurs, and they have been so unsatisfactory in their contents, that really, at last, I am got to hate to see them come. They are not a tenth part so good as the letters that you wrote a year ago. I shall be ashamed to bind them up, and I now never show them to anybody. I hope you will change your conduct in this respect immediately; but if you do not; if you do not write me *full and clean and correct* letters, and *answer* all that I ask of you, you had better write me none at all, and let me save the pence that your letters now cost me.²

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

² *Ibid.*

William Cobbett to his Wife

NEWGATE, December 11, 1811.

MY DEAREST NANCY,—Dear William gave me an agreeable surprise this morning. How he is grown! How handsome he is! What a blessing is health! And what a blessing is such a kind and dutiful son!¹

William Cobbett to his Wife

NEWGATE, February 7, 1812.

As I said before, I see no objection to Mr. Elston's boarding at our house, while I am from home, except that of the *time of breakfast*, which, in a few weeks, he must have at another hour. But as to *wine*, never let it be seen; nor is it necessary, except now and then, to have any *ale*. I hope you do not make *suppers*. That must not be the custom for anybody. You may have your tea a little *later*, and those who have a mind to have meat may. But I do hope that *suppers* will never become the fashion of my house, summer or winter, for anybody. It is not so much the *expense* as the *habit* that I dislike.²

William Cobbett to his Wife

NEWGATE, February 10, 1812.

MY DEAR NANCY,—The Boys stick to their school most surprisingly. William is out in the morning at half-past seven and sometimes sooner; but I always find that Johnny is not so well when he goes out before breakfast, and therefore I often keep him at home. William translates delightfully; he is got into a regular book, of which he translates 8 or 9 pages a day, besides

¹ The Cobbett MSS.² *Ibid.*

his lessons at Arithmetic. His drawings would surprise anybody that did not know him. And John makes *excellent* progress in both French and Arithmetic. You would be surprised to see how John gets on. Their *whole time is taken up*, and Mr. Newman is so kind as to let them out in the morning as soon as they have a mind to go. But the *dancing!* They have had 4 lessons, and they are as eager to get at it as ever they were to get to play. They did not go out all day yesterday, and I was alone a good part of the day. They put on their pumps and danced the best part of the day; and laughed till their jaws ached, and so did I. John has got all the steps and capers, and he skips and twists himself about like a grasshopper. I would have the girls of the Village get themselves in order for dancing, for these fellows will soon be ready to hand them about. They will be quite fit for them by the next Harvest home. In short, they are learning more at this place in a month than they would learn at a humdrum county school, or even at Dr. Kilby's, in a year. They love the school. They are well treated, and they feel great encouragement in getting on so fast.¹

Cobbett was released early in July 1812, and the day he left Newgate he was entertained at dinner by six hundred of his admirers. Sir Francis Burdett was in the chair, and an amusing story is told that when the soup-plates were removed, each guest found the reprint of a lampoon which, some years earlier, Cobbett had written on Burdett, and which some waiter had been bribed to distribute. Fortunately, the incident merely caused laughter.² The details of Cobbett's return to Botley are told by his daughter.

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

² J. G. T. Rogers, *Historical Gleanings*, p. 174.

Ann Cobbett to Licutenant Reid

BOTLEY HOUSE, July 13, 1812.

We got to Bagshot about ten o'clock on Friday evening, where we slept, and the next morning left at about six o'clock, and breakfasted at Alton, the bells rang a merry peal as we entered the Town and continued to ring about an hour. We proceeded from Alton to Alresford, and from thence to Winchester, where we arrived about one. About five minutes after we got there Mama came in a post-chaise with all the children. After staying there a little while Mama came home with her three daughters, leaving the three boys to come home with Papa after the dinner. Parson Baker refused the keys of the Church so that the people could not ring the bells which they wished very much to do. However, they sufficiently testified their respect to Papa, and their pleasure at his return, without the assistance of the Church. For a party of young men, I should think about a hundred, or a hundred and fifty, accompanied by a band of music which they had hired themselves for the purpose, met him about a mile out of Botley, on the new Winchester road, where they insisted on taking the horses out of the carriage, which they did, and, with colours flying and the band of music marching before them, they brought him into Botley. At the entrance of the village they gave three cheers and, after taking him round the village, they stopped opposite Mr. Smith's, where he addressed them in a very appropriate speech, thanking them for the joy they testified at his return, and, after explaining why he was prosecuted, and what he had done to deserve such a punishment, he assured them that in the same cause he would suffer the same again, and ten times more. This met with unbounded cheers, but by this all the men, women, and children in the parish were assembled. They then, with the



SIR FRANCIS BURDETT
From an engraving by William Sharp, after a painting by J. Northcote, R.A.

music playing, brought him down to the house, and upon his getting out of the carriage gave him three hearty cheers. Mama had ordered four hogsheads of ale, one at each of the public houses, in the morning; but she had no idea of what was to be done. Papa arrived here about eight o'clock, and after we had drunk tea about nine, the band came and stationed themselves on the lawn, where they continued playing for some time, after which we called them into the Hall, and I gave the young men and young women of the village a dance. Mr. Walker and your humble Servant opening the Ball. They danced till Sunday morning, and then dispersed.¹

“Poor Anne,” so runs a note to this letter made in later life by Anne’s sister Susan, “does not tell to Uncle Frederick that she had to resist the idea of some lady friends that it would be more proper for her to go home alone the day before than to go home with Papa and a carriage full of gentlemen, but she thought that having had so much of the imprisonment, she had a right to share the glory of the going home, and being received at different places by ringing of bells and at Alton by a public breakfast. At Alton, however, she received a great set-down, for instead of being allowed to enjoy this beautiful repast, all over fruit and flowers and food and speeches, Mr. Baverstock came to rescue her from the company of so many gentlemen, to seat her down in his own house to breakfast alone with Mrs. Baverstock. Ann never all her life forgot her mortification.”

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

CHAPTER XV

THE PERIOD OF SPADE-WORK (1812-1817)

Cobbett released from Newgate—His difficult position—Continues to fight the cause of reform—Hampden Clubs—The cheap *Register*—The Government unsuccessfully attempts to write down Cobbett—Ministerial change of tactics—Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act—Cobbett thereupon goes again to the United States—"Taking leave of his Countrymen"—Secret departure to escape creditors—His debts—His disastrous financial position brought about by persecution.

WHEN Cobbett came out of Newgate he was a marked man. He was still bound over to keep the peace, and the Government of the day, regarding him as a perpetual danger so long as he was at liberty, was watching for some false step on his part that would serve as a plausible pretext for again proceeding against him. Cobbett, however, was on his guard, and was very careful not to bring himself within the clutches of the law. The necessity to weigh his every word did not, however, deter him from continuing his agitation for parliamentary reform, or from fighting, hand in hand with Lord Cochrane, as persistently as ever, the cause of the poor. The years from 1812 to 1816 produced little in the way of direct result, but it was the period of active spade-work for the reformers, when they were establishing their agitation on a sound basis, the period during which the poor were being educated to the point at which they could realise their political degradation. It was not until 1816 that the

incessant labour of Cobbett, Cochrane, Hunt, Cartwright, and the other leaders began to bear fruit, for then were formed, under their auspices, the Hampden Clubs, with the avowed purpose to prosecute the cause of parliamentary reform and to unite the reformers in one system of action. Hampden Clubs were established in every town in the Kingdom and in many villages, and all were affiliated with the central organisation at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, presided over by Sir Francis Burdett.

The time was now ripe for Cobbett to inaugurate a cheap *Register*. He had long desired that the periodical should circulate very widely among the poorer classes, but the heavy Stamp Duty made it unprofitable to sell it at less than one shilling. Even then men clubbed together to buy a copy, but Cobbett declared that he would not be satisfied until it was to be found in every home. The happy idea at last occurred to him to print copies of the current issue without the news, by which means he evaded the tax and could sell the paper for twopence. The first issue of this "twopenny trash" appeared on November 2, 1816, and the sales went up by leaps and bounds until they amounted to between forty and fifty thousand copies, an enormous circulation for those days and one hitherto undreamt of.

The Government was alarmed at the great success of the *Register* and at the ever-increasing strength of the reform party, and it was especially afraid of the growing popularity of Cobbett, which was, indeed, a factor to be reckoned with. "At this time (1815-16) the writings of William Cobbett suddenly became of great authority," Samuel Bamford noted in his *Autobiography*. "They were read on nearly every cottage hearth in the manufacturing districts of South Lancashire, in those of

Leicester, Derby, and Nottingham; also in many of the Scotch manufacturing towns. Their influence was speedily visible. He directed his readers to the true cause of their sufferings—misgovernment; and to its proper correction—parliamentary reform. Riots soon became scarce. . . . Let us not withhold the homage, which, with all the faults of William Cobbett, is still due to his great name. Instead of riots and destruction of property, Hampden Clubs were now established in many of our large towns and the villages and districts around them. Cobbett's books were printed in a cheap form: the labourers read them, and thenceforth became deliberate and systematic in their proceedings." ¹

Notwithstanding Bamford's statement, it cannot be denied that, taken as a whole, the country was in a disturbed state. During 1816 secret meetings were held in different parts of England, and there were many bread riots; the price of wheat, which in January 1816 was 52s. 6d. a quartern, within twelve months had risen to 103s. 1d. The obvious course was to introduce measures whereby the condition of the working-classes would be improved; but instead of adopting this policy, the Government endeavoured by coercion to silence the complaints of the distressed. At first, however, it contented itself with attempts to fight Cobbett with his own weapons.

. . . In the meanwhile the *Cheap Register* went on, and the Government went on with its efforts to check it. At first the opinion appears to have been that I was to be beaten *by the press*, supported by the Government. A set attack upon me in the *Times* newspaper

¹ *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, ii. 12.

was distributed at the price of a *half-penny*, though the paper must have cost a *penny*. Great numbers of this paper, reprinted by Clowes, printer of the *Tax-papers*, and, of course, in the employ of the Government, were carried, in the night, to the office of the *Courier*, where a great number of Placarders were assembled, who, at two o'clock in the morning, were sent out to stick them up, for the doing of which they were to be paid *fifteen guineas*. Two of these men, having been taken up by the Watch, were taken to the Captain of the Watch, and were by him released upon their informing him that they were doing "*a Government job*." All this I had it in my power to prove before a court of justice, and I trust that the opportunity of doing this will yet be afforded me.

About this time, which was early in December [1816], Mr. Becket, the Under Secretary of State to Lord Sidmouth, said, in answer to a proposition for silencing me in some *very atrocious* manner, "No : he must be *written down*." Accordingly, up sprang all the little pamphlets at Norwich, at Romsey, at Oxford, and at many other places, while in London there were several, one of which could not cost less than *two thousand guineas* in advertising in large and expensive *placards*, which were pulled down, or effaced, the hour they were put up, and which were replaced the next hour, as one wave succeeds another in the sea. At last, after all the other efforts of this kind, came "*Anti-Cobbett*," published at the same identical office which George Rose originally set up with the public money, and one-half of which, as intended partner of John Heriot, was offered to me on my return to England from America, and which I refused, as stated in the "*New Year's Gift to George Rose*." This "*Anti-Cobbett*" was written "*by a Society of Gentlemen*," amongst whom, I was told, were Canning, William Gifford, and Southey. The expenses attending it could not fall short of *twenty thousand pounds* before I left

England. Not content with advertisements in three hundred newspapers; not content with endless reams of placards; the managers of this concern actually sent out *two hundred thousand* circular letters, addressed to persons by name, urging them to circulate this work amongst all their tradesmen, farmers, workpeople, and to give it their strong recommendation; and this they were told was *absolutely necessary* to prevent a *bloody revolution!*

These efforts of the suborned press were, however, all in vain. They did produce effect; but it was this: amongst candid people, even though opposed to me as to political views, they produced shame at the unwarrantable means that my enemies resorted to, and they awakened in the minds of many such persons the first dawnings of a suspicion that I was, after all, *in the right*.¹

The fight continued for a time, and Cobbett at his own game beat the Government handsomely. There was, indeed, no man living who could write him down, and when Lord Sidmouth found that this was the case, he changed his tactics, and hit below the belt. In the warfare of politics some excuse may be found for such a blow when it is necessary in the interests of the country; when, however, it is dealt without this justification, it recoils with terrible severity upon him who deals it. Reform must have come sooner or later; wise measures (from the point of view of the upper classes) might have averted it indefinitely; the day Lord Sidmouth suspended the Habeas Corpus Act in order to enable him to silence Cobbett was the day on which the reformers virtually triumphed. They did not indeed at once enjoy the fruits of victory, but the battle was won.

¹ *A History of the Last Hundred Days of English Freedom.*

Why this publication has the title of *Two-penny Trash*, why it is to be published monthly are as follows :—

From 1801 to 1817 I published the *Weekly Political Register*, at the price, first of *tenpence*, then of a *shilling*. But just before the commencement of the last-mentioned year, I, in order to give my writings a wide spread, laid aside the *stamp*, and sold the *Register* for *two-pence*; and instead of selling about two or three thousand a week, the sale rose to *sixty or seventy thousand*. The effect was prodigious; the people were everywhere upon the stir in the cause of *parliamentary reform*; petitions came to the Parliament early in 1817 from *a million and a half of men*.

The *answers* to these petitions were, laws to enable Ministers to take, at their pleasure, any man that *they* might *suspect* of treasonable *intentions*; to put him into any *jail* and any *dungeon* that they might choose; to keep him there for any time that they might choose; to deprive him of the use of pen, ink, and paper; to keep him from the sight of parents, wife, children, and friends; and all this on their own mere will, and at their sole pleasure, without regular commitment, without confronting him with his accuser, without letting him know who was his accuser, and without stating even to himself *what was his offence!*¹

In politics as in diplomacy a blunder is worse than a crime, and the Government blundered badly when on March 3, 1817, it suspended the Habeas Corpus Act until the following July. It was obsessed with fear of Cobbett and his *Register*, but as a matter of fact both the man and the periodical contended strenuously against those who urged open sedition, and the policy of the Hampden Clubs was to preach pacific agitation as opposed

¹ *Two-penny Trash*, July 1830.

to riots and wanton destruction of property. Cobbett, not without reason, declared that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was directed against him.

You will observe that *this* [the *Two-penny Pamphlet*] it was which, at bottom, was the *main thing*! Lord Sidmouth, in his speech, clearly pointed it out, though he did not actually *name* it. He said that *cheap* publications had found their way into the very cottages and hovels. And he said very truly; but what reason was this for suspending the Act of Habeas Corpus? He said that the pamphlets had been submitted to the Law Officers, and that they were found to be written with *so much dexterity* that he was *sorry to say* that hitherto the *Law-Officers could find in them nothing to prosecute!* And what *then?* Why, he proposed, in that very speech, the *Suspension of the Act of Habeas Corpus!*¹

Cobbett thoroughly appreciated the compliment paid him, but at the same time he realised that, by virtue of it, he was in great danger of being again incarcerated in Newgate, and this time without a trial, merely on suspicion. "I saw Cobbett twice," Lord Holland wrote in 1817. "His upright figure indicated the drill of a soldier, his ruddy complexion and homely accent the subsequent character of a farmer as well as his original condition. Neither countenance nor conversation (at least at this time) were at all of a piece with the sprightliness of his style, the shrewdness of his remarks, or the closeness of his reasoning in written compositions. His objects were the co-operation of the Whigs in public

¹ *Political Register*, March 22, 1817. For Lord Sidmouth's speech see Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, February 24, 1817 (vol. xxxv. p. 554).

meetings for a change of Ministry, and their protection and countenance if he wrote in their favour. In such objects I told him Whigs could not but concur, but I avoided all appearance of any closer connection. He was alarmed at the threatened suspension of the Habeas Corpus. He very unaffectedly acknowledged his distrust of his own nerves, and a dread of behaving meanly and basely if arrested; he therefore hinted at an intention, which he afterwards executed, of retiring to America. He earnestly asseverated that he never had, and never would, belong to any political Opposition whatever." ¹ Cobbett, then, was not prepared to face another term of imprisonment, and he decided to fly the country. On March 21, 1817, at No. 8 Catherine Street, Strand, the house at which the *Register* was then published, he dictated his "Taking Leave of his Countrymen," wherein he gave the causes that drove him from England.

LONDON, March 21, 1817.

MY BELOVED COUNTRYMEN,—Soon after this reaches your eyes, those of the writer will, possibly, have taken the last glimpse of the land that gave him birth, the land in which his parents lie buried, the land of which he has always been so proud, the land in which he leaves a people whom he shall to his last breath love and esteem beyond all the rest of mankind.

Every one, if he can do it without wrong to another, has a right to pursue the path to his own happiness; as my happiness, however, has long been inseparable from the hope of assisting in restoring the rights and liberties of my country, nothing could have induced me to quit that country, while there remained the smallest chance of my being able, by remaining, to continue to

¹ *Further Memoirs of the Whig Party*, pp. 253-4.

aid her cause. No such chance is now left. The laws, which have just been passed, especially if we take into view the real objects of those laws, forbid us to entertain the idea, that it would be possible to write on political subjects according to the dictates of truth and reason, without drawing down upon our heads certain and swift destruction. It was well observed by Mr. Brougham, in a late Debate, that every writer who opposes the present measures "must now feel that he sits down to write with a halter about his neck;" an observation the justice of which must be obvious to all the world.

Leaving, therefore, all considerations of personal interest, personal feeling, and personal safety; leaving even the peace of mind of a numerous and most affectionate family wholly out of view, I have reasoned thus with myself—What is now left to be done? We have urged our claims with so much truth; we have established them so clearly on the ground of both law and reason, that there is no answer to us to be found other than that of a Suspension of our Personal Safety. If I still write in support of those claims, I must be blind not to see that a dungeon is my doom. If I write at all, and do not write in support of those claims, I not only degrade myself, but I do a great injury to the rights of the nation by appearing to abandon them. If I remain here I must, therefore, *cease to write*, either from compulsion or from a sense of duty to my countrymen; therefore, it is *impossible* to do any good to the cause of my country by remaining in it; but if I remove to a country where I can write with perfect freedom, it is not only *possible*, but very *probable*, that I shall, sooner or later, be able to render that cause important and lasting services. . . .

The *sacrifice* I make would, under any other circumstances, be justly considered as enormous. The ceasing

of a profit of *more than ten thousand pounds a year* from my works; the loss of property of various sorts, left scattered about in all manner of ways; the leaving of numerous friends and of local objects created under my own hands, and affording me so many pleasant sensations. But all this weighs nothing when compared with the horrid idea of being *silenced*; of sneaking to my farm and *quietly* leaving Corruption to trample out the vitals of my country, while her infamous press was revelling in unexposed falsehoods and calumnies levelled against myself and my friends; compared to this, no loss of fortune, no toils necessary to support a numerous family, no poverty, no bodily suffering: there is nothing of this kind that must not appear trifling, and even wholly unworthy of notice, when compared with the loss of that satisfaction which I shall now derive from still retaining the power of combating corruption, and from the hope that I shall never cease to entertain of returning to my beloved country in the day of the restoration of her freedom. . . .

. . . I will never become a *Subject* or a *Citizen* in any other state, and will always be a *foreigner* in every country but England. Any foible that may belong to your character I shall always willingly allow to belong to my own. And the celebrity which my writings have obtained, and which they will preserve, long and long after Lords Liverpool and Sidmouth and Castlereagh are rotten and forgotten, I owe less to my own talents than to that discernment and that noble spirit in you, which have at once instructed my mind and warmed my heart: and my beloved countrymen, be you well assured, that the last beatings of that heart will be love for the people, for the happiness and the renown of England; and hatred of their corrupt, hypocritical, dastardly and merciless foes.

WM. COBBETT.

This "farewell" paper did not appear until after Cobbett's departure, which was kept a profound secret; until he had gone no one, save the members of his family, knew of his intention, not even Henry Hunt, whom he was under an engagement to support at a political meeting at Devizes. On March 22 he left London, accompanied by his two sons, William and John, and proceeded to Liverpool, whence, on the 28th, he sailed in the American vessel *Importer*.

The reason for the secrecy which Cobbett maintained with reference to his leaving England was rendered necessary by his financial position, for he was heavily in debt; and he feared that, if the news of his projected departure became known, his creditors would not have allowed him to go. Gossip asserted this, and in so far uttered truth; but it lied when it went further and stated that Cobbett went off with well-lined pockets and had no intention ever to meet his obligations.

The sons and daughters of Corruption harp a good deal upon the circumstance of my having taken away a few hundred pounds in ready money, when I said, in my notification from Liverpool, that I carried away nothing but my wife and my children [he wrote soon after he arrived in the United States]. What! did they imagine that I counted it *anything* to carry with me money enough to pay my passage and to furnish me with food and lodging for a few months? Did they imagine it to be *anything* to have the means of putting myself on shore, when I left behind me a farm covered with stock of all sorts; a house full of furniture; an estate which, with its improvements, had cost me forty thousand pounds and which was mortgaged for less than seventeen thousand; copyrights which were worth an immense

sum, and a current income from my writings of more than ten thousand pounds; under these circumstances was it too *much* to have a few hundred pounds in my own pocket, and to leave sufficient at the command of my wife for the purpose of bringing her and her children over to me? Did the sons and the daughters of Corruption grudge us this? Did they really expect that, in abandoning a fortune larger than has ever been possessed by Lord Sidmouth or any of his family; did they imagine that in making this enormous sacrifice, or rather, in being driven from these, the fair fruits of my industry and talents, I was going, not only to lead the life of a mendicant, but, which was of much greater importance, to deprive myself of the means of having a place where I might have room and warmth to carry on the struggle against the Borough-mongers? If they did imagine this, they were as ignorant as they are well known to be greedy and merciless.¹

A few months later Cobbett again referred to the matter in the *Register*.

I am here in order to help to make England a place fit for us all to live in; and, as to *money*, I have left behind me *three times as much as will pay all I have ever owed*. If the Borough-mongers, or their agents, proceed to *confiscate*, under whatever pretence, my engagements to individuals must, of course, go unfulfilled. It is a calamity which I cannot avoid; but I will endeavour to make good all those engagements, in which I have no fear of success.²

Cobbett's enemies in England were careful to make

¹ *Political Register*. April 5, 1817. As a matter of fact, the money Cobbett took with him was £500 he borrowed from Thomas Hulme, whom he repaid out of the profits of his books.

² *Ibid.*, July 12, 1817.

capital out of his indebtedness, and immediately after his departure published a list of his creditors :—

Mr. Tunno, mortgagee of the Botley estates	£16,000
Sir Francis Burdett	4,000
Mr. R——	3,000
Messrs. Tipper & Fry, stationers	3,500
Timothy Brown, paper merchant	2,000
Mr. L——r	1,300
Executors of Mr. B——e	900
Mr. P——s	450
Mr. White, solicitor	500
Messrs. Molyneux, printers	500
Joseph Swann, paper-maker	100
Sundry small accounts	400
	<hr/>
	£32,650 ¹

At first sight the sum seems very considerable, but it must be remembered that the debt of £16,000 to Tunno was fully secured and therefore does not rank, while the £3000 alleged to be owing to Burdett was a disputed item: Cobbett saying that, though asked for as a loan, Burdett gave it to him as a gift towards the expenses of his political campaign; Burdett, after Cobbett's departure, declaring that it was a loan. The matter was in itself of no great importance, though the controversy between the principals and their respective adherents made it appear at the time as of some moment.² If these two sums be deducted, the liability in 1817 stood at something under £13,000, this amount made up mainly of the bills of printers, paper-makers, and of his solicitor:

¹ *Quarterly Review*, vol. xxi. p. 136. The list has, however, been revised by the present writer.

² The matter is referred to in the *Political Register* for April 10, 1830, and also in October 1833. Letters that passed between Cobbett and Burdett were published as a pamphlet in 1819.

there is nothing in the schedule to suggest that the money was squandered in extravagant living. Cobbett, indeed, was unfortunate in his farming, but he was a flourishing man until he was sent to Newgate in 1810.

My wife arrived [at Newgate] in about half an hour after ; but before that time I had *bought* myself out of the company of felons. By great favour, I finally obtained leave to occupy two rooms in the jailer's house, paying for them *twelve guineas a week*, and it required *eight* more to fee the various persons, and to get leave to walk an hour on the leads of the prison in the morning : so that here were £2080 during the two years, besides the £1000 to the good old King. These direct losses were, however, trifling compared with the indirect. I was engaged in the publishing of two works, called the *State Trials* and the *Parliamentary History*. There had been a great outlay for these works ; several thousands of pounds were due to the paper-maker and the printer. These works were now, as far as regarded me, ruined. I had bought land in 1806 and 1807. This land, about 500 acres, was *in hand*. I had made plantations, and had made preparations for others. I had then a trifling mortgage to pay off, but within the reach of my earnings ; and, in short, if it had not been for this savage sentence, I should, by the year 1814, have had my estate clear. . . . The truth is, had it not been for *one thing*, I should not have been able to bear up under this accumulation of evil ; and that *one thing* was, that I had a friend to whom, on the third day after I entered the accursed jail, I wrote requesting him, in case of my death, to send for and take care of my wife and children, and from whom I, *as quickly as possible*, received an answer containing, amongst others, these words : " Give thyself no trouble about Nancy and the children. If thee should die, which I hope thee will not for years to come, thy dear family

shall find a home under my roof, and shall be to me and all of us as our own kindred." At sixty-four years of age I feel the tears of gratitude on my cheeks as I transcribe his words. . . . Such was the friendship of James Paul. No wonder that I named a son after him.¹

When Cobbett came out of Newgate he was a ruined man. Indeed, as he left the dinner given at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in honour of his release he was arrested for debt, and would have gone back to prison had not Hunt and Dolby, the new publishers of the *Register*, stood as his bail. With the perseverance that was so marked a feature of his character, Cobbett devoted himself to the restoration of his fortunes, struggling bravely against great odds.

My imprisonment, which ended in July 1812, gave me, as to money matters, a blow not easily recovered. The *peace* came, too, in about twenty months afterwards, which was greatly injurious to me *as a farmer*, and, at the same time, as a *writer*; for, in its fit of drunken ioy, the nation in general laughed at me; and, which was the heaviest blow of all, I, under such heavy bonds, *did not dare to be the proprietor of the Register*; it was transferred to another, in order to screen me; that other would, of course, have the greater share of the profits; so that by the beginning of the year 1816, my pecuniary affairs had become so desperate as to make me determined to sell my land and everything else, and on beginning the world afresh.²

Just after he had sadly come to this conclusion, he happily bethought himself of issuing a cheap edition of the *Register*.

¹ *Political Register*, April 10, 1830.

² *Ibid.*, April 10, 1830.

This gave a totally new turn to my pecuniary affairs. The sale of the *Register* was prodigious; the sale was forty to fifty thousand a week, besides the *Paper against Gold*, which was selling in weekly numbers at the rate of from twenty to thirty thousand a week.¹ In short, clear of all expenses, and making due allowance for bad debts, there was a *profit* of £200 a week, and more than that; so that if I had been let alone, if *no law* had been passed to stop and to ruin me, my estates would have been clear at the end of two years, and I should have been as rich as I ever wanted to be.²

Everything looked bright enough now, and Cobbett saw himself on the road to amass a comfortable competence, when the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act drove him from the country and ruined his financial prospects.

¹ One hundred and fifty thousand copies of the *Paper Against Gold* were sold by July 12, 1817.

² *Political Register*, April 10, 1830.

CHAPTER XVI

SECOND VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES (1817-1819)

Arrival at New York—Settles at North Hempstead—Letters to his family in England—Favourable impressions of the country—Lives the life of a private citizen—Visited by Henry Bradshaw Fearon—"Fearon's Falsehood"—Farming difficulties—Continues the *Register*—Cobbett's efforts to pay his debts—His many literary schemes—"A Year's Residence in the United States"—His return—A letter from Joseph Buonaparte.

Cobbett landed at New York on May 5, 1817, and the next day went to Long Island, where he saw Hyde Park Farm, near North Hempstead, which attracted him so much that he decided to settle there. "The house is large, and very sound, and commodious," so ran his description. "The avenue o. trees before it the most beautiful that I ever saw. The orchard, the fine shade and fine grass all about the house, the abundant garden, the beautiful turnip-field; the whole a subject worthy of admiration; and not a single drawback."¹

William Cobbett to Mrs. Cobbett, at Botley

LONG ISLAND, May 19, 1817.

MY DEAREST LOVE,—All well here. We have taken a place for the summer. Pleasant, and *everything agreeable*. Pray, my dearest Nancy, do not venture *too soon*. Mr. H. has told us that you must be *confined* first. The Autumn is boisterous. Do not set off later than *first of September*.

¹ *Political Register*, March 6, 1819.



WILLIAM COBBETT

*From an engraving by Edward Smith
Engraved after a drawing taken on board the Imposter, on her departure from
Liverpool to America, March 27-1817*



Bring your *Plate*, linen, and everything that you can, besides the books, and two sets of *Vols. of Registers*, as I told Nancy. The Boys are very well indeed. John as fat as a Sussex Pig. We are at a beautiful place, called *Hyde Park*. A fine park, orchards, garden, and fields and woods, *for a year*. A fine house too, but out of repair. Mr. Morgan¹ is coming here to-morrow. Everybody is kind and obliging. But we shall keep retired till you all come. If you could send J (?) and Dogs and Pigs and Turkeys and guns from *London* and his *children*, and also books and other heavy things, Mrs. J. would serve you on board. Tell J (?) to be sure to *board himself*, and to take plenty of *flour*, onions, cheese, butter, and potatoes; but especially *flour*. Tell him I will engage to keep him and his family for two years, and to give them in money two hundred dollars during the time in quarterly payments. I will find them in house, lodging, board and everything but *clothes to wear*, they working for me during the time. So that they may, if they will, have 30 guineas in their pockets at the end of the two years. I will do the same for Doland and his family. A million of kisses to dear Nancy and Ellen and Susan and James and Little Dick, and ten millions to your dear self, from your affectionate husband,

WM. COBBETT.²

William Cobbett to Anne Cobbett, at Botley

HYDE PARK, NORTH HEMPSTEAD, LONG ISLAND,
June 19, 1818.

MY DEAREST LITTLE NANCY,—A long letter of mine, dated yesterday, to Mr. Richd. Hinxman, will tell you all my designs as to remaining in and going from this country. I hope that, at last, this explicit declaration,

¹ Morgan, of Philadelphia, sometime Cobbett's partner in the book-selling business in Pall Mall.

² The Cobbett MSS.

and the reasons on which it is founded, will prove satisfactory to all parties. If it do not, I can say and do nothing to produce satisfaction; and, as I am bent on vigorous exertion, I will never again waste my time in making the attempt. My heart, which was, for many weeks, sunk within me, has recovered its usual tone, which has been, in part, produced by the cheering prospect, described in my letter to Mr. Richard Hinxman, and which prospect has burst upon me like the sun through the gloomy clouds, which enveloped the horizon on the evening of the memorable thunderstorm at this place. Tranquillity of mind is absolutely necessary to any exertion of mind; and that tranquillity I now enjoy, unalloyed by one single bitter reflection as to any one act of my whole life.

I have, in my letter to Mr. Richard Hinxman, spoken of your brothers William and James. I will exact nothing from either contrary to their own wishes. I have always been the kindest of fathers, and the kindest of fathers I will remain. A "second *part*," to follow the "*part*" given to Johnny, shall reach Mr. J. Hinxman in September. William hesitates to accept of it *with any conditions*; and, though I think him in error, I will not insist on any. I will retain the control over the contents of the book, and will bestow the proceeds on him, and these proceeds, be they what they may, Mr. Hinxman shall retain for his use. The *Third Part* shall be James's; and though he be young, I am resolved they shall be at his disposal in the same way, if he choose it. I scorn to suspect my children of anything unworthy of them or of their father; and I will, therefore, place no restraint upon their minds. If I had the dollars to give them, they should have the dollars. I have them not; and, therefore, I give them the produce of my talents in kind. As for yourself and your sisters and dear, dear Richard, you must have a little *patience*. Before I go beyond the £200 a year, I must owe no

farthing in the world. The "Boys," as dear Richard calls them, are boiling to be *in the great and busy world*. They are eminently endowed for great things; and though I would have preferred for them the plough and the pruning-hook, it is their happiness, and not my taste, that is to be considered. Therefore, the moment the means are in my possession, or are in the hands of Mr. Hinxman, from whatever source, William and James shall have free liberty to return to England; that is to say, if they wish to do it before my departure. For, though *uncertainty*, as to this matter, is not calculated to give uneasiness to me, whose mind is soothed and cheered with constant hope of accomplishing great things; and who am naturally pleased with the attention which I attract; the case is different with them, who may think that the time is flying away from them, and in whose breasts lives and burns a desire to figure upon that spot, where they are destined to remain. To them this state of seclusion and of suspense; this state of apparent penury that hides itself from the world may become not only irksome, but painful; and, if *compelled* to remain in it, may engender, in time, feelings with regard to me to suspect the existence of which would be a source of misery unbearable. Therefore, again I say, the moment I acquire the means, that moment I am ready to gratify any wish that they may have on this subject. As to our living *here* in a way suitable to my state in life, the thing is out of the question. I will make no alteration in any respect. Simply to preserve *life and health* is all that reason, or common sense, will permit me to go to the expense of.

We are all well in health. The weather is yet very mild. Jemmy seems *languid* sometimes; but he is very well. "*No flies yet.*" The house is as clean as a pin. We have got into Johnny's bedroom, with each his table covered with papers. It looks like a great public-office! Mrs. *Churcher* came up with Hammerton on the

Saturday after you went away, and seemed to be very glad to be on the former footing. She will have little to do, and that will best suit. My *book* kept me at New York till the Friday. When I came up, I found that *James had made and baked bread!* The Blacks, thinking they had us at their feet, could not come till the next week *some time!* What a pretty mess we should have been in! In order to prevent completely all *losing* of things and *not knowing what* is become of them, we have made a distribution of all wearing apparel. The two Boys have theirs under their own keys, and are to make regular *washing bills*. All the bedding, all the sheets, table linen, towels, mugs, spoons, and all *my* wearing apparel, down to my very oldest shoes and hats, I have made an *Inventory of*, put them into one wing of the great Wardrobe, and *put the key into the keeping of Mrs. Churcher*; making a firm bargain with her, that, if anything be *lost*, she is to make it good out of her wages. So that, if she has the *honour*, she has the *risk*. Thus I get rid of all petty cares on this score. I find none of my *white waistcoats*, and William says you packed them up. In all probability I shall not want them; for, I dare say, I shall not put a coat on till October, when they would be too cold. But they ought to be taken care of.

In order to save labour of writing, and to economize my time, now so very precious for your sakes, I must refer you to my letter to Mr. Richard Hinxman, which Mr. John Hinxman is to read and to show to you.

God bless you all, and believe me, my dearest child, always your affectionate father,

WM. COBBETT.¹

Cobbett's impressions of the United States during his first visit have been recorded in an earlier chapter: now he regarded the country with a very favourable eye, and

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

found much to please and little to annoy him. From the time of his landing he began to sing its praises.

We lodge and board in this Inn, have each a bedroom and good bed, have a room to sit in to ourselves, we eat by ourselves; and it really *is eating*. We have smoked fish, chops, and eggs, for breakfast, with bread (the very finest I ever saw), crackers, sweet cakes; and when I say that we *have* such and such things, I do not mean that we have them for *show*, or just enough to *smell to*; but in *loads*. Not *an egg*, but a dish full of eggs. Not a snip of meat or of fish; but a plate full. Lump sugar for our tea or coffee; not broke into little bits the size of a hazel-nut, but in good thumping pieces. For dinner we have the finest of fish, bass, mackerel, lobsters; of meat, lamb, veal, ham, &c. Asparagus in plenty, apple pies (though in the middle of May). The supper is like the breakfast, with preserved peaches and other things. And for all this, with an excellent cider to drink, the kindest and most obliging treatment on the part of the Landlord and Landlady and their sons and daughters, we pay no more than *twenty-two shillings and sixpence a week each*. In England the same food and drink and lodging at an Inn would cost us nearly the same sum *every day*. But there are two things which no money can purchase anywhere. The first is, no grumbling on the part of the landlady, except on account of our eating and drinking *too little*; and the other is, that Mr. Wiggins has no fastening but *a bit of a chip run in over the latch of the door* to a house which is full of valuable things of all sorts, and about which we leave all our things much more carelessly than we should do in our own house in any part of England. Here, then, are we able to live at an Inn, one of the most respectable in the whole country, at the rate of 59 pounds a year, while the pay of the common farming man is not much short of that sum.¹

¹ *Political Register*, July 17, 1817.

He could not speak too highly of the inhabitants. "I wish every English youth could see those of the United States: always *civil*, never servile"—"One of the most amiable features in the character of American society is this: that men never boast of their riches, and never disguise their poverty"—"This country of the best and boldest of seamen, and of the most moral and happy people in the world, is also the home of the tallest and ablest-bodied men in the world"¹—these were among the tributes he paid the United States, and he had a special compliment for its women-folk:—

You often hear girls, while scrubbing or washing, singing till they are out of breath; but never while they are at what they call *working* at the needle. The American wives are most exemplary in this respect. They have none of that false pride which prevents thousands in England from doing that which interest, reason, and even their own inclination would prompt them to do. They work, not from necessity; not from compulsion of any sort; for their husbands are the most indulgent in the whole world. In the towns they go to the market, and cheerfully carry home the result; in the country, they not only do the work in the house, but extend their labours to the garden, plant and weed and hoe, and gather and preserve the fruits and the herbs; and this, too, in a climate far from being so favourable to labour as that of England; and they are amply repaid for these by those gratifications which their excellent economy enables their husbands to bestow upon them, and which it is their universal habit to do with a liberal hand.²

That Cobbett should have been so good-humoured in his exile is the more surprising because he was not in

¹ *Advice to Young Men* (ed. 1837), pars. 37, 57, 275.

² *Ibid.*, par. 160.

any way lionised, nor did any one there regard him as a martyr to the cause of liberty. Even his abuse of monarchical institutions did not create any sensation in a country that, having gone its own way, had long since used up its vocabulary in such abuse. He came as a martyr, but seems to have been content to live as a private citizen, and indeed he made no attempt to take part in the politics of the Republic. Only once he expressed surprise at not being recognised as a personage of importance, and that was when at a friend's house he met an Englishman, and from Botley, too. "His name is Vere," he wrote naïvely. "I knew him the moment I saw him; and I wondered *why* it was that he knew so little of me."¹ If the Englishman from Botley only moved Cobbett to a mild sensation of astonishment, there was another Englishman that aroused his ire, and drew terrible punishment upon himself. This was Henry Bradshaw Fearon, who paid an unsolicited visit to Hyde Park Farm, and who, in a book he wrote and published soon after, made some comments which Cobbett thought objectionable. Cobbett saw these "false and calumnious statements," as he dubbed them, for the first time when some extracts from Fearon's *Sketches of America* were published in the *New York National Advocate*, to the editor of which periodical, Cobbett, as a counterblast, sent on January 9, 1819, a letter headed "Fearon's Falsehood," wherein he gave an extract from his journal made on August 22, 1817:—

A Mr. Fearon came this morning and had breakfast with us. Told us an odd story about having slept in a black woman's hut last night for sixpence—though

¹ *A Year's Residence in the United States*, p. 33.

excellent taverns are at every two miles along the road. Told us a still odder story about his being an envoy from a *host of families* in London to look out for a place of settlement in America—but he took special care *not to name* any one of those families, though we asked him to do so. We took him, at first, for a sort of *spy*. William thinks he is a shopkeeper's clerk; I think he has been a tailor. I observed that he carried his elbows close to his sides, and his arms, below the elbow, in a horizontal position. It came out that he had been with Buchanan, Castlereagh's consul, at New York; but it is too ridiculous—such a thing as this cannot be a spy—he can get access nowhere but to taverns and boarding-houses.¹

Hyde Park Farm occupied much of Cobbett's time, but his venture was not successful, for he found himself confronted with difficulties, not the more easily borne because they were not peculiar to himself, but fell to the lot of all who had agricultural land in the United States at that time. "Mr. Cobbett," Fearon wrote in 1817, "complained of the difficulty of obtaining labourers at a price by which the agriculturist could realise a profit: so much so, that he conceives that a farmer in America cannot support himself unless he has sons, who, with himself, will labour with their own hands. He had contracted with a man to do his mowing: the terms were an equal division of the produce. . . . The contractor complained that even half the hay, for merely his labour, was a hard bargain."² The end of Cobbett's troubles as a farmer came in 1820, when his homestead was burnt down. Then he settled in Pennsylvania and devoted himself exclusively to authorship.

The *Register* had perforce been suspended for three

¹ Printed also in the *Political Register*, April 6, 1819.

² *Sketches of America*, pp. 69-70.

months when Cobbett left England, but after his arrival in the United States he sent home the articles week by week, and the periodical resumed the even tenor of its way, with the issue of July 12, containing a letter from Cobbett dated May 8. Cobbett, writing from Long Island, had despatched a circular letter to his creditors informing them of his intention to endeavour to meet, sooner or later, his liabilities, and with this object in view he laboured strenuously.

William Cobbett to Mr. Tipper

NORTH HEMPSTEAD, LONG ISLAND,
November 20, 1817.

MY DEAR SIR,—First let me acknowledge my deep sense of the kind manner in which you have uniformly spoken to Mrs. Cobbett with regard to me; and then without further waste of that time, of which I have so little to spare, let me come to business, and let me lay down, before I proceed to our own particular affair, some principles which I hold to be just to my conduct towards my creditors in general.

If there be any man who can pretend, for one moment, that mine is an *ordinary case*, and that not having enough to pay everybody, I ought to be regarded as an *insolvent debtor*, in the usual acceptation of the words; and if he does this after being apprized that the whole force of an infamous tyranny was embodied into the shape of despotic ordinances, intended for the sole purpose of taking from me the real and certain and increasing means of paying off every debt and mortgage in two years: if there be any man whose prosperity and whose means of profitably employing his own industry have remained wholly untouched and unaffected by these despotic and sudden acts of the Government, and who is yet so insensible to all feelings of humanity as well as so willingly blind to every

principle of either moral or political justice ;—if there be any man who, wholly absorbed in his attachment to his own immediate interest, is ready to cast blame on a debtor, who has had his means of paying cut off by an operation as decisive as that of an earthquake, which should sink into eternal nothing his lands, his houses, and his goods ;—if there be any man who, if he had been a creditor of Job, would have insisted that that celebrated object of malignant devils' wrath, which swept away his flocks, his herds, his sons, and his daughters, was an insolvent debtor and a bankrupt, and ought to have been considered as such, and as such provided against ;—if there be any such man as this, to whom I owe anything, to such a man I first say that I despise him from the bottom of my soul ; and then I say, that if he dare meet me before the world in open and written charge, I pledge myself to cover him with as much shame and infamy as that world can be brought to deign to bestow upon so contemptible a being. For such occasions as the one here supposed, if such occasion should ever occur, I reserve the arguments and conclusion which the subject would naturally suggest. To you I trust no such arguments are necessary, and therefore I will now proceed to state explicitly my intentions with regard to what I shall endeavour to do in the way of paying off debts. I hold it to be perfectly just that I should never, in any way whatever, give up one single farthing of my future earnings to the payment of any debt in England.

When the society is too weak or unwilling to defend the property, whether mental or of a more ordinary and vulgar species, and where there is not the will or the power in the society to yield him protection, he becomes clearly absolved of all his engagements of every sort to that society, because in every bargain of every kind it is understood that both the parties are to continue to enjoy the protection of the laws of property.

But from the great desire which I have not only to

return to my native country, but also to prevent the infamous acts levelled against me from injuring those persons with whom I have pecuniary engagements, and some of whom have become my creditors from feelings of friendship and a desire to serve me, I eagerly waive all claim to this principle, and I shall neglect no means within my power fully to pay and satisfy every demand, as far as that can be done consistently with that duty, which calls on me to take care that my family have the means of fairly exerting their industry, and of leading that sort of life to which they have a just claim.

It is clear, however, that to do *anything* in the way of paying off must be a work of some little time. I place great dependence on the produce of some literary labours of great and general utility; and it is of these that I am now about more particularly to speak, and to make you, Sir, a distinct proposition.

First, I must beg you to read in a *Register*, which I now send home, a letter to a French scoundrel, whom the Borough-mongers of England, by a robbery of us for the restoration of the Bourbons, have replaced in his title of *Count*.

When you have read that letter you will see a part of my designs, as to my present endeavours to pay my debts. The "*Maitre Anglois*" has long been the *sole work* of this kind in *vogue* on the Continent of Europe, in England, and in America. It was the only book of the sort admitted into the Prytanian Schools of Bonaparte, where it was adopted by a direct ordinance.

You will see that it is sent from France to England, and in this country it is imported from France. Both editions (separate and coeval) are sold at New York and in all the towns here. I have always been afraid to look into this book, from a consciousness of its imperfections, owing to the circumstance of haste under which it was originally written.

You know as well as any man what the probable

extent of sale and durable profit of the exclusive right to print such a book are. I am now engaged in making this book *quite complete* under the title of "*The English Master*, by William Cobbett, corrected, improved, and greatly enlarged, by the Author himself." If you understand French enough to read it with a perfect understanding of its meaning, you will, if you read this book, easily see the causes of its great celebrity.

Its clearness, its simplicity, its wonderful aptitude to its purpose, its engaging and convincing properties make it so unlike all the offspring of pedantry, that it is no wonder that it should have made its way in general esteem. I will make the new edition *supplant all the old ones immediately*; and to you I propose to confide the care of securing the copyright both in England and France. A second work, and one of still more importance as a source of profit, is also now under hand, namely, "*The French Master; or a Grammar to Teach French to English Persons*, by William Cobbett." You will easily see that if I could, twenty-two years ago, actually *write a book* in the French language to French persons, how able I must be to write a book in the English language to teach French. Indeed, my knowledge of the whole matter is so complete, that the thing, complicated and abstract as it is in its nature, is as easy to me as it is for me to walk or sit. This work, I will pledge my existence, will sweep away very speedily all competitors. My children (some of them) are now learning French by the principles and rules which will constitute this book, and this gives me every opportunity of perceiving and removing all sorts of impediments and embarrassments.

My son William *wrote* French at twelve years old better than nine-tenths of the Frenchmen that I have ever known, or at least that I have ever seen write; and both John and he speak now French as well as the greater part of Frenchmen.

I shall publish both these works, and secure the copy-

right of them, in America, where there is a great sale for books of this description ; but from the great intercourse now existing between England and France, the sale will be much more considerable in those countries.

In about two months, or less, I shall send to Mr. White, to be delivered to you (if you will undertake the thing) the matter for these two works. You can secure the copyrights *in England* and also in France. It is impossible for me to say what will be their produce ; and I know well that immediate produce is not to be expected ; yet it would be irrational not to believe that these works must in a short time begin to be a source of real and substantial profits, the proceeds of which I should devote to the liquidation of the debts due to you ; and if they exceeded that, to other purposes. In the meanwhile there would be the foundation of profit, from the same source, laid in this country, from which, however, I should for some time not expect anything beyond what I should need here. I do not know that there would be any objection to the *selling* of this copyright *in France* ; but I should not approve of this being done in *England*, because time may make them a source of great profit, and further, because I should not like for me or my sons to be precluded from future improvements of the works themselves. As to the particular application of the money that may arise from this fair and honourable source, after an equitable discharge of your demands on me ; and as to the precise mode of proceeding in the business, these must be the subject of a letter to accompany the manuscripts, which you will understand are now in a state of great forwardness, so that as time is valuable, I hope that you, who understand such matters so well, and who have so much activity and intelligence, will, upon the receipt of this letter, and upon the strength of what you will see addressed to the beggarly tool of a French Blackguard rascally Noble *jean foutre*, make some inquiry amongst the race who trade in the fruit of men's

minds. You know them pretty well, and I have perfect reliance on your prudence, integrity, and industry.

I am, you will perceive, getting ready a *Grammar of the English Language*. This, which is a work which I have always desired to perform, I have put into the shape of a series of letters, addressed to my beloved son *James*, as a mark of my approbation of his affectionate and dutiful conduct towards his mother during her absence from me.

In this work, which I have all my life, since I was nineteen years old, had in my contemplation, I have assembled together the fruits of all my observations on the construction of the English language; and I have given them the form of a book, not merely with a view to profit, but with a view to fair fame, and with the still more agreeable view of instructing, in this foundation of all literary knowledge, the great body of my ill-treated and unjustly contemned countrymen.

I believe it to be quite impossible that this work should not have a very extensive circulation in England and America; and that it should not be of many years' duration, in point of profit. Whatever part of this profit can, without endangering the well-being of my beloved and exemplary, affectionate and virtuous family, be allotted to the discharge of my debts or incumbrances, shall with scrupulous fidelity be so allotted; but as to this particular object, and as to other sources of gain, I will first take care that the acts of tyrannical confiscation, which have been put in force against me, shall not deprive this family of the means, not only of comfortable existence, but that it shall not deprive this family of the means of seeking fair and honourable distinction in the world. It is impossible for me to say or to guess at what I may, with my constant bodily health, and with the aptitude and industry which are now become a part of me, be able to do in the way of literary works productive of gain; but I can with certainty declare that, beyond the pur-

poses of safety to my family, I will retain or expend nothing until no man shall say of me that I owe him a farthing. With regard to any profits that may arise from the *Register* in England, I at present know scarcely anything; and I have not any time to digest any regular plan relative to that matter: I shall do this in the course of a short time.

As I have fully apprised Mr. White of the contents of this letter, I beg you to communicate with him on the subject, and to tell him very freely your opinion relative to the whole of its contents; I have, all circumstances considered, a very strong desire to retain my real property in that country, which I so ardently love, and to which I have preserved, through all circumstances, so invariable a fidelity; and though I would abandon that object rather than do any act of real injustice, I will never, while the present infamous abrogation of the laws of my forefathers exists, set my hand to any deed, or give, either expressly or tacitly, my sanction to so infamous a violation of my rights, as well as of the rights of all.

We shall hardly be able to get the manuscript off before the *month of January* next, but in the meanwhile I shall be glad to hear from you, and to receive from you any suggestions that you may think useful.

I have the pleasure to tell you that we enjoy excellent health; and I assure you that it will give us all great pleasure to have the same sort of account from yourself, Mrs. T., and family.—I am, my dear Sir, your most obedient and most humble Servant,

WM. COBBETT.

I lately sent home to be published a little book, entitled *A Year's Residence in the United States* [he wrote to Henry Hunt]. Read it, and you will have a pretty good account of this country. I said nothing about *rural sports*, however, and I should have done it. The *wood-cock* shooting is just begun here. Anything of

a shot will kill *ten or twelve brace a day*. Every farm has its wood, from 10 to 100 acres; and every wood its wood-cocks in abundance. *You* would kill a hundred brace every day. The beautiful *setter* that you gave to James is a fine dog for the sport; and my Botley spaniels make the woods ring with their shrill voices. We see the wood-cocks flying about like bats in the evening. A French bird-catcher, with his glade-net, would catch a vaggon-load in a week. Partridges are not killed till september. They are very abundant. We have broods all round about the house and garden. They, as well as the wood-cocks, are *one-third smaller* than the English. *Plovers* are shot all round about here in great numbers. Deer-hunting is going on in October and November at about 20 miles' distance. And, observe, the county in which I live is *more thickly settled* than your part of Hampshire. I have heard of people going from *Hampshire to Scotland* grouse shooting. It would be a much pleasanter party to come to Long Island a wood-cock shooting. The season lasts three months, and the game never fails. And, besides, here *anybody* shoots *anywhere*; and it is impossible to be upon a spot where there is not a house at a small distance to afford a resting-place and refreshments and a hearty welcome. What say you to a shooting party here? If you were to set out, I should not wonder if the Borough-mongers, to their other suspensions, were to add a suspension of the prayer for those that "travel by water." However, I hope you will not let the fear of this stop you; for, I can assure you, that the danger is not half so great as that of going from Portsmouth to the Isle of Wight. Think of it. A hundred brace of wood-cocks a day. Think of *that!* And never to see the hang-dog face of a tax-gatherer. Think of *that!* No Alien Acts here. No long-sworded and whiskered Captains. No Judges escorted from town to town and sitting under the guard of dragoons. No packed juries of tenants. No Crosses. No Bolton

Fletchers. No hangings and rippings up. No Castleles and Oliveres. No Stewarts and Perries. No Cannings, Liverpools, Castlereaghs, Eldons, Ellenboroughs or Sidmouths. No Bankers. No Squeaking Wynnes. No Wilberforces. Think of *that!* No Wilberforces!¹

Cobbett was not happy in the United States. He was separated from most of the members of his family, and he felt that his political influence would become less in direct ratio to the time he was absent from the scene of his activities, but, he had stated emphatically, "I will die an Englishman in exile, or an Englishman in England free," and he did not propose to return until he could do so with honour. In the autumn of 1819, however, there was no further reason why he should remain in America, and he decided to return without delay.

I myself am bound to England for life (he had written in *A Year's Residence in the United States*). My notions of allegiance to country; my great and anxious desire to assist in the restoration of her freedom and happiness; my opinion that I possess, in some small degree, at any rate, the power to render such assistance; and, above all the other considerations, my unchangeable attachment to the people of England, and especially those who have so bravely struggled for our rights: these bind me to England.

William Cobbett to Isaac Wright

MURRAY'S HILL, September 14, 1819.

SIR,—I spoke to you this morning about a passage for myself in the *Amity*, bound to Liverpool. You referred me to the Captain; and my son was to be at

¹ *Political Register*, October 3, 1818.

your store to go on board and mark my place. He has been to your store, and you and the Captain have told him, that there are already seven passengers, and they have all declared, that, *if I go in the ship, they will not*. Whereupon, my son says, you have resolved that I shall not go.

Now, Sir, this is such an insult and injury to me, on the part of those passengers, that I hope you will, this evening or in the course of to-morrow, inform me of *their names*.

Your ships are called *packets*. It is understood that they are for the use of any one who is ready to pay the usual price; and, as I have notified to my friends in England that I am going in the *Amity*, they will be much disappointed if I do not.

At any rate, I trust you will not hesitate to give me in writing the names of the objecting passengers.—I am, Sir, your most obedient Servt.,

WM. COBBETT.

P.S.—I must beg you not to put me off, for I am now writing by the *Importer*; and I am resolved to do all in my power to obtain justice for this injury and insult. I propose to advertise immediately for the names of the seven passengers, unless I have them from you, and, therefore, I must again beg you not to put me off.

You will please clearly to understand that I mean to claim my right, legally, to go in the ship.

*William Cobbett to William Cobbett, junior,
in London*

NEW YORK, September 20, 1819.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—The yellow fever rages to a great degree. We keep out of town, about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The following notification will be necessary to be put in the

Register if you have put in the notification about my intended return in the *Amity* :—

Mr. Cobbett will not, in all probability, come home in the *Amity* as he intended. The yellow fever raged in New York on the 20th of September. The danger was such, that it had been proposed to remove the Post Office and the Custom House to without the city. The *Amity* had not got her cargo in, and it would be impossible for her to be laden without taking her cargo from the Store-Houses, which were the very seat of contagion. The owner, *Isaac Wright* (a very cunning old Quaker), told Mr. Cobbett, on the 15th of September, that they were "*working it to get a clean Bill.*" They had, he said, got the ship round to the *North River*; and they meant to try and get her *cleared out from Amboy* (a small port in New Jersey), in order to *avoid the quarantine at Liverpool*. Whether they would play this trick Mr. Cobbett was not certain; but, as passengers (all except Mr. Cobbett, who lives in the country) and cargo would go from the seat of deadly contagion, it would be a very base and fraudulent act to clear the ship out from Amboy. At any rate, Mr. Cobbett was resolved to come by a *clean ship*; and it was, on the 20th of September, probable that he would sail *before the Amity*.

Now, *be sure* to put in, and to *repeat*, the above notification. I wish it to be done by all means. If you should have no *Register* to put it in, put it into some *newspaper*. It is very important that it should be published in England *the moment you get it*.

I shall write by every ship. James and I are very well. Mr. Morgan is here, and he sends his love to you all. God bless you.

P.S.—Don't omit *a word* of my above notification.¹

Joseph Buonaparte to William Cobbett

BORDENTOWN, *Septembre 27, 1819.*

MONSIEUR,—Je reçois la lettre que vous avez bien voulu m'écrire. La Dame en faveur de laquelle vous me

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

montrez de l'intérêt ne s'est adressée à vous, qu'après avoir cherché à intéresser beaucoup d'autres personnes, et qu'après m'avoir menacé, même par écrit, de faire insérer ses plaintes dans les journaux. D'après ce procédé vous devez concevoir, Monsieur, que je ne puis rien faire pour obéir à l'exigence de cette dame.

Je n'ai pas l'avantage de connaître son mari. Elle ne m'a porté, en arrivant ici, aucune recommandation de personnes connues de moi ; et cependant je ne lui ai pas refusé les légers secours que la position de mes affaires, et la multiplicité des malheureux, me permettent de donner. Elle a obtenu de moi environ deux cents dollars dans les premiers mois de son arrivée, et je lui ai conseillé, en même tems, de retourner en Europe, ne concevant pas ce qu'elle venait faire ici. Je l'ai perdue longtems de vue, et c'est lorsque je supposais qu'elle avait suivi mes conseils, et qu'elle n'était plus dans ce pays, qu'elle a redoublé tout à coup ses demandes, ses plaintes et ses menaces ; et, par là, elle s'est fermé tout accès auprès de moi. Elle a eu recours à vous trop tard. Si elle avait eu des recommandations de Ste. Hélène, j'aurais agi pour elle, comme je l'ai fait pour des personnes qui sont arrivées ici du même lieu, dûment recommandées. Je ne vous parle de cette circonstance, Monsieur, que parceque je sais que vous avez obligé ces personnes, qu'elles m'en ont parlé plusieurs fois, et que depuis longtems j'avais le désir de vous témoigner combien j'avais été touché de vos nobles procédés à leur égard.

Vous devez juger d'après cela, Monsieur, le regret que j'éprouve de ne pouvoir vous complaire, désirant depuis longtems de vous témoigner les sentimens distingués avec lesquels j'ai l'honneur d'être, Monsieur, votre

JOSEPH, C^{te} DE SURVILLIERS.¹

¹ From the autograph collection of Stanley Lathbury, Esq. Comte de Survilliers was the title by which Joseph Buonaparte elected to be known during his sojourn in the United States.

William Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

THE NARROWS, October 30, 1819.

MY DEAREST LITTLE SON,—My heart seems dead within me! My dear, kind, good child, God almighty bless you. Your dear health is all I can now think of. Pray, think for nothing in comparison with *that*. Get you good clothes; good fires; good warm bedding; keep a horse ready for you at all times. Do all that is good for your health. Think about no *interests* compared to that.

I know that Mrs. Churcher is devoted to you as well as to all of us; and I have done all in my power to show how grateful I shall be for her attention *to you*. I have told her that *all* I care for on this side the water is *your health*. My dear, dear child, if you were to die, I should die. I always loved you in a peculiar manner; and your dutiful, affectionate, sober, and thoughtful deportment, while alone with me, has made an impression on my heart never to be effaced. Be assured that you shall not *remain one hour* after prudence will permit me to call you home.¹

The Cobbett MSS.

CHAPTER XVII

RETURN TO ENGLAND (1819-1820)

Cobbett arrives at Liverpool—Brought with him the bones of Thomas Paine, which excites much ridicule—Byron's quatrain—"Cobbey's Dream"—Enthusiastic reception accorded him at Liverpool—Invitation to visit Manchester—Manchester authorities desire him not to come—The danger of riots—The projected visit abandoned under protest—Cobbett still the literary leader of the Reform party—The "Gagging Acts"—The *Register*—*Cobbett's Evening Post*—Cobbett contests Coventry—His address—Application for funds—Cobbett not elected—Files his petition of bankruptcy—Living at Brompton—*Cleary v. Cobbett*—*Wright v. Cobbett*.

COBETT sailed in the *Hercules*, and arrived at Liverpool on November 21, landing on the following day.

William Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

LIVERPOOL, November 22, 1819.

MY DEAREST LITTLE SON,—We are not yet permitted to land. So that I must send you merely a few notes, as the ship, the *Hector*, is going off in an hour. She is just going out of the dock, and is so close that I can toss my letter on board of her. I have then just to tell you that the Parliament will meet *to-morrow!!!* that the horrid bad times continue; that Lord Fitzwilliam has been dismissed from his post of *Ld. Lieutenant*, because he, at a public meeting, took the part of the Manchester Reformers; that some other Lords Lieutenant have been dismissed on similar grounds; that this is, in my opinion, an event of *vast importance*; and



WILLIAM COBBETT
From a lithograph by G. C. Ingre



you will all recollect that I predicted something of this sort as soon as I saw a *letter*, which Lord Fitzwilliam wrote and caused to be published in August last.

No communication, except by *bawling*, has yet been suffered between us and the shore. But Mr. Smith came alongside last night, and from him I learnt that Mr. Benbow was gone to Manchester, ready to meet me; that William *had* been here and was to be sent for the moment I came; that your dear mother and all were well and safe at Botley; that Mr. Hunt was well and was to be sent for when I came; that a great talk had been made about Paine's Bones; that Capt. Gillinder denied having brought them; that a *dinner* was prepared here for my reception at it; that a meeting was to be ready for me at Manchester. Perhaps, before I close my letter, I shall be able to give you some certain information upon this latter point.

We have had the most pleasant passage that ever was heard of. The Captain and the ship both as good as possible. It really has been a pleasant sailing party, or, at any rate, would have been such had it not been for seeing and hearing the damned fools of steerage passengers, who, blast them, will starve and ought to starve. They are come to starvation; and let them starve. They swear there is *no good meat in America!* God Almighty damn the lazy beggars. The first thing here, in port, is a *subscription* proposed, amongst us, to raise money to take one of the passengers *home to his parish!* A stout, young, single man!

You see, they have really called the Parliament to *meet me*, or, rather, to *receive me*. God bless you. I might write *more* by Gillinder, perhaps; but I must send off my paper without waiting any longer. I may write another letter by him perhaps; but it is not likely.

Pray *read* the *news* of this letter to Mrs. Churcher. It will be a satisfaction to her to hear it. I have just

got the following from a Manchester Paper of *Novr. 20*.
The *dinner here* will be *to-morrow*, I believe.

(*Newspaper cutting enclosed*)

On Monday a meeting of the friends of Mr. Cobbett was held in the Union Rooms, in this place, conformable to advertisement, when Mr. Stott of Pendleton was called to the chair, and the following resolutions were unanimously adopted :—

1. That Mr. Wm. Cobbett be requested to do us the honour of visiting Manchester.
2. That a committee of management be appointed, with power to add to their number, for the purpose of providing a suitable reception to Mr. Cobbett on his arrival at Manchester.
3. That a deputation be appointed to wait upon Mr. Cobbett on his arrival at Liverpool, to present him with the Lancashire Address, now signing.
4. That this meeting respectfully requests that the neighbouring towns do appoint deputies to co-operate with the Manchester Committee, in furtherance of the object of the above resolutions.¹

When it was known that Cobbett was on board the *Hercules* a vast crowd flocked to the docks to give him a hearty welcome, and he was so earnestly begged to address his supporters that he issued the following notice :—

TO THE PEOPLE OF LIVERPOOL

LIVERPOOL, *November 24, 1819.*

On the day of my landing here, I promised my friends who were anxious to see me that I would give them an opportunity of doing it before my departure. In fulfilment of this promise, I intend to be at a public meeting in Clayton Square on Friday, the 26th instant, at twelve o'clock.

(Signed) WILLIAM COBBETT.

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

There are many astonishing things to relate about Cobbett, but surely there is nothing to unfold more amazing than his action with regard to the bones of Thomas Paine, the author of *The Rights of Man*. When Cobbett was in America in the nineties there was published by George Chalmers a biography of Paine; and Cobbett, a violent opponent of the French revolutionary leaders, classing Paine among them, and accepting the often libellous statements in Chalmers's book, made in 1796 a vigorous onslaught on him in the *Censor*. The "infamous Tom Paine," he called him, and he could not find expressions strong enough adequately to convey his detestation of his character.

It was not until Cobbett was in America for the second time that he read Paine's *Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance*, in which book, published in 1796, was truly predicted the suspension of cash payments by the Bank of England in the following year. This, Dr. Moncure Conway says, revolutionised Cobbett's opinion of Paine, and led him to try and undo the injustice he had wrought.¹ He at once announced his intention to write a biography of Paine,² and in the *Register* made from time to time appreciative references to the man he had in all ignorance slandered. "Old age," he said, "having laid his hand upon this truly great man, this truly philosophical politician, at his expiring flambeau I light my taper." Had Cobbett been content to eat his words all would have been well, but his enthusiasm knew no bounds: Paine had been a

¹ *Life of Thomas Paine*, ii. 238.

² Cobbett's *Sketch of the Life and Character of Thomas Paine* was first printed in 1892 by Dr. Moncure D. Conway in his biography of Paine, ii. 433-58.

devil; he was now an angel. "I have just performed a duty which has been too long delayed: you have neglected too long the remains of Thomas Paine," he said to J. W. Francis. "I have done myself the honour to disinter his bones. I have removed them from New Rochelle. I have dug them up; they are now on their way to England. When I myself return, I shall cause them to speak the common sense of the great man; I shall gather together the people of Liverpool and Manchester in one assembly with those of London, and those bones will effect the reformation of England in Church and State."¹ He brought the bones back with him, and made himself the laughing-stock of Europe. Byron, in a letter to Tom Moore, suggested the following quatrain:

"In digging up your bones, Tom Paine,
Will Cobbett has done well;
You visit him on earth again,
He'll visit you in hell."

Or, said the poet, the last two lines might run:

"You come to him on earth again,
He'll go with you to hell."²

A less distinguished versifier wrote the following skit:

COBBEY'S DREAM.³

The moon retired behind a cloud,
And fast asleep were young and old,
In nasal twangs, both long and loud;
"Past three o'clock," had watchey told,

¹ J. W. Francis, *Old New York*, p. 141.

² Moore, *Life of Lord Byron* (ed. 1844), p. 432.

"Pray do not let these versiculi go forth with *my* name, except among the initiated, because my friend H[obhouse] has foamed into a reformer, and, I greatly fear, will subside into Newgate."—*Ibid.*

³ Huish *Memoirs of William Cobbett, Esq.*, vol. ii. pp. 291-2.

RETURN TO ENGLAND

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When Cobbey lay him down to snore,
His thoughts on PAINES, CARLILES, and HONES.
When lo, a hollow voice did roar,
O give me back my pilfered bones.

Pale horror raised erect his hair,
Above the sheets he popped his chin,
And saw Tom Paine before him stare
With menacing terrific grin.
O rascal, why my name afresh
Dost thou lug forth in canting tones?
The worms content were with my flesh,
But thou hast robbed me of my bones.

Why didst thou on the billows toss,
Or why thy native country fled,
Why thou the vast Atlantic cross?
Why, caitiff thief! to rob the dead.
Lay by thy pen, cork up thine ink,
None read thee now but drivelling drones,
Thy boasted fame will end in stink,
So give me back my pilfered bones.

O scrub, how didst thou once becall
The wretched elf thou now dost praise;
Prepare thee for thy destined fall,
Whence none give *two pence* thee to raise.
Awake he cried, "Avaunt, ye fears!
'Tis but a dream my mind dethrones;
Come, let me bellow in thy ears,
I'LL SEE THEE D——D, I'LL KEEP THY BONES"

Cobbett could get no one to take the matter seriously. It was his desire to bury the bones under a splendid monument to be subscribed for by the public, but the reception of his idea was so discouraging that he did not even attempt to raise the funds. His proposal for a great public dinner to be held on Paine's birthday had to be abandoned owing to lack of support; while his offer, at a price, of locks of Paine's hair soldered up in

rings found no purchasers and only caused a vast amount of harmless merriment.

On November 24, Cobbett, accompanied by his son William and his friend Thomas Smith, drove in a hackney coach at the appointed time to Clayton Square, Liverpool, where he was presented with Addresses from Manchester, Warrington, Blackburn, Bolton, and other places. There he made a speech in which, after giving his reasons for bringing the bones from America, he dwelt on the familiar theme of the necessity of reforming the House of Commons. His popularity, as evinced at the meeting and at a dinner given to him in the evening, was evidently very great, and, as containing in it the elements of danger, was very distasteful to the authorities. When it was announced that he proposed to visit Manchester, the city fathers were alarmed. They pasted bills enjoining the well-disposed inhabitants to remain indoors, special constables were sworn in, and a troop of hussars and a body of infantry with two field-pieces were ordered to hold themselves in readiness. Cobbett was on his way from Liverpool to Manchester, when at Irlam, about eight miles from the latter city, he received the following communication :—

MANCHESTER, *November 28, 1819.*

SIR,—Having reason to believe that your introduction into the town of Manchester, on Monday the 29th instant, is intended to be public, and to be accompanied by an unusual procession and multitude of people, as well strangers as inhabitants, we, the undersigned, being borough-reeves and constables of the towns of Manchester and Salford, beg to inform you, that we consider such an assemblage of a great mass of the population of this pistrict, in the present situation of the country, is neces-

sarily attended with considerable danger to the public peace. We do, therefore, caution you against making any public entry into the town of Manchester, and if you persist in so doing, or if you adopt any other proceeding, whereby the public peace may be broken or endangered, we shall feel it our indispensable duty immediately to interfere.—We are, Sir, your obedient servants.

[Here follow the signatures.]¹

To this caution Cobbett replied :—

IRLAM, November 29, 1819.

GENTLEMEN,—If it had come from any other person in this world, the notification which I have just received from you would have surprised me. Coming from you, it excites no surprise, nor any sort of feeling towards you, which was not before entertained by every just man in every part of the world where your deeds and character have been heard of.

But, Gentlemen, is it really come to this, that a man upon returning to his country, or upon moving from one part of England to another, is to be stopped on his way by threats of interference on the part of officers appointed to keep the peace, lest the concourse of people which his mere presence may draw together should produce danger of a breach of the public peace? Is it really come to this? Is this the state of England? Is this the law? Is this one of the effects of that system, which we are told is so excellent that it requires no reform? The laws of England secure to us the right of locomotion, that is to say, the right of moving our bodies from one place to another. Now, if your notification be anything more than a mere empty putting forth of words, it presumes that you have a right to prevent me from enjoying this liberty of locomotion, for you tell me you shall *interfere*, if I persist in my intention of making a

¹ Huish, *Life of Cobbett*, ii. 286.

public entry into your town; and alas! we know too well what you mean by *interference*. And what do you mean by public entry? What do you mean, I say, by *public* entry? How am I to make any other than a public entry, if I enter at all? Like other persons, my intention must have been to enter your town in a carriage, or on horseback, or on foot. Are not these the ways in which all other persons enter? and have I not a right to enter as other persons do? Either, therefore, you must mean to forbid me to enter at all, or you must mean that I shall move like the women of the seraglio of the dey of Algiers, shut up in a box with large air-holes in it, or ride upon a horse, my body and head being covered with a species of tub. This is the state is it to which the system has brought once free and happy England?

To what a pitch must men have arrived, when they could sit down and look at one another in the face, while they wrote and signed a paper such as that you sent me. This paper was addressed to a man having no power and no inclination to disturb the public peace, a man who, with the knowledge of recent events daily impressed upon his mind, has taken the precaution to beseech the people not to mix up a reception of him with even an allusion to those events. It appears manifest that the public peace could not have been endangered from my entrance into Manchester. But to see such multitudes of people assembled together to show their respect for me appeared to be more than you could endure. We read the accounts of the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, the Marquis of Anglesea, the Duke of Wellington, and other *great* personages, moving here and there amidst public plaudits. Infinite pains at any rate are taken to make us believe that this is the case. What right, therefore, have you to make any attempt, either directly or indirectly, to prevent the people from bestowing their applause upon me in person? Is not my right to move from place to place as perfect as any of the three men

that I have just mentioned? Aye, but then the assemblages that they cause are so *small*.

Suppose I were at this moment living at an inn at Manchester, it is pretty clear, I believe, that an assembly of persons would take place at any time that I chose to walk out to the spot where the dreadful scenes of the 16th of August were exhibited. What, then, would you expel me your towns, or compel me to keep myself shut up in a room? And if the people presumed to come to show me marks of their respect, would you visit them with your awful *interference*? Gentlemen, we shall live to see the day, and that day is not far distant, when I shall be able to visit the excellent people of Manchester and its neighbourhood, without you daring to step in between us with threats of interference.

Let me call on you to think a little on the figure you now make in the world. Here I am at ten miles from Manchester, there are the people whom you call an unusual multitude, ready to receive me, and to bestow upon me all possible marks of respect, and there are you sending me threats of interference, and preparing all sorts of means for making that interference effectual, in order to intercept a verbal expression of popular approbation, intended to be bestowed upon a man destitute of every species of means of obtaining that approbation other than the means naturally arising from his integrity and his talents, his well-known love for his country, and his well-known zeal in her cause, during the whole course of his life, under all circumstances, whether abroad or at home, whether in prosperity or adversity.

Thus the parties stand before the world. I disdain to tell you what my intentions are, whether I intend to enter Manchester or not. I have made this comment upon your communication, in order that the nature of your conduct may be the better understood, and even in doing this I have condescended to bestow on you too great an honour.

With feelings, such as a real friend of the people, a real lover of his country, and faithful subject of the king must ever entertain towards men like you, I am,

WILLIAM COBBETT.¹

Cobbett's indignation was not unnatural, but there can be no doubt that the authorities were justified in making the appeal, for only in the previous August had occurred there a terrible conflict between the soldiers and the people, when the "Peterloo" meeting, presided over by "Orator" Hunt, had been held in defiance of the prohibition of the magistrates. Cobbett's good sense prevailed, and he went instead to Coventry, where he was enthusiastically received, and thence to London, where on December 3 he was entertained by a large company at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, presided over by Hunt.

In spite of the contemptuous laughter that greeted the production of the bones of Thomas Paine, Cobbett was still a power in the land. While he was in America the *Register* had suffered somewhat from the fact that it could not be topical, and that his comments on English affairs appeared three months after they happened; but if it lost something in freshness, there was no falling off in strength, and it was an incontestable fact that Cobbett was still the literary leader of the Reform party. It was, therefore, with some justification that he declared that the repressive measures enacted by Parliament at the end of 1819 were mainly directed against him. These measures were known as the "Six Acts" or the "Gagging Acts." The first was to prevent delay in the administration of justice in cases of misdemeanour; the next

¹ Huish, *Life of Cobbett*, ii. 286-9.

three, which were to be in force until 1822, to punish blasphemous and pernicious libels, to prevent the training of persons in the use of arms, and to authorise magistrates to seize arms collected and kept for purposes dangerous to the public peace; the first, which was to continue for five years, was to prevent seditious assemblies; and the last was an Act for stamping newspapers.

I came back to England, late in the month of November of that year, and I found the Parliament *preparing an Act to meet me* (Cobbett wrote in *Two-penny Trash* in 1830). The *cheap publication* was still going on: it had outlived Sidmouth's law: it was now found to be *useless* to pass power-of-imprisonment laws to put it down; for the only effect would be another trip for me across the Atlantic. Now, then, a new invention was resorted to: an Act was passed to punish with great severity any one who should publish, without a stamp, any thing, *periodically*, that should *not* contain *more than two sheets of paper*, each sheet being, at least, *twenty-one inches long and seventeen inches wide*, containing *no advertisements and no blank pages*; and besides this, the publication was *not to be sold for less than sixpence!*

This Act, generally called *Cobbett's Act*, so loaded me and my readers with expense, that it reduced the circulation to a tenth part, perhaps, of what it was before. Still, it kept on well.

The profits from the *Register* were, of course, much diminished, and Cobbett, at once anxious not only to increase his income but also to extend the sphere of his influence, projected, undeterred by his previous failures in this direction, another daily newspaper.

Anne Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

BOTLEY HOUSE, December 24, 1819.

. . . What think you of Papa having a daily paper? If the thing be but managed well, it will be a famous thing, tho' it will oblige Papa to live in Town, at least during the session of Parliament, and he says he will have us all there too. I must own I would rather remain here than go back to London if Papa be with us, but we none of us wish to be separated again. You will perceive by the papers that the Govt. have been doing what they could to stop Papa's writings, but they will fail, I hope. At all events, if they should oblige him to leave England again, he can say with great truth that his creditors have no claim upon him, if the Govt. will not let him work to pay his debts. However, I do hope he will be in Parliament before any great length of time, and then he is safe.¹

William Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

BOTLEY, December 23, 1819.

It is impossible to say what may happen here, and therefore I am very anxious to keep my foot on the American soil. The villains shall not *beat us*, by God!²

John M. Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

LONDON, December 30, 1819.

Papa is, as you will see, going to publish soon a daily paper. He will continue the *Register*, but it must be stamped, and he will, besides these two, publish the *Register monthly*, without a stamp. That is, four numbers

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

² *Ibid.*

of the stamped *Register* will be printed together every month, without a stamp, for sixpence or eightpence. And, every month, *four hundred* of these unstamped ones are to be sent to you, which you are to sell at a quarter of a dollar each.

They are in a monstrous stew here. Papa thinks Reform will be given, by next Spring, by the Ministers themselves. Castlereagh has pledged himself to support one motion (Lord William Russell's) for Reform, and it will be, as they themselves very truly said the Winter before last; if they are made to say *A*, they must say *B*. Lord Grosvenor, the other day, said in the House of Lords that "*nothing but Reform could save the nation.*" And a great, very great, number of those who were against Reform, up to last Session, have now declared themselves in favour of it.¹

William Cobbett to his Wife

January 4, 1820.

MY DEAR LOVE,—I have no time to write; but I must say a word or two. The daily paper every one says will succeed. If it do, we may *set everything at defiance*; and no man has any doubts of it. We shall start in about a fortnight. If we get a *high sale*, we may rely upon all we want. But recollect, my dear, that this is a *trying time*; and that it is now that fortitude is required. You *show it*; and, if necessary, I hope you will continue to show it. The boys are wonders of activity and sense and spirit. We are very *strong*, and we shall show our strength. Pray *take exercise*: all of you *walk out a good deal*: do not stay *moping in the house*. Why ought you to do it? Go and look about the farms. My love to dearest Nancy and to all of the dear children.

God bless you.

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

Hammerton is a complete *liar*. He is, by this time, *turned away*; and so he finds it right to abuse a country in which he lives like a prince! Tell his father that he is a *liar* and a drunkard too. He told me just before I came away, "how rich my father would soon be, if he were here!"¹

[Enclosure]

LONDON, January 4, 1820.

1

My dear little Dick,
Who are always so quick
At everything else about house,
Pray, why 'don't you write,
You quick little spright,
And not be as silent as mouse?

2

Write away, little boy,
And you'll give us great joy,
To hear how you're running your riggs;
How you're prancing about,
And making a rout,
And how you come on with your pigs.

3

When your pigs are all fat,
We know what to be at,
And, therefore, of meat do not cheat 'em.
We'll take all the pork,
Send it off to New York,
And there let the Emigrants eat 'em.

WM. COBBETT.²

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

² *Ibid.* "This was when Papa had just returned from America. He, William, and John were in London. The rest with Mamma at Botley, at our own house *lent to us*" (Note by Anne Cobbett).

William Cobbett to his son James, in New York

LONDON, January 7, 1820.

. . . You will see that the villains have cut off the cheap *Register*. What I shall now do is this: on the 24th of this month I begin a daily evening paper. We think that this will have a great sale. Everybody thinks this. Then I shall publish a *Register* monthly. Of this I shall send to you 400; for, though they may not be able to be all sold, they will cost very little here, because when we are printing for ourselves, we have only to add these for you. Those which will be sold here for 2d. and for 6d. (there will be two of these latter), you will sell for a *York shilling*; and the monthly ones for a quarter of a dollar. I shall send you, soon, some other pamphlets and books, as occasions may offer.

The state of things here is so very perilous, that it is impossible to say what may happen. I may, by one means or another, be stripped of my all. And, therefore, I shall do all I can to supply you in such a way as to keep up the business in America. . . .

By the same ship that this will go, you will receive from Mr. Smith some *Registers*, and also 400 of *The House that Jack Built*. And I enclose you an advertisement to put in the papers, relative to this famous *House that Jack Built*. . . . If booksellers take 10 *Registers* or 10 *House that Jack Built* from you, you may let them have 10 upon giving you money for eight; but not upon any other terms. I shall soon have leisure to look out for some farming books and other books for you to sell, and I will send some on to you. . . . We are all very well, and you need not be informed that we are all as busy as bees.¹

¹ Add. MSS. 31127, ff. 1-4.

William Cobbett to his Wife

LONDON, February 2, 1820.

MY DEAR LOVE,—If you could know the endless worry we are in here, you would never interpret my silence nor that of the dear boys into a mark of want of affection or attention. God knows that my *heart* is *always at home*; but I must have my *mind* and *hand* here. I am forcibly struck with what dearest Nancy says about *Southampton*; and if Mr. Rogers's account (he is in town) agrees with yours, I will try *that* instead of Coventry. I am quite sure that the *mass of the people would prefer me*. And, if I find that there is *probability*, I will try. In that case I will address a *whole "Register" to them*, and send it down, and *give one to every house* without selling. They will all then *read*; and, if they read, I am not afraid. If I resolve on this, I shall send a short notification down to-morrow, to be posted up in the Town. I can think about nothing but this at this time. If I do this, you must send to *Wheeler*, who will go and *talk*. I will pay him for his time. Compton himself is no bad hand. For, observe, it is the *common people*. *Guillaume* could do much with *Hunt*, and *you* can do all with *Mrs. Guillaume*. *Warner* might do a good deal; and, perhaps, he would do something. God bless you all.¹

The newspaper, *Cobbett's Evening Post*, was launched on January 29, 1820, the day on which the King died. In those days the demise of the sovereign necessitated a general election, and Cobbett at once offered himself as a candidate for Coventry, to the electors of which town on January 30 he issued the following Address:—

GENTLEMEN,—The time is now approaching when you will have an opportunity of choosing men to represent

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

you in the House of Commons, and I offer myself to you as one of those men. This I did previous to the last election. I was then absent ; but if you had chosen me, I would have been at my post as punctually as either of the gentlemen whom you then chose.

The justice, and, indeed, the necessity of extending the right of suffrage all over the kingdom has been proved so clearly, that the enemies of reform, quite unable to answer arguments, have resorted to those means by which truth is kept from the eyes and ears of men. But you have no cause to complain of a want of power to exercise this right ; and, therefore, seeing that you possess the power, I will not suppose that you want the inclination to exercise it for the good of your country in general.

Gentlemen : Those of you who happen not to believe that my intentions are good, and that my ability to give effect to those intentions is not such as to induce you to prefer me before another, will, of course, not think this application worth your notice ; but, if you should think that my intentions are good, and that my ability to serve the country at this critical, and even awful period, is greater than that of any other man that shall offer himself to you, give me leave to express a hope that you will, upon this interesting occasion, give proof that your public virtue is superior to every temptation by which you may be assailed.

We ought, gentlemen, upon all occasions to consider, when we are about to act, what is the nature of our engagements as to that action ; and, also, what may be the effect of our conduct. A voter at an election, under the present circumstances of the country, is invested with a *trust* ; a trust which he exercises for his neighbours as well as for himself. Those persons whom the voters choose make the laws, and the laws affect every man, woman, and child in the community. You, in fact, assist, therefore, in producing every oppression

which may fall upon the country, unless you, by your vote, take every precaution in your power in order to put into Parliament such men, if you can find them, as will do everything in their power, and everything that can be done by man to prevent the passing of oppressive laws!

My countrymen, look at the situation of this miserable country! Look at the sorrows that afflict her! Look at the perishing hundreds of thousands that beg, cry for food, and starve by inches! Look at the pangs that shake the bosom of your country! Look at the perils that surround her; and look at the future degradation, which, without a change of system, awaits her as surely as the hand of death awaits every one of us! Can you, with this afflicting spectacle before you, and still more, with this heart-rending prospect, go from the election without having performed your duty according to your consciences, and lay your heads calmly down upon your pillow?

The question in such a case for every man to put to himself is, not whether he has done the best for himself, but whether he has done his best for his suffering country; that is to say, whether he has obeyed the commands of the Gospel, and has done towards others as he would that others should do unto him. No man is justified in balancing his interests against his duty—if duty agree with interest, it's well; but, if not, conscience commands us to disregard interest as much as it commands us to disregard every other invitation to flagrant iniquity.

However, gentlemen, I hope it is wholly unnecessary for me to employ any further argument upon the subject. Your city was famed in very ancient times for its attachments to those rights and liberties to gain and maintain which our forefathers bled so profusely. I have main hopes that the same spirit animates the children of the men of that celebrated city, who dared, in the days of

the worst of tyrants, to show their friendship openly for the men whom those tyrants most dreaded.

I point out to your rejection no gentleman in particular; and I beg you to believe that, while I stand pledged (as I most solemnly do) never to receive a farthing of the public money in any shape as long as I live, I have no ambition to gratify.¹

William Cobbett to his son James, in New York

LONDON, February 12, 1820.

MY DEAR LITTLE SON,—Things are in such a state no man can tell, from day to day, what is to happen. I am putting up for Coventry; but by no means sure of success. The misery of the people is so great that nothing but money will do anything at all. Therefore, you must look to what you can do in case of the worst. For they may ruin us here so completely as to compel us, at last, to flee even to get bread to eat. You will, you think, be able to imagine how bad things are; but you cannot. People are so cowed down, so timid, so afraid; and as we cannot move an inch with the press without bail being continually demanded of us, we can do hardly anything. People are afraid to read, or afraid to be known to be friends with those who endeavour to make a stand for the country. The thing must go to atoms; but we may be made beggars in the meanwhile! Therefore, take care of your seeds. Keep bread for your mother and sisters at any rate, if they should be able to find the means of fleeing to you. In the meanwhile we will do for you all we can. . . . Write to me very often. Do not suffer your spirits to droop. We are all well, and all heartily attached to each other. Your dear Mama is very well, and is quite ready to encounter any difficulty or any toil that may present itself. I am as well as I can be, and, if these atrocious tyrants would

¹ Anon., *Life of William Cobbett*, pp. 239-42.

suffer me to do what I ought, you would all soon be rich. But we must do as well as we can. I am going to Coventry to-morrow; and I will write to you from that place.¹

Anne Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

BOTLEY HOUSE, February 15, 1820.

. . . What vast changes have taken place since Papa came home! Only think that the King should die on the *very day that our first paper was published*; so that the second paper was clothed in black. Then his new Majesty was taken ill, and not expected to live; indeed, it is generally believed he is not long for this world; so then we shall have the Duke of York for Sovereign. It is expected there will be sad work about the new Queen. She is abroad, and there is a strong party here for her, who want her to come home and be crowned with her husband; and she has quite spirit enough to do anything, but it seems Prinny will not let her be crowned, and in the alteration of the Litany, he has left her out altogether, though in some churches they have had the face to pray for her, as "our gracious Queen Caroline"! If she come to England there will certainly be a row; many will espouse her cause out of mere *obstinacy* to the new King, though hers is the most popular side of the question. Papa and John are gone down to Coventry to try the temper of the people, I suppose, previous to the election. We shall not be disappointed if he do not get in, for we have made up our minds not to expect it. Though the place may be *very* independent, yet the government have so much the power of *bribery*, that we are fearful they will use their utmost endeavours, in this way, to prevent Papa's being elected. And the worst of it is, that if the new King should die, there must be still another election.²

¹ Add. MSS. 31127, ff. 5, 7.

² The Cobbett MSS.

Cobbett, as will presently be seen, was practically penniless, and, even though he had no intention of bribing the electors, it was necessary to spend a certain amount of money in connection with his candidature at Coventry. He issued, therefore, a printed appeal to those on whose support he thought he could rely, and through these means obtained about seven hundred pounds.

William Cobbett to John Cam Hobhouse

LONDON, February 25. 1820.

SIR,—You have already heard that I am a Candidate for the City of Coventry. There is a *Subscription* on foot to defray the lawful expenses; but, so short is the time to be allowed us, that I fear that the sum necessary to carry in the outlying voters will not be sufficient, if we rely solely upon the ordinary comings-in of the *Subscription*. Success is *certain*, if we raise the money. We shall be, I think, about £700 deficient, at the time when it will be wanted; and the object of this letter is to obtain *your assistance* upon this occasion. A letter, in the same words as this, is this day dispatched to *seventy* gentlemen; and if you, together with the rest of the *seventy*, send us, each of you, *ten pounds*, I shall, to a certainty, be returned a Member for Coventry. There is no doubt at all that the whole of the money will be finally collected; and, therefore, when that comes in from the public subscription, the ten pounds, *unless you express your wish to the contrary*, shall be returned to you.

It is, I hope, hardly necessary for me to state to you what are the uses of the power that you would thus be putting into my hands. It seems clear as daylight that a change in the manner of conducting public affairs must take place; or that we are hastening, with grand strides, to a bloody revolution. And I am

of opinion that my stock of knowledge, my industry, and my recent experience, if they had a sphere for their full exertion, would greatly tend to produce, without any *shock* at all, that so anxiously desired change. For the express purpose of doing my utmost to save my country, I have returned to that country. I am now bound up in politics with NO MAN. My mind is my own. I will pursue what that mind shall dictate. My love for my country and my dread of her dangers have swallowed up all private resentments. I most anxiously desire to see the present form of government preserved. I wish to see my country again free and prosperous; and I am convinced that, in one month, I should be able to suggest the means of effecting, in a comparatively short time, her complete restoration.

Whether I shall have the power of doing this will, Sir, depend on you and on the other gentlemen, to whom this letter is addressed; and, if I should not obtain that power, I shall, at any rate, secure the approbation of my own heart, by having thus made a tender of my services to my country, and having done all within my power to be enabled to render those services. To "dig" I am not "ashamed"; and, if I be doomed to see the wreck of my country, my daily bread will be sweetened by the reflection, that I have had no hand in the causing of that wreck.—I am, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

P.S.—If you should accede to the application, please to direct, *postage paid*, to me, at No. 269, Strand, London. The money will be wanted by the *seventh of March*.

W. COBBETT.

Cobbett had in those days an exclusively freeman's franchise, and there being no householder's vote as such,

¹ Add. MSS. 36458, f. 154.

a large proportion of the 3700 voters had to be brought from a distance, which made the seat terribly expensive to contest. Cobbett went down to Coventry on February 28, but he never at any time had a chance of turning out the old members, Edward Ellice and Peter Moore, who were returned again by a great majority.

The year 1820 was unfortunate for Cobbett. His *Evening Post* died on April 1. This is not surprising, for of the many newspapers started not many live longer than a few months, but the *Evening Post* had the great drawback of having no money to keep it going until it attained a circulation, and of the editor, being occupied with his *Register* and his parliamentary candidature, being unable to give it the attention that was necessary. The failure of the paper was a blow to Cobbett, but there was worse to come.

John M. Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

LONDON, April 12, 1820.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Papa has failed in his election, and he has been so ill-used by several persons, to whom he owed money, that he will shortly be compelled to *surrender himself*, and to yield up all the property he has, though he could so easily clear off all the claims upon him, and though he is so anxious to do it to the last farthing. But the spiteful villains, urged on, no doubt, by the Government, will not give him any time at all, and, therefore, he must take the usual protection of the law, and be either a *bankrupt* or an *insolvent*; and we all insist that he ought to do it, as well as other men who do it and live well on the *reserve*, whereas he will *reserve nothing*; he will *give up all*; and rely on his and our future exertions for support.

They have spread a report that he has *an estate in*

America worth twenty thousand dollars, and a great stock of seeds, &c. He has declared that he *has nothing there*; and, as you well know, he sold all to Mr. Morgan, who is the real owner of all that Papa left. You see what villains they are here; and how they would hunt us off the face of the earth.

I enclose you a copy of this, which you will send on to Mr. Morgan, with our kindest respects and best thanks for his kindness to Papa. Keep up your spirits; for Papa fears nobody and nothing, his *Register* will keep us all well; and we are all happier and more full of hope than ever. All send their love to you.

God bless you.—I am your affectionate brother,

JOHN M. COBBETT.¹

Anne Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

LONDON, April 20, 1820.

MY DEAR JAMES,—Johnny will ship you in a day or two some *Hawes*, some *trees* (as an experiment), and the *vetches*. These will arrive too late for this year; but you will have them. We will make up for all deficiencies in the fall with regard to seeds. We all hope, and are sure, that you will be careful and diligent; for we may yet have to look to America for safety. The state of England is *horrible*. Not only misery is seen everywhere, but there is no safety for anybody, especially for those whom men in power dread or suspect. The price of land falls every day; and Papa has been so deceived and so ill-used by some of those who call themselves *creditors*, but to whom he really does not owe a farthing, that he has resolved to take the course that others take to get rid of his encumbrances. One villain has spread a report, that he not only had great personal property in New York, but that he had (under a borrowed name) *an estate of twenty thousand dollars*. He has given them the

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

lie direct, and has frankly owned that he *sold his all to Mr. Morgan*, out and out. We suspect that a fellow, whom *we always hated*, and who has always been *supported by Papa*, will go out to America. Monr. Chasse, I mean. Pray be on your guard against him and against everybody else! This country is full of traitors and villains; and Papa has been deceived by them all. He is, however, now *free* from them all; and he will do well for him and ourselves, in spite of all that can be done against him. . . . Keep up your spirits, my dear Jimmy Jumps; for we fear nothing at all. We can all work, and work we will, and cheerfully too. The girls are able to help Papa a great deal, and as we all pull together, and there are so many of us, we can do a monstrous deal in a short time. Our plagues will very soon be over. We shall see Papa *free* and merry, and that is all we care for. *Mama* never looked better or prettier in her life, and as she sees a prospect of Papa's being in a state of tranquillity as to all embarrassments, her mind is more at ease than it has been for years; while all the rest of us are at work, she and Dick must prattle together and amuse one another. . . .¹

John M. Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

LONDON, April 22, 1820.

. . . In a letter I wrote you some little time since, I told you something about the nastiness of some of Papa's creditors. Turner, the printer, has, it seems, a relative living at New York; and from him he hears that Papa has property in America. I should not wonder if you have some prying, sneaking gentlemen over with you to find out the real state of the case. However, I am afraid they will not be able to prove Papa rich in money and money's worth; unless, indeed, they make tangible property of his brains and industry.²

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

² *Ibid.*

William Cobbett to his son James, in New York

LONDON, May 8, 1820.

. . . The time is now come, when you are to show by your actions that you have a real affection for your Mother and Sisters. It so happens that much will depend on you whether they are to be comfortable and respectable in future, or poor and forlorn. And the way for you to act is, cheerfully to do what I request to be done; not to set up your own will against mine; and to answer all my letters very punctually; not to think anything of little consequence because it may not hit your taste; but in all things to do my will to the utmost of your power. Pray be diligent and active and attentive, and your conduct will always be remembered by your affectionate father,

WILLIAM COBBETT.¹*William Cobbett to his son James, in New York*

LONDON, June 6, 1820.

MY DEAR JAMES,—We have your letter of the 7th and 10th of April. I have not time to write much to-day. But, my dear little son, why did you write such a *huffish* letter to your dear sister Nancy? I hope you will never do the like again. She is a most dutiful and diligent daughter, and a kind sister, and everything that is clever and good; and I cannot see any of you treat her with the smallest degree of harshness without its giving me *great pain*. For God's sake, *love one another*, and be very kind to one another, as your dear Mama and I have always been to you all.²

As the above correspondence shows, a crisis had arisen in Cobbett's affairs. In the United States he had hoped to make money enough to pay off his creditors,

¹ Add. MSS. 31127, f. 16.² *Ibid.*

but misfortune had dogged his footsteps, and he returned home as poor as when he left. At last he accepted the advice of Timothy Brown, a creditor for £2000, and declared himself a bankrupt. Both Brown and James Swann signed his certificate without a penny of dividend; indeed, Cobbett had not a farthing, and one of these kind friends actually gave him a pound-note and a few shillings so that he might, for form's sake, have something to surrender to the commissioners.

William Cobbett to his son James, in New York

BROMPTON, October 9, 1820.

MY DEAR LITTLE JAMES,—1. I have all your letters up to the 9th of September. I have not time to say much, and, therefore, you must be content with little.

2. In the first place, we are all in good health, and in much better spirits than we have been before for *ten years past*. My private affairs are settled for ever. I am now free of every debt, and I have still a claim on my estate as good as ever, subject only to the payment of past debts; and I think things will take such a turn as to enable me to have the whole again, fairly and justly.

3. As to what *changes* you have made, I am sure they are right. I am not at all disappointed at the falling off in business. It must be so, if the paper-money makers stop. But things have, as to us, *changed as much for the best here*. I cannot enter into *particulars*. If you have read the *Queen's Letter*, the *Register*, and *Nancy's Letters*, you will easily guess at the goodness of our prospects. We have so much to do here that it is impossible for us to live at Botley. I have a place at Brompton, walled in from all roads, distinct from all houses, nice garden, 4 acres of rich land for cows and pigs, surrounded by Nursery Gardens. And here, if we cannot be *patient*, we ought to be hanged.

4. This turn of things makes a great change in my views with regard to *you*; and my present intentions are these: first, to send you by Peck all things you have written for: second, to send you a good parcel of other things: third, for Mr. M[organ] to sell off next May or June, if he chooses, and for you to come home in the summer. Mind, he has *nothing belonging to me*. I sold all to him. If I had had anything there, I must have *surrendered it here*. I am afraid he will lose by his bargain; but, if he do, I will make it up to him as soon as I can.¹

Anne Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

BROMPTON, October 13, 1820.

MY DEAR JAMES,—You have never been told any particulars about the settlement of our money concerns, and I think it high time you should. The Govr. is always apprehensive that our letters are read on their way, but I think that cannot be. Mr. Brown it was who advised the Bankruptcy, and it has been about three months in hand, during all the hubbub of the Queen's affairs, so that *our* affairs have entirely escaped the public notice. Yesterday the Certificate was signed, so now the Govr. has got rid of all his encumbrances, and more at ease than he ever was in his life. If it had not been for the coming of the Queen we might have met with some plague with some of the Creditors, but they thought it best for all their *interests* to be civil, and not one of the London papers have taken any notice of it, from the first to the last. It was Buckland's arresting Govr. at Coventry for money lent to the Turnpike road, that determined us upon taking some such step as this to put it out of their power to torment us. So now Buckland, after going to a great expense himself in law, is worse off than he was before, and, let Papa hereafter possess

¹ Add. MSS. 31127, f. 17.

what he may, he can never have any claim upon him. Everybody says this was the only thing Papa could do, and so I am sure it was. After all the noise that has been made about our debts, only 5000*l.* were proved before the commissioners, and of these 1400 was Mr. Brown's, 3000 Mr. Tipper's, and 900 Mr. Rogers', and all these Papa *requested* to come and prove. So that it has all been done without any plague whatever.¹

Even bankruptcy did not complete the tale of Cobbett's misfortunes in 1820, for in that year he had to defend two libel actions. The first action was brought by Thomas Cleary. In a letter to John Wright, dated April 10, 1808, Cobbett had written :—

It is impossible for both factions united to calumniate our motives, if we proceed as we ought, and do not mix with men of bad character. There is one Hunt, the Bristol man, Beware of him. He rides about the country with a whore, the wife of another man, having deserted his own. A sad fellow! Have nothing to do with him.²

At the Westminster election in 1818, at which Hunt was a candidate, Thomas Cleary, a law-student and Secretary of the Hampden Club, who was taking an active part against the "Orator," was given this letter of Cobbett by Francis Place for the purpose of reading it on the hustings, whereby, it was hoped, much damage would be done to Hunt. Only a portion of the letter was read by Cleary, who let it be assumed that the epistle had been addressed to him, and it is not surprising that when Cobbett in America saw in a New York paper an account of Cleary's speech including the isolated

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

² The letter is given in this work, vol. ii. p. 13.

passage, that he declared in the *Register* for September 5, 1818, that the letter was a forgery and that Cleary had uttered it.

There are forgeries of omission as well as forgeries of commission (Cobbett said subsequently). Only a part of this letter was read at the Westminster hustings by Cleary, and from that part I had no recollection of such a letter, and this cannot excite any surprise, when it is remembered that the letter purported to have been written so far back as 1808. If the postscript as to Sir Jacob Astley had been published, that circumstance might have brought it to my recollection, and if so, I should have [had] no hesitation in avowing it. But that a letter written in a hurry, about ten years before it was adduced at the hustings, should have escaped my memory was not a matter of surprise.¹

When Cobbett returned to England Cleary brought an action for libel against him, which was tried before Lord Chief Justice Abbott (afterwards Lord Tenterden) and a jury. Cobbett, giving the explanation printed above, no longer denied the authenticity of the letter, but he defended himself most brilliantly.

Now (he said, addressing himself to the question of damages) considering the scarcity of the gentlemen of the bar, and the difficulty of procuring law for love or money, I must say that I should feel seriously responsible if I had the misfortune to occasion a deduction from that learned profession of such an eminent personage as Mr. T. Cleary! It was held to be a crime, even by poachers, to destroy young birds; and how criminal, then, must be I, if I really had crushed a lawyer in the egg!²

¹ *Political Register*, December 9, 1820.

² *Ibid.*

His main contention, however, was that the betrayal of private correspondence was an act of the grossest treachery. "I beg the jury," he concluded, "to mark with reprobation this abominable system of *espionage*, this spy system, to show the natural abhorrence of Englishmen at what is base, and to let your decision stamp the infamy of those who had been guilty of such a *breach of private confidence*."¹ The jury evidently thought that Cobbett had been as much sinned against as sinning, and instead of the thousands of pounds that Cleary claimed, awarded him forty shillings damages.

The other action against Cobbett was brought by Wright for libels printed in the issues of the *Register* for January 4, 1817, March 6, 1819, and January 6, 1820. Cobbett as usual had not minced his words, and he had, indeed, hit harder than usual, being firmly convinced that Wright had not only defrauded him, but had also revealed the negotiations for abandoning the *Register* in 1810.

You, my dear Sir, know the history of this Wright; you know all his tricks, all his attempts [thus he had addressed Major Cartwright in the *Register* for March 6, 1819]. The public do not, and I will not now trouble the public with a detail, which, if put in a suitable form, would make a *romance* in the words of *truth* far surpassing anything that ever was imagined of moral turpitude. I will execute this task one day or other. If the caitiff should put forth anything by way of palliation in the meanwhile, there is Mr. Walker, there is Mr. Margrave, there is my Attorney, there are the documents, there is Mr. Swann, there is Sir Francis Burdett himself, there is my son John, who, though he was then a child,

¹ *Political Register*, December 9, 1820.

will never forget the big round drops of sweat that, on a cold winter's day, rolled down the caitiff's forehead, when he was *detected* in fabricating accounts, and when I took Johnny by the hand (who had begun whimpering for "poor Mr. Wright") and said: "Look at that man, my dear! Those drops of sweat are the effect of detected dishonesty! Think of that, my dear child, and you will always be an honest man!" Mr. Peter Walker and Mr. Swann were present at this scene, which took place in my room at Newgate in 1811.

While Cobbett was still in America Wright had proceeded for libel against the publisher of the *Register*, W. I. Clements, and had been awarded £500 damages, and now, in an action heard on December 11, the jury gave him £1000 damages against Cobbett.

Annæ Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

BROMPTON, December 6, 1820.

Papa obtained a grand victory two days ago in the *Court of King's Bench* over the *Rump* and Mr. Brougham. Cleary has brought an action to recover damages for the libels Papa wrote against him, and he recovered *forty shillings!* Mr. Brougham undertook the cause, and the damages were laid at 3000l.!!! Wright, Jackson, Adams and Place and the printer Molyneux swore away like troopers. Papa was his own lawyer, of course, and he cross-questioned them, till he made them appear the blackest villains that ever were beheld in a Court of Justice. You have seen Papa at a County Meeting get hold of the ear and obtain silent attention by his conciliating address and good humour, but you will be rather surprised that he should succeed in this way with a Court of lawyers. To be sure, the *looks* of the *witnesses* were very much against them; *you* know three of them, and I assure [you] the others are no better looking. It

was very gratifying to Papa, who was seated with the two boys, one on each side of him, to see the impression his appearance made contrasted with the rascally villains. Brougham did all he could for his Client (besides which he had an old grudge against Papa for certain lashings received lately), and he began his speech with extolling the Governor's great talents up to the very skies, but then he charged him with great malignity, &c. &c. However, the Govr. paid him off over head and ears, and actually drove him out of Court; Papa kept the Judge, jury and Court laughing the whole time, and this the poor lawyer could not stand, so he was obliged to go away before the cause was finished. Whenever the judge *could* lean towards Papa or assist him he did it, and all the lawyers sitting round kept writing little hints on slips of paper and handing them to the boys for Papa's use, either when he was cross-questioning the witnesses or during his speech, and so they were of monstrous assistance in this way, for they put him on his guard when he was likely to go a wrong way, and pushed him on when he was upon a right tack. Now after all the abuse that Papa has poured out upon lawyers, and the prejudice that these men have against him, this is a strong proof of his power of conciliating those who see him. The old Major was there ready to speak to Cleary's character, but when he saw the way Papa was going on, he *declined* to enter the witness-box. The Court was crowded to excess, and the trial lasted eight hours. It has created such a sensation as you have no idea of. The judge said that if P. had not accused Cleary of *forgery* that no terms would have been too strong to express his horror of the deed, of reading a private letter, and he charged the jury, if they gave any, to let the damages be *temperate*. It is somewhat astonishing and rather unexpected that *we* should meet with fair play in a court of Justice, and to say the truth, I think the libel *was* a furious one. However, the whole thing has turned out to our advantage.

tage. This trial is the most glorious thing that ever happened for Papa, and the beating of Brougham, who scarcely ever has a cause which he does not gain, is such a grand affair, and is making such a noise nothing can be like it. The jury were obliged to give him a verdict, and forty shillings is as little damages as they could give, but they *wanted* to get 3000*l.*!!! Wright is coming on with an Action, too, but I think he will stand a bad chance after Cleary's defeat. He has taken care to have a *Special Jury*, thinking that may secure him a verdict, because, as you know, the Special Jurors are generally persons attached in some way to the Government.

December 16.

As I in some degree anticipated, this Special Jury has given the villain Wright a verdict, and most outrageous to imagine, *a thousand pounds* damages! Not one farthing of this will he ever get, as you may imagine.¹ There are gentlemen enough who would come forward and pay the money, but *we* are *determined* that he shall not have it; and we are now going to set us to work to get a new trial. The public are terribly enraged at the verdict, and a great clamour is making about it. Save a rogue from the gallows, and he will cut your throat. . . .²

¹ The £1000 damages was paid for Cobbett by his friend George Rogers, of Southampton (E. Smith's biography, ii. 230).

² The Cobbett MSS.

CHAPTER XVIII

WILLIAM COBBETT AND QUEEN CAROLINE (1820-1821)

Cobbett an active supporter of the Queen—His interest in "The Delicate Investigation" and *The Book*—Cobbett's private correspondence with the Queen as regards Parliament and the trial—His advice not to leave the country—Prepares a draft of her answer to the House of Commons—Writes the famous letter from the Queen to the King—Lady Anne Hamilton—Alderman Wood—The Bill of Pains and Penalties withdrawn—Cobbett's jubilation—Cobbett at Court—Cobbett drafts the letter from the Queen to Prince Leopold.

COBETT had not long returned to England before he was taking an active part in the great quarrel between the King and Queen. His interest in Queen Caroline dated back to the "Delicate Investigation" of 1813, when he was concerned in the publication of *The Book*.

The story of this royal marriage is so familiar that only a few notes are necessary to elucidate the correspondence. George III. died on January 29, 1820, and "The First Gentleman of Europe" ascended the throne. He at once caused instructions to be given to the English representatives at foreign Courts not to recognise Caroline as Queen of England, and commanded that her name should not be inserted in the Prayer for the Royal Family. The Queen, who was at Rome, at once protested against these insults, and made formal complaint to Lord Liverpool. His Majesty wished to divorce his consort, but Lord Liverpool insisted that an offer should be made of

£50,000 a year for life, on condition that she remained abroad and assumed a title other than that of Queen of England. Her Majesty's Solicitor-General, Denman, urged her to return; her Attorney-General, Brougham, begged her to stay away; but she came back, being always distrustful of the latter. "If my head is on Temple Bar," she said to Denman, "it will be Brougham's doing." The Queen, accompanied by Lady Anne Hamilton and Alderman Matthew Wood, landed at Dover on June 6; and on that day Ministers in each House of Parliament moved for a Secret Committee to examine the report of the Milan Commission and report whether there was sufficient ground for the introduction of a Bill of Pains and Penalties against the Queen. On the next day Brougham in the House of Commons read a message from her Majesty demanding an open investigation.

William Cobbett to the Queen

June 8, 1820.

Thousands and hundreds of thousands whose hearts beat with anxiety for the Queen, and who think with the greatest alarm of the numerous arts which are and will be employed against her, implore her to beware of insidious and perfidious advice. The public have beheld with admiration the message of her Majesty to the House of Commons; but they see and fear the danger of her Majesty being artfully led into some new negotiation, which may end in a compromise fatal to her. Her enemies are powerful, active, vigilant and implacable. They fear to meet her openly. But if they can once prevail on her to give up her rights, they know that the people will look upon such a compromise as a proof that there is some truth in the accusations against her, and then her enemies, knowing that her Majesty will have



WILLIAM COBBETT
"Friends to a Constitutional Reform of Parliament," plate 3

lost the friendship of the people, will have no scruple to treat her with every mark of indignity. The debate in the House of Commons convinces the Public that, if her Majesty persevere in her high and noble tone of defiance, her enemies will yield to her just claims, and will permit her to enjoy the state and place that belongs to her exalted rank. The adjournment was contrived for the purpose of gaining time to effect by crafty and perfidious advice that which could not otherwise be effected. Her Majesty is, therefore, implored to listen to no advice other than that which would lead her to demand all her rights as Queen, or a full and open investigation.¹

William Cobbett to the Queen

LONDON, June 10, 1820.

The humble individual, who hopes that the goodness of his motives will apologise for his addressing this paper to the Queen, most deeply regrets that her Majesty cannot be truly and fully informed of the sentiments of the people respecting her Majesty's case. He ventures to assure her Majesty that it is the universal hope that she will not suffer herself to be induced to accept of *any compromise*; but that she will insist on the full enjoyment of all her rights; that being the only thing which can completely put to silence the calumnious aspersions of her indefatigable and implacable enemies. He beseeches her Majesty to bear in mind, that though those enemies have been, thus far, baffled and discomfited, disappointment may tend to teach them dissimulation as well as to sharpen their malignity; and that what they cannot effect by force, they may endeavour to effect by craft; what they cannot obtain by menaces, they may endeavour to obtain by blandishments; what they have not been able to extort from her fears, they may endeavour to steal from her magnanimity. If her

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

Majesty should have advice offered her, he implores her to consider what may be the possible ultimate objects of those who offer that advice, and to reflect that it may be possible for them not wholly to overlook, on so important an occasion, their own interests and the gratification of their own ambition. Her Majesty knows, perhaps, little of what is passing amongst the public. Already are the windows of the shops exhibiting her Majesty's Person, attired in Royal Robes, with a Crown on her head and a sceptre in her hand. And the person who humbly submits this paper to her Majesty assures her, that the united soul of this loyal and just nation is poured out in prayer, that she will not yield, either to threats or intreaties, any portion, or particle, of her rights as *Queen of this kingdom*. This prayer is founded on a sense of national honour; on a sense of what is due to the women of this kingdom; and, above all, on a most anxious desire that her Majesty should not do anything that might leave even her bitterest enemy the smallest ground for sustaining a supposition unfavourable to her Majesty's innocence. The writer begs leave humbly to add, that he hopes that her Majesty will reflect, that, though she *yield* only in the smallest degree, there is no form of words that can possibly be used in so doing that will prevent her enemies from afterwards ascribing her condescension to a motive, the very thought of which would give her Majesty pain to the end of her days.

WM. COBBETT.¹

William Cobbett to the Queen

June 12, 1820.

The following representation is, with the greatest deference and humility, submitted for the consideration of her Majesty the Queen.

It appears probable that her Majesty's Ministers will

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

persevere in refusing to her Majesty the possession and enjoyment of her rights as Queen of this kingdom ; and that an open investigation will, in the end, take place.

In this case it must be manifest that the *Alien Act*, as it now stands, must have a very dangerous effect with regard to the cause of her Majesty. That Act invests his Majesty's Ministers with the absolute power of sending, at their mere will and pleasure, Aliens out of the kingdom. Of course, it invests them with a similar power of preventing Aliens from entering ; because they can order Aliens to be stopped at the seaports, and to be sent back without being permitted even to land ; which was, in fact, done in the case of the Countess de Montholon.

Whether his Majesty's Ministers would have a disposition to use this great and fearful power in such manner as to deprive her Majesty of any testimony that might be material to her Majesty's justification is a point which it becomes an humble individual to leave to her Majesty's superior judgment ; but when the writer of this paper reflects on her Majesty's long absence from England, together with the many weighty matters which must, at this time, engage her Majesty's attention, he hopes he shall not be deemed presumptuous if he supposes it possible that her Majesty may have overlooked the fact of the existence of this Act of Parliament ; and the same hope accompanies him while he begs leave further to state, that the Act is about to expire and to be renewed and continued in force ; that a Bill is now before Parliament for that purpose ; that if this Bill become an Act, it cannot be repealed, altered, or amended during the present session of Parliament ; and that another session may not take place until after the investigation shall have been brought to a conclusion.

A representation to the Parliament by her Majesty would, doubtless, obtain a security against danger from this source, either by causing the Act to be suspended during the investigation, or by a clause in the Act em-



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powering her Majesty to give, for a certain limited time, passports and certificates of residence to such Aliens as her Majesty might deem it expedient to cause to come to and to remain in the kingdom; and it is, with all humility, suggested that a representation in the name of her Majesty would be more likely to be attended with success than any statement or reasoning made, however ably, by Members of the House.¹

William Cobbett to the Queen

LONDON, June 15, 1820.

How great soever the fears of an humble individual to expose himself to the risk of being thought obtrusive and of incurring the displeasure of her Majesty the Queen, those fears are overcome by that sense of duty, which imperatively calls on him to give her Majesty intimation of danger, which intimation he thinks it probable that her Majesty may receive from no other quarter; and he therefore, relying on the gracious condescension and indulgence of her Majesty, will proceed humbly to offer her Majesty that intimation.

The enemies of her Majesty now see that they overrated their powers of deception and delusion. They see that public opinion in her Majesty's favour is too strong to be safely set at defiance. It would seem, therefore, to be their design to procure delay, to procrastinate, to keep things in a concealed and equivocal state; and, by these means, to weary the public mind and divert the public attention. Those enemies, whatever may be their other deficiencies, are by no means deficient in craft. They well know that, if they can *suspend* the question for a time, until the fever of public spirit shall have abated, they shall, in great part at least, succeed in depriving her Majesty of her best, and, indeed, her only efficient, support against their machinations.

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

There are many men who, in the present state of things, would be ashamed to take, *openly*, part against her Majesty, but would, nevertheless, very gladly be thought, by certain persons, to be ready, if necessary, to take such part. This description of men is very numerous; and they are, of course, extremely averse from anything like bringing the matter to issue at the present moment, and will do everything in their power to put off a decision of the question, which they will endeavour to reserve for a *distant day*, when they will be able to aid the enemies of her Majesty without exposing themselves to public odium.

Therefore, in the judgment of him who humbly submits this paper to her Majesty, it clearly appears that the cause of her Majesty must of necessity suffer from procrastination; and that that procrastination should be put an end to by steps as decisive and as prompt as those which have, to her immortal honour, recently marked the conduct of her Majesty.

The writer throws himself on her Majesty's gracious indulgence, while he, with all possible diffidence, ventures even to offer an opinion as to what those steps ought to be; but he humbly hopes that his motives will plead with her Majesty in his behalf, while he begs leave to observe that it appears to him that, unless a decision be come to on Friday, her Majesty, strong in her own innocence, and viewing all threats and accusations with *silent* indignation, ought to make a complaint to the House of Commons, simply informing the House; that her Majesty finds, with surprise, that no preparations are making for her coronation; and that she relies on the House to take, in this case, such steps as justice to her Majesty and as the honour and dignity of his Majesty's Crown may, in the judgment of the House, appear to demand.

This would, it is humbly presumed, put an end to all procrastination; bring the question to issue at once;

eventually secure to her Majesty the full enjoyment of all her rights; and produce universal satisfaction and gratitude amongst his Majesty's dutiful and affectionate subjects.

It need not be observed to a person of her Majesty's extensive knowledge and profound penetration, that to attempt to withhold *obvious, notorious, and established* rights upon the bare assertion that there exist grounds of charge against the party to whom those rights belong, is something too offensive to all ideas of law and justice to be tolerated for a moment in any civilised community; but if it could be supposed possible for such an attempt to be made, its award would unquestionably be universal reprobation and abhorrence.¹

William Cobbett to the Queen.

LONDON, June 20, 1820.

The humble individual who, with the greatest submission, begs leave again to address her Majesty the Queen, has had much experience in matters affecting the public mind; but he has never known that mind to receive so violent a shock as that which has this day been given to it by the publication of the documents relating to the negotiation between the delegates of the King's Ministers and the Legal Advisers of her Majesty.

The feelings of respect, which the writer entertains towards her Majesty, would restrain him, even if he had the power, from describing minutely the effect of that publication; but he cannot refrain from stating, that the promulgation of the documents has fully answered the most sanguine hopes and expectations that her Majesty's enemies can possibly have entertained; and, as he deems it more honourable to be thought wanting in good manners than destitute of feeling, he ventures to assure her Majesty that the offer made in her Majesty's

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

name to *quit the country* has filled the women's eyes with tears and the men's hearts with a feeling which never before existed in them with regard to her Majesty.

He implores her Majesty to be convinced that no *terms, no conditions, no qualifications*, can, in the public opinion, remove the impression which consenting to abandon the country must necessarily make; and, emboldened by his zeal in her Majesty's cause, he ventures, even at the risk of incurring her displeasure, to express his anxious hope that nothing will induce her Majesty to adopt, *on any terms*, a course, the fatal consequences of which he can clearly foresee but has not the heart to describe.¹

It was evident that the affair threatened to become the most crying scandal of the century, and Ministers were anxious not to have to proceed to extremes, seeing that, whatever the result might be, the dignity of the Crown must be seriously impaired. The Queen was now offered £50,000 a year for life, a frigate for travelling, and abroad the honours due to the Queen of England; and Wilberforce in the House of Commons moved an Address to her Majesty asking her to accept these terms. The motion was carried on June 22 by 391 to 124 votes, and was at once presented to the Queen, who declined to accept the suggestion.

William Cobbett to the Queen

LONDON, June 23, 1820.

The writer of this paper begs leave most humbly to state to her Majesty the Queen:

That the understood determination of her Majesty *not to go out of the kingdom* has produced a return of that

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

public feeling which was, for a moment, banished by the report of her Majesty's intended departure; that the object of Mr. Wilberforce's motion is clearly seen through by the public, who have no doubt that it is intended to effect by supplication that which it is perceived cannot be effected by threats; that it is the opinion of the writer of this paper, that the *address*, moved by Mr. Wilberforce, is intended to place her Majesty in this dilemma, namely, *to give up to the Ministers*, or, *to incur the ill-will of the Commons* by rejecting their advice; and that, therefore, much will depend on the *Answer* which her Majesty shall be pleased to give to that Address.

Her Majesty has too much sagacity not to perceive *le piège* (the snare). It is plain that, if the advice in this address be followed, another address will soon find its way to her Majesty from the same, or from a similar source, if any similar source be to be found in the world; and that thus, if her Majesty give way *now*, address after address will follow, till her Majesty be addressed out of all her rights, and, finally, out of England.

To prevent a result so injurious to her Majesty and so afflicting to his Majesty's loyal subjects, the writer of this paper presumes humbly to express an opinion, that the Answer to this Address should *explicitly reject the advice* contained in the Address; should do this in a manner calculated to flatter, rather than wound, the pride of the House; and should contain (*incidentally*) an expression of her Majesty's determination to remain at *home*—that word so sweet to English ears, and so electrifying if it were to come from the pen of her Majesty.

An Answer of this description would, it is believed, put a stop to the efforts of Mr. Wilberforce. The writer of this paper, relying on her Majesty's great goodness and indulgence, has enclosed a paper containing what he thinks would be a suitable Answer, which, with the

greatest diffidence, he humbly submits to her Majesty's superior judgment.

If her Majesty thought proper to yield, upon this occasion, to any feeling other than that of her benignity, her Majesty would have a fair opportunity of observing upon the singularity of the circumstance, that, though her Majesty has *lately become Queen*, and has also *lately arrived from abroad*, and has still more recently *sent a Message to the House*, her Majesty has never heard from the House, until it thought proper to wait upon her with an humble address *advising her to surrender a part of her rights*.

The other course may, however, be the best; though the writer of this paper ought not to disguise from her Majesty that it is his decided opinion that her Majesty will gain nothing by her being advised to appear to do anything *out of complaisance to the Parliament*.¹

PROPOSED ANSWER

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,—Accept my most cordial thanks for this loyal, dutiful, and affectionate Address.

If, as to points immediately, peculiarly and exclusively affecting my own personal feelings, and dependent on a sense of female honour, I decline to avail myself of advice suggested by your kind solicitude for my comfort and tranquillity, be assured that I retain a firm and unalterable reliance on your integrity and wisdom.

In the many and deep sorrows and afflictions with which it has pleased Providence to visit me, I have derived unspeakable consolation from the warm and constant attachment of this loyal, just and generous people, of whom you are the faithful Representatives, and to cherish and live at home with whom will be the chief happiness of the remainder of my days.

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

William Cobbett to the Queen

June 25, 1820.

The writer of this paper begs leave most humbly to state to her Majesty the Queen :

That her Majesty's Answer to the Resolution of the House of Commons has given great satisfaction to the public, in as far as it contains a rejection of the advice of the House ; that, however, great *anxiety* still prevails on the subject of her Majesty's possible intentions as to *going abroad* ; that the public are all alive *upon this great point* ; that it is of the utmost importance that *no doubt* should longer exist on the subject ; that all such doubt would at once be removed by an expression of her Majesty, *on the first proper occasion*, that her Majesty has resolved *not to go abroad*.

The writer of this paper thinks it right that her Majesty should be informed that her strength and safety lie in the public opinion ; that the Parliament will do nothing for her, except as it is influenced by the Public opinion ; that the Ministers were *checked* only by that decided expression of public opinion which her Majesty's arrival called forth, and for which they were not prepared ; that to yield anything in order to please the Parliament would only displease the public the more on that very account ; that the four Members, who carried the Resolution to her Majesty, very narrowly escaped being personally handled by the people ; that they made their escape all four in one carriage ; that the people *leur crachoient à la figure* (spit in their faces) as they drove along the street, that these four worthy delegates of the House returned home actually covered with spittle ; that it is clear, therefore, that to recede at the request of the Parliament would be to make a useless sacrifice.

It is very clearly seen by the public that her Majesty's enemies want but one thing, namely, *to get her out of the*

country; because they well know that she would then be instantly deserted by the people. It is clear also that, unless her Majesty go away, nobody can get money or honours by advising her to go! For these reasons it will necessarily follow, that every art which hatred can suggest and which perfidy can put in motion will be employed to induce her Majesty to depart, or, at any rate, to persuade the people that she is willing to depart. The effect even of this last would be most injurious to her Majesty; and, therefore, effectual measures should, as speedily as possible, be taken to remove from the public mind all doubt on the subject.

The Ministers are in a state of difficulty not possible to describe. They cannot extricate themselves from that difficulty. They are at the mercy of the Queen, who has nothing to do but to remain in her present attitude for some days. Her Majesty ought to make *no overture* for negotiation; and if her Majesty find that the Parliament is *about to be prorogued*, she ought then to make, before they separate, a formal demand of her rights and privileges, of which a full detail ought to be given.

If this line be pursued with firmness, a short time will give her Majesty the full enjoyment of all her rights and privileges; and in the meanwhile her Majesty is safe in the love and admiration of this generous people, who are *all* for her, in every part of the kingdom.¹

William Cobbett to the Queen

June 29, 1820.

The writer of this paper begs to be permitted humbly to lay the following information and observations before her Majesty the Queen.

As it is now perfectly well known that those Politicians who are usually opposed to the Ministers do not mean to attempt anything for her Majesty, except just

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

as far as it may serve their own selfish and ambitious views; and as it is equally well known that similar motives are but too likely to actuate other persons, whose advice has not hitherto been altogether advantageous to her Majesty's cause: this being the case, it follows of course that her Majesty has no real and efficient reliance, except on *the people*. But here her Majesty has support which is able to carry her through every persecution; and support that will never forsake her Majesty, unless her Majesty were to be induced to listen to advice that would seem to indicate a disposition to desert the people.

For this reason it appears to be of the greatest importance, not only that her Majesty should do no act which would have a tendency to damp the ardour of the public; but that her Majesty should avail herself of *early opportunities* of giving to the public *open* marks of confidence in their support, and of cheering and encouraging them in a perseverance in the loyal and generous course which they are now pursuing.

Being of this opinion, the writer of this paper thinks it his duty most respectfully to inform her Majesty, that the public has felt some little *alarm* at her Majesty's not going to the *Theatre*, agreeably to the signification of that intention which it had pleased her Majesty to convey to the Manager. This alarm in the minds of the people arises, not from any doubts which they entertain of her Majesty's own gracious disposition and firm resolution; but from their fears that selfish and crafty persons, by the like of whom her Majesty has so often been deceived, may yet obtain from her complaisance that which they have not been able to obtain by threats. The public are all anxiety lest her Majesty should be assailed by new deceivers. These persons will endeavour to persuade her Majesty that she ought to keep herself in *retirement*; that she ought to *shun the people*; that it is *beneath* her even to show herself to the people; that it is to *lower her own dignity* to appear to be grateful to

the people. Her Majesty's sad experience, her long endurance of injury in silence; these will, it is hoped, be quite sufficient to prove to her Majesty the folly or the insincerity of advice of this description. There can be no loss of dignity in being beloved and admired by a just and sensible people; nor in showing to such a people that her Majesty is fully sensible of all the marks she receives of that love and admiration.

The persons who would by their advice keep her Majesty at a distance from the people are, in the opinion of this writer, the *only enemies* that her Majesty has to dread. Such counsellors wish to see her Majesty have no support from the people, in order that they themselves may become her pretended supporters, and may raise themselves, in the end, upon her Majesty's ruin.

The zeal, the ardour, the anxiety which the people feel in her Majesty's cause are wholly without a parallel. Persons entirely dependent upon the government have, upon this occasion, lost sight of their own interests and even of their own safety for the sake of her Majesty. Every brave man in the kingdom has a heart devoted to her cause. And it is presumed that under such circumstances her Majesty can never be too forward to prove that she is not insensible to attachment so great and so rare.

It is clearly evident that the enemies of her Majesty hope that they shall gain by wearying the public mind; by leaving public spirit to evaporate; by weaning the people from her Majesty by degrees. Therefore it is the opinion of all thinking persons that her Majesty should lose very little time before she take some *open and decisive* step in the assertion of her rights and privileges; for, if her Majesty wait patiently the good pleasure of her enemies; if she take no step *openly, actively, and in the presence of the people* to assert her rights as Royal Consort and as Queen, it is much to be feared that in the course of time her enemies will (*par des moyens*

sourdes) produce an effect on the public mind that may be disadvantageous to her Majesty.

To the writer of this paper it appears quite monstrous ; it appears to be an outrageous insult to her Majesty to suppose that her Majesty's rights and privileges, or any particle of them, are to be withheld because the Ministers have chosen to say that they have accusations to make against her Majesty. If upon a pretext like this her Majesty's rights and privileges are to be suspended, her Majesty may bid farewell to those rights and privileges for ever. The trial of Mr. Hastings lasted more than seven years, and the enemies of her Majesty would find very little difficulty in keeping the green bag replenished for seven times seven years. The laws of England proceed upon a different principle : they demand *proof of guilt first*, and then proceed to punishment. They do not first inflict punishment by withholding rights and privileges, and then proceed to demand proof of guilt. The existence of pretended charges, therefore, is no ground whatever for suspending, for one single moment, the enjoyment of even the smallest portion of her Majesty's rights and privileges ; to obtain possession of which rights and privileges should be the first object of her Majesty's efforts.

The above is submitted to her Majesty with the greatest humility ; and if the writer has been unable to check himself in freely expressing his opinions to her Majesty, he trusts that the purity of his motive will be his apology.

On July 4 Lord Liverpool introduced in the House of Commons a Bill of Pains and Penalties, being "An Act to deprive her Majesty Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of the titles, privileges, and exemptions of Queen Consort of this realm, and to dissolve the marriage between his Majesty and the said Caroline Amelia Elizabeth," the

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preamble declaring her guilty of criminal conversation with Bergami. The Bill was forthwith read a first time. The proceedings opened on August 17, and on October 24 Denman replied on the whole case for the Queen.

It was thought desirable by her friends that the Queen should make a last protest as to her treatment in the form of a letter to the King. The famous letter of August 7 was sent to his Majesty, but some point of etiquette was neglected, and it was returned unopened. It was, however, printed on August 14 in the *Times*, and was copied into every newspaper in the kingdom. Great curiosity was expressed as to the author, and by some it was attributed to Dr. Parr. As a matter of fact, it was written by Cobbett, who at the time would not admit it, and when taxed with it would reply, "I believe it was written by Alderman Wood."¹

John M. Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

LONDON, September 14, 1820.
Rules of the King's Bench.

MY DEAR JAMES,—We have just received your letters, dated 1st and 30th of July, before which we had not for some time received any. From them it would seem that the new business is not actually a gold-mine; but I hope it is a little better than nothing, and, if it be, we are yet much better off than many of our neighbours. I am surprised at what you tell us about the unsaleability of the haws, for I had great hopes of their turning out

¹ Among the Cobbett MSS. is the draft in Cobbett's handwriting of another letter from the Queen to the King, undated, but evidently written subsequent to that mentioned above. "When in the month of August last, I subdued my just indignation so far as to address your Majesty," it begins; and concludes, "neither in life nor in death did guilt or fear belong to the heart of England's affectionate and grateful Caroline R." Whether this letter was sent to the King is not known.

to your advantage. I took much more trouble about them than I ever did about anything I ever before had to do with ; but, curse the Americans, I never will again expect to worm anything out of them !

Mind ! I am not complaining, but, at the same time, I confess you squeeze into your paper as little news as it was well possible. I am aware that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones, but in order that you may not, in future, have the advantage of that excuse, I am going to tell you as much as I can of the news of the present day.

In the first place, we talk, and nobody talks, or thinks, about anybody, or thing, but the Queen. When Peck went from here, the trial had, I believe, only just begun. We are going, with this, to send you the newspapers, as far as the thing has gone, and, therefore, you will not expect me to repeat all that has passed in the House of Lds. upon the subject ; but I will give you a talk about what more immediately concerns us. The Alderman, you know, has brought her over. He had never seen Papa but once, before he went for her, and that was soon after P[apa] landed. The A[lderman] was evidently shy, for he never came or said any[thing] in any way to P[apa], but the very night the Queen came, P[apa] wrote to the Aldn. offering his services, but, at the same time, saying that he could do but little unless he had communication with him, or some one who could give him information as to her case, &c. To this the fellow replied, in a cold manner, that, as soon as an opportunity offered, he would make the communication known to her Majesty. This, you know, was just nothing. On, then, the thing went, without anything further passing ; P[apa] writing, as well as he could in her favour, and against Brougham, who was evidently selling her. All the world saw this, and B[rougham] was going to the Devil fast. He, one night, in the House of Commons was so ill that he was obliged to leave it. All the members shunned

him; and Mr. Power said, upon seeing him that night, that he verily believed he would cut his throat. However, in a day or two, he saw he must try another tack, and, therefore, to avert the public opinion for a day or two he brought forward his famous dame-school motion, to which nobody attended, but it saved him for the moment, just while he was making up his mind to be honest, which he has been ever since. But, before this honest turn came into his head, P[apa] saw that she was going, and, therefore, he wrote some letters to her, and sent them, by one of us, who left them at the door. After the third or fourth had been sent, the man at the door said he could not take in anything without having the name of the person who sent it. So that, P[apa] with the next was under the necessity of sending William to go in and ask for Lady Anne Hamilton. W[illiam] found her at breakfast with the Aldn, who upon W[illiam]'s coming in, looked confounded and guilty. W[illiam] asked her to give the letter to the Queen, upon which she asked if the Alderman's having it would not do the same (for, you see, she and the Queen thought P[apa] was in correspondence with the Alderman and, depend on't, he had lied finely about it), upon which W[illiam] said no, that it must go to the Queen and nobody else, to which she consented, and W[illiam] came away. The very next day the Alderman came to P[apa]. But I should before have told you that he sent his brother a day or two before W[illiam] went to say that the Queen wanted to *buy the back volumes of the Register*, hoping, you see, to satisfy him with that. And, upon P[apa]'s asking him if the Queen had seen the *Register* of that week, he answered he believed not, for he knew she had given positive orders that no paper whatever should be taken in during the proceedings against her! We all set it down as a monstrous falsehood, and two or three days after, when the Alderman came, he let it out that the brother had been sent to return the Queen's thanks

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to P[apa] for what he was then doing for her! and he further said that the Queen had received, by post 50 copies of the *Register* from different people who were anxious she should see it. P[apa] has not yet seen the Queen. He has not thought it right as yet. But he has been prime mover. And a Letter to the King which, I dare say, you have seen, was written by a person that you very well know. I am afraid to say who, for it is High Treason, and all the Devils in H. have bestirred themselves to fix it upon some one's head, but it is all secret. . . .¹

William Cobbett to Lady Anne Hamilton

BROMPTON, Sunday Evening, October 22, 1820.

MADAM,—The reluctance which I naturally must have to intrude myself upon your ladyship, to whom I have not the honour of being personally known, could have been made to yield to nothing but by my conviction of the importance of the matter that I have to lay before you; of the reality and magnitude of the danger that I apprehend, and of the necessity of the means of prevention being immediately applied.

Assuring your ladyship of my perfect respect, I, without further ceremony, proceed to inform you; that, on Friday morning, and again yesterday morning, I received information, of which the following is the substance: 1. That the ministers fully *expect* that the queen will be prevailed on to *quit the kingdom*; 2. That *overtures* have *actually been made* to her Majesty for this purpose; 3. That these overtures have been received *without indignation*.

This information, though coming from *the enemy*, comes to me in such a way as to command my serious attention, if not my implicit belief; and the effect on my mind has been a conviction that duty calls upon me

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

When I see the Queen, and think of her gallant spirit,
I always think of that Lady of Lincolne; and, the, amongst
others that I have had the inexpressible pleasure to know,
have convinced me, that women are the favourites
of the creation.

To Mr. Thomas Smith, }
Lincolne. } Mrs. Cobbet.

A FACSIMILE OF THE HANDWRITING OF WILLIAM COBBETT
From the original in the possession of Richard Cobbett, Esq.



to state the information in *my next Register*, and to make thereon such representations, to use such arguments, and to draw such conclusions, as shall appear to me necessary to *awaken watchfulness and caution* in the public.

It occurred to me, however, that before I did this, it might be proper to communicate my intention to Mr. Alderman Wood, and to obtain from him, if he chose to give it, *positive information* of the truth or falsehood of my information. But, finding that the Alderman has left town; that he will not return until Tuesday, and that I shall probably not be able to see him till Wednesday, when it will certainly be too late for my purpose, I have thought it right to make this communication to your ladyship, and to inform you that my son, who is the bearer of this, will wait upon you again at *ten o'clock on Tuesday morning* to receive any answer, verbal or written, that you may be pleased to give to this letter; or, in case your ladyship should deem it improper to give any answer at all, to ascertain that you do not deem any answer necessary. Candour, however, compels me explicitly to state to your ladyship, that, unless I receive, on Tuesday morning, a positive assurance from you, *that her Majesty will not, under any circumstances, leave the kingdom*, I shall, in my next *Register*, proceed to the performance of that duty towards the public, which duty I have above described, and the neglect to perform which would make me a deluder and deceiver of that public.

I am convinced that if, *under any circumstances*, her Majesty quit the kingdom again, she will not only be totally ruined in the estimation of the nation and of the world, but will very soon cease to receive from this country *any income whatever*. The strong ground of her Majesty; that which outweighed all that could be brought against her; that which formed the main basis of my answer to the attorney-general; that which spoke home to the heart of the nation, was *her coming to England*; but it

was *her coming for ever!* I beseech your ladyship to observe *that!* Let it only be said; let it only be *suspected*, that she is *willing to go back*; and away goes the sheet-anchor of her defence and of her hopes! The public mind will take a turn; it will go backward as fast as it has gone forward. The people will never believe that *any one can like any country so well as England*; and can they endure the thought of the Queen leaving *them* to go, by *choice*, to live amongst the perjurers, suborners, the picklocks, and assassins of Italy, and to spend *their money*, too, on such a people! Can they ever be made to believe that the Queen is *willing* to do this, except from motives such as those which her base calumniators have imputed to her? I beg your ladyship to be assured, that the bare suspicion of her Majesty *being willing to do this* would at once lay her prostrate at the mercy of her enemies.

Already do the quick-sighted public *wonder* at the great change in her Majesty's deportment and tone! They cannot account for her *seclusion* from public view; they are surprised at her *patient silence* under the *exposure of the conspiracy*; they think they discover a *compromising* spirit in the language and conduct of her lawyers; they are surprised at the *mollified language* of her answers to addresses; and are astonished at *praises bestowed upon lawyers* who have extolled her enemies to the skies. But let them (which God forbid!) only suspect that her Majesty has *listened to proposals for her quitting the country*, and she may bid an everlasting farewell to security and peace.

It will give me great pain to do anything calculated to excite such a suspicion; but, while I am faithful to her Majesty, I must also be faithful to the people; and, that I may act agreeably to my fidelity to both, I have taken the liberty to trouble your ladyship with this letter.

With great admiration of your long and faithful and

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heroic attachment to her Majesty, when shunned by all the rest of those who ought to have stood by her.—I am your ladyship's most obedient and most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.¹

Anne Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

BROMPTON, October 26, 1820.

MY DEAR JAMES,—Since I wrote the other letters which accompany this, Papa has been to Court and kissed the Queen's hand, and a very pretty little hand he says it is. We made the gentleman dress himself very smart, and powder his head, and I assure you he cut a very different appearance to what he used to do on Long Island with the straw hat slouched over his eyes. He carried two addresses, one from the town of Warwick, and the other from Bury St. Edmunds (Baker's Town). The Queen made him a little speech, in which she thanked him for the great services he had rendered her, and conveyed to him some handsome compliments about his talents and so forth. This was in public, of course, that is to say, her Chamberlains, Major Doms and Dames of honour standing about. Her Chaplain, the gentleman who writes her answers for her (all that the Govr. has not written) told us the next day that when Papa left the room, she turned round and said in her lively manner, "Well now, if that is Mr. C. no wonder such fine writing comes from him he is the finest man I have seen since I came to England, aye, aye, if there be only a few such men as that to stand by me, I shall not care for the Lords." All of which the Govr. says is nothing more than bare justice, for he says he saw no man there anything to compare to himself; you know the gentleman has by no means a contemptible notion of his person. . . .²

¹ Cobbett, *History of the Regency and Reign of George IV.*

² The Cobbett MSS.

William Cobbett to Alderman Wood

BROMPTON, Sunday, October 29, 1820.

DEAR SIR,—The impression made by the speeches of the Attorney and Solicitor-General has been, and is, *very* great, and well it may, coming, as those speeches do, after the defective, feeble and childish defence of the Queen's Lawyers. That "*offered service stinks*" I have proved in the case of my urgent advice to circulate, through the newspapers, as well as by means of cheap pamphlets, my answer to the Attorney-General's opening and my answer to the Solicitor-General's summing up. If that had been done, things would not have been as they now are. In those answers I anticipated and confuted nearly the whole of what is now, upon being revived, making this deep impression against the Queen. The comparatively narrow circulation of the *Register* rendered those answers of comparatively little efficacy; yet they were the best things that had been done for the Queen. Many gentlemen were so anxious for a wide circulation of them, that some even had copies printed at a cheap rate for circulation at their own expense; but they could not be sent *by post*, and, therefore, the circulation was comparatively narrow. If they had, as I recommended, and as I anxiously wished, been inserted in the *newspapers*, they would have gone all over the world.

I have only mentioned the past for the purpose of inducing you to *listen to the present*. If you can prevail upon *Mr. Vizard* to spare 500*l.* out of the 30,000 that he has received to be expended in the *defence of the Queen*; if he will only give 500*l.* to cause it to be put *into the newspapers* and to be published in a cheap form by anybody that he chooses; if he will only spare this 500*l.* out of the 30,000, which have, as yet, only gone to purchase disgrace for the Queen and to insure her conviction; if he will only spare this little sum to be paid to

the newspapers, to publish *an answer to the closing speeches* of the Attorney and Solicitor-General, *I will write that answer, and will have it ready by Thursday next.* And, you will observe, that, as in all former cases, I will receive no reward of any description. If I do not hear from you before noon to-morrow, I shall think no more of the matter.

There are two things of which I must speak:—1. Enormous injury has been done and is doing to the Queen by the circumstances of her *leaving the Baron behind*, and of her not even *now daring to bring him over*. I will venture to assert that this has done her *more harm*, more real harm, than her own lawyers, and even *more than her praises* of those lawyers, in her answers to some recent addresses.

It appears to me that justice, not to say faithful and ardent attachment, to her Majesty, demands an immediate *public declaration*, that she *intended* to bring him, that she *wished* to bring him, and that she was with difficulty prevailed on not to do it. This declaration on your part would have a great effect. It was the *only suspicious circumstance* that ever presented itself to my mind, and I always hoped that what I now find to be the fact was the fact; namely, that you, from a good, though an erroneous, motive, advised her not to bring him. However, a declaration of the fact ought *now* to be made public. 2. The notification about the *non-reception of addresses*, and the abrupt, impolite, uncivil, and almost rude language and manner of it, is well calculated to *cool* the people in the Queen's cause; and that, too, at the very moment when she stands in need of all the warmth of their friendship. It has excited *great suspicions* as to her ultimate views. It has the outward appearance of a *secret compromise*, or of a desire to compromise. And, therefore, something ought immediately to be done to remove those suspicions.

I shall send this to Brandenburgh House, where I

suppose you are. If I find you not there, it shall be brought back to your house in South Audley Street. You will determine for yourself; and I shall rest satisfied that I have done my duty.¹

William Cobbett to Alderman Wood

BROMPTON, Monday, October 31, 1820.

DEAR Sir,—The notice about the *non-receipt of addresses* will be found to be a most fatal step for the Queen! We have letters from all parts of the country, complaining most bitterly of it. These two "*Vice-Chamberlains*" have made a pretty job of it. They will *drive away* her *real friends*, just at the moment when she will stand in *need* of them! You know, I always said, that, if your advice ceased to prevail, she was ruined. I must, in my next, say something about this fatal notification, so abrupt, impolite, uncivil, and almost *rude*. If I were in your place, I would let it be known *that I did not advise it*. I would keep myself clear, at any rate.

They will *pass a Bill*. Depend upon *that*. Lord Grey, I am told, means to oppose it in every stage. Tierney, I am told, means to support it. Of course, there will be *some splicing of the Ministry*. The Grenvilles will come in, and Tierney and some others. The main object is to *get the Queen away*, and I think, from what I heard yesterday, that *Gell* is the channel of the intrigue!

When I wrote to you last about the expenses of the Placards and Hand-Bills I find I did not include the *printing* and some of the *minor expenses*. I now enclose you the whole of the account. My son is not here, and I have forgotten the sums paid by you on account.

You see what a handle they have made of the *unimpeached character* of *Barbara Cress*! Oh! These are pretty *lawyers*. Mr. Vizard has found good employment for the 30,000*l.* I dare say. He has purchased with it

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

the sure conviction of his client!—I am, most sincerely
yours,
WM. COBBETT.

P.S.—“*The Alderman* must know nothing of our case.”
These words a friend of ours saw *in a note from one of the
lawyers to another!* They have done their job pretty
completely! I shall never forgive these rascals as long
as I live.¹

The second reading of the Bill of Pains and Penalties
on November 2 was passed by 123 to 95 votes, a majority
of twenty-eight; the third reading by 108 to 99, a major-
ity of nine. If there was only a majority of nine in
the House of Lords, where the King's influence was great,
it was almost certain that the Bill would be thrown out
in the Lower House. This would be equivalent to a
vote of censure on the King, since it was known to all
that the Bill was the result of the King's express desire.
It was known, too, that Brougham intended, if the
matter were carried further, in the interest of his client
to take the offensive and carry the war into the enemy's
country, and bring forward evidence to prove the King's
numerous infidelities, and, if necessary, impeach his
Majesty's title to the throne by proving that he had
married a Roman Catholic (Mrs. Fitzherbert) while heir
apparent, and had thus, under the Act of Settlement,
forfeited the Crown, “as if he were naturally dead.”
Ministers were not prepared to face these dangers, and
Lord Liverpool on November 10 announced in the House
of Lords that “in the present state of the country, and
with the division of sentiment so nearly balanced just
evinced by their Lordships,” he did not propose to
proceed with the Bill.

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

Anne Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

[11 MICHAEL'S PLACE], BROMPTON,
November 15, 1820.

MY DEAR JAMES,—I suppose the same vessel which carries you this will convey to the Yankees the intelligence that even in an aristocratic country, a people under even a Kingly government may sometimes command and have their will ; the greatest triumph has been gained by the people of England that ever was gained in this world. The Ministers had carried their Bill at the third reading by a majority of *nine*, but, fearing the vengeance of the people, they did not dare send it to the House of Commons, so they *gave it up*. The decision was known about *four* o'clock in the afternoon, and in less than half-an-hour afterwards, guns were firing in all directions, the church bells ringing in all parts of the town, and every street, and all the suburbs have been most brilliantly illuminated for the last *five* nights ; everybody, whether the Queen's friends or not, being compelled to light up, and the Ministers obliged to fly out of town and leave their houses filled with police officers. This is the triumph of the *people*, and they do enjoy it, I assure you. All the gentlemen's carriages are stopped and abused unless their servants have white bows in their hats, or laurel leaves. The Mail and other coaches that carried the news into the country spread it about very soon. At Winchester, where the Mail gets in at *three* in the morning, the parish officers were soon called up, all the Parsons were awaked before daylight by the ringing of the bells. Benbow (who lives opposite to where you may remember Mr. Clement lived in the Strand), and from whence has issued that which has *caused* this triumph, has two fine emblematic and appropriate transparencies, and has the whole front of his house one mass of blaze. I think he ought to think

his injuries avenged, for I assure you Govr. says *he* is satisfied, for his own part. Everybody gives *him* the credit for it, solely and undividedly. There will be a change of Ministers, but though the Whigs *want* to get in, still they seem *shy*, for they know they cannot get in unless the people help them, and in that case they know they must give *some* reform; and the Govr. says unless they do that they *shall not* come in, and if they give a *little*, the rest will soon follow. There will be another election, in that case, and then the Govr. will be got in by some means or another. At present the whole country is mad with rejoicing. It was the threat in the concluding part of the Queen's letter which frightened them, and *her* triumph is *ours*, you know, my dear Jumpy. They have gone through the mockery of tramping the Military through the streets every night, though they knew they could not trust them, and they actually *cheered* and *waved their caps* in passing Benbow's. Papa got a coach and took us all through the town two nights since, to see the illuminations, and the spectacle was fine beyond anything you can imagine. All the ships in the river lighted to the mast-heads, processions marching with bands of music carrying busts of the Queen with the crown on her head, covered with laurels, playing God save the Queen and bearing torches; altogether the sight was such as to overcome one, at the same time that it was most particularly gratifying to *us*.¹

William Cobbett to Lady Anne Hamilton

BROMPTON, Sunday, November 19, 1820.

MY LADY,—I beg leave to trouble your Ladyship with a suggestion, which appears to me not unimportant. Doubtless her Majesty will soon *order a play* at one of the theatres. If so, and at Covent Garden, the play of *Wallace*, I, with great submission, think ought to be the

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

play. It is a *new play*; the subject very apt and suitable; and the *northern* friends of her Majesty, who have been very zealous in her cause, would be greatly flattered by the selection. The author is a very young man, whose name is *Walker*, and who and whose father (a gentleman in Sussex) have been extremely zealous and active in her Majesty's cause. The selection would be a mark of her Majesty's desire to cherish rising genius, and would undoubtedly be greatly beneficial to the author.

After stating so many and such weighty reasons to induce your Ladyship to have the goodness to recommend the thing to her Majesty, it is unnecessary for me to add (though I cannot help doing it) that the selection would be deemed a particular favour, conferred on your Ladyship's most obedient and most humble servant

WM. COBBETT,

and the *only favour* that he ever shall ask at her Majesty's hands.—Mr. Alderman Wood knows *Mr. Walker* well, and would, I am certain, heartily second the application.¹

John M. Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York.

[11 MICHAEL'S PLACE], BROMPTON,
November 26, 1820.

MY DEAR JAMES,—I wrote to you about two months since, and sent my letter (a longish one), with a whole volume of writings of Nancy's, to Mr. Smith, to be sent off by the then next opportunity; but, by some mistake or another, I have never for a certainty heard that the parcel reached Liverpool. I hope it did, and that it has long since been in your possession, as it may have acted, in some measure, as an atonement for my negligence in the corresponding way. Those on your side of the water, who may have expected long letters from me,

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

must long have thought I take but a queerish method to "*congeal my friends.*"

In the letter I have alluded to above, I gave you some information respecting the state of affairs in this country; but, more particularly, I gave you an account of the Governor's situation amongst the movers in the great affair which has, from its commencement, set everything else aside. The Trial and all other *particulars* you will doubtless have seen from the papers. But you may not be able to extract from them the state of the public feeling and of the miserable plight of the two political factions: the Whigs and Tories. I will do what I can in drawing their cadaverous portraits.

In the first place, with one accord, the people, the whole of the people, Church people, Methodists and sectarians of all sorts, Tradesmen, *Farmers*, labourers, and *Soldiers* as much as any, had all long ago declared for the Queen, leaving for her enemies the King, Ministers, and all courtiers and all Parsons and Priests of every description. This, in the first place, was almost a Revolution; for the Queen is a Radical, and has consequently joined all together against the Government.

Seeing that the whole public had decided *prima facie* in her favour, the Ministers saw that they must find her guilty to save themselves from the odium of maltreating an *innocent* woman; therefore, until the last moment, they fully intended to pass the Bill. But the being *obliged* to drop it when it was on the eve of passing has been more to their disgrace than it would have been had they dropped it in an earlier stage of the proceedings. And if you read the debates immediately subsequent to the trial, you will see that it was at last thrown out merely from a dread of public vengeance, as a majority, certainly, of those who voted *against* the passing of the Bill declared the Queen guilty, but said "it was dangerous, from the state of the public mind, to press the measure any further." A confession of mob influence which must

have stuck in their Lordships' throats sometime before they could give it utterance.

There is nothing now going on, the Parliament being prorogued for two months. But the whole Government is one universally hated monster! And the Ministers would willingly turn out, but those who come in must attend to the voice of the people, and all can plainly see that that voice would call, first, for the Trial of the Ministers as Criminals, and secondly, for Parliamentary Reform. The Ministers stay in to save their heads, and the Whigs stay out because they cannot perform what they *must* promise before they will be let in.

The state of things is, therefore, as you may conceive, delightful. The Governor's power is monstrous now, and they all feel it. He has pointed out their difficulties to them, and they plainly see that they can do nothing without giving the people all they want, and their stomachs are not quite brought to yet. We send you some papers giving account of the public rejoicings. Letters could not contain half.

Papa presented two or three addresses to the Q. one day, and has had many more every presenting day since, but he always sends a deputy.¹

Anne Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

BROMPTON, December 6, 1820.

MY DEAR JAMES,—To-day, you must know, is the Lady Ellen's birthday, and to-day she has numbered fifteen years, and is withal a very comely dame to look at. This day week our Gracious lady the Queen went in state to St. Paul's to return thanks for her escape from the fangs of the Government; when I say *in state*, I mean that her intention of going had been announced a week before, and that the City authorities had been notified to meet her at Temple Bar and accompany her to the Church, for

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

she had none of the usual appendages of *state* to attend upon her, no soldiers, constables, civil officers, or anything of the kind, not one of the nobility; and it was the finest sight ever beheld. About a *thousand* gentlemen mounted on horseback formed themselves into a guard of honour, and riding four abreast, five hundred rode before and five hundred behind her carriage. She was from ten o'clock till half-past twelve going from Hyde Park corner to St. Paul's, owing to the immense mob, and yet it was wonderful to see how well the people behaved; all seemed actuated by one common feeling, and, strange to say, not one accident happened during the whole day. It was a very fine dry cold day, and altogether it was a most gratifying concern. As she went to the Church the Queen's carriage was shut, but in returning she had it thrown open, that the people might see her, and this, you know, considering the weather, was very kind and condescending. I assure you, my dear Jumpy, we all wished for you that day, as, indeed, we do every day, but then in particular, for it was *our* triumph as well as the Queen's, and it was a great damper to us that you were not here to participate in the pleasure with us. In short, we begin to be very impatient about your coming home now.¹

Anne Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

BROMPTON, January 17, 1821.

Papa is become mighty fond of dress, and if you had seen him go off to Court to pay his respects to the Queen this morning, you would not have known him, he looked so smart. A *Claret*-coloured coat, white waistcoat and silk stockings, dancing pumps and powdered head, are very becoming to him, I assure you.—Pray is it suspected in America who wrote the letter? But I suppose the poor simpletons think it to be her own production.

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

When, alas! she did nothing but put her fist to the bottom of it. If it depended upon *her writing*, the country need not expect much assistance from her. She likes a game of blind man's buff much better. She is a real *good woman*, kind, charitable, feeling and condescending towards every creature; she possesses wonderful courage, presence of mind, fortitude, and promptness in action; but Papa declares she does not write better than Mrs. Churcher, and we know that she *will not* read to please anybody. She is very industrious, for when sitting still she is always at work, and if anything ails any of her servants she waits upon them and sees them properly taken care of, and such like. But *study* she never did and never will. She loves fun to her heart, and I think the Govr. is the man of all men to be her Prime Minister.

The following letter concludes the series. Written by Cobbett, and taken from the draft in his handwriting, it was sent to the Queen, to be copied by one of her Household (probably by Lady Anne Hamilton) and sent in her name to her son-in-law:—

The Queen to Prince Leopold

BRANDENBURGH HOUSE, February 17, 1821.

SIR,—Her Majesty the Queen, having duly considered the contents of the letter, which I had the honour to receive from you on the 12th instant, has been pleased to command that an answer should be returned in the following words.

With regard to the rejection of the application of His Royal Highness Prince Leopold for a personal interview, Her Majesty would be sorry if the act alluded to were suitably described by the word *rejection*; and Her Majesty is eager to observe on this part of your letter that, if the proposed personal interview was declined, it was solely because Her Majesty clearly saw that it

was wholly unnecessary, or that it must be painful to both parties; because, if His Royal Highness were prepared to assent, there needed no explanation; and if to announce a refusal were to be the result of the interview, that refusal would, Her Majesty naturally concluded, come with less reserve and less pain from the pen than from the lips of His Royal Highness.

Frank herself on all occasions, Her Majesty would have preferred a statement more explicit of the grounds of His Royal Highness's present determination as well as of that determination itself. But, before remarking on these, Her Majesty would call to the recollection of His Royal Highness that Her Majesty had, on one pretence or another, been disappointed as to every residence that she had had in view, whether the object of her own choice or pointed out by His Majesty's Ministers; that it was not until after these numerous disappointments that Her Majesty thought of treating for Marlborough House, having good ground for believing that His Royal Highness was anxious to remove from that mansion, and that he had actually given directions with a view to such removal; that Her Majesty had even good grounds for believing that His Royal Highness contemplated a temporary residence abroad; that it having been rumoured that His Majesty had objections to her occupying Marlborough House, a communication with the Earl of Liverpool took place on the subject, and that the Minister stated that His Majesty had no communication with His Royal Highness Prince Leopold, and declined to authorize any answer to be given.

Under these circumstances Her Majesty made the purchase of the lease of Marlborough House, which, besides other recommendations, had that of being the property of the nation, and therefore the more fit for a Royal Residence; and, if Her Majesty be now compelled to abandon the hope of accomplishing her purpose, the lessons which she has received in the school of afflict-

tion will teach her to bear the disappointment with fortitude.

If Her Majesty be obliged to abandon this hope, she would, however, have preferred doing it at once on a final determination explicitly declared by His Royal Highness, to being kept in suspense by allusion to circumstances and contingencies, from which allusion it is difficult to deduce even so much as the implication of a meaning. But if the terms in which is conveyed what Her Majesty fears must be deemed a refusal are not entirely satisfactory to Her Majesty, Her Majesty can by no means disguise her complete want of satisfaction as to the alleged *grounds* of His Royal Highness's determination.

Her Majesty does not think that obscurity of expression can, in any case, be of real utility, and Her Majesty must lament that, in a case like the present, where the nation might finally become the umpire, and where it was, therefore, so necessary that the motives of all parties should be clearly understood; Her Majesty cannot but lament that, in a case like this, His Royal Highness should not have directed the grounds of his proceedings to be stated to Her Majesty in plain and simple language.

However, Her Majesty is, from the tenor of the whole of the Letter, warranted in assuming that His Royal Highness alleges "that he would willingly make a surrender of Marlborough House to Her Majesty, but that he has a well-grounded apprehension that such surrender would occasion uneasiness, or give positive offence to the King; and that duty and every feeling of delicacy and propriety forbid him to cause such uneasiness or give such offence."

That this is the real meaning of His Royal Highness, Her Majesty is confident no one can question. On this statement of grounds, Her Majesty has first to suggest for the consideration of His Royal Highness, whether

to represent His Majesty as ready to take positive offence on such an account is the best possible way of showing delicacy and respect towards His Majesty. For her own part, Her Majesty cannot help thinking that a bare allusion to such a ground of apprehension could have been rendered endurable in the mind of His Royal Highness only by long familiarity with the history of Her Majesty's persecutions, in every page of which history the world has read that, as towards Her Majesty, nothing has been deemed indelicate, nothing unmanly.

Far be it from Her Majesty to underrate the weight of that duty towards His Majesty which His Royal Highness is pleased to urge as his principal motive of restraint upon this occasion. But Her Majesty is free to confess her inability to discover any sense of *duty* which would not, in this case, have tended to an opposite result. If it be duty, as a subject, to which His Royal Highness alludes, Her Majesty has never yet heard that in a land of freedom the sovereign had any control, direct or indirect, over the disposition of private property; and Her Majesty hopes that the time will never arrive when individuals will, in the disposal of their estates, be under any apprehensions of creating uneasiness in the breast of the sovereign, much less of giving him positive offence. Naboth, indeed, suffered for persisting in disposing of his own Vineyard at his pleasure; but the final consequences were not such as to induce succeeding generations to believe that there is any duty in a subject towards his sovereign which restrains the former from freely using his own property. Besides, if the mere apprehension of giving offence to the King be a valid ground of objection with His Royal Highness, the same ground must have been good to the same or a similar end on the part of every subject of the realm, and then what, how deplorable, must have been the condition of Her Majesty! If every subject had thought himself bound in duty to the King so to act towards the

Queen as to give neither offence nor uneasiness to His Majesty, Her Majesty believes that it requires little of exaggeration to conclude that she would have [been] completely abandoned, totally bereft of every comfort, left destitute of even raiment and of food. None understand better than Englishmen their duty as subjects; none more cheerfully render that duty; but, happily for Her Majesty, they have not included in that duty an abandonment of their own rights, and have entertained no apprehensions when called upon for the exercise of kindness and humanity.

Her Majesty is aware that His Royal Highness may have in view a duty towards His Majesty of another and more tender nature. But can it be necessary for Her Majesty to remind His Royal Highness that, as to *this* duty, Her Majesty also has some little claim! His Royal Highness had to witness, indeed, the omission of Her Majesty's name in the superscription on the coffin of her dear daughter; but His Royal Highness can surely not have adopted the opinion that a series of unjust and barbarous treatment, of however long duration, has bereft Her Majesty of a right to expect from His Royal Highness every feeling of duty which, as a son-in-law, His Royal Highness owes to the King.

Her Majesty, however strongly urged by the circumstances of the case, forbears to enter into a detail of the singular transactions, in which Her Majesty has been the cause of showers of comforts falling on others, while even the scattering drops have been so grudgingly allotted to Her Majesty; but Her Majesty cannot refrain from expressing her belief that there must have been some moments of His Royal Highness's life when he did not anticipate his present apprehensions; and Her Majesty, having asked His Royal Highness whether, if a melancholy event had not taken place, His Royal Highness would have come to his present determination; having asked His Royal Highness what reason conscience and

honour can give for his determination being different now from what it would have been if that event had not happened; having put these questions to His Royal Highness, Her Majesty has nothing further to add, except an expression of her hope that a short time for reflection may induce His Royal Highness to alter that determination, which Her Majesty cannot help believing to have been taken under apprehensions much more imaginary than real.¹

¹ The Cobbett MSS. The draft of this letter is in the handwriting of William Cobbett.

CHAPTER XIX

LITERATURE AND POLITICS (1821-1832)

Cobbett's position in 1820—His financial state—Leaves Botley and comes to London in January 1821—The business side of the *Political Register*—Cobbett's plans—A letter to Lord Egremont—Correspondence 1821-22—Connection with the *Statesman*—The King and Queen—Political affairs—Cobbett's seed-farm in High Street, Kensington—Subsequent removal to Barn Elms, Surrey—The Cobbett Library—Prospectus—*Advice to Young Men*—His projected History of England—His conception of history—*History of the Reign of George IV*—*History of the Reformation in England*—*Rural Rides*—*Two-penny Trash*—Trial for sedition in 1831—Acquittal.

IN spite of the trials and tribulations that befell Cobbett during 1820, he was not depressed. His stalwart defence of the Queen had endeared him to the people, and at the end of the year his eldest daughter, inspired by his confidence, was evidently in high spirits.

Anne Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

BROMPTON, December 6, 1820.

We are mounting the ladder apace now much quicker than we came down. Papa never did a better thing than cutting the old Major (Cartwright),¹ Hunt, and the whole tribe calling themselves Reformers. He has never until now been able to do anything or go anywhere without having to drag some of them along with him, and

¹ Anne Cobbett subsequently added a note: "The Major had done something nasty by Papa, in conjunction with some Westminster Cliques of Politicians."



WILLIAM COBBETT
From an engraving by H. Adlard

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they always kept him back ; but now that he is rid of the whole swarm he is able to do more for himself, for the cause, and is of much more consequence in himself.¹

Anne Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

BROMPTON, December 16, 1820.

I told you in a letter which I believe went by the 1st November that our certificate is signed, and consequently we have now no one debt in the world. And I also told you, I believe, that the estate we have put into Chancery, in order that we may have the selling of it put off for *three years*, as we expect either that it will be *ours* by that time, or that the value of land and the growth of timber may be so increased that it may sell for its worth. During this period we might live at Botley if we chose, but after due consideration of the matter, we found that a residence at so great a distance from town would be very inconvenient, and indeed impracticable at this interesting time. Papa *must* be in town almost constantly to enter into discussion of events as they take place, and also to look after the *business* part of the *Register* ; and then to keep up an establishment down there would be adding very greatly to our expenses, and be very uncomfortable at the same time. Besides which I assure you that a return to the place has completely sickened us of it. What with the Parson and the disagreeable B——s, and nobody but the poor people and Doctor Punch to compensate for the constant annoyance of the others, we found it very disagreeable. The house we are in at present, at Brompton, we find too small, and have got one in our eye at Kensington, which has four acres of land, quite enough for Papa's amusement, though not sufficient to drag him into any great expenses. There we can have two cows, a pig, a duck and a hen to lay eggs, all in a very snug way, and

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

we shall bake our own bread, and be as much in the country style of living as if we were a hundred miles from town. The *Register* brings in *a thousand a year*, and this, you know, is not to be sneezed at. The French Grammar and gardening book will both sell very well, and would have been out now if it had pleased her Majesty to bide away a few months longer. Then the *Peep*¹ sold "deprising" well, as Dick says, and we have got a Peep at the Commons and one into the Church, coming out. So that *I* am very well contented with the times such as they are at present. The *Register* would sell most enormously, if it were not for the difficulties which the Acts passed last winter have thrown in the way of sending them over the country. As to *Law*, Papa and the boys have come to a determination that to succeed at it *now* a man *must* be a rogue; but, at the time that *you* are ready to be called thereto, things must be in a very different state indeed; and, therefore, my advice to you is to do all you can in acquiring knowledge on the subject. The time you will devote to it cannot be *wasted*, at all events; a knowledge of law is useful to every man, be he what he may.²

Although, then, Botley was to remain Cobbett's for three years, he did not live there. "Botley is getting much too hot to hold us,"³ Anne wrote to her brother James on October 26, 1820; a state of affairs probably occasioned by Cobbett not having been able to pay the debts he had incurred in the neighbourhood. Whatever the reason, later in the year the entire family, except James, who was in the United States, removed to London.

In January 1821, my family, after having for years been scattered about like a covey of partridges that had

¹ *A Peep at the Peers*, published by Cobbett earlier in the year.

² The Cobbett MSS.

³ *Ibid.*

been sprung and shot at, got *once more together* in a *hired lodging* at Brompton; and our delight and mutual caresses, and our tears of joy, experienced no abatement at our actually finding ourselves with *only three shillings in the whole world*, and at my having to borrow from a friend the money to *pay for the paper and print off the then next Saturday's Register*.¹

Anne Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

BROMPTON, January 17, 1821.

. . . And now I will tell you what we are all so busy about. First, then, know that Benbow² has turned out to be the greatest, ten thousand million times the greatest, villain that Papa ever had to deal with; and that you know is saying a great deal. Wright was an angel in comparison. But the excess of his villainy will be productive of our salvation in the end, for it has made Papa determine to trust *no one* for the future, and next Saturday the *Register* is to be published by John Morgan Cobbett, who has this day taken a house in the Strand and opened shop, so now you may fancy the Gentleman skipping about behind the counter. Moreover, Papa means to carry on the *printing* himself at the house we are going to, at Kensington, where there is a building removed from the dwelling-house just fitted for the purpose. So now he will have the printer's profits, the publishing and retailing profits, and the author's profits. Everybody is commending Papa for this new scheme, which he has actually been driven to because he could not get his money out of Benbow's hands. About *four hundred* pounds, at the very least, he has got now, not one farthing of which will Papa ever get. And the wretch is abusing us all round in the most diabolical manner you ever heard, threatening to split John's skull,

¹ *Political Register*, April 10, 1830.

² The publisher of the *Political Register*.

calling him and William "two ignorant asses," and saying that his wife (who is, I think, on her *death-bed*) says that *now* she is *happy*, there being an end to his connection with Cobbett! But there, I can give you no idea of the wretch's behaviour, but it has really quite disgusted Papa with the Patriots, and he vows he will have no more to do with any of them. I told you in my last letter that the *Register* brought in about a thousand a year, but, however, we find that it is more likely two thousand, if we could only get it, and we are resolved we will get it. We are all monstrously bitten with a fancy for getting some money together, and since whatever Papa writes does sell, we are resolved that no rascally rogue of a Reformer shall step in and rob us of our earnings. This arrangement has only been made three weeks, and you cannot think how merry it has made us all. Papa declares he never was so happy in his life, for now he says he feels some encouragement to labour, for he knows he shall not be robbed any more. Several books he has got in his head to bring out, and the printing being done under his own eye at home, and the publishing and all the profits of selling under the management of Master John at his shop, he will find himself at last reaping the fruits of his labours. The poor dear soul was terribly cut at Benbow's ingratitude, so much so that it disturbed his sleep at night, and really whenever I think of *that*, Jimmy, I could go and stick a dagger into him. Under our own management the *Register* will have [a] very great sale, and as it goes more amongst gentlemen than it does among the ragged class, the sale will be steady, and, between ourselves, the Govr. says so too. There will be warm work this winter in the Houses of Parliament, the Whigs are trying to pick up a bit of a bobbery about the country by declaring themselves for Reform. All this tends to sell our wares, and I care not what they do about Reform so that they let John get hold of their money. He will not live in

Town, but tramp in from Kensington every morning and out again at night, which is just what you know Major Codd has done for the last twenty years.

The Queen has bought a house in Pall Mall, a large house fit for her to live in, the gardens of which communicate with Carlton House, and she says she will have a hole cut in the wall and be in with her spouse in a trice. How she will worry them, to be sure, and she is resolved not to give up an inch. . . .

Papa took a trip into the country a few weeks ago, and he had a day's fox-hunting and a day of rabbit-hunting with ferrets, which latter he says is the best sport in the world. He is uncommonly well, and in good spirits and in good humour with everybody and everything except this vile rascal Benbow. Indeed, he was saying only a few days before we found out his roguery that he never was so happy in his life. I am sure it is high time he began to know what ease and happiness is. Perhaps it will be a great good in the end, and indeed it certainly will, for it has made the boys stir their stumps, and determined them to put a stop to this system of pillage. John opened his shop yesterday morning, and if you remember Moses in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, you may fancy something like our equipping John out for his first essay behind the counter. When he came home at night he brought upwards of twenty-six pounds with him, after paying the printer, &c. &c. And positively we sometimes have not had any money at all from Benbow for several weeks together, and then when we did get it perhaps 5*l.* at a time. But you will not be surprised at his sacking Papa's money when I tell you that he sleeps in a bed, the whole concern of which must have cost at least *fifty pounds!!!* And it comes out that his opposite neighbours have been in the habit of seeing him seated at his table with *two decanters* placed before him. If you feel any astonishment at this not being *suspected* and put a stop to, a little hint in my last letter will

remind you that *I* was fearful of some *negligence*, though I really did not suspect anything like the roguery that has come to light. If shorter reckonings had been kept, or if the boys had paid more attention to the business, none of this would have happened. I always dreaded a settlement, as I was sure a rumpus would accompany it. But you men bodys are all so [*word illegible*] that we poor women dare never presume to offer our advice or pretend to any knowledge above the darning-needle or the pudding-cloth. However, John is monstrously of a mind now to attend to business, and I think we shall get on famously well. He is to attend to the office, and Wm. is to stay at home and mind the *printing*.

William Cobbett to his Son James, in New York

BROMPTON, February 7, 1821.

. . . Now let me beg your attention to what I have to say. I have settled that you are to remain till next October—15th, or thereabouts. The *American Garden Book* is nearly done. It will go off in a month at farthest, but it requires time to copy it, for I must send you duplicates. The Grammar to teach French will be ready in *May*, and shall reach you in July. These books are to be delivered to Mr. Morgan, who will take the Copy-rights in his own name; and will do everything that is right towards us. Now, you know that Benbow has turned out the greatest rogue and villain of all. In short, it is become necessary for us to rely *only on ourselves*. I have bought the lease of a place at Kensington, which has *four acres of ground walled in*. A very beautiful place indeed. William will *print* there, and John will publish in town, which indeed, he does already. My income is about *three thousand pounds a year*, which, God knows, is quite enough. But I see no reason why I should not, as I have the land, and so well situated,

form a nursery, which might make a very good income for you. It is true that we *may* all be otherwise engaged, but it is prudent and pleasant to be independent of courts and courtiers. And, besides, I take great delight in trees and gardens, and it gives me great pleasure to introduce and spread things of this sort. I have a right to enjoy some pleasures as well as other people. . . . Those villains *Wright* and *Cleary* have pillaged me to the amount of about 800 pounds by *law*. *Burdett* has been their abettor, and in about three days *he will walk into jail!* I shall, as soon as greater affairs will allow me, do full justice to all these villains. However, all is *prosperous* with us now. We may be as rich as we ought to be in a very few years.—God bless you, my dear little James.¹

William Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

KENSINGTON, July 24, 1821.

Everything prospers in my affairs. The whole nation is disposed to listen to me; and, in short, we are as we ought to be. This is a beautiful place. We have a hot-house, a green-house, 30 lights of frame-work, keep 5 cows, and Dear Dick is to have his pony in a month to ride out with me.²

William Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

KENSINGTON, September 13, 1821.

I informed you how successfully we were going on here; that I had, with my own hands, raised a large income, which was daily growing larger and larger.³

¹ Add. MSS. 31127, ff. 18-19.

² The Cobbett MSS.

³ *Ibid.*

William Cobbett, Jr., to James M. Cobbett, in New York

December 20, 1821.

Papa has renewed the sporting propensity, and has been practising in every kind of pursuit after game, but with the guns.¹

William Cobbett to the Earl of Egremont, at Petworth

KENSINGTON, December 26, 1821.

MY LORD,—When I reflect on the conduct of the Aristocracy towards the people in general, and towards myself in particular, I cannot but be agreeably surprised that a member of that body should have been just and frank enough to offer me an apology for *any* thing, though such apology had been ten million times more loudly called for than in the case referred to by your lordship; a case in which the statement manifestly arose from mistake, contained nothing of malice towards me, was clearly not intended to do me the smallest injury, and accordingly deserved, has received, and will receive no *reproof* at my hands.

Nothing further would have been necessary on my part, if your lordship had not thought proper to inform me that you “disapprove of the principles of the *Register* generally,” and that you have not taken it in on that account. I lament this, my lord, for two reasons, first, because it is not pleasant to learn that one’s principles are disapproved of by any person of a character such as that which your lordship bears; and second, because (to follow your example in point of frankness) I am convinced that without the adoption of those principles by the Parliament, there must come a convulsion, in which it is possible your lordship may lose every acre which the loan-jobbers and stock-jobbers will have left you.

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

I am disposed to believe that your lordship cannot know what the principles of the *Register* really are, and that you have formed your opinion of them upon no evidence other than that contained in the newspapers, which chiefly have been and are in the hands of selfish creatures, the mere tools of corrupt men who, though exceedingly knavish, have at last shown to all the world that their foolishness exceeds even their knavery. If your lordship had *read* the *Register* before you disapproved of it, you would have known that, for eighteen years or thereabouts out of the twenty, its principles have been these :—

That the Debt and paper system must be got rid of, or that the nobility and the church must fall.

That to get rid of the Debt and paper system there must be a reform in that House of Commons, the mode of filling which is so well known.

That this reform, therefore, is not less expedient than it is just.

These, my lord, are the principles of the *Register*; principles maintained by arguments that have never been answered except in the way that the High Priests and Elders answered the arguments of Saint Paul; principles which thus far have received the sanction of experience, and which, I am persuaded, have not now long to wait to hear their truth proclaimed throughout the world, either by the cheers of millions quietly restored to freedom and happiness, or by the thunder of events which, with [the] Six Acts before my eyes, I will not venture to describe even in a letter committed to the honour of a nobleman.

Such are the principles of which your lordship thinks it necessary to express your disapprobation. What are the principles you approve of it is not for me to say, but I cannot refrain from observing that it is a strange thing to behold a body of nobles jealous, haughty and

severe towards the common people, who cannot be their rivals and without whom they are nothing, while they are all confidence, all condescension, all kindness and caressing towards a tribe of money-changers, loan-jobbers and stock-jobbers, who are actually taking from them, day by day, those estates which alone give them the power of acting towards the people as they have done. However, such is their choice, and the consequences must ultimately rest with themselves; an observation which, as well as those which precede it, I should not have obtruded upon your lordship, if you had not deemed it necessary to inform me that you disapproved of those principles that have so long been inculcated by me.—I am, my lord, your lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.¹

Anne Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

KENSINGTON, December 27, 1821.

MY DEAR JAMES,—Papa and I have just returned from a fortnight's visit in Norfolk, where the Governor met with a reception, both public and private, most gratifying, I assure you. Two public dinners were given him, one at Yarmouth and the other at Norwich, at both of which places, if he had shown his nose three years ago, he would not have got away with a bone unbroken. He was received with unbounded applause; and as he walked through the market at Norwich, where there were about two thousand rich farmers assembled, and there as he passed through the crowd they took off their hats and bowed to him, and those who were near enough pressed forward to shake him by the hand. These were not *rabble* but rich farmers, all of whom keep hunters and some of them hounds. At the village of Cawston, where Baker was born, the ringers were in waiting to ring the bells as Papa passed through. We were staying at the

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

house of Mr. Clarke, and every day while we were there we had a large dinner-party of three or four and twenty people to meet Papa, or else he went out to dine at the house of somebody else; and really you can imagine nothing like the respect and admiration with which the people behaved towards him. They really appeared to make a little God of him. He is receiving invitations to accept of public dinners from all parts of the kingdom, and from a very different sort of people from those who used to come to him. The *farmers* when they are good are certainly the best people in the world. Mr. Clarke and many others whom we saw in his neighbourhood has been always a constant reader and admirer. When Papa came out of Newgate he had a grand dinner at his house in celebration of it, and made two or three persons so drunk they could not stand. And in Norfolk we found what we owe and shall always owe to the poor Queen, for many places where Papa was received with unbounded admiration he would not have dared to show his nose before the Queen's cause turned so many many hundreds of hearts from the side of the government. All we have to lament is that the cause of so much and lasting good should have suffered so melancholy an end.¹

*William Cobbett to Samuel Clarke, Bergh Apton,
Norwich*

KENSINGTON, January 17, 1822.

MY DEAR SIR,—We have had famous fun in *Sussex*. By heavens we have stirred up *that county* at any rate! I wish you had been with me. Lewes is the *head-quarters* of the Bull-frogs of the South Downs. There were not less than 300 present; and the Ellmans had been beating up for recruits all the day. It was, as you will see by the *Register*, the devil of an attack. Spalding and Nichols and Denny will laugh to see how I *parried* the

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

unexpected thrust ; and how I beat the cocks upon their own dunghill. But, I must say, that I was not the less tranquil for having *William standing behind me*, and a friend at my right hand. It was a cursed passage, to be sure ; I wrote it at *Withers's* that morning when my candle went out, and when I was compelled to write till noon. When you see Withers, tell him that his rush-light going out made me in a hurry and really did make me put upon paper what I should not have put on it by candle-light in the morning. You will laugh when you get the next *Register*.

I am to be at *Huntingdon* by invitation on *Tuesday next*. There is to be a grand dinner, at which the "*distresses*" are to be taken into consideration. The dinner is on *Tuesday*. I go down on *Monday*. I come home on *Thursday*. I go back to *Lynn in Norfolk* on the 28th, and am to dine with the farmers there on *Tuesday the 29th*. . . .¹

*William Cobbett to Samuel Clarke, Bergh Apton,
near Norwich*

KENSINGTON, *March 25, 1822.*

MY DEAR SIR,—William and I shall be at the White Swann, at Norwich, on Thursday night. We must come off again quick as lightning ; for there is not now a moment of time to lose. I shall set away back as soon as the dinner is over, so as to be back in London by eight o'clock in the morning ! This is of great importance in many respects. Now, if it be not too fatiguing for Miss Clarke, she can go to Norwich on Friday, and set off with you and me in a post-chaise in the evening ; and we can leave William to find his way back to London when and how he likes.

Please to pack up and send us all the rest of the turnip (swede) seed, as soon as you can ; for we shall

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

sell it all, I am very sure. What we shall do is this, pay you 6d. a pound for the seed and divide the other sixpence with you, after taking out the cost of carriage; so that you will get for your seed about 8d. a pound, as we sell hardly any in quantities less than 10 pounds. If you cannot sell for 8d. at home, send it all to us, and the sooner the better.¹

Anne Cobbett to James P. Cobbett, in New York

KENSINGTON, May 30, 1822.

You will be here just about in time to see that scamp of scamps, Hunt, come out of his der. He has been for a long time abusing first Papa, then William and John, in his periodical publication, and lately he has fallen upon *Mama*, telling the reformers of England that Mrs. Cobbett was always changing her cooks and housemaids. Did you ever hear of such a fool? But all this has never provoked Papa to say one word about him, either good, bad, or indifferent. And now there is another tack, Hunt and Sir Francis Burdett are making all the world sick by *praising one another*. What a set of rogues Patriots are!²

William Cobbett to Dr. Taylor, in New York

KENSINGTON, July 2, 1822.

. . . The *daily paper*, of which I have spoken, is the *Statesman*, in which I have taken a share, and the *politics* of which I have under my control. . . .³

¹ From the autograph collection of Mr. Stanley Lathbury.

² The Cobbett MSS.

³ During the following year Cobbett broke off his connection with the *Statesman*. "It was a variety of causes that made him determine to have done with it," his son John wrote on May 23, 1823. "Being kept constantly in London was one; actually pulled away from the French Grammar (which is more than half done), the best reason. Then, on the other hand, the bad print in which the papers always

As to public affairs, the *Register* and *Statesman* will tell you pretty nearly what is passing. I may add that the country is surprisingly changed since you went away. The government is comparatively gentle. Very tame from what it used to be. It is so pushed by the Landlords, that it is as feeble as a child. This has been a terrible session. They have just passed a vote for adding eight, or nearly eight, millions to the Debt, while they have taken off 4,000,000 of the taxes. I am sure they must reduce the interest of the Debt largely next year, or repeal Peel's Bill, and come to real *assignats*. What is to happen no man can say; but I expect that the *church property*, both in England and Ireland, will be made very free with in a very short time. As to *my own affairs*, I have subdued *all my foes*. The fulfilment of my predictions has given me a thousand times the weight that I have ever had before. The *Register* has a circulation that it never before had, and its effects are really prodigious. It keeps in check the government and the other faction too. The *Statesman* has a great run in its way, so that I have now a good share of the press in my hands, and I use it for the good of my country, I trust, and I really do think that I am destined (if any man is) to save this kingdom from that very revolution which the villains have so long been accusing me of endeavouring to produce. Old Burdett makes a very sorry figure now that I am upon the spot to stick to him. The ruffians, owing, and solely owing, to my having *lost my voice at Coventry*, have kept me out of the House; but they have not kept me out of hearing. I have, since last autumn, been in *seventeen counties* making *Rustic Harangues*, which have produced far more effect than any of the speeches in Parliament. In short,

appeared had well-nigh broken off the connexion at several distinct times, and to determine the mind that was more than half determined before, a little instance or two of veniality stepped in" (The Cobbett MSS.).

I am as I ought to be, and am enjoying the fruit of my industry and perseverance. The things which I wrote in the *Paper-Tent* in Long Island are now read by all the nation; edition after edition are published, and everybody seems astonished at my *foresight*. What I do now only sustains the monument that I raised when I used to be laughing away my time in Long Island; a spot which, on many accounts, will always be dear to my recollection. I do not think they will be able to keep me out of Parliament long, let things go how they may; and when I am there, I think you may be satisfied that all is safe. I know I could rescue the country from its perils, but I also know that not a *suggestion* will I give to be acted upon by any *other man* than myself. It is my duty to do all that I can for my country, but not to show others how to do it to exalt them and to keep myself in a state of abasement.

You would be astonished to behold the state of nothingness to which Burdett and his band are reduced. They are like grass which a heavy foot repeatedly and constantly presses to the earth and bruises. As to Bott Smith, Burdett's Toad-eater at Liverpool, judge of his state when he was driven to destroy himself by promulgating the substance of the contents of Hulme's private letter, and when he dared not print the letter itself, though I challenged him to do it on pain of passing for a *sheer liar*. The truth is, he had it intimated to him by several persons (no friends of mine), that if he published that letter, they would *cut him!* So that here he was, I calling upon him to publish, on pain of being set down as a naked liar, the *Courier* calling upon him in the same strain, and his friends bidding him abstain, on pain of being everlastingly damned! I had not thought of the beast for three months before I sat down to write to you. The truth is, I did not care a straw about the letter. The *puff-out* article has done me no harm, and the country a great deal of good. I was sorry that

Hulme should have written such a letter, but I did not care a straw about it, and that Bott Smith must have known if he had not been the fool that he is.

I must not conclude without telling you that we owe a great deal to the poor Queen. It was she that pulled down the haughty foes of our freedom more than all the rest of us put together. Until she came, scarcely any man dared to say his soul was his own. She raised the people up, and Peel's Bill has kept them up, while their oppressors have been falling. She lost her life in consequence of a set of half-fools half-knaves, who were unable to defend her themselves, and who were too base and envious to suffer those to come about her who were able to do it, but who, for their own honour, could not suffer themselves to be abased by becoming tools in the hands of such contemptible men. Never was human being so unfortunate; never were glory and life so manifestly made the sacrifice to "*absolute*" folly, and to envy and baseness not less absolute. The people acquired immortal honour by their conduct towards her. The King can never forget that conduct; and, accordingly, he never shows himself in London. This nation owes everlasting gratitude to the Queen. It was she that raised us from the very dust. The feeling towards the THING now is much more of *contempt* than *dread*. Its *embarrassments* are so great, and it discovers its own apprehensions in so many ways, that our fears of it are dissipated. *Bolton Fletcher*, and the like, are not those kings of terrors that they were. I think it will end in reform, and a *peaceable* settlement. I hope so, at least; but nothing effectual will be done until the moment that a serious reduction of the Debt shall be forced upon the government. The summer hitherto has been as fine as in Long Island, and we had *not one frost* during the winter. The wheat harvest, which will be abundant, will begin *next week*, full a month earlier than usual. If we have a fine harvest, everything will be *cheap indeed!* The very largest crops

of hay that any man ever knew have been got in *without one drop of wet*.

I, who have, every day of my life, travelling or not travelling, an average of 20 columns of *Register* print to write, have here found time to write you this long letter. Will you be so kind as to consider all this last paragraph as written also to Mr. Abraham Taylor, General Swartwont, Mr. Walter Morton, Mr. Casey, and young Mr. Garned? Be so good, I pray you, as to show it them with my apologies for inability to write to each, and with my best respects to each and my most ardent wishes to hear of the health and happiness of all. I beg to be very particularly and respectfully remembered to Mrs. Taylor, to Mrs. Casey, and Mr. Morton, and Mrs. Swartwont and daughters; and I beg you all to accept my thanks for your kindness to my son James, who is come home in excellent health to the great delight of us all.

Much of the above, relating to myself, I should have omitted; but it was *necessary*, in order to give you a true account of things. Pray let me hear from you as soon as you can, and believe me to be sincerely yours,

WM. COBBETT.

P.S.—We live at Kensington, which, you know, is a little out of town; but we have a *house and shop*, No. 183 Fleet Street. That is the place for *letters* and *parcels* to be delivered. But, agreeably to what I have said before, *Liverpool* is the channel; and then Mr. Smith will take care of whatever comes. It will not do to send newspapers by *London*. The rascals get them into the *Post-Office* at Deal, and make a parcel cost us 5 or 6 pounds. They must have a string round the parcel, but, as they are to go to Mr. Smith, you will easily ascertain how the thing is done.¹

¹ Add. MSS. 33127, ff. 21-4.

William Cobbett to Mr. George Woodward

KENSINGTON, July 4, 1822.

I never spent happier days than in Long Island, and, amongst those days, none happier than those passed at *Grasshopper's-Hill*. That was real liberty, by God. Real *free-and-easy*. Whenever I think of those happy days I am melancholy, and think nothing of all the gains and all the glory. I hope that England will yet be free, and, if I did not, by God, I would not remain here any longer than necessary to obtain the means of easy life in America.¹

William Cobbett to John Morgan, in New York

LONDON, August 23, 1822.

You will yet, long as the delay has been, get the *French Grammar*, and that, too, sooner than you may expect, though I will name no time.²

William Cobbett to Mr. Fawkes

November 12, 1822.

The ruin in this part of the country is *general*. An unruined farmer is the exception. The Pitt system seems destined to fulfil *all* my prophecies—even those that were thought the most *wild*. Faith! your antagonist Mr. Canning has his hands full. He has already discovered what it is to negotiate with a debt of 800 millions and a dead weight of 100 millions hanging round the neck of the country. This was one of the points that Windham told me I was *mad* upon. I said you can have neither war nor peace in safety without getting rid of this infernal debt. He used to say, "Let us beat the French first." I used to say that to beat them with

¹ Add. MSS. 31127, f. 25.² *Ibid.*, 31127, f. 34.

bank-notes was to beat ourselves in the end. And thus it has been. The country becomes a poor, low, pitiful, feeble, cowardly thing, unless we get rid of the debt; and that is not to be got rid of without a reform in the House of Commons. The conduct of the Lords has always been to me the most surprising thing. Terrified out of their wits at ["Orator"] Hunt, who is really as inoffensive as Pistol or Bardolph, and hugging to their bosoms the Barings, the Ricardos, and all that tribe. . . . However, it is useless to exclaim. . . . The war used to be called an "eventful period"; but *this* is the eventful period for England.¹

From the above correspondence some idea of Cobbett's activity at this time will have been gathered. He was interested in his seed farm near the High Street, Kensington, and where he endeavoured to grow several plants and trees indigenous to America, and it was in recognition of his introduction of Indian corn that the Society of Arts presented him, in 1823, with its silver medal. When, some years later, Cobbett removed to Barn Elms, in Surrey, he continued his experiments and made strenuous efforts to popularise "Cobbett's Corn."² He published a number of the *Register* on paper made from the husks, and established depots for the sale of its flour and bread, in the hope of attracting the attention of the public and persuading it to use the corn as a substitute for the potato. All his efforts in this direction, however, were in vain.

If Cobbett occasionally found time to indulge his sporting proclivities, it was certainly not at the expense

¹ *Creevey Papers*, ii. 55.

² Towards the end of his life Cobbett rented, from Colonel Woodroffe, Normandy Farm, of about one hundred and twenty acres, in the parish of Ash, about seven miles from Farnham, in Surrey.

of his work, for never did he labour harder than in the years after he returned from his second visit to the United States. His energies during this period were divided between literature and politics, and each of these fields must be separately surveyed.

It was now that Cobbett began to organise that series of works that he grouped together and advertised as "The Cobbett Library." Most of these were written by himself, but he induced his sons, John, James, and William, to contribute some volumes.

William Cobbett to John M. Cobbett

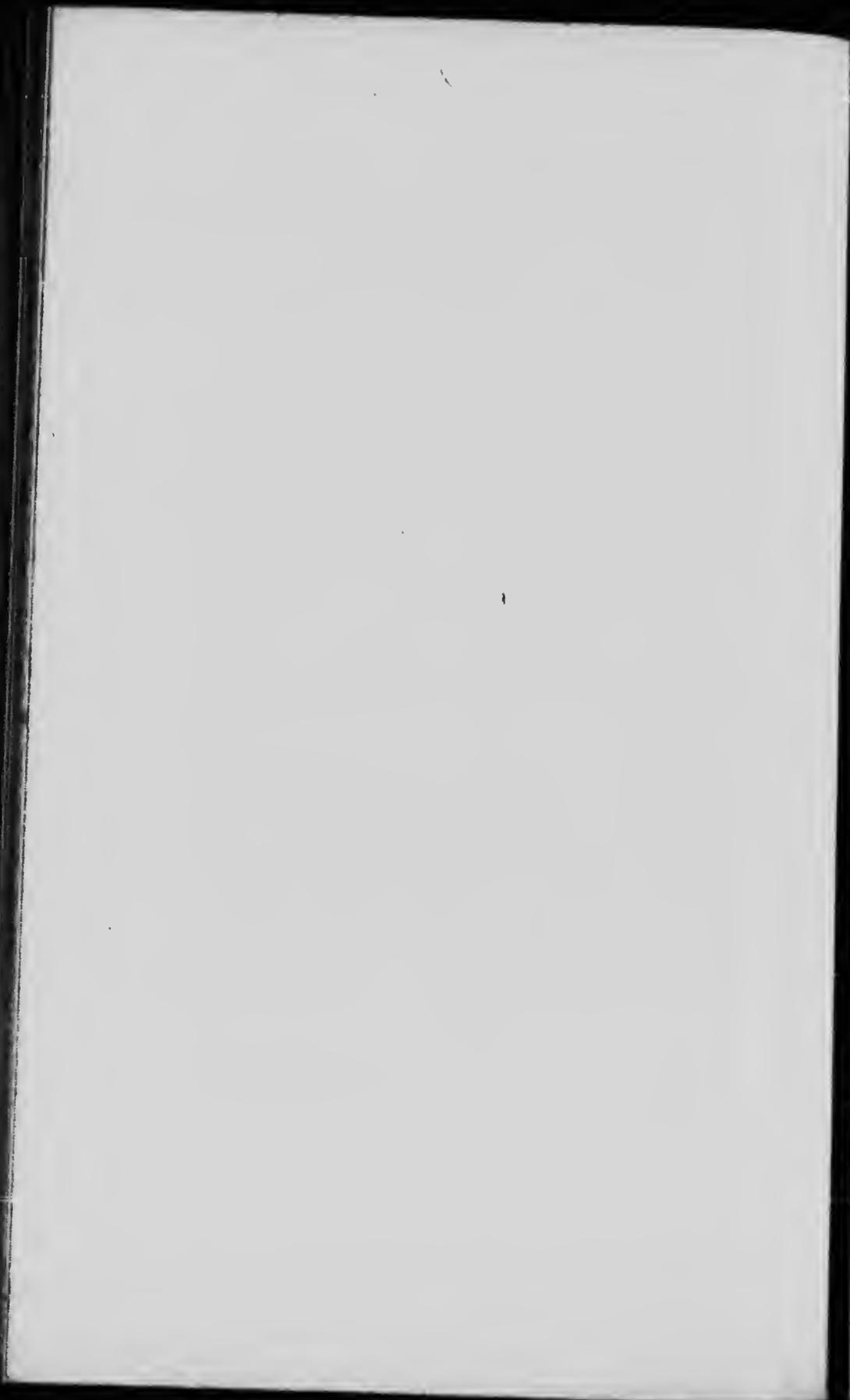
KENSINGTON, August 20, 1824.

. . . As to *the disposal of yourself*, this is a matter of more importance. I have read what you say to James about not having it said of you *that you have "been to Paris."* I agree with you, my dear Johnny; and while I hear, with great satisfaction, the praises bestowed upon James's book,¹ I am anxious that *you* should stand before the public for what *you* are worth, which, I am sure, is a great deal. The docility of my dear Johnny makes me less positive in offering him my advice; yet, as that advice has succeeded so well with James, I shall venture to press it. Besides the stock of reputation, James's book will bring him a clear £200; and this is, as all the world sees, only a *sign* of what he will be capable of. My advice to you is this: To stay at Paris till the affair of the book be *nicely settled*, as above, or in any way that you and Doctor Martin may agree upon. Then to *buy a horse*, and travel as James did; for, I assure you, that this *mode of travelling* has excited a great deal of admiration. Your account should be in a *series of letters to James*. This manner is the best of all. It

¹ James Cobbett's *Ride of Eight Hundred Miles in France*.



IN ELMS FARM
from an old print



allows of more minute detail ; more *gaiety*, for which you are so well calculated ; more of that humour in description, of that vivacity, and that bringing of the reader into your company, which are always so pleasing. I know of nobody more likely to shine in such a work. Yet your Letters would not overlook the more *solid* matter. You would, as you went along, give an account of the *state of the people*, of *prices*, of *agriculture*, *manufactures*, and the like. As to your *route*, it will be time enough for me to talk of that when you shall have agreed to follow my plan ; but this much I can say now : I would go in a sort of sweep across the north of France into the *Netherlands* ; then down into *Holland*, or some part of it ; then along by *Dunkirk to Calais*. You would, of course, begin with an account of your journey to the *Limosin* ; then of your journey back to Paris ; then give *an account of Paris* ; and then come to your *northern route*. Your book would be much *larger* than that of James, and would, of course, be the better for you. It would do you infinite honour ; it would give you a name at once ; and, let me beg of you to believe, that, if a man has too much modesty to put *himself* before the world, the world supposes that he is not fit to be put before it. I am very anxious upon this subject. The public here is quite ready to do justice to all of you. People seem delighted that I *have a son like James*. They do not know that I *have a son like you*. Let them know it, my dear Johnny, and therein you will give me a degree of pleasure that I shall feel more plainly than I shall be able to describe. . . .¹

In his "Library" Cobbett had the greatest faith, and in a prospectus issued in 1830 he called the attention of the public to the merits of it in its entirety as well as to the advantage to be derived from the perusal

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

of individual volumes. Perhaps the simplest way of dealing with the Library is to print the characteristic prospectus that Cobbett drew up in 1830.¹

N.B.—All the books under-mentioned are published at No. 11, Bolt-court, Fleet-street, London; and are to be had of all the Booksellers in the Kingdom.

THE COBBETT LIBRARY

When I am asked what books a young man or young woman ought to read, I always answer, let him or her read *all the books that I have written*. This does, it will doubtless be said, *smell of the shop*. No matter. It is what I recommended; and experience has taught me that it is my *duty* to give the recommendation. I am speaking here of books other than THE REGISTER; and even these, that I call my LIBRARY, consist of *twenty-six* distinct books; two of them being TRANSLATIONS; *six* of them being written BY MY SONS; *one* (TULL'S HUSBANDRY) revised and edited, and one published by me, and written by the Rev. Mr. O'CALLAGHAN, a most virtuous Catholic Priest. I divide these books into classes as follows: 1. Books for TEACHING LANGUAGE; 2. ON DOMESTIC MANAGEMENT AND DUTIES; 3. ON RURAL AFFAIRS; 4. ON THE MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL AFFAIRS; 5. HISTORY; 6. TRAVELS; 7. LAWS; 8. MISCELLANEOUS POLITICS. Here is a great variety of subjects, and all of them very *dry*; nevertheless the manner of treating them is, in general, such as to induce the reader to *go through the book*, when he has once begun it. I will now speak of each book separately under the several heads above-mentioned.

N.B.—All the books are *bound in boards*, which will be borne in mind when the price is looked at.

¹ *Two-penny Trash*, pp. 22-4.

I. BOOKS FOR TEACHING LANGUAGE

COBBETT'S ENGLISH GRAMMAR. (*Price* 3s.). This is a book of *principles*, clearly laid down; and when once these are got into the mind they never quit it.

COBBETT'S FRENCH GRAMMAR (*Price* 5s.); *or, Plain Instructions for the learning of French*. More young men have, I dare say, learned French from it than from all the other books that have been published in English for the last fifty years.

MR. JAMES COBBETT'S ITALIAN GRAMMAR (*Price* 6s.); *or A Plain and Compendious Introduction to the Study of Italian*. I would pledge myself to take this book and to learn Italian from it in *three months*.

2. DOMESTIC MANAGEMENT AND DUTIES

COBBETT'S COTTAGE ECONOMY (*Price* 2s. 6d.), containing information relative to the brewing of Beer, making of Bread, keeping of Cows, Pigs, Bees, Ewes, Goats, Poultry, and Rabbits, and relative to other matters.

COBBETT'S ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN, and (incidentally) *to Young Women, in the middle and higher Ranks of Life* (*Price* 5s.). It was published in fourteen numbers, and is now in one volume complete.

COBBETT'S SERMONS (*Price* 3s. 6d.). More of these Sermons have been *sold* than of the Sermons of all the Church parsons put together since mine were published.

COBBETT'S EDITION OF TULL'S HUSBANDRY (*Price* 15s.); THE HORSE-HOEING HUSBANDRY; *or, A TREATISE ON THE PRINCIPLES OF TILLAGE AND VEGETATION*, wherein is taught a Method of introducing a sort of VINEYARD CULTURE into the CORN-FIELDS, in order to increase their Product and diminish the common Expense.

3. BOOKS ON RURAL AFFAIRS

COBBETT'S YEAR'S RESIDENCE IN AMERICA, WITH A MAP (*Price 5s.*). A book very necessary to all men of property who emigrate to the United States.

COBBETT'S ENGLISH GARDENER (*Price 6s.*). A *complete* book of the kind.

COBBETT'S WOODLANDS (*Price 14s.*); or, A TREATISE ON COBBETT'S CORN: containing Instructions for Propagating and Cultivating the Plant, and for Harvesting and Preserving the Crop; and also an Account of the several Uses to which the Produce is applied, with Minute Directions relative to each mode of Application. This edition I sell at 2s. 6d., that it may get into *numerous hands*.

4. MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL AFFAIRS

COBBETT'S PAPER AGAINST GOLD (*Price 5s.*); or, The History and Mystery of the Bank of England, of the Debt, of the Stocks, of the Sinking Fund, and of all the other tricks and contrivances carried on by the means of Paper Money.

COBBETT'S RURAL RIDES (*Price 5s.*). If the members of the Government had *read* these *Rides*, only just *read* them, last year when they were collected and printed in a volume, they *could not* have helped foreseeing all the violences that have now taken place, and especially *in these very counties*; and foreseeing them, they must have been devils in reality if they had not done something to prevent them.

COBBETT'S POOR MAN'S FRIEND (*Price 8d.*); or, A Defence of the Rights of those who do the Work and fight the Battles. This is my *favourite* work. I bestowed more labour upon it than upon any large volume that I ever wrote.

COBBETT'S EMIGRANT'S GUIDE (*Price* 2s. 6d.); in TEN LETTERS, addressed to the TAXPAYERS OF ENGLAND.

USURY LAWS (*Price* 2s. 6d.); or, LENDING AT INTEREST; also, the Exaction and Payment of certain Church-fees, such as Pew-rents, Burial-fees, and the like, together with forestalling Traffic; all proved to be repugnant to the Divine and Ecclesiastical Law, and destructive to Civil Society.

5. HISTORY

COBBETT'S HISTORY OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION IN ENGLAND AND IRELAND (*Price* 4s. 6d.); showing how that Event has impoverished and degraded the main Body of the People in those Countries: PART II. (*Price* 3s. 6d.); containing a List of the Abbeys, Priors, Nunneries, Hospitals, and other Religious Foundations, in England and Wales, and in Ireland, confiscated, seized on, or alienated by the Protestant "Reformation" Sovereigns and Parliaments.

COBBETT'S ROMAN HISTORY, ENGLISH AND FRENCH (*Price* 6s.); VOL. I.: From the Foundation of Rome to the Battle of Actium. VOL. II.: AN ABRIDGED HISTORY OF THE EMPERORS, IN FRENCH AND ENGLISH; being a continuation of the HISTORY OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC. This work is intended as an *Exercise-book* to be used with my *French Grammar*; and it is sold at a *very low price* to place it within the reach of young men in general.

COBBETT'S HISTORY OF THE REGENCY AND REIGN OF GEORGE IV. This work is published in Nos. at 6d. each, and shall do *justice* to the late "*mild and merciful*" King.

LAFAYETTE'S LIFE (*Price* 1s.). A brief account of the Life of that brave and honest man, translated from the French, by Mr. JAMES COBBETT.

6. TRAVELS

MR. JOHN COBBETT'S LETTERS FROM FRANCE
(Price 4s. 6d.).

MR. JAMES COBBETT'S RIDE OF EIGHT HUNDRED
MILES IN FRANCE (the Third Edition, Price 2s. 6d.).

MR. JAMES COBBETT'S TOUR IN ITALY, and also in
Part of FRANCE AND SWITZERLAND (Price 4s. 6d.).

7. LAW

COBBETT'S TRANSLATION OF MARTENS'S LAW OF
NATIONS (Price 17s.); being the Science of National
Law, Covenants, Power, &c. Founded upon the Treaties
and Customs of Modern Nations in Europe.

MR. WM. COBBETT'S LAW OF TURNPIKES (Price 3s. 6d.).

8. MISCELLANEOUS POLITICS

THE REGISTER, published Weekly, Price 1s. 2d.
Sixty-four pages.

TWO-PENNY TRASH, published monthly, Price 2d.,
12s. 3d. for a hundred, and 11s. a hundred if 300 or up-
wards.

This is the Library that I have *created*. It really
makes a tolerable *shelf of books*, a man who understands
the contents of which may be deemed a man of great
information. In about every one of these works I have
pleaded the cause of the *working people*, and I shall now
see that cause triumph, in spite of all that can be done
to prevent it.

N.B.—A whole *set* of these books at the above prices
amounts to £71, os. 2d.; but if a whole set be taken
together, the price is £61. And here is a stock of know-
ledge sufficient for any young man in the world.

It is not necessary to deal in detail with the volumes

in the Cobbett Library.¹ Many, as the titles indicate, were strictly utilitarian, and have little or no interest for the public; and those that treat of politics have already been mentioned in the course of this survey of their author's career. The gem of the collection is the *Advice to Young Men and (incidentally) to Young Women in the Middle and Higher Ranks of Life*. The advice was given in a series of letters addressed to a Youth, a Bachelor, a Lover, a Husband, a Father, a Citizen, and a Subject; and the book, in which Cobbett in all these relations holds himself up as a model, is the most extraordinary medley of common sense and prejudice, of egotism and manliness, and of dissatisfaction and patriotism. Written, like all Cobbett's books, with sincerity, in homely idiomatic English, its popularity has not yet waned, and it will probably always be read, not so much perhaps for its advice, as because of the light it throws upon the writer's character.

Cobbett, who saw things largely, was able to plan undertakings on a great scale, as his schemes for the Parliamentary Debates and the State Trials prove conclusively. He now determined to write, in innumerable volumes, a new history of England, being entirely dissatisfied with all existing works covering the field.

The history of a country, he wrote, ought to show the origin and progress of its institutions, political, civil, and ecclesiastical; it ought to show the effects of those institutions upon the state of the people; it ought to delineate the measures of the government at the several

¹ Other volumes were added to the library: notably, the *Legacy to Labourers*, which was concerned with the repeal of the Poor Laws; the *Legacy to Peel*, in which various reforms in England and Ireland were discussed; and the *Legacy to Parsons*, which treated of the vexed question of disestablishment.

epochs; and, having clearly described the state of the people at the several periods, it ought to show the cause of their freedom, good morals, and happiness, or of their misery, immorality, and slavery; and this, too, by the production of indubitable facts, and of inferences so manifestly fair, as to leave not the smallest doubt upon the mind.

Do the histories of England which we have answer this description? They are very little better than romances. Their contents are generally confined to narrations relating to battles, negotiations, intrigues, contests between rival sovereignties, rival nobles, and to the character of kings, queens, mistresses, bishops, ministers, and the like; from scarcely any of which can the reader draw any knowledge which is at all applicable to the circumstances of the present day.

Besides this, there is the *falsehood*; and the falsehoods contained in these histories where shall we find anything to surpass? Let us take one instance. They all tell us that William the Conqueror knocked down twenty-six parish churches and laid waste the parishes in order to make the New Forest; and this in a tract of the very poorest land in England, where the churches must then have stood at about one mile and two hundred yards from each other. The truth is, that all the churches are still standing that were there when William landed, and the whole story is a sheer falsehood from the beginning to the end.

But this is a mere specimen of these romances; and that too with regard to a matter comparatively unimportant to us. The important falsehoods are those which misguide us by statement or by inference with regard to the state of the people at the several epochs, as produced by the institutions of the country, or the measures of the Government. It is always the object of those who have power in their hands to persuade the people that they are better off than their forefathers

were : it is the great business of history to show how this matter stands ; and, with respect to this great matter, what are we to learn from anything that has hitherto been called a history of England ! I remember that, about a dozen years ago, I was talking with a very clever young man, who had read twice or thrice over the History of England, by different authors ; and that I gave the conversation a turn that drew from him, unperceived by himself, that he did not know how tithes, parishes, poor rates, church rates, and the abolition of trial by jury in hundreds of cases came to be in England ; and that he had not the smallest idea of the manner in which the Duke of Bedford came to possess the power of taxing our cabbages in Covent Garden. Yet this is history. I have done a great deal, with regard to matters of this sort, in my famous History of the PROTESTANT REFORMATION ; for I may truly call that famous which has been translated and published in all the modern languages.

But it is reserved for me to write a complete history of the country from the earliest times to the present day ; and this, God giving me life and health, I shall begin to do in monthly numbers, beginning on the first of September, and in which I shall endeavour to combine brevity with clearness. We do not want to consume our time over a dozen pages about Edward the Third dancing at a ball, picking up a lady's garter, and making that garter the foundation of an order of knighthood, bearing the motto of *Honi soit qui mal y pense*. It is not stuff like this ; but we want to know what was the state of the people ; what were a labourer's wages ; what were the prices of the food, and how the labourers were dressed in the reign of that great king.¹

Cobbett decided to begin, not at the beginning, but with the reign of George IV, and this, too, in spite of

¹ *Advice to Young Men*, pars. 316, 317, 318, 319, 320.

the suggestion made to him that the events of that decade could not yet be seen in the right perspective.

Peel says, "that we are too *near* to the advantages which we have derived from the *mild* and *beneficent* reign of his Majesty to be able fully to *appreciate them*." Indeed! What! *too near* to the select-vestry law, the new trespass law, the transporting-poaching law, the Irish transporting-with-jury law, *too near* to the dungeon law, and the famous six Acts; *too near* to the Italian witnesses, to Castles, Oliver, Edwards; *too near* to Sidmouth, and Castlereagh, and Canning; *too near* to all those and a thousand other things and persons, "to be able *fully to appreciate* the advantages we derived from their *mildness* and *beneficence*!" Better to stop, I suppose, till we are got *farther off*; till *names* and *dates* are beyond the reach of all but a few; and till *facts become matter of dispute*, instead of being capable of proof, such as to satisfy a judge and jury! Better stop, certainly, till the palace building, the Irish starvation, till the *16th of August*, till 500 killed and wounded persons, and till the *letter of thanks to the Yeomanry Cavalry*, be all forgotten! Oh, no! Mister Peel, we will, if you please, not stop so long as this. We will, while the story is fresh in our memory, have it down in *black and white*; in order that those who are coming up to be *men* may learn how to appreciate these acts of "*mildness and beneficence*," and may know how *they* ought to act their part on the stage, which is now, according to all appearance, going to be a very bustling one.¹

Thus he wrote on the eve of the publication of his book, of which the announcement ran as follows:—

HISTORY OF ENGLAND

On the 1st of September I shall publish No. 1 of *The History of the Life and Reign of George IV.* When

¹ *Two-penny Trash*, September 1, 1830.

that is done, I shall go back to the earliest times, and publish, in similar numbers, on the 1st of every month, a COMPLETE HISTORY OF ENGLAND. A *true one*; not a *romance*. The History of George IV will be the end, of course, unless I outlive another king. I begin with this last reign, because we want it, and particularly the history of our poor, unfortunate and excellent friend, Queen Caroline, who, by her known hatred of corruption, gave the borough villains a better blow than they had had for many many years. They have, in fact, never been "*their own men*" since. These incomparable villains (for what is equal to their villainy) shall have their *due*, their full due, in my history, which shall show *how they got* their possessions; and enable the nation to judge of the *right* that they have to keep them. Our histories are romances, written by pensioned and bribed slaves. It is high time that the people knew the truth; high time that they saw the degradation into which they have fallen, and *the causes of it*. This task was reserved for me; and, God giving me life and health, I will perform it. The Numbers will come out *monthly*, price 6d., as low as I can sell it, with anything like compensation to myself; and I do this, because I wish people in even low circumstances to read it.¹

How Cobbett can have deluded himself with the idea that he possessed the qualifications of an historian it is not easy to understand. He could see that "the great use of history is to teach us how laws, usages, and institutions arose, what were their effects on the people, and how they promoted happiness, and otherwise";² and he knew that most historians thought these things of no consequence, and devoted their pages to accounts of battles, negotiations, Court intrigues, and Court amours;

¹ *Two-penny Trash*, August 1, 1830.

² *Protestant Reformation*, Letter II.

but when he sat down to write history he ought to have discovered his unfitness for the task. His account of the reign of George IV is merely a partisan tract; and his *History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland* is simply a book *pour rive*. Lord Dalling has said of the latter work that the author's chief aim "seems to have been to volunteer a contemptuous defiance to all the religions and popular feelings in England," and Dr. Arnold protested bitterly against the prejudice exhibited in its pages. "It is a queer compound of wickedness and ignorance with strong sense, and the mention of divers truths which have been too much disguised or kept in the background, but which ought to be generally known," he wrote to the Rev. John Tucker. "Its object is to represent the Reformation in England as a great national evil, accomplished by all kinds of robbery and cruelty, and tending to the impoverishment and misery of the poor, and to the introduction of a careless clergy and a spirit of ignorance and covetousness amongst everybody. It made me groan, while reading it, to think that the real history and effects of the Reformation are so little known, and the evils of the worldly policy of Somerset's and Elizabeth's government so little appreciated. As it is, Cobbett's book can do nothing but harm, so bad is its spirit and so evident its unfairness."¹ In justice to Cobbett it must be said that if he did write of Bloody Queen Bess and Good Queen Mary, on the whole his history was not much more partial than those written in the Protestant interest. The Roman Catholics, of course, were loud in praise of the work, of which, when it was issued in numbers, no less than forty thousand copies were sold;

¹ *Life of Thomas Arnold*, i. 67.

but there was no truth in the many contemporary suggestions that the author had gone over to Rome.

I have now performed my task (Cobbett wrote in Letter XVI.). I have made good the positions with which I began. Born and bred a Protestant of the Church of England, having a wife and numerous family professing the same faith, having the remains of most dearly beloved parents lying in a Protestant church-yard, and trusting to conjugal or filial piety to place mine by their side, I have, in this undertaking, had no motive, I can have had no motive, but a sincere and disinterested love of truth and justice. It is not for the rich and powerful of my countrymen that I have spoken; but for the poor, the persecuted, the proscribed. I have not been unmindful of the unpopularity and the prejudice that would attend the enterprise; but when I considered the long, long triumph of calumny over the religion of those to whom we owe all that we possess that is great and renowned; when I was convinced that I could do much towards the counteracting of that calumny; when duty so sacred bade me speak, it would have been baseness to hold my tongue, and baseness superlative would it have been if, having the will as well as the power, I had been restrained by fear of the shafts of falsehood and of folly. To be clear of self-reproach is amongst the greatest of human consolations; and now, amidst all the dreadful perils with which the event that I have treated of has at last surrounded my country, I can, while I pray God to save her from further devastation and misery, safely say that, neither expressly nor tacitly, am I guilty of any part of the cause of her ruin.

Perhaps the best criticism that has been passed on the book was written by William Bates, who declared

that for vigour of composition, hardihood of paradox, and crassitude of ignorance, it is without a parallel in the language. "It is a true curiosity of literature, and one of the most amusing of books," he added, "if only from the courageousness of its prejudice, and absence of all the qualities that go to make up a philosophical history."¹ Yet, in spite of all its faults, this is one of the best written of all Cobbett's works, and for that reason well worthy of perusal. An example of his style must be given.

Nor must we, by any means, overlook the effects of these institutions on the mere face of the country. That soul must be low and mean indeed which is insensible to all feeling of pride in the noble edifices of its country. Love of country; that variety of feelings which, all together, constitute what we properly call patriotism, consist in part of the admiration of, and veneration for, ancient and magnificent proofs of skill and of opulence. The monastics built as well as wrote for posterity. The never-dying nature of their institutions set aside, in all their undertakings, every calculation as to time and age. Whether they built or planted, they set the generous example of providing for the pleasure, the honour, the wealth and greatness of generations upon generations yet unborn. They executed everything in the very best manner: their gardens, fish-ponds, farms, in all, in the whole of their economy, they set an example tending to make the country beautiful, to make it an object of pride with the people, and to make the nation truly and permanently great. Go into any county and survey, even at this day, the ruins of its, perhaps, twenty Abbeys and Pories; and then ask yourself, "What have we in exchange for these?" Go to the site of some once-opulent Convent. Look at the cloister, now become,

¹ *The Maclise Portrait Gallery* (ed. 1898), p. 339.

in the hands of rack-renter, the receptacle for dung, fodder, and faggot-wood : see the hall where for ages the widow, the orphan, the aged and the stranger found a table ready spread ; see a bit of its walls now helping to make a cattle-shed, the rest having been hauled away to build a workhouse : recognise, in the side of a barn, a part of the once magnificent Chapel ; and if, chained to the spot by your melancholy musings, you be admonished of the approach of night by the voice of the screech-owl, issuing from those arches, which once, at the same hour, responded with the vespers of the monk, and which have, for seven hundred years, been assailed by storms and tempests in vain ; if thus admonished of the necessity of seeking food, shelter, and a bed, lift your eyes and look at the white-washed and dry-rotten shell on the hill called the "gentleman's house" ; and apprised of the "board wages" and the spring guns, suddenly turn your head ; jog away from the scene of devastation ; with "Old English hospitality" in your mind, reach the nearest inn, and there, in room half-warmed and half-lighted, and with reception precisely proportioned to the presumed length of your purse, sit down and listen to an account of the hypocritical pretences, the base motives, the tyrannical and bloody means, under which, from which, and by which, that devastation was effected, and that hospitality banished for ever from the land.¹

If Cobbett's histories were as romantic as those which they were designed to supersede, and as untrustworthy as any partisan publications must be, a very different sentence has to be pronounced upon the *Rural Rides*. In this latter work Cobbett is at his best as a descriptive writer, and his best is very good indeed.

¹ *Protestant Reformation*, Letter V.

They say that these gardens [of Mr. Drummond at Albury] were laid out for one of the Howards, in the reign of Charles the Second, by Mr. Evelyn, who wrote the *Sylva*. The mansion-house, which is by no means magnificent, stands on a little flat by the side of the parish church, having a steep, but not lofty, hill rising up on the south side of it. It looks right across the gardens, which lie on the slope of a hill which runs along at about a quarter of a mile distant from the front of the house. The gardens, of course, lie facing the south. At the back of them, under the hill, is a high wall; and there is also a wall at each end, running from north to south. Between the house and the gardens there is a very beautiful run of water, with a sort of little wild, narrow, sedgy meadow. The gardens are separated from this by a hedge running along from east to west. From this hedge there go up the hill, at right angles, several other hedges, which divide the land here into distinct gardens or orchards. Along at the top of these there goes a yew hedge, or, rather, a row of small yew-trees, the trunks of which are bare for about eight or ten feet high, and the tops of which form one solid head of about ten feet high, while the bottom branches come out on each side of the row about eight feet horizontally. This hedge, or row, is *a quarter of a mile long*. There is a nice hard sand-road under this species of umbrella; and, summer and winter, here is a most delightful walk! Behind this row of yews there is a space, or garden (a quarter of a mile long, you will observe), about thirty or forty feet wide, as nearly as I can recollect. At the back of this garden, and facing the yew-tree row, is a wall probably ten feet high, which forms the breastwork of a *terrace*; and it is this terrace which is the most beautiful thing that I ever saw in the gardening way. It is a quarter of a mile long, and, I believe, between thirty and forty feet wide; of the finest green sward, and as level as a die.

The wall, along at the back of this terrace, stands

close against the hill, which you see with the trees and underwood upon it rising above the wall. So that here is the finest spot for fruit-trees that can possibly be imagined. At both ends of this garden the trees in the park are lofty, and there are a great many of them. The hills on the south side of the mansion-house are covered with lofty trees, chiefly beeches and chestnut: so that a warmer, a more sheltered spot than this it seems to be impossible to imagine. Observe, too, how judicious it was to plant the row of yew-trees at the distance I have described from the wall which forms the breast-work of the terrace; that wall, as well as the wall at the back of the terrace, is covered with fruit-trees, and the yew-tree row is just high enough to defend the former from winds, without injuring it by its shade. In the middle of the wall, at the back of the terrace, there is a recess, about thirty feet in front and twenty feet deep, and here is a *basin*, into which rises a spring coming out of the hill. The overflowings of this basin go under the terrace and down across the garden into the rivulet below. So that here is water at the top, across the middle, and along at the bottom of the garden into the rivulet below. Take it altogether, this certainly is the prettiest garden that I ever beheld. There was taste and sound judgment at every step in the laying out of this place. Everywhere utility and convenience is combined with beauty. The terrace is by far the finest thing of the sort that I ever saw, and the whole thing altogether is a great compliment to the taste of the times in which it was formed.¹

In *Rural Rides*, besides giving thumbnail descriptions of rural scenery, Cobbett introduced innumerable subjects. He had something to say on arithmetic and forestry, on the game laws and agriculture, on Jews and Roman

¹ *Rural Rides* (ed. Pitt Cobbett), i. 195-6.

Catholics, on the currency question and the Malthusian problem, on plurality of holdings and tithes, on great estates and poverty-stricken villages lying on the outskirts of great estates. On all these subjects he commented, with the authority that came to him by virtue of his intimate acquaintance with the country and country life. Making London his headquarters, he, accompanied usually by one or other of his sons, rode into the country in all directions. His *Rural Rides*, begun in the autumn of 1821, were not discontinued until he took his seat in Parliament more than eleven years later; and the thoroughness with which he carried out his plan he was at no pains to disguise.

I have ridden on *horseback* nearly all over the counties of Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hants, Wilts, Gloucester, Hereford, Worcester, Berks, and others, going, as much as possible, by cross-roads and into villages and hamlets, that I might learn by my own eyes and ears what was the state of the working people, and that I might be able to plead their cause with a store of knowledge on the subject.¹

Since I left London, on the 9th of March last, I have been from London to the mouth of the *Thames*; from the mouth of the *Thames* I have been to the mouth of the *Humber*; from the mouth of the *Humber* I am come to the mouth of the *Severn*; I have ridden more than a *thousand miles*; I have *walked* about *three hundred and fifty miles*; I have made fifty-four speeches; I have been in commercial towns, agricultural towns; I have conversed with merchants, manufacturers, tradesmen, operators, artisans, and labourers; and *everywhere*, in every county, town, and village, I find the same tale of deep distress amongst all those who do *not live on the taxes*.²

¹ *Two-penny Trash*, December 1, 1830.

² *Ibid.*, July 1, 1832.

The immediate object of the *Rural Rides* was Cobbett's desire that he should acquire at first hand information as to the state of the people; and this information he at once passed on to the general public, for every night when he was away from town he wrote down, for publication in the *Register*, what he had seen and heard and said during the day. Wherever he went he tried to improve the shining hour by talking with the farmers and labourers and discoursing to meetings on the necessity of reform, and wherever he went he endeavoured to stimulate the agitation for a comprehensive measure.

I want to see *other men* in the House; and as to *who* those other men should be, I really should not be very nice (he declared on November 25, 1822). I have seen the Tierneys, the Bankeses, the Wilberforces, the Michael Angelo Taylors, the Lambs, the Lowthers, the Davis Geddies, the Sir John Sebrights, the Sir Francis Burdetts, the Hobhouses, old or young, Whitbreads the same, the Lord Johns, and the Lord Williams, and the Lord Henries and the Lord Charleses, and, in short, *all the whole family*; I have seen them all there, all the same faces and names, all my life-time; I see that neither adjournment nor prorogation nor dissolution makes any change in *the men*; and, caprice let it be if you like, I want to see a change *in the men*. These have done enough in all conscience; or, at least, they have done enough to satisfy me. I want to see some fresh faces, and to hear a change of some sort or other in the sounds. A "hear, hear" coming everlastingly from the same mouth is what I, for my part, am tired of.

I am aware that this is not what the "great reformers" in the House mean. They mean, on the contrary, no such thing as a change of men. They

mean that Lopez¹ should sit there for ever, or, at least, till succeeded by a legitimate heir. I believe that Sir Francis Burdett, for instance, has not the smallest idea of an Act of Parliament ever being made without his assistance, if he chooses to assist, which is not very frequently the case. I believe that he looks upon a seat in the House as being his property; and that the other seat is, and ought to be, held as a sort of leasehold or copyhold under him. My idea of reform, therefore, my change of faces and of names and of sounds, will appear quite horrible to him. However, I think the nation begins to be very much of my way of thinking; and this I am very sure of, that we shall never see that change in the management of affairs, which we most of us want to see, unless there be a pretty complete change of men.²

These addresses were probably the most valuable part of the work done by Cobbett during these years, and as the result of them was to increase the clamour for reform, it may be imagined that his activity was not favourably regarded by the Government. His efforts to have an assured position in public life did not, however, meet with success. He was defeated when in 1826 he offered himself as a candidate for the representation of the borough of Preston in Parliament; and two years later when he expressed a desire to be elected a Common Councilman for Farringdon Without, he found no one to propose him. No disappointments could dishearten him, and he determined to try again and again; but in the meantime he was satisfied to extend the circulation, and thereby the influence, of the *Register* by lowering

¹ Sir Manasseh Masseh Lopez (1755-1831), a converted Jew, sometime member of Parliament.

² *Rural Rides* (ed. Pitt Cobbett), i. 189-90.

the price and issuing a cheap monthly publication entitled *Two-penny Trash*.

At last, in 1829, I determined to give it the *wings* afforded by the *post*; and there it is now, sold by me for SIXPENCE to the news-men, out of which the Parliament takes only *a farthing for tax on the paper*, and *fourpence for tax on the stamp*; leaving me *a penny three farthings*, to pay for paper, print, and publishing, to compensate me for my labour as author, and to fill my breast with grateful feelings towards "the envy of surrounding nations and admiration of the world," and particularly towards that branch of it which SIR JAMES GRAHAM, some time ago, denominated the *noblest assembly of free men upon the face of the earth*; not knowing, I presume, that there might be a still *nobler assembly beneath the surface of that same earth*!

Well, then, but how can I *now* publish this work of *one sheet*, and sell it for *two-pence*? Why, "the noblest assembly" made an exception with regard to *monthly* publications. That was very good of the "noblest assembly." To let people read cheap publications *oftener than once a month* was dangerous. Well, then, they can have them only once a month: only at every change of the moon. Dear, good, kind, and careful "noblest assembly"! Therefore it is that I shall publish this little work once a month, and on the first day of every month, at my shop, No. 11, Bolt Court, Fleet Street.¹

There can be no doubt that it would at once have again proceeded against him if an opportunity had offered, but Cobbett, warned by previous experience, was careful to give no opening for prosecution. All that could be done, therefore, was to watch him carefully.

¹ *Two-penny Trash*, January 1830.

"You will have heard perhaps that I caused inquiry to be made at your office respecting a Frenchman of the name of Sievrac, now resident at Kensington," Canning wrote to William Yates Peel at the Home Office, December 28, 1826. "My reason for wishing to learn what is known of him is, that I have received information, from a source which I have often found correct, that this Sievrac is an intermediary between either the French Government or the French Ambassador and our friend Cobbett, and the channel of certain metallic communications with the said Cobbett, which have kindled his recent zeal for Catholicism and Spain."¹ What the result of the inquiry may have divulged as regards Sievrac has not been made public, but apparently his relations with Cobbett were confined to business matters. He assisted Cobbett in the preparation of his French Grammar and his French Dictionary, and in the compilation of the Roman history; and he translated the *History of the Protestant Reformation* into French.²

Cobbett was left unmolested for many years, but on December 23, 1830, Arthur Hill-Trevor,³ member of Parliament for New Romney, called the attention of the House of Commons to an article by "a person called Cobbett" in the *Register* of December 11, entitled "Rural War," in which the following passage occurred:—

¹ Parker, *Sir Robert Peel*, i. 407.

² *Fraser's Magazine*, February 1862, p. 177.

Sievrac's name is given on the title-page of the Roman history: *Elements of the Roman History, in English and French, from the foundation of Rome to the battle of Actium, selected from the best authors, ancient and modern, with a series of questions at the end of each chapter. For the use of schools and young people in general. The English by William Cobbett; the French by J. H. Sievrac, 1828.*

³ Afterwards third Viscount Dungannon of the second creation.

But without entering at present into the *motives* of the working people, it is unquestionable that their acts have produced good, and great good too. They have been always told, and they are told now, and by the very parson¹ I have quoted above, that their acts of violence, and particularly the burnings, can do *them no good*, but *add to their wants*, by destroying the food that *they would have to eat*. Alas! they know better: they know that one thrashing-machine takes wages from ten men; and they also know that they should have none of this food; and that *potatoes and salt* do not burn! Therefore this argument is not worth a straw. Besides, they see and feel *that the good comes*, and comes *instantly* too. They see that they *do* get *some* bread, in consequence of the destruction of part of the corn; and while they see this, you attempt in vain to persuade them that what they have done is *wrong*. And as to one effect, that of *making the parsons reduce their tithes*, it is hailed as a good by ninety-nine hundredths even of men of considerable property; while there is not a single man in the country who does not clearly trace the reduction to the acts of the labourers, and especially *to the fires*; for it is to the terror of these, and not the bodily force, that has prevailed.

These passages Trevor declared to be inflammatory, and he added that he thought "it was the duty of the House, if it was not within the immediate province of the law-officers of the Crown, to adopt some measures with regard to it; and at all events to record their sense of the mischief it must produce." Lord Althorp opposed the motion on the grounds that it was not in the public interest for the House to order the law-officers of the Crown to institute a prosecution; and in the end

¹ The Rev. Charles Day, Vicar of Rushmere and Playford, Suffolk.

Trevor consented to withdraw his motion.¹ The Government, however, decided soon after to proceed against Cobbett as the author of this article, and on February 18, 1831, an indictment for publishing a seditious libel was found against him at the Old Bailey Sessions. The indictment was removed by *certiorari* into the Court of King's Bench.

John M. Cobbett to William Palmer

KENSINGTON, February 24, 1831.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your very kind letter of the 14th reached us but a few days, you see, before the vile wretches of Whigs had openly avowed their hostile intentions in the shape of a *bill of indictment*. However, we are all firm, and indignation is the main feeling of us all—women as well as men. The Government certainly wished my father to go abroad; but no friend of his, I am sure, would advise it. We are all decidedly for a hard fight, without the semblance of flinching or compromise; and my father, I am glad to say, is determined. I believe the trial will come on in May. It may be before; but we have great hopes in the City of London Special Juries. They are very different to the others. The alleged libel is in the *Register* of the 11th December, page 937. Beginning with the words: "but without entering into the motive, &c.;" and ending with the words: "and not the bodily force that has prevailed."²

William Cobbett to William Palmer

KENSINGTON, May 8, 1831.

MY DEAR SIR,—Being sure that your friendship for me will make you uneasy about the *Trial*, this is to tell

¹ Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, third series, ii. 71-81.

² The Cobbett MSS.



I am most sincerely yours,

W. Cobbett.

*From a model for a medallion made by Peter Rowe in 1826
From a print in the possession of Richard Cobbett, Esq.*

you that, on Friday last, the Whig-villains *countermanded* their notice of trial. You will see more about it in the next *Register*.—I am, most faithfully yours,

WM. COBBETT.¹

The action was tried on July 7, 1831, before Lord Chief Justice Tenterden and a special jury, the Attorney-General (Sir Thomas Denman) prosecuting, and Cobbett defending himself (advised by his solicitor, Edward C. Faithfull). Cobbett was loudly cheered as he entered the Court, and as he entered he turned to the crowd and declared, "If truth prevails, we shall beat them." The trial has been recorded at length, and it is not necessary to enter into any details here. Cobbett made an eloquent speech which occupied four and a half hours, concluding:—

GENTLEMEN,—The last time I was brought into this Court I was sent out of it to endure two years' imprisonment amongst felons and amongst thieves. I was to pay at the end of the two years 1000*l.* fine to the King, which he took and kept. I was held in a bond of 5000*l.* myself, with two sureties of 2500*l.* each for seven years afterwards. In order to be free from the society of those felons I had to ransom myself by paying the gaoler twelve guineas a week for rent, the whole expense amounting altogether to twenty guineas a week during the 104 weeks. I was taken seventy miles from my family, where my cottage was and my garden, in the hopes that I should expire from vexation and mortification and contagion. Gentlemen, it pleased God to bless me with health. My sobriety and abstinence gave me health in that situation, and I outlived that

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

tyrannical attempt to destroy me. Gentlemen, what was it for? What was that horrible sentence inflicted upon me for? It was for writing a paragraph expressing my indignation at the flogging an English local militiaman at the city of Ely in the heart of England under a guard of German bayonets. I felt indignation and I expressed it, and I should have been ashamed to exist without expressing my indignation at it. Well, gentlemen, what is the case now? Every newspaper, even the champion newspaper of the *Attorney-General*, is every day writing against the flogging of soldiers, giving an account of the blood running down their backs, calling these gentlemen the monsters of all society, and joining in the cry I raised against the flogging of those soldiers. Now, gentlemen, what must be their remorse if there be any of that jury alive who tossed me down, just as Daniel was tossed into the lions' den, when they reflect on the sufferings of myself and the lasting injuries to my family, when they perceive that which I have written and that which I recommended ought to be done is now done; when they see every man that thinks freely expressing his reprobation of this in a much bolder style—reprobating the flogging of soldiers? If those gentlemen who were upon that jury be now alive—if any of them be left alive, it must be very grating to them to have that subject mentioned in their presence. Gentlemen, for just the same sort of cause this Whig *Attorney-General* is calling upon you to toss me to be torn to pieces this day. What are my sins? What are the heinous sins I have committed? Calling upon the Government to repeal the hard-hearted laws—the hard-hearted laws that drive the labourers of the country to desperation. Let them restore the law. Let them do away with the old Game Laws and with the new Game Laws. Can you conceive of anything more horrible? We read yesterday of a magistrate having been appointed by the Lord Chancellor whom the Lord Lieutenant charged

with having been perjured or something or other. Figure to yourself the condition of a labourer brought before that magistrate, with power to that magistrate and another to sentence him to seven years' imprisonment for being out in the night to hunt a wretched animal, the magistrate himself being a preserver of the game perhaps. And so it has been if, as to one of these measures the present *Attorney-General* alludes to, they have followed up what I have said and taken it to themselves. But though they will not adopt the measure I recommend, they still prosecute me for recommending it. Just so in the case of Parliamentary Reform. They are now reforming the Parliament. Many writers have been urging the necessity of Parliamentary Reform. I am one. They have lately found out, for it is a late discovery, what sort of reform they must have, and it is very much like that I have for twenty years recommended. They are compelled to adopt it, though they do not like it. They are going to be married to this reform. They are going to be married in a halter. I furnished that halter, and for that they would cut me in pieces.

Gentlemen, I think you will be satisfied when you have heard the evidence that the grounds for this prosecution are malignant, that it is perfectly groundless, that there is no sincerity in it from beginning to end, that my intention was not at all what they pretend it is, that it is a mere story trumped up, a mere pretence to get rid of me either by pecuniary ruin or sickness in gaol, or something or another, to get rid of the man whom they know they cannot buy, and whom they know they cannot silence while there is life left in him. Gentlemen, it is fear that actuates them. It is fear of the consequences of suffering me to live. They want my death. You have the power of preserving me from the execution of that intention, and I trust you will. But if it so happens that I am compelled to go out of

Court this day, that I am compelled to meet death in some stinking dungeon into which they have the means of cramming me, my last breath shall be employed in praying to God to bless my country, and to curse the Whigs to everlasting, and revenge I bequeath to my children and to the labourers of England.¹

The general impression of the trial was admirably summed up by Charles Greville. "They have made a fine business of Cobbett's trial; his insolence and violence were past endurance, but he made an able speech," he wrote. "The Chief Justice was very timid, and favoured and complimented him throughout; very unlike what Ellenborough would have done. The jury were shut up the whole 'night, and in the morning the Chief Justice, without consulting either party, discharged them, which was probably on the whole the best thing that could be done. Denman told me that he expected they would have acquitted him without leaving the box, and this principally on Brougham's evidence, for Cobbett brought the Chancellor forward and made him prove that *after* these very writings, and while this prosecution was hanging over him, Brougham wrote to his son, 'Dear Sir,' and requesting that he would ask his father for some former publications of his, which he thought would be of great use on the present occasion in quieting the labourers. This made a great impression, and the Attorney-General never knew one word of the letter till he heard it in evidence, the Chancellor having flourished it off, as is his custom, and then quite forgotten it. The Attorney told me that Gurney overheard one jurymen say to another,

¹ *Report of State Trials*, new series, ii. 867-9.

'Don't you think we had better stop the case? It is useless to go on.' The other, however, declared for hearing it out, so on the whole it ended as well as it might, just better than an acquittal, and that is all."¹ This was the last action brought against Cobbett.

¹ *Memoirs* (ed. 1874), July 10, 1831; ii. 158. The jury actually did retire to consider whether they should not stop the trial.

CHAPTER THE LAST

PARLIAMENT—DEATH (1831—1835)

Cobbett lectures throughout the country—His profession of political faith in 1831—He visits Scotland—The Reform Bill becomes law—Cobbett offers himself as Parliamentary candidate for Manchester—Nominated also for Oldham—And returned for the latter constituency—His ambition at last realised—His conception of the dignity of the position of a member of Parliament—His impressions of the House of Commons—His early speeches—A contemporary description—Cobbett as a speaker—His first important speech—His violent onslaught on Lord Plunkett—His attack on Peel—Cobbett visits Ireland—Daniel O'Connell welcomes him—O'Connell's appreciation of Cobbett—Their correspondence—The "Gridiron Prophecy"—Parliamentary attendance affects Cobbett's health—His last appearance in the House of Commons—Goes to Normandy Farm—Illness—Death—Burial—Inscription on his grave.

AFTER the Wright trial Cobbett spent much of his time lecturing in various parts of the country, and in every place was he treated with the respect due to a man who had for thirty years been one of the most persistent advocates of the reform that was now imminent. Nowhere had he larger audiences than at Manchester on the last six days of the year 1831, and it was there that he made his profession of political faith, which must here be given, because it was far in advance of all his earlier ideas and also far in advance of most of the most ardent reformers of the day. "It is always my fate," Cobbett said, "to be about three or four years *before* the public."



NORMANDY FARM, ASH, SUKKEY, WHERE COBBETT DIED
From an old print

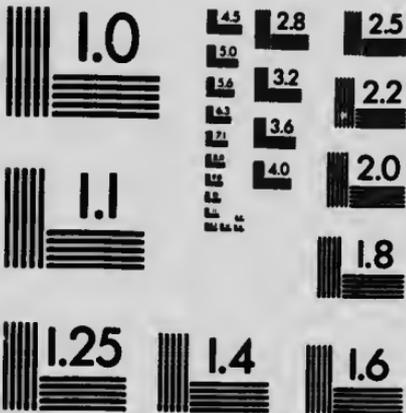
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1. To put an end to all pensions, sinecures, grants, allowances, half-pay, and all other emoluments now paid out of the taxes, except for such public services as, upon a very scrupulous examination, shall be found fully to merit them; and to reduce all salaries to the American standard.
2. To discharge the standing army, except such part of the ordnance and artillery as may be necessary to maintain the arsenals at the seaports in a state of readiness for war; and to abolish the military academies, and dispose of all barracks and other property now applied to military uses.
3. To make the counties, each according to its whole number of members of Parliament, maintain and equip a body of militia, horse as well as foot and artillery, at the county expense, and to have these bodies, as they are in America, mustered at stated periods; so that at any time a hundred thousand efficient men may be ready to come into the field, if the defence of the kingdom require it.
4. To abolish tithes of every description; to leave to the clergy the churches, the church-yards, the parsonage houses, and the *ancient* glebes; and, for the rest, leave them to the voluntary contributions of the people.
5. To take all the rest of the property, commonly called church property; all the houses, lands, manors, tolls, rents, and real property of every kind, now possessed by bishops, chapters, or other ecclesiastical bodies, and all the misapplied property of corporate bodies of every sort; and also all the property called crown-lands, or crown-estates; including that of the Duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster; and sell them all, and apply the proceeds to the discharge of the

Debt which the late parliaments contracted with the fund-holders.

6. To cease, during the first six months after June 1832, to pay interest on a fourth part of the debt; second six months, to cease to pay interest on another fourth; and so on, for the other two fourths; so that no more interest or any part of the debt would be paid after the end of two years.
7. To divide the proceeds of all the property mentioned in paragraph No. 5, and also in paragraph No. 2, in due proportion, on principles of equity, amongst the owners of what is called *stock*, or, in other words, the *fund-holders*, or persons who lent their money to those who borrowed it in virtue of acts of the late parliaments, and to give to the fund-holders, out of the taxes, nothing beyond these proceeds.
8. To make an equitable adjustment with respect to the pecuniary contracts between man and man, and thereby rectify, as far as practicable, the wrongs and ruin inflicted on thousands upon thousands of virtuous families by the arbitrary changes made by acts of the late parliaments, in the value of the money of the country.
9. To abolish all *internal taxes* (except on the land), whether direct or indirect, including stamp-taxes of every description; and to impose such a postage-charge for letters as to defray the *real expenses* of an economical and yet efficient post-office establishment, and no more; so that the postage would be merely a *payment* for the conveyance of letters, and not a tax.
10. To lay just as much custom-house duty on importations as shall be found conducive to the benefit of the navigation, commerce, and manufactures of the kingdom, viewed as a whole, and not to lay on one penny more.

11. To make effectual provision, in every department, for the maintenance of a powerful navy; to give such pay and such an allotment of prize-money to the seaman as to render impressment wholly unnecessary; to abolish the odious innovation of *naval academies*, and re-open the door of promotion to skill and valour, whether found in the heirs of nobles, or in the sons of the loom or of the plough; to abolish all military *Orders*; and to place the navy next in honour to the throne itself.
12. To make a legal, a *fixed*, and a generous allowance to the King, and, through him, to all the branches and members of his family; to leave to him the unshackled freedom of appointing all his servants, whether of his household or of his public ministry; to leave to him the full control over his palaces, gardens, and parks, as land-owners have over their estates; to take care that he be not worried with intrigues to purloin from him that which the people give him for his own enjoyment; so that he may be, in all respects, what the Chief of a free people ought to be, his name held in the highest honour, and his person held sacred, as the great guardian of the people's rights.
13. To make an accurate valuation of all the houses, lands, mines, and other real property, in each county in the whole kingdom; to impose a tax upon that property, to be paid quarterly, and in every county on the same day, and in such a manner as to cost in the collection, or, rather, payment, not more than *four hundred pounds a year* in any one county; to make the rate and amount of this tax vary with the wants of the state, always taking care to be amply provided with means in case of war,

when war shall be demanded by the safety, the interest, or the honour of the kingdom.

14. To cause the PROTESTANT HIERARCHY to be legally repealed and abolished in Ireland; and to cause the Parliament of the whole kingdom to hold its sessions, and the King to hold his Court IN IRELAND once in every three years; and to cause the same to take place in the city of York once in every three years, and also in the city of Salisbury once in every three years.¹

William Cobbett to Eneas Mackenzie, at Newcastle

OLDHAM, September 13, 1832.

This Lancashire is a spot easily got *into*, but not so easily got *out of*. After 13 public harangues at Manchester, I have made one of *seven*, which are to be made here, and to which I am bound by every tie of inclination, duty, and gratitude towards this most sensible, spirited, and every way excellent people.²

From Lancashire Cobbett went north, and visited Scotland for the first time in his life. He went to Glasgow, Paisley, Lanark, and other cities during October, and was everywhere well received.³ He could not, as he would willingly have done, extend his tour, because his affairs demanded his return to England. The Reform Bill became law in June, and the first elections to the Reformed Parliament had been arranged for December. Cobbett stood for Manchester, but so soon as he was nominated for that city, the neighbouring constituency of Oldham invited him to offer himself for election there also, because,

¹ *Manchester Lectures*, pp. 2-4.

² The Cobbett MSS.

³ For details of the Scotch visit, see the *Political Register*, October 20 to November 24, 1832.

he said, "the people, knowing how difficult it would be to carry an election for Manchester by mere voluntary support, came to the resolution to secure my return for Oldham." This he consented to do, and his decision was fortunate, for at Manchester the result was: Phillips, 2923; Thompson, 2069; Lloyd, 1832; Hope, 1560; Cobbett, 1305. It is only fair, however, to point out that Cobbett would doubtless have polled many more votes but for the fact that at noon on the last polling day it was known that he had been elected for Oldham, and that consequently many of his supporters either abstained from voting or else voted for some other of the candidates. At Oldham the result of the first day's polling was Fielden, 670; Cobbett, 642; Bright, 153; Burge, 101; Stephen, 3: whereupon the other three candidates retired, and Fielden and Cobbett were declared duly elected. Cobbett's return, it has generally been assumed, was largely owing to the influence of his colleague, John Fielden, a wealthy cotton manufacturer and an ardent disciple of Cobbett, with whose campaign against paper-money he had been in sympathy.

William Cobbett to John P. Cobbett

MANCHESTER, *September 3, 1832.*

MY DEAR JOHN,—1. Never was there a victory so complete! Oh! What would I have given for Mr. Williams and Mr. Wilkinson to be present!

2. Pray see that the next *Register* is correct. It goes off by mail-coach parcel to-morrow morning, and will be in London on Wednesday morning.

3. All is enthusiasm and all is free here.

4. I have found here letters from *all the towns further*

north informing me that they are prepared to receive me with honour, and all pressing me to go to private houses.¹

Cobbett had at last achieved his ambition, and was so happy that, his son said, it would have broken his heart if the people of Oldham had not elected him a second time. It seemed to him a very great thing to be a member of Parliament, and, high as his opinion of himself had always been, there is no doubt that he had never before felt himself so important. The dignity of the position to which he had attained seemed to him so tremendous that he was greatly exercised in his mind as to whether it was fitting that he should redeem his pledge to return to Scotland for a second lecturing tour. He was not, however, so overawed but that he could disapprove and record his disapproval, of the House of Commons itself and of its procedure.

In the first place, *the House itself* is to be spoken of. I have gone down early in the morning, and have taken a hasty measurement of it: and my opinion is that if the whole of the area were cleared of benches, of the table, of the Speaker's chair and of everything else, there is not *a foot and a half square* for each of the six hundred and fifty-eight men to stand upon. The length of a bench does not, I believe, allow to each man fifteen inches. Last night, when a call of the House brought in rather less than 400 persons, every bench was crowded, there was a standing crowd behind and all about the Speaker's chair, and a crowd of 43 persons, as nearly as I could count them, standing upon the floor; and leaving, in the whole House, only one bare piece of floor about 17 feet by 13. I am satisfied that the 658 members

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

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Wm Cobbett

AUTHOR OF THE POLITICAL REGISTER:

WILLIAM COBBETT

After a drawing by Daniel Maclise, R.A.



cannot be in the House, without close packing upon all the benches, without filling all the little avenues, and without covering the whole of the floor by persons standing upright. To move from your seat to go out of the House, no matter for what cause, no matter how pressing the necessity, upon an average, a hundred persons must be disturbed. Moving out of the pit in the midst of a theatre is nothing compared to it. . . .

The *effects* of this want of room are many, and most detrimental to the proceedings of this assembly. . . . The confusion which arises out of it beggars all description. The business is retarded by it; the crowds about the Speaker's chair, while the private bills are going on; the everlasting tramping backwards and forwards on the floor; the interruption which men give to one another, in spite of their desire to avoid it; the calls of "order, order," incessantly recurring; all these absolutely distract men's minds, and render it impossible for them to do that which it is their duty to do, and which they must do. The House necessarily thus becomes a place for doing little business, and that little not well. . . .

To take your seat in that House, and to sit as constantly as you ought to do, requires, in the present state of things, not only perfect health, but great bodily strength; and it is not always that the wisest heads are placed upon the shoulders of the strongest bodies. I know pretty well what a regiment of soldiers is: and I never saw one the private men of which would have been able to undergo a regular and constant attendance in that House, constructed as it is now, and annoying as every man's situation is. For my own part, I find very little inconvenience compared with what others must experience. I live within four hundred yards of my seat in the House; I can come away, and return, with very little inconvenience; my habits are such as to keep me always in good health: I never dine out: I know nothing of feasting of any sort: I have nothing to annoy me: I

have a great pleasure in performing my duty : I have sensible constituents : I have a colleague who is as punctual as the clock ; and, which is a very great thing, the perfect confidence which our constituents have in us prevents them from making applications to occupy any part of our time, or demand any part of our care.¹

Cobbett was present when Parliament assembled, and a few days after he had taken his seat, on February 7, 1833, made his maiden speech on the Address in answer to the King's Speech. On the report stage he spoke again, and when he rose, being greeted by an impatient House with cries of "Divide! Divide!" declared that a division should not be allowed to take place for two hours unless he was allowed to say what he wished. He was so clearly in earnest that no further opposition was offered, and he was permitted to finish his speech without interruption. An interesting pen portrait of him as he appeared at this time, when he was seventy years of age, has happily been preserved. "Mr. Cobbett, in personal stature, was tall and athletic," James Grant has written. "I should think he could not have been less than six feet, while his breadth was proportionately great. He was, indeed, one of the stoutest men in the House. His hair was of a milk-white colour, and his complexion ruddy. His features were not strongly marked. What struck you most about his face was his small, sparkling, laughing eyes. When disposed to be humorous himself, you had only to look at his eyes and you were sure to sympathise in his merriment. When not speaking, the expression of his eyes and his countenance was very different. He was one of the most striking refutations of the principles of Lavater I ever witnessed.

¹ *Political Register*, March 2, 1833.

Never were the looks of any man more completely at variance with his character. There was something so dull and heavy about his whole appearance, that any one who did not know him would at once have set him down for some country clodpole—to use a favourite expression of his own—who had not only never read a book, or had a single idea in his head, but who was a mere mass of mortality, without a particle of sensibility of any kind in his composition. . . . He usually sat with one leg over the other, his head slightly drooping, as if sleeping, on his breast, and his hat down almost to his eyes. . . . Cobbett's usual dress was a light grey coat, of a full make, a white waistcoat, and kerseymere breeches of a sandy colour. . . . When he walked about the House he generally had his hands inserted in his breeches' pockets." ¹

It has often been said that Cobbett was a failure in the House of Commons, but this was certainly not the case. Much was expected from a man of his character and gifts, and it may be that he disappointed the expectation of his most enthusiastic admirers; but, against this, it must be remembered that he was an old man when he took his seat and that he was only in Parliament during three sessions. He was, indeed, a failure in so far that he directly achieved nothing; but no well-informed person could expect that a man with his views at that day, with a following that might be counted on the fingers of one hand, would be able to do anything directly. He entered Parliament as spokesman for the poor, and he never failed to plead their cause and present their view. During the session that began on January 29 and closed on May 1833, he spoke more than one hundred and sixty times—more often, perhaps, than any other

¹ *Random Recollections of the House of Commons*, pp. 191-2.

private member, with the exception of Hume and O'Connell—and he took part in debates on subjects so various as the Irish question, public distress, pensions, plurality of holdings, juvenile offenders, the ballot, the emancipation of the Jews, agricultural distress, the monetary system, the malt duties, the house and window tax, the National Debt, the management of Crown lands, the stamp duties, the duration of Parliaments, factory regulations, the abolition of slavery, the Post Office, the Foreign Englishmen's Act, the Metropolitan Police, impressment, and education.

As a speaker he was as a rule well worthy of attention—in spite of Creevey, who told Miss Ord that "Cobbett's voice and manner of speaking are tiresome, in addition to which his language is blackguardly beyond anything we ever heard."¹ Hazlitt, on the other hand, said that Cobbett spoke as well as he wrote;² and Brougham conceded that his old enemy spoke with great ease, even so early as 1820 when they were opposed to each other in the Cleary action: "His style," Brougham wrote, "was abundantly characteristic and racy; it had great originality,—it suited the man,—it possessed nearly all the merits of his written productions, and it

¹ *Creevey Papers*, ii. 251.

² *Table Talk*, Essay VI.

"The only time I ever saw Cobbett he seemed to me a very pleasant man—easy of access, affable, clear-headed, simple and mild in his manner, deliberate and unruffled in his speech, though some of his expressions were not very qualified. His figure is tall and portly. He has a good sensible face—rather full, with little grey eyes, a hard, square forehead, a ruddy complexion, with hair grey or powdered; and had on a scarlet broadcloth waistcoat with the flaps of the pockets hanging down, as was the custom for gentlemen-farmers in the last century, or as we see it in the pictures of members of Parliament in the reign of George I. I certainly did not think less favourably of him for seeing him" (*Hazlitt, Table Talk*).

was set off by a kind of easy, good-humoured, comic delivery, with no little archness, both of look and phrase, that made it clear he was a speaker calculated to take with a popular assembly out of doors."¹ The many addresses and lectures he delivered during the next ten years gave him further fluency, and won him the approval of a person so fastidious as Richard Monckton Milnes, who heard him at a meeting at St. Ives in April 1830. "He spoke in a barn to about one hundred farmers and Cambridge men," Milnes wrote. "It lasted full three hours, and he never paused, sat down, or recalled a word, but went through the whole series of the causes of the distress: currency, poor laws, Church property, Crown lands; standing army, &c., and wound up with radical reform. He was at one time conversational, at another humorous, at another eloquent, yet all in the same idiomatic phraseology. The impression on the farmers was decidedly favourable, and I was much pleased with the whole."² When Cobbett made his maiden speech in the House of Commons, he admitted that for the first time in his life he was nervous, although, he added, the feeling wore off as he continued, and when he sat down he was nearly as self-possessed as if he had been addressing a public meeting. He ascribed his nervousness to the fact that he was appearing before an audience of men altogether different in habits, manners, education and opinions to any that he had before addressed, and that he felt the eyes of the whole country were upon him.³ While no one could excel him in private conversation or as a writer in the art of

¹ *Speeches of Lord Brougham*, i. 6.

² Reid, *Life of Lord Houghton*, i. 94.

³ Grant, *Random Recollections of the House of Commons*, p. 185.

vituperation, yet in the House of Commons he was as a rule careful and measured in his language, saying in his pleasant clear voice what was in his mind easily and concisely, without any affectation of oratorical graces, as if addressing a small party of private friends. "In speech and delivery he was quite as dogmatical and downright as in his written diatribe," John O'Connell declared; "and he had quite as much sarcastic audacity of self-possession as though he were a wealthy patrician member of that tuft-hunting House."

Cobbett first addressed the House on the day Parliament assembled (January 29, 1833), when he intervened in the debate on the choice of a Speaker;¹ but it was not until February 11 that, on the Report stage of the Address in answer to the Speech from the Throne, he delivered an important speech.² He rose to move the very drastic amendment that all the words after "Most Gracious Majesty" be omitted. The House was at first impatient, and showed an inclination to interrupt; but they did not know their man. Opposition was to him not a deterrent but a stimulant, and he continued in a strain not unlike that which Disraeli a few years later adopted.

I appeal to you, Mr. Speaker, if I have not a right to be heard: please be so good as to keep order. [Laughter.] You'll not silence me, that I'll assure you. You may rely on it, if you do not hear me, I shall adjourn the House. I was quite prepared for this, and am not to be put down by it. The people, I say, expected that some measures should be proposed by Ministers for their relief; instead of which they ask for the power of throw-

¹ See Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, third series, xv. 77-8.

² See *ibid.*, pp. 524-40.

ing the people into dungeons. [Great confusion.] If I be not heard, I shall move an adjournment. I will not spare you one word. You shall hear every word that I have to say. . . . I have a very sacred duty to perform, and if the House be determined not to hear me to-night, I will certainly bring it forward to-morrow; and if the House will not hear me to-morrow, I will then bring it forward the day after. The statement I have to make, I am determined to make.

Interruption being clearly futile, the members settled down to listen to Cobbett while he discoursed on the subject he knew so well—the conditions of the poor. He spoke first of England and then of the mooted repeal of the Act of Union, when he made a violent onslaught on that Lord Plunkett whom “Juverna” had attacked many years before in the *Register*.

There remains to be noticed (he said) another man of considerable importance in Ireland, not less worthy of being rescued from oblivion. If there was anything shameful on earth—if there was anything to make a man blush—if there ever was anything to induce a man to wish to hide his head from the light of day—it is what the man to whom I am alluding formerly said, as contrasted with what he is doing now. This man, after saying all sorts of things in opposition to the Union (such as, that it never could be law—that the people never would obey it)—added: “For my own part I will resist it to the last gasp of my existence—to the last drop of my blood—and when I feel the hour of my dissolution approaching, I will, like the father of Hannibal, take my children to the altar, and swear them to eternal hostility against the invaders of their country’s freedom.” Again he said, “I shall be proud to send my name down on the roll with those who have resisted the ener-

of their country ;" and again he declared, " that he should bear in his heart the consciousness of having performed his duty, and when his death approached he should not be haunted with the thought of having basely sold or meanly abandoned the liberties of his native land." Now where is the man who held this language? Is he in England; or is he in Ireland? Is he in the ranks of the Ministerialists opposite, or is he in the ranks of the repealers around me? He is in Ireland. But what is he there? Is he Lord Chancellor? Yes! This old Hannibal (Hannibal, indeed!) is actually Lord Chancellor of Ireland. Yes! the very man who is to have the management of the dungeons in which the honourable Member [O'Connell] is to be thrust, only for asking—in a peaceable and constitutional manner—through this House, for the repeal of that very Act which this Lord Chancellor himself declared, at its passing, to be a violation of the Constitution—which he said he would oppose to the last hour of his life; and against which and its framers he was to swear all his children to eternal hostility. Well, but what has become of all the young Hannibals? I should like, if anybody can tell me, to know if they have been sworn? I have them all in a paper before me; every Hannibal of them.

Then, to a House that listened delighted, he read out slowly name after name of Lord Plunkett's sons, sons-in-law, and relatives and the handsome places and emoluments that had been found for them by "old Hannibal." When the long list was finished, Cobbett put down his paper, and wound up with, "*There's a pretty Hannibal for you!*"

As against this success must be recorded a blunder which Cobbett made in the early days before he thoroughly understood the spirit of the House of Commons.

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SIR ROBERT PEEL

From an engraving by C. Turner, after a painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.

He had always felt strongly on the subject of paper money, and he was so ill-advised as to set down a motion condemning the policy of Sir Robert Peel, especially in relation to the Currency Acts of 1819 and 1826, and calling on the House to present an Address to the King, praying him to be graciously pleased to dismiss Peel from the Privy Council. Such an Address was only justified if corruption could be proved, and as Cobbett did not even suggest such a motive for Peel's action, his attitude was generally resented. Indeed, he was at the last anxious to withdraw the motion, but this Peel would not allow.¹ Cobbett, therefore, moved it on May 16, 1833, in an impatient and angry House. When Peel, greatly excited, rose to reply he was greeted with a tremendous outburst of cheering from all quarters; later, when Cobbett rose to reply, he could not obtain a hearing, and he sat down abruptly. The House then divided: Ayes, 4; Noes, 298. Lord Althorp then proposed "That the resolution which has been moved be not entered on the Minutes," and this was carried by 295 to 4 votes. The members who supported Cobbett were Thomas Atwood, Patrick Lalor, John O'Connell, James Roe. The tellers for the Ayes were Cobbett and Fielden.

In the autumn of 1834 Cobbett went to Ireland. He crossed by the Holyhead packet to Kingstown, where he was met by General Sir George Cockburn, with whom he stayed at Shanganah Castle, near Bray, until September 18, on which day he, at the request of a large number of admirers, made a public entry into Dublin, and addressed a meeting. Subsequently he visited Kilkenny, Waterford, Cork, Limerick, and other

¹ Charles Greville, *Memoirs* (ed. 1874), ii. 373.

cities, returning to Dublin early in November, and leaving for England at the end of the month. His impressions of Ireland he recorded in the *Register* in a series of letters addressed to Charles Marshall, a labourer employed at Normandy Farm.

Amongst those desirous to do him honour was Daniel O'Connell. The relations between Cobbett and O'Connell dated back to 1824, when the alliance was thought most curious. "You ask me what I think of O'Connell's union with Cobbett," Peel wrote to Lord Liverpool on December 30 of that year. "I think it very strange, because as Cobbett brought over the bones of Paine, and Paine was no friend to any religion, and still less to the Roman Catholic, this union with Cobbett must, I should think, disgust the fanatic and even the really religious Catholic. O'Connell is a very clever man, but in some things a very foolish and indiscreet one. Probably he took up Cobbett (who is now engaged in proving that the Reformation was a great curse), without much reflection, and having forgotten the bones."¹ It was, however, not until the Liberator's visit to London in February 1825 that the men met. "I spent an hour with Cobbett and was greatly pleased with him," O'Connell wrote to his wife. "He is a bold, clear-headed fellow, and his views are distinct and well-intentioned."² The men fell out over the question of Catholic Emancipation, but by the time Cobbett went to Ireland the breach was healed. So soon as his visit was announced, O'Connell, who was unable to come to Dublin, wrote to Edward DWyer asking him to organise a public dinner in the capital, "at which Cobbett may receive the respectful

¹ Parker, *Sir Robert Peel*, i. 336.

² *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, i. 97.

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Your faithful Servant
Daniel O'Connell

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

From an engraving by W. Holl, after a painting by T. Carrick

attentions of the sincere friends of civil and religious liberty in Dublin."

O'Connell thought Cobbett one of the most extraordinary men that the world ever saw. Looking back upon Cobbett's humble beginnings, he, as he wrote to Edward Dwyer in September 1834, did not know which most to admire, "the value of that strong mixture of the democratic principle in British institutions which has allowed him to make such an advance, or the extraordinary and vigorous intellect which enabled him to overcome the many and numerous difficulties which counteracting aristocracy threw in his way, and to become one of the most powerful and useful men now living." O'Connell, of course, was, like most Catholics, an admirer of the *History of the Protestant Reformation*, but his enthusiasm did not exhaust itself over this one book, but extended over the entire Cobbett library. "We see," he said to the same correspondent, "that he has published the very best and most practically useful books of instruction—that he has written the most pure English of any writer of the present day, and has embraced and illustrated more topics of popular and sound politics than any other living, or perhaps dead, author—that even his errors and mistakes are brought forward with so much distinctness and fairness that they also advance the cause of truth and justice, by stimulating to and requiring most attentive and considerate discussion."¹

William Cobbett to Daniel O'Connell

DUBLIN, September 23, 1834.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have received your letter of welcome by the hands of Mr. Edward Dwyer; and also your

¹ *Political Register*, September 27, 1834.

kind letter of invitation to your house at Darrynane.

With regard to the first, I will not pretend to believe that I am altogether unworthy of the character you have given me, while as far as good intentions and zealous endeavours go, no one can overrate me there. If I do not (as I certainly do not) deserve *all* the praise that you bestow on me, I have, in the commendations thus bestowed on me by you, and in the honourable reception that I have found in Ireland, a powerful motive, in addition to all those which before urged me on to action, to endeavour to deserve all your praise, great as it is.

I did not set my foot on Irish ground without bearing in mind the fact, that I had resolved never to come hither, while the unmitigated "*Coercion Bill*" should remain in force; and, without bearing in mind this other fact, namely, that it was *you*, and *you alone*, who had prevented it so remaining. Never shall I, as long as I live, forget your attitude, your manner, your agitation, your anxious and impassioned tone, when you asked, *whether it was intended to renew the Coercion Bill*; nor shall I ever forget the indignant declaration of your resolution to oppose it. It was your conduct, in that five minutes, which produced all that followed; it was your conduct in that five minutes that brought me here: your country's gratitude you know you have; and I here, with the greatest respect, beg you to accept of mine.

With regard to the second matter—your invitation to Darrynane, I could, by going thither, not possibly add, in the view of either your countrymen or mine, one particle to the proof of that respect and admiration which I bear towards you: if the visit could do this, nothing should prevent me from making it. But while it could be of no use in this respect, I find, upon full and minute inquiry and calculation, that it would retard me ten or twelve days in that progress which I am perform-

ing, not for pleasure, not to gratify curiosity, but from a sense of duty; from a desire to acquire that knowledge which I did not before possess, and the possession of which is necessary to enable me duly to discharge that duty which my excellent constituents have a right to expect at my hands. For these reasons, and because the loss of ten days would be injurious to my object, I beg you to excuse (as I know you will) my not visiting you now, receiving my assurance that, if alive and well next year, I will go from my home to your house for the express and sole purpose of showing my respect towards you and your family.¹

Daniel O'Connell to William Cobbett

DARRYNANE ABBEY, November 2, 1834.

MY DEAR SIR,—The delay between the writing of your letter on the 30th of October and the receipt of this reply may induce you to accuse me of neglect, but I am not guilty. I write as soon as it is possible according to the course of our Post, and indeed I am incapable of such ingratitude as to postpone answering your interesting letter.

I am incapable also of returning you adequate thanks for your powerful answer to the "bloody old *Times*." It is an able composition and kind-hearted in the highest degree. Believe me, I will ever retain a lively sense of that kindness, and feel it only the more deeply because it is accompanied by the regret at not being able to evince my sincerity by acts rather than words. But see how vain is all this—I am unable to gratify myself and serve my country by going up to town to you at once. I had unfortunately fixed on the 19th for the day of my arrival in Dublin, and arranged with the Citizens of Cork to attend a public dinner there on the 17th. All my other arrangements depend upon that. Thus,

¹ *Political Register*, September 27, 1834.

therefore, I lose the opportunity of consulting with you on the fittest use of the material in your power. Could I even give you any suggestions in the way of advice? May not *something* be done by letter? But I agree with you that one conversation would be worth a volume of letters—besides I have no right to trespass on your time in that way. I can, therefore, only answer your enquiry by mentioning the 19th as the earliest day on which I can be in Dublin.

These certainly are, as you say, times to try men's souls—but my anticipations of the future are far from being gloomy. Your journey to Ireland must be attended with the most beneficial effects. You have done great good already by the straightforward expression of your sentiments. You know I differ with you as to Poor Laws—at least to a certain extent I differ—but still even your lectures on that subject can do nothing but good. I heartily thank you for the manner as well as the matter of these lectures. But your collection of facts will necessarily be of the utmost value—especially in the hands of one who knows so well how to use them. I, however, think it not unlikely that if I could converse with you on both our plans for the ensuing political campaign it would be most useful that we should do so. It is, therefore, with poignant regret that I find myself unable to go to you at once, as I assure you I would do but for my previous arrangements. I *must* be one day in Tralee, which town my eldest son represents, and one day at Killarney before I go back to Cork—thus making it impossible for me to go to Dublin to talk with you before the Cork dinner of the 17th. I leave this place on the 11th. Let me hear from you before you leave Dublin, and if possible let me have some intimation of the plans you have in contemplation and of the advice you *would* give me to direct mine during the remainder of the recess.

Wishing you health to see our enemies prostrate—

and prosperity to enjoy their defeat, to which you have so powerfully contributed. Believe me to be, my dear Sir, your very grateful and faithful servant,

DANIEL O'CONNELL.¹

Cobbett called on the *Liberator* on November 20 or 21 at his house in Merrion Square, Dublin, where O'Connell asked him to come, as he wished, so his letter ran, "to thank you most heartily for all the good, the unmixed good, you have done for Ireland, and the still greater good your visit and your knowledge of the state of this country must produce."² The friendship was not again broken, and at Cobbett's funeral O'Connell was conspicuous among the mourners. The last letter that passed between them has been preserved.

Daniel O'Connell to William Cobbett

MERRION SQUARE, DUBLIN,
February 10, 1835.

... It is hardly worth giving you the trouble of learning the truth upon subjects of such little interest to you or the public, especially when the all-absorbing question of the existence of the present Ministry fills the public mind.

There never was a Ministry so hateful to Ireland— inimical to the Irish people. It is impossible to describe to you the wretched state of the different public departments in this country under the present iron rule. Orangism in its most insulting as well as oppressive form is quite triumphant. Every old abuse is in full activity. Every new instrument of oppression put in motion.

Alas, I feel disposed to declaim, because it is im-

¹ From the autograph collection of Mr. Stanley Lathbury.

² *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, ii. 505.

possible adequately to describe the state of misery which this Government produces and seeks to perpetuate.

You often told me that the evils of Ireland were due to the British Government, not to the British people—and yet how many of the English people look on with apathy and acquiescence at this renewal of all the horrors of the old system of misrule. Nay, my dear Sir, what, after all, are we to expect, even from *you*—you to whom the people of Ireland would *now* be so much disposed to look up [to] as a friend and a protector? What will you do on *this* occasion? ¹

The *Register* still continued to appear, but of late with the trademark of a gridiron. This was assumed in consequence of the famous “gridiron prophecy” contained in a “Letter to Lord Viscount Folkestone,” written by Cobbett at Long Island, on the proceedings in Parliament during the session of 1819 relative to the paper money:—

Now, as to the plan, the grand plan, which is to rescue the Borough-system from its perilous state; it is, as I understand it, as follows: 1. That the Borough-Bank shall not pay in *coin* until the end of four years: 2. That it shall begin to pay its notes in bullion in February next, provided that those who demand such payment shall not demand less than sixty ounces at a time; and, even then, the Bank is, for four pounds and one shilling in its notes, to give one ounce of gold; or, in other words, is to receive its own notes at a discount of about five per centum: 3. That, from October 1820 to May 1821, the Bank is to pay in bullion of thirty ounces, and is to receive its notes at a discount of about two and a half per centum: 4. That in 1823, the Bank, the brave Borough-Bank, the Old Lady, is, without

¹ Add. MSS. 31022, f. 32.

any reduction of Debt, *to pay in coin!!!* If she do, I will give my poor body up to be broiled on one of Castlereagh's widest-ribbed gridirons.¹

It was subsequently argued by some of Cobbett's opponents that, matters having improved, he ought to offer himself up for broiling; but Cobbett's retort was to announce his intention to erect a gridiron over his premises.

To the Cobbettites

Many have called at Bolt-Court to obtain information relative to the putting up of the GRIDIRON. It is at a friend's at Kensington. If Lord Althorp leaves us enough gold in the country, it shall be gilt, decorated with laurel, fixed firmly in a stout waggon with four horses, and thus carried, slow march to Bolt-Court, and there fixed up on the front of the house; and there it shall remain till a sovereign in gold will sell for twenty one-pound notes; and then as soon as we have hoisted the *gridiron* we will have a dinner, at which we will laugh to scorn all the stupid and malignant beasts that have been abusing me for so many years. I had a right to put up my gridiron long and long ago, my prophecy having been fulfilled; but I thought I would stop till the finishing stroke came; and now we shall pretty soon have it in one way or another.

Cobbett, on the eve of offering himself for election to the Reformed Parliament, at one time intended to abandon the publication of the *Register*.

If I be returned a member to the Parliament, it is my determination to have under my control *a daily*

¹ *Political Register*, September 25, 1819.

evening paper, to be published in London, without which I should be fighting in muffles; I should be under the infernal hatches of the base and villainous *reporters*. Rather than herd with whom I would beg my bread from door to door, and with whom I must herd, and whom I must treat with both guttle and guzzle, and see my statements either garbled and disfigured, or wholly suppressed. Therefore, I must have a daily paper under my control; and, if I be elected, have it I will. I intended to *drop the Register* at the end of the present year; but I shall *not do that*. It is *so efficient!* People have got into the habit of taking it in clubs and societies so nicely. Like the sun, it sheds its beams so truly all over the kingdom that I shall not cease to publish it until Sturges Bourne's Bill be repealed; and the malt-tax and hop-tax and tithes be abolished, at any rate. I mention this affair of the daily paper *now*, in order that people may be prepared for casting off the dirty *Globe*, and the other heaps of lies and nonsense that now load the mail-bags throughout the country.¹

The intention to "drop the *Register*" was happily abandoned; but it must be admitted that the periodical suffered by its editor being in Parliament, for, although he was assisted by his sons not only in the management but also with the writing, yet he still wrote or dictated the more important articles, though he could not devote all his time or thought to the work. That the interest of the *Register* was not sustained was as nothing, however, to the fact that the change in his habits occasioned by his election to Parliament seriously affected Cobbett's health. He who every day of his life had spent hours in the open-air taking vigorous exercise suffered from

¹ *Political Register*, November 17, 1832.

the confinement within doors which is part of the price that is paid by the legislator. He looked very healthy, and still had a firm step at seventy-three, and indeed a fortnight before his death thought that he might live for a long time; but the inclination to inflammation of the throat, which for some years past had troubled him, as he grew older secured a firmer hold upon him. Yet, with the bull-dog pertinacity that was one of his most marked characteristics, he clung to his post, albeit of necessity his attendance became less regular, and he had to make it a rule to leave the House not later than ten o'clock at night.

He was present on March 10, and spoke early in the debate in favour of the repeal of the Malt Duties, but when he rose later in the day to speak again he was so hoarse that he could not make himself heard. On May 12 he presented petitions for the repeal of the "cursed" (as he called it) Poor Law Bill, and on that occasion he made a tremendous onslaught on the Duke of Richmond. "The hon. member," Hansard records, "adverted to the situation of a parish in Sussex, and censured the conduct of the Duke of Richmond, who had induced a parish of Sussex to expend £2000 upon additions to the poor-house, one of the avowed objects being to put an end to the horrible system of bastardy. The noble Duke seemed to forget that he was himself sprung from a bastard, and that he was only noble because he had sprung from a bastard."¹ He sat through the voting of Supplies on May 15, and spoke several times; and ten days later he made an admirable and powerful speech supporting Lord Chandos's motion on Agricultural

¹ *Parliamentary Debates*, third series, xxvii. 1026.

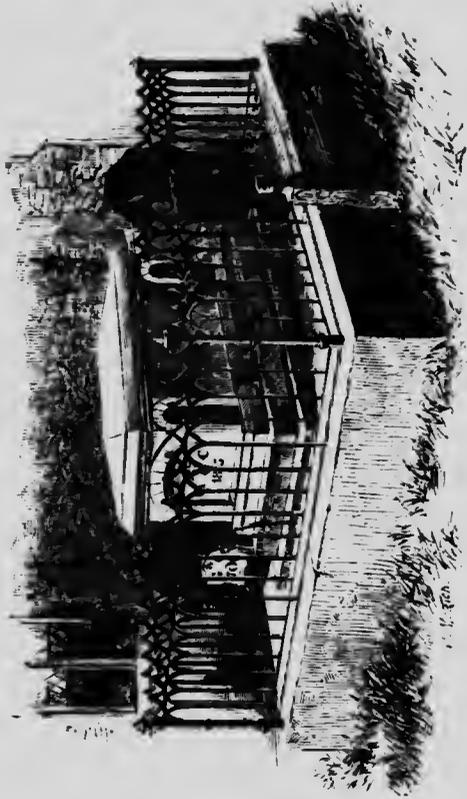
Distress, in which he urged Parliament to take the matter in hand. On this occasion he broke through his rule to leave early, and remained to vote. This was his last appearance in the House of Commons. The following morning he went to Normandy Farm, never again to leave it alive.

In his native Surrey air Cobbett hoped to recover something of the strength he had lost during his stay in the metropolis. He dictated from his bed an article for the *Register*, Wednesday and Thursday, June 10 and 11, and on the latter evening he was taken suddenly ill, and for forty-eight hours his life was despaired of. His fine constitution came to his aid, however, and on Monday he was well enough to talk to members of his family on politics and farming and to express a wish "for four days' rain for the Cobbett-corn and root-crops." On Wednesday he insisted on being carried round the farm to see how the work was progressing; but even this overtaxed his strength. On his return to the house he became more and more feeble, and it became clear that the end was at hand. He retained consciousness, and could answer any question put to him until within the last half-hour: at ten minutes past one o'clock on the afternoon of Thursday, July 18, he passed quietly away, in the presence of his wife, his eldest son and daughter, and two friends. "The immediate cause of this event," his son William wrote to William Palmer, "was water on the chest, becoming suddenly fatal by the heat of the weather, and arising from a cold taken from the great exertions made by him consequent on attending the debate on the late motion of the Marquis of Chandos. His sufferings were difficulty of breathing and deprivation of sleep, which

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THE TOMB OF WILLIAM AND ANN COBBETT AT FARNHAM
From a print in the possession of Richard Cobbett, Esq.

caused him to dream: but his mind remained perfect to his latest breath." ¹

In accordance with the wish expressed in his will, he was buried near his father and mother in the churchyard at Farnham. On a wall of the church is a marble tablet erected to his memory by his colleague in Parliament, John Fielden; and over his grave was placed a stone bearing this inscription:—

Beneath this stone lie the remains of WILLIAM COBBETT, son of George and Ann Cobbett. Born in the parish of Farnham, March 9, 1762. Enlisted in the 54th regiment of foot in 1784, in which regiment he became serjeant-major in 1785, and obtained his discharge in 1791. In 1794 he became a political writer, in 1832 was returned to Parliament for the borough of Oldham, and represented it till his death, which took place at Normandy Farm in the adjoining parish of Ash on the 18th June 1835.

¹ The Cobbett MSS.

In his will, dated December 14, 1833, he left no specific legacies, but bequeathed the copyright of his works and all his other property to his eldest son, William, whom he named as his sole executor. His effects were sworn to be under £1500.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FIRST EDITIONS

NOTE

THIS Bibliography of the First Editions of William Cobbett contains the particulars of every work known to me that Cobbett wrote, edited, or "introduced." In a few cases, where I have not been able to trace the first edition, I have given the details of a later edition, but to these attention is called. Works which I have not been able to see are marked with an asterisk.

By the courtesy of the Editor of *Notes and Queries*, this Bibliography appeared in the columns of that valuable periodical during July and August of this year. It has since been somewhat extended. The Bibliography appended to Mr. Edward Smith's biography of Cobbett, and Mr. Joseph Sabin's *Dictionary of Books relating to America*, have been of great service to me. I am also indebted for assistance to Mr. John Lane, Mr. Austin Smyth (Librarian of the House of Commons), Mr. Charles W. Sutton (Chief Librarian of the Manchester Public Libraries), Mr. George Reynolds, and Mr. J. T. Page.

At the moment of going to press I have received from Mr. H. H. B. Meyer, Chief Bibliographer of the Library of Congress, Washington, much information concerning American first editions of Cobbett, which I have incorporated in these pages. I gratefully record my sincere thanks to Mr. Meyer and the other officials of the Library of Congress.

LEWIS MELVILLE.

SALCOMBE, HARPENDEN, HERTS,
September 1912.

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A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FIRST EDITIONS OF WILLIAM COBBETT

By LEWIS MELVILLE

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"Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law" (Gold-
smith). Written by a Subaltern. (Price 2*d.*, or 100 copies,
10*s.* 6*d.*) 1793.

8vo, pp. 15. This work is sometimes attributed to Cobbett,
but Cobbett denied the authorship. (See Vol. I. p. 90 of
this work.) Mr. Edward Smith, in his biography of Cobbett,
refers to an edition of this work published by Ridgway in
1792.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE EMIGRATION OF DR. JOSEPH 1794
PRIESTLEY, and on the several Addresses de-
livered to Him, on his Arrival at New York. "Du mensonge
toujours le vrai demeure maître ;" "Pour paraître honnête
homme, en un mot, il faut l'être ;" "Et jamais, quoi qu'il
fasse, un mortel ici bas," "Ne peut aux yeux du monde
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Price One Shilling and Six-pence.

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Thomas Bradford, No. 8, South Front Street. 1795.

8vo, pp. v-66. Published, January 1795. The author's
name is given as "Peter Porcupine" on the title-page of the
fourth edition, 1796.

***A KICK FOR A BITE ; or Review upon Review, with a**
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8vo, pp. 31. Published, February 1795.

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See note to "The Democratiad."

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The *Political Censor* was issued monthly from March 1796, and was published, first by Benjamin Davies, and subsequently by Cobbett himself.

THE GROS MOUSQUETON DIPLOMATIQUE ; or Diplomatic Blunderbuss. Containing Citizen Adet's Notes to the Secretary of State. As also his Cockade Proclamation. With a Preface. By Peter Porcupine. Philadelphia : Printed for, and sold by, William Cobbett, opposite Christ Church. Nov. 1796.

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THE BLOODY BUOY, thrown out as a Warning to the Political Pilots of America, or, A Faithful Relation of a Multitude of Horrid Barbarity, Such as the Eye never witnessed, the Tongue never expressed, or the Imagination conceived, Until the Commencement of the French Revolution. To which is added an Instructive Essay, tracing these dreadful effects to their real causes. Illustrated with four striking Copper-plates. "You will plunge your Country into an Abyss of eternal Detestation and Infamy, and the Annals of your boasted Revolution will serve as a Bloody Buoy, warning to the Nations of the Earth to keep Aloof from the mighty Ruin." Abbé Maury's Speech to the National Assembly. Philadelphia : Printed for Benjamin Davies, No. 68, High Street. MDCCXCVI.

12mo, pp. 241.

*THE SCARE-CROW ; being an Infamous Letter sent to Mr. John Oldden, threatening Destruction to his House, and Violence to the Person of his Tenant, William Cobbett ; with Remarks on the same. By Peter Porcupine. Philadelphia : William Cobbett. MDCCXCVI.

8vo, pp. 23.

THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF PETER PORCUPINE, with a full and fair account of all his Authoring Transactions ; Being a sure and infallible Guide for all enter-

prising young Men who wish to make a fortune by writing Pamphlets. By Peter Porcupine himself. "Now, you lying Varlets, you shall see how a plain tale will put you down." Shakespeare. Philadelphia: Printed for, and sold by, William Cobbett, at No. 25, North Second-Street, opposite Christ Church. M.DCC.XCVI.

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*AN ANSWER TO PAINE'S RIGHTS OF MAN. By H. Makenzie, esq. of Edinborough. To which is added a Letter from P. Porcupine to Citizen John Swanwick, an Englishman, the son of a British waggon-master, and member of Congress for the city of Philadelphia. Philadelphia: Printed for, and sold by, William Cobbett, North Second Street, opposite Christ church, Oct. 1796.

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*THE HISTORY OF JACOBINISM, ITS CRIMES, CRUELITIES AND PERFIDIES: comprising an inquiry into the manner of disseminating, under the appearance of philosophy and virtue, principles which are equally subversive of order, virtue, religion, liberty, and happiness. By William Playfair. With an Appendix by Peter Porcupine containing a History of the American Jacobins, commonly denominated Democrats. . . . Philadelphia: W. Cobbett. 1796.

8vo, 2 vols.

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The compiler has not seen a copy of this book, but it is mentioned as "just published" at the end of *The Political Censor* for September 1796.

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8vo, pp. iv-58.

- 1797 A LETTER TO THE INFAMOUS TOM PAINE, IN ANSWER TO HIS LETTER TO GENERAL WASHINGTON. By Peter Porcupine, Author of *The Bone to Gnaw for Democrats, &c.* Philadelphia printed: London reprinted, for David Ogilvy and Son, No. 315, Holborn. 1797. Price One Shilling.
8vo, pp. 23.

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OBSERVATIONS ON THE DEBATES OF THE AMERICAN CONGRESS, ON THE ADDRESSES PRESENTED TO GENERAL WASHINGTON, ON HIS RESIGNATION: With Remarks on the Timidity of the Language held towards France: The Seizures of American Vessels by Great Britain and France; and on the Relative Situations of those Countries with America. By Peter Porcupine, Author of the *Bone to Gnaw for Democrats,—Letter to Tom Paine, &c., &c.* To which is prefixed, General Washington's Address to Congress; and the Answers of the Senate and House of Representatives. Philadelphia printed: London reprinted, for David Ogilvy and Son, No. 315, Holborn. 1797. Price One Shilling.
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Pp. xvi-259.

***THE ANTIGALLICAN**; or, The Lover of his own Country. In a series of pieces partly heretofore published and partly new, wherein French influence, and false patriotism, are fully and fairly displayed. By a citizen of New England. Philadelphia: W. Cobbett. 1797.
8vo, 82 pp.

Generally attributed to Cobbett. It will be remarked that in the later days of "The Porcupine" newspaper (1801), it was given by Cobbett the sub-title of "The Anti-Gallican Monitor."

THE POLITICAL CENSOR. . . .

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES ILLUSTRATED BY EX-AMPLE. By Peter Porcupine. Part the First. London: Printed for J. Wright, opposite Old Bond Street, Piccadilly; and sold by Mundell and Son, Edinburgh; and I. Mundell, Glasgow. 1798.
12mo, pp. 23.

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***THE DEMOCRATIC JUDGE**; or The Equal Liberty of the Press, as Exhibited, Explained, and Exposed, in the Prosecution of William Cobbett, for a pretended Libel against the King of Spain and his Ambassador, before Thomas M'Kean, Chief Justice of the State of Pennsylvania. By Peter Porcupine. Philadelphia: W. Cobbett. 1798.
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*FRENCH ARROGANCE ; or, " The Cat let out of the Bag " : A Poetical Dialogue between the Envoys of America, X. Y. Z. and Lady. Philadelphia : Published by Peter Porcupine. 1798. 8vo, pp. 31.

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1799 REMARKS ON THE EXPLANATION, LATELY PUBLISHED BY DR. PRIESTLEY, RESPECTING THE INTERCEPTED LETTERS OF HIS FRIEND AND DISCIPLE, JOHN H. STONE. To which is added, A Certificate of Civism for Joseph Priestley, Jun. By Peter Porcupine. London : printed for J. Wright, opposite Old Bond Street, Piccadilly. 1799. 8vo, pp. 52.

*THE TRIAL OF REPUBLICANISM. Philadelphia. 1799.

*DETECTION OF A CONSPIRACY FORMED BY THE UNITED BRETHREN, WITH THE EVIDENT INTENTION OF AIDING THE TYRANTS OF FRANCE IN SUBVERTING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. By Peter Porcupine. Philadelphia. 1799. 8vo.

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8vo, pp. 309. The numbers the compiler has seen are dated: 15, 28 Feb., 15, 31 March, 30 April, 30 Aug., 1800.

COBBETT'S ADVICE.

1 sheet, 4to. A manifesto, dated Pall Mall, 29 Sept., 1800.

BY WILLIAM COBBETT. PROSPECTUS OF A NEW DAILY PAPER TO BE ENTITLED THE PORCUPINE.

8vo, pp. 8.

THE PORCUPINE. . . . London.

This newspaper was founded by William Cobbett, and the first number was issued on 30 Oct., 1800. Its motto was "Fear God: Honour the King." It was "Printed and Published for William Cobbett, at No. 3, Southampton Street, Strand."

LE MAÎTRE ANGLAIS, ou Grammaire Raisonnée, pour faciliter aux Français l'étude de la langue Anglaise, Par William Cobbett: Ouvrage élémentaire, adopté par le Prytanée Français. Seconde Edition, Soigneusement corrigée, et augmentée notamment d'une Table Alphabétique des Matières; Par F. Marguery, Professeur de Belles-Lettres. A Paris, Chez Warée, Libraire, au Louvre. Fayolle, Libraire, rue Honoré, No. 1442. Masson, Besson, et Bossange. An IX.—1801.

8vo, pp. xii-414.

PORCUPINE'S WORKS; containing various Writings and Selections, exhibiting a Faithful Picture of the United States of America; of their Government, Laws, Politics, and Resources; of the Characters of their Presidents, Governors, Legislators, Magistrates, and Military Men; and of the Customs, Manners, Morals, Religion, Virtues, and Vices of the People: comprising also a Complete Series of Historical Documents and Remarks, from the End of the War, in 1783, to the Election of the President, in March, 1801. By William Cobbett. In Twelve Volumes. (A Volume to be added annually.) Vol. I. [Vol. II.] [Vol. III.] [Vol. IV.] [Vol. V.]

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[Vol. XII.] London: printed for Cobbett and Morgan, at
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1802 LETTERS TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY ADDINGTON, CHANCELLOR OF HIS MAJESTY'S EXCHEQUER, ON THE FATAL EFFECTS OF THE PEACE WITH BONAPARTE, particularly with respect to the Colonies, the Commerce, the Manufactures, and the Constitution, of the United Kingdom. By William Cobbett. London: Published by Cobbett and Morgan, Pall-Mall. January, 1802.

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A COMPENDIUM OF THE LAWS OF NATIONS,
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ment. . . . By William Forsyth. To which are added,
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*LE MERCURE ANGLOIS.

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THE EMPIRE OF GERMANY DIVIDED INTO DEPARTMENTS, UNDER THE PREFECTURE OF THE ELECTOR OF *****. By Jean Gabriel Peltier. To which is prefixed, A Memoir on the political and military state of the continent, written by the same author. Tr. from the French, by William Cobbett. London: Printed for E. Harding. 1803.

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From January to June, 1808. London: Printed by Cox and Baylis, Great Queen Street; Published by Richard Bagshaw, Bow-Street, Covent Garden; Sold also by J. Budd, Pall Mall; W. and J. Richardson, Royal Exchange; Blacks and Parry, Leadenhall Street; J. Mercer, Dublin; J. Morgan, Philadelphia; and E. Sarjeant, New York. 1808.

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From July to December, 1808. London: Printed by Cox and Baylis, Great Queen Street; Published by Richard Bagshaw, Bow-Street, Covent Garden; Sold also by J. Budd, Pall Mall; W. and J. Richardson, Royal Exchange; Black, Parry, and Kingsbury, Leadenhall Street; J. Mercer, Dublin; J. Morgan, Philadelphia; and E. Sarjeant, New York.

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1808 Leadenhall-Street; and J. Archer, Dublin. January, 1808.

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8vo, unnumbered Tables of Contents—1390-ccviii columns,

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ELEMENTS OF REFORM, or An Account of the Motives and Intentions of the Advocates for Parliamentary Reformation. By William Cobbett, proprietor of the *Political Register*. "Englishmen! read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest." London: Printed and Published by J. Gold,

103, Shoe-Lane, Fleet-Street; and to be had of J. Asperne, 1809
32, Cornhill; J. Hatchard, Piccadilly; and Reynolds and
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12mo, pp. 24.

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From January to June, 1809. [Volume XVI. From July
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tion, in 1688, to the Accession of Queen Anne, in 1702.
London: Printed by T. C. Hansard, Peterborough-Court,
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[Vol. II. Comprising the Period from the First Year of the
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Comprising the Period from the Third Year of the Reign
of King Charles the First, A.D. 1627, to the Sixteenth Year
of the said Reign, A.D. 1640.] [Vol. IV. Comprising the
Period from the Sixteenth Year of the Reign of King Charles
the First, A.D. 1640, to the First Year of the Reign of King

1809 Charles the Second, A.D. 1649.] London: Printed by T. C. Hansard, Peterborough-Court, Fleet-Street. Published by R. Bagshaw, Brydges-Street, Covent Garden; and sold by J. Budd, Pall-Mall; J. Faulder, New Bond-Street; Sherwood, Neeley and Jones, Paternoster-Row; Black, Parry, and Kingsbury, Leadenhall-Street; Bell and Bradfute, Edinburgh; and J. Archer, Dublin. 1809.

8vo, vol. i. pp. liv-1452 columns; vol. ii. pp. viii-1486 columns; vol. iii. pp. vi-1536 columns; vol. iv. pp. vi-1470 columns.

The *State Trials* were edited by William Cobbett, John Wright, and Thomas Bayly Howell.

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8vo, pp. viii-1344 columns-8 pp. Indices, &c.

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8vo, vol. xv. pp. viii-672 columns and cxlii columns, and 3 pp. Indices; vol. xvi. pp. viii-1130 columns, and 3 pp. Indices; vol. xvii. pp. xvi-798 columns and ccx columns, and 3 pp. Indices.

- 1811 COBBETT'S POLITICAL REGISTER. Volume XIX. From January to June, 1811. London: Printed by T. C. Hansard, Peterborough Court, Fleet Street; and sold by Richard Bagshaw, Brydges Street, Covent Garden; and John Budd, Pall Mall. 1811.
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COBBETT'S POLITICAL REGISTER. Volume XX. From July to December, 1811. London: Printed for the Author, and sold by Richard Bagshaw, Brydges Street, Covent-Garden; T. C. Hansard, Printer, Peterboro' Court, Fleet Street.

8vo, pp. xvi-832 columns.

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Fleet-Street: and sold by R. Bagshaw, Brydges-Street, 1811
Covent-Garden; and J. Budd, Pall Mall. 1811.
8vo, unnumbered Tables of Contents—988—ccliv columns.

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8vo, unnumbered Tables of Contents—1454 columns.
Vol. X. and subsequent volumes were issued as "The Parliamentary History of England," and were edited by John Wright, Cobbett having disposed of his interest in the work.

COBBETT'S COMPLETE COLLECTION OF STATE TRIALS and Proceedings for High Treason and Other Crimes and Misdemeanors from the Earliest Period to the Present Time. Vol. IX. Comprising the Period from the Thirty-Fourth Year of the Reign of King Charles the Second, A.D. 1682, to the Thirty-Sixth Year of the said Reign, A.D. 1684. London: Printed by T. C. Hansard, Peterborough-Court, Fleet-Street. Published by R. Bagshaw, Brydges-Street, Covent Garden; and sold by J. Budd, Pall Mall; J. Faulder, New Bond Street; Sherwood, Neeley and Jones, Paternoster-Row; Black, Parry, and Kingsbury, Leadenhall-Street; Bell and Bradfute, Edinburgh; and J. Mercer, Dublin. 1811.

8vo, pp. vi—1372 columns.

VOL. II.

- 1811 COBBETT'S COMPLETE COLLECTION OF STATE TRIALS and Proceedings for High Treason and Other Crimes and Misdemeanors from the Earliest Period to the Present Time. Vol. X. A.D. 1684-1685. London: Printed by T. C. Hansard, Peterborough-Court, Fleet-Street; For Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Co.; J. Richardson; Black, Parry, and Kingsbury; J. Hatchard; E. Lloyd; J. Budd; J. Faulder; J. Booker; Cradock and Joy; E. Jeffery; and T. C. Hansard. 1811.

8vo, pp. v-1418 columns. With this volume Cobbett's connexion with the "Collection of State Trials" ceased, his name was removed from the title-page, and that of T. B. Howell inserted.

COBBETT'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES, during the Fifth Session of the Fourth Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the Kingdom of Great Britain the Twenty-first, Which met at Westminster, the First Day of November, in the Fifty-first Year of the Reign of His Majesty King George the Third, Annoque Domini One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ten. Vol. XVIII. Comprising the Period between the 1st of November, 1810, and the 28th of February, 1811. London: Printed by T. C. Hansard, Peterborough-Court, Fleet-Street; For Longman, Hunt, Rees, Orme, and Browne; J. Richardson; Black, Parry, and Kingsbury; J. Hatchard; J. Ridgway; J. Booker; J. Rodwell; Cradock and Joy; E. Jeffery; R. H. Evans; J. Booth; J. Budd; and T. C. Hansard. 1811. 8vo, vol. xviii. pp. viii-1268 columns, and 3 pp. Indices.

- 1812 COBBETT'S POLITICAL REGISTER. Volume XXI. From January to June, 1812. [Volume XXII. From July to December, 1812.] London: Printed for the Author, and sold by Richard Bagshaw, Brydges Street, Covent Garden; J. M'Creery, Printer, Black-Horse-Court, Fleet-Street. 8vo, vol. xxi. pp. xvi-832; vol. xxii. pp. xvi-832.

COBBETT'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES, during the Fifth Session of the Fourth Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the Kingdom of Great Britain the Twenty-first, Which met at Westminster, the First Day of November, in the Fifty-first Year of the Reign of His Majesty King George the Third, Annoque Domini One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ten. Vol. XIX. Comprising the Period between the 22nd of Feb. and the 10th of May, 1811. [Vol. XX. Comprising the Period between

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the 13th of May and the 24th of July, 1811.] London: 1812
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 Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the Kingdom
 of Great Britain the Twenty-first, Which met at Westminster,
 the Seventh Day of January, in the Fifty-second Year of the
 Reign of His Majesty King George the Third, Annoque
 Domini One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twelve. Vol.
 XXI. Comprising the Period between the 7th of January
 and the 16th of March, 1812. London: Printed by T. C.
 Hansard, Peterborough-Court, Fleet-Street; For Longman,
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 1812.

8vo, vol. xxi. pp. xiv-1316 columns, and 1 pp. Indices.

Vol. xxiii. contains an "Advertisement," dated 17 Sept.,
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 "Multum continetur in parvo." New-York: Printed for
 the Publisher. 1813.

8vo, pp. 24.

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1813 sold by Richard Bagshaw, Brydges Street, Covent Garden. J. M'Creery, Printer, Black-Horse-Court, Fleet-Street.

8vo, vol. xxiii. pp. xvi-928 columns; vol. xxiv. pp. xvi-832 columns.

1814 COBBETT'S POLITICAL REGISTER. Volume XXV. From January to June, 1814. [Volume XXVI. From July to December, 1814.] London: Printed and Published by G. Houston, No. 192, Strand.

8vo, vol. xxv. pp. iv-832 columns; vol. xxvi. pp. iv-864 columns.

1815 LETTERS ON THE LATE WAR BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN: together with other miscellaneous writings on the same subject. By William Cobbett, Esq. New-York: Published by J. Belden and Co.: Van Winkle and Wiley, Printers. 1815.

8vo, pp. 407.

PAPER AGAINST GOLD AND GLORY AGAINST PROSPERITY, or, An Account of the Rise, Progress, Extent, and Present State of the Funds and of the Paper-Money of Great Britain; and also the Situation of that Country as to its Debt and other Expenses; its Navigation, Commerce, and Manufactures; its Taxes, Population and Paupers; drawn from Authentic Documents, and brought down to the end of the Year 1814. In two Vols. By William Cobbett. Vol. I. [Vol. II.] London: Printed by J. M'Creery, Black-Horse-Court. 1815. Retail Price, 20s. in Paper-money.

8vo, vol. i. pp. viii-523; vol. ii. pp. iv-100-cxxvi.

THE PRIDE OF BRITANNIA HUMBLED; or, The Queen of the Ocean Unqueen'd, "By the American Cock Boats," or "The Fir-built Things, with bits of Striped Bunting at their Mast Heads."—(As the Right Hon. Mr. Canning, in the British parliament, called our American Frigates.) Illustrated and Demonstrated by Four Letters addressed to Lord Liverpool, on the late American War. By Wm. Cobbett, Esq. Including a number of his other most Important Letters, and arguments, in Defence of The American Republic. To which is added, A Glimpse of the American Victories, on Land, on the Lakes, and on the Ocean. With a Persuasive to Political Moderation. Most respectfully addressed to the Persons composing the two great Parties in the United States in general, and to the Politicians of Connecticut and Massachusetts in Particular. New York: T. Boyle. 1815.

12mo, pp. 216.

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CHUSETTS. Written in England, Nov. 13, 1814. By
 William Cobbett. With a Prefatory Epistle to Certain
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 Ye shall know them by their fruits. New Testament.
 Boston: Printed at the Yankee-Office. 1815.
 12mo, pp. 24.

COBBETT'S POLITICAL REGISTER. Volume XXVII.
 From January to June, 1815. [Volume XXVIII. From
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 8vo, vol. xxvii. pp. iv-800 columns; vol. xxviii. pp. iv-408
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COBBETT'S POLITICAL REGISTER. Volume XXX.
 From January to June, 1816. London: Printed and Pub-
 lished by G. Houston, No. 192, Strand. 1816.
 8vo. pp. ii-831-2 pp. Index.

COBBETT'S POLITICAL REGISTER. Volume XXXI.
 From 6th July to 28th December, 1816. Entered at Stationers'
 Hall. Printed by Hay and Turner, No. 11, Newcastle Street,
 Strand. Published by William Cobbett, Jun., No. 8, Catherine
 Street, Strand.
 8vo, pp. iv-831-2 pp. Index.

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 Volume XXXII. Of which the former part was written
 in England, and the latter in America. In the whole thirty-
 eight numbers, being all that were published in the year
 1817. London: Printed and Published by and for William
 Jackson, 11, Newcastle Street, and 192, Strand. Entered
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 8vo, pp. iv-1216.

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OF AMERICA; Treating of the face of the Country, the
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1818 of the Institutions of the Country, Civil, Political, and Religious. In three Parts. By William Cobbett. Part I. Containing: I. A Description of the Face of the Country, the Climate, the Seasons, and the Soil; the Facts being taken from the Author's daily notes during a whole Year. II. An Account of the Author's Agricultural Experiments in the Cultivation of the Ruta Baga, or Russian, or Swedish, Turnip, which afford proof of what Climate and Soil are. New-York: Printed for the Author by Clayton and Kingsland, No. 15, Cedar-Street. 1818.

12mo, pp. 134.

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16mo, pp. 184.

COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER. Volume XXXIII. From January to June 1818. Written in America. London: Printed and published by and for William Jackson, 11, Newcastle Street; 192, Strand; and 34, Wardour Street, Soho. Entered at Stationers' Hall.

8vo, pp. iv-730 columns.

1818-19 COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER. Volume XXXIV. From August 1818 to August 1819. Written in America. London: Printed for and published by Thomas Dolby, 34, Wardour Street, Soho. Entered at Stationers' Hall.

8vo, pp. iv-1136 columns.

1819 A YEAR'S RESIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; Treating of the face of the Country, the Climate, the Soil, the Products, the Mode of Cultivating the Land, the Prices of Land, of Labour, of Food, of Raiment; of the Expenses of House-Keeping and of the usual manner of Living; of the Manners and Customs of the People; and of the Institutions of the Country, Civil, Political, and Religious. In three Parts. By William Cobbett. Part II. Part III.] New York: Sold at No. 53, Vesey Street, where all orders will be attended to. Clayton and Kingsland, Printers. 1819.

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8vo, pp. 20.

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COBBETT'S REFLECTIONS ON RELIGION. Pub-
lished by Himself in the Twelve Volumes of his Works.
8vo, pp. 14. Published by G. Garbutt, High Street,
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- 1890 THE RIGHTS OF THE POOR, AND THE PUNISHMENT OF OPPRESSORS. By the late William Cobbett (M.P. for Oldham). Price One Penny. London: Published by Samuel Miles, Bill Poster and Advertising Agent, 2A, Longnor Road, Mile End, E. Also to be obtained at the Book Saloon, Great Assembly Hall, Mile End Road, E.
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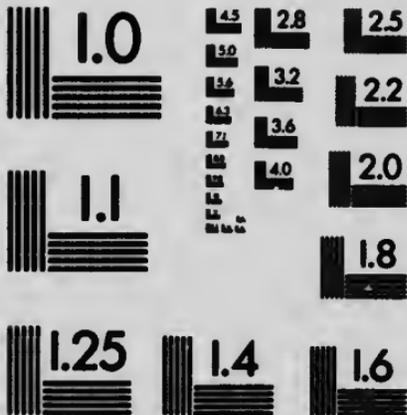
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