2. Do you know a person of the name of Gales, a printer at Sheffield?
   A. Yes, very well.

Q. Mr. Yorke was not a settled inhabitant of Sheffield?
   A. No.

Q. Did he attend the meetings of the Constitutional Society at Sheffield?
   A. He frequently attended, almost every weekly meeting during his last visit to Sheffield.

Q. As he was not a settled inhabitant of Sheffield, in what character did Mr. Yorke attend regularly the weekly meetings of the society.
   A. They considered him as a man of considerable abilities and an orator, paid great respect to him; and he used to attend constantly once a week at the meeting called the committee; but it was not properly a committee, for the time of the expiration of the committee was elapsed before, and another was not chose; and such persons, whether they had been in the committee before or not, were admitted on account of Mr. Yorke being at Sheffield.

Q. I ask you in what character he came there
   A. I am totally unacquainted with it, for he did not bring any letter to us: I have heard say—

Q. Did you ever hear himself say?
   A. No.

Q. But being there, you discovered that he had great talents; and was an orator?
   A. Yes.

Q. Did he take any part in the discussions of the society, or in the management of it?
   A. Yes, he wrote several pamphlets while he was at Sheffield, and several times brought some part, if not the whole of his pamphlets in manuscripts to those meetings to be read.

Q. Do you speak now of the weekly meetings, that were improperly called committees?
   A. Yes.

Q. Where were those held?
   A. At my house.

Q. In a large commodious room there, probably?
   A. It was a small room when the meeting met. But there was a large room when there were more persons present.

Q. How often was that large room used?
   A. Some two, three or four times; I do not recollect how many.

Q. During his last visit?
   A. Yes.
In that room was there any particular accommodation for the more commodious exercise of the talents and oratory of Mr. Yorke?

Q. Yes, some little thing erected for to elevate the speaker.
A. What did they call it?
Q. I do not know any particular name for it: some called it a pulpit and some a tribune; but it never was christened.
Q. And from this tribune Mr. Yorke addressed the society?
A. Yes.
Q. Besides this meeting, improperly called a committee, and the meeting where the tribune was, do you recollect any general meeting upon the Castle-Hill, Sheffield?
A. Very well.
Q. Was it the seventh of April?
A. I do not justly recollect; but I was there.
Q. Was Mr. Yorke there?
A. Yes.
Q. Did he there exercise himself in addressing the people?
A. Yes.
Q. In what sort of manner and language?
A. He had with him a book in his hand, wrote by Mr. Locke, and he expatiated very largely on the corruptions that had crept into the British constitution, or rather the evils which are generally complained of; he thought there was a deviation in some degree from the original constitution of Great Britain; but his manner of speaking may sometimes lead him to go farther in speaking than he ought.
Q. That does happen to those that are great orators very often.—On that occasion did this unfortunate fatality attend him, that he went farther than he ought; did it appear that this address of his, and Locke's book for his text, was more violent and went farther than he ought?
A. He is peculiarly energetic, and at the same time very warm, very strong; but at this meeting I do not know that he said anything that was detrimental to the constitutional law of England.
Q. It was settled that you was to do something at that meeting?
A. It was.
Q. Settled by whom?
A. By Mr. Yorke and Mr. Gale at a previous meeting.
Q. To do what?
A. That I should make a motion at that meeting for petitioning the House of Commons for a Reform in the Representation of the People.

Y y

Q. For
Q. For what purpose was you to make that motion as it was settled?
A. That it might be over-ruled.

Q. Was it settled by the committee beforehand that the motion should be made, and that it should be over-ruled?
A. Yes; it was so agreed upon, and further for the purpose of introducing another motion in its place.

Q. Pray, Sir, did you make the motion as it was agreed?
A. I did, for petitioning the House of Commons.

Q. What was done upon your making that motion?
A. It was objected to with a view of making way for another, which was brought in and carried.

Q. Who was the objector?
A. There were only four of us that were elevated above the rest.

Q. Then there was an elevation on Castle-hill?
A. Yes; one of these matters was carried there from our room.

Q. This tribune?
A. Yes.

Q. Who were the other three with you?
A. Mr. Yorke, Mr. Gale, and Mr. Camage.

Q. Then either Mr. Yorke, Mr. Gale, or Mr. Camage opposed your motion?
A. Yes.

Q. What number of persons might be assembled at this meeting?
A. Several thousands.

Q. This was a meeting in the open air?
A. Yes.

Q. Then one of these persons opposed your motion, as it had been agreed, for introducing the other?
A. Yes.

Q. What was that other motion?
A. Instead of petitioning the House of Commons, to petition his Majesty, and the petition was drawn up; the parchments lay at my house.

Q. Drawn up by who?
A. By Henry Redhead.

Q. Was it drawn up before or after the meeting?
A. It might be drawn up before, and read there; I think it was, but it was not signed till after.

Q. It was left at your house for signatures?
A. Yes.

Q. Upon this occasion did Mr. Yorke address the meeting, which you say was composed of some thousands?
A. Yes;
A. Yes; he introduced the subject of petitioning the King to exercise his power for a Reform in the Representation of the People; and this petition was sent to London to Earl Stanhope, and he did not think proper to present it in that form.

2. Do you remember, a day or two after the meeting upon Castle-hill, being in company with Mr. Gale and Mr. Yorke at your house, when any application was made to him on the subject of printing the speech he had delivered upon Castle-hill?

A. I remember something of that sort being said to him at my house.

2. Did he agree to print his speech?

A. To the best of my recollection he did agree to it.

Q. Was it done?

A. Yes, to the best of my recollection.

Q. Did you see it afterwards?

A. Yes.

Q. Printed?

A. Yes.

Q. From having heard it upon the Castle-hill, could you form an opinion whether the printed one is a pretty accurate statement?

A. The substance of the matter I expect it contains.

Q. Was that published at Sheffield?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you believe this to be one of those publications?

A. I do.

Q. Did you receive afterwards, in your character of secretary, from Mr. Yorke, any number of this pamphlet for any purpose?

A. I did not receive them from Mr. Yorke, but I received them at Mr. Gale’s shop.

Q. Did you do anything with them by the direction of Mr. Yorke?

A. It was by direction of the meeting, previous to their being communicated to different persons.

Q. Do you mean the public meeting?

A. The private meeting.

Q. Did you in consequence thereof make up any packets?

A. Yes.

Q. Look at these packets.

A. These are directed by me according to order.

Q. How many might you direct in that manner in several packets?

A. I do not recollect exactly.

Q. About how many?

A. There might be twenty-four.

Y y 2

Q. What
9. What were done with them?
A. They were lapped up, and directed to separate persons, and then all put in a box.
9. To whom were they sent?
A. To the best of my recollection, they were sent to Thomas Hardy.
9. I would ask you first, what your situation in life was before you was applied to, to become the secretary of this society?
A. I was a cutler,
9. Was you working at your business?
A. Yes, when I had any business to work at.
9. Was you applied to, to become the secretary, or did you apply?
A. I was applied to.
9. Who applied to you?
A. John Allcock was one.
9. Was you paid any thing for your trouble?
A. Yes.
9. What was your inducement for taking that office upon you?
A. I should not have taken it upon me if I had not been applied to.
9. What induced you?
A. The war had spoiled my business.
9. You did it to increase your means of support?
A. Yes.
9. Did you hear any thing about procuring arms at Sheffield?
A. I heard the report, as many others did, but I purposely avoided meddling in thought or act with any thing of that sort.
9. Did you hear in the society, or from any of the members in the society, any proposition for arms?
A. Yes, I did; but it is necessary that this should be well explained. A few days before this meeting, when it was spoke to as being the right of Englishmen to have in their power means of defence, a spurious hand-bill was published in Sheffield, with an intention to provoke the society to some unjustifiable measure; it was spoke to in the meeting, as having a right to have them in their own defence; and Joseph Gale spoke to it; he was the man; and this bill, this wicked hand-bill, was not signed by any magistrate, and it was throw'd about the town in the dark. It caused agitation in the minds of the people, and it was spoke of as being the right of every individual there to have such and such arms according to their rights, lest any riot or tumult should break out; and I am happy to speak of this, for I should be happy to see
see that advertisement which was published in the Sheffield paper a week after.

Q. Was that hand-bill distributed previous to the meeting upon the Cattle-hill?

A. To the best of my knowledge it was after that meeting.

Q. Was this subject of procuring arms publicly discussed, or at the private meeting?

A. It was in the public meeting of the society that Gale spoke of our rights, in our large room.

Q. Was it a public meeting of the society; were there strangers there?

A. Yes, many others who were not members in the room. Tickets were not regularly delivered at that time I believe.

Q. You members introduce visitors?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you see any arms, or any model of any?

A. I never saw one.

Q. What sort of arms were they that were talked of as fit to be had for the purpose you were stating?

A. Pikes, but I never saw any till I was brought to London.

Q. I do not know whether you have heard any thing of night-cats?

A. I saw a model of one, but it was only like a child's play-thing.

Q. We will just get an account in what manner children play with it at Sheffield. What sort of a thing was it?

A. It was a little thing, standing on three points, and one point standing up.

Q. How many points were there to it?

A. I think there were four.

Q. If you throw it down it always presents a point?

A. Yes.

Q. And how long was that point?

A. About three quarters of an inch, just to show what sort of a thing it was.

Q. Was there any other purpose for which these instruments were to be made, except as a play-thing for children?

A. I never heard of them in the society at all.

Q. Where did you see that model?

A. To the best of my recollection, in the house of one Benjamin Dan.

Q. Was he a member of the society?

A. Yes, but it was not he that produced it.

Q. Who did produce it?

A. I think they call him Charles Rhodes.

Q. Had you ever seen such a thing before?

A. I never
A. I never did.

Q. You naturally asked its use, for which it was constructed?
A. I do not recollect any conversation on that head, only that it was taken and thrown on the floor.

Q. Was that act of throwing it down on the floor, accompanied by no description of the use of it, except as a play-thing?
A. There might, but it was not serious; there was nothing serious said on it.

Q. Serious or not, what was said on it?
A. Nothing was said, but he brought it to shew them.

Q. What was said, serious or not serious, as to the use?
A. I cannot call to mind, only that he took it out of his pocket, and said, that he had come to shew them this that a little boy had made.

Q. Was it called by any name?
A. I heard no name of it there till I came to London, and then it was called a cat.

Q. What did you hear it called in addition to that name?
A. I heard no name at all there whatever.

Q. Was there any conversation at that time, when it was thrown upon the floor, about cavalry?
A. I do not recollect any conversation at all; they might say, look at the model.

Q. Was there no conversation? You told me just now, that the conversation was not serious about it. Upon your oath, was there nothing said about cavalry or the town of Newcastle?
A. I know nothing about the conversation of Newcastle; Newcastle was not mentioned.

Q. Upon your oath, was you not present at a conversation in which the model was produced, and there was a talk of the town of Newcastle?
A. Upon my oath, I never was.

Q. Nor you never heard of any conversation with respect to cavalry?
A. No, I do not recollect any conversation about its use; I never heard any thing except defultory, loose, trifling, pleasing conversation.

Q. The more defultory, loose, trifling, pleasing conversation it was the better; let us have it?
A. I am sure I cannot recollect it, else I would.

Q. Try, do not hurry yourself?
A. I do not recollect, except taking it out of his pocket and throwing it on the floor.

Q. No, no debate at all, and the conversation you do not recollect?
A. No, there was none at all; it was shewn principally to the
the company as being the production of a boy or child; I remember it perfectly well.

Q. It was a thing you had never seen any thing like it before?

A. No, I do not recollect that ever I had.

Q. And you contented yourself with seeing it thrown down upon the floor, without asking any questions about the use of it?

A. I had nothing at all to do with that.

Q. Now, sir, you told me that at that meeting at the Castlehill, Mr. Yorke, though generally warm and energetic, disposed to say strong things, did not say any thing detrimental to the constitutional law of England. Were you present at any other meetings, when his speeches were not altogether constitutional?

A. I have been present at other meetings where he has not been so guarded as at that meeting.

Q. Perhaps when he has not been so well guarded, it was at the meeting of the society only?

A. Yes.

Q. Be so good to tell us a little the tendency of his discourse when he gave himself a loose manner, and followed the impulse of his nature?

A. If I had noted them down, I might have been able to repeat them.

Q. I do not expect that you should give them in his manner, or precise words, but the substance?

A. I do not recollect at present; I may have heard him when conversing in this meeting; sometimes he was very warm to be sure, and sometimes might drop an unguarded expression; sometimes such as comparing what he looked upon to be the grievances under which we labour, and the privileges that we once enjoyed; he might step out of the way; I heard him once use an expression, but for my own part I would not chide to put a comment on it; he expressed himself to this purpose, that we were in a low despicable situation, and rather than submit to it, he would go up to London with the people there present, but did not say for what.

Q. How many of you might there be then present, who were to come up with Mr. Yorke to London, rather than submit to live in so despicable a situation?

A. There might be one hundred and fifty or two hundred.

Q. Was this at one of the meetings of the society?

A. Yes, with some others.

Q. At one of the general meetings?

A. Yes.
Jury. Go to London, and what then?
A. He did not draw any inference.
Mr. Garraw. Was that after you had heard any thing upon the subject of arming?
A. I think it was before that; to the best of my memory it was before that, I am not perfectly clear of that.
Q. Was that delivered from the tribune?
A. Yes, delivered from the place that was called so; sometimes it is called a pulpit.
Q. It was from that orator’s elevation that this speech was delivered?
A. Yes.
Q. Then, perhaps, having brought that to your recollection, you may possibly recollect something else?
A. No, I never remember any other that gave me any pain; I should not recollect that, but I felt pain at the time.
Q. What was it that made you feel any pain at that declaration of Mr. Yorke’s?
A. Because I fear God and honour the King.
Q. And therefore you felt pain at that declaration of Mr. Yorke?
A. Yes.
Q. Either at that or any other meeting do you recollect any other expressions of Mr. Yorke?
A. No, I do not remember any expressions that so struck me as that.
Q. I do not know whether you have seen this paper before. (The proceedings of the fast day at Sheffield shewn him.)
Q. Did you ever see that before?
A. I never see but one from which this was taken, perhaps, Mr. Attorney-General. Look at the hymn there.
A. Yes.
Mr. Garraw. Have you seen a pamphlet of which that appears to be a copy?
A. Yes.
Q. Be so good as to look at this: (another paper shewn him) have you seen that before?
A. Yes.
Q. Do you remember the circumstance of a proclamation for a general fast-day to be held in January 1794, in London?
A. Yes.
Q. Tell us in what manner the fast was observed upon the Castle-Hill, at Sheffield?
A. It was not at the Castle-Hill, it was another place, at the top of the town; I forget the name of the place.
Q. Was you there?
A. I was.
Q. Was
Q. Was that in the open air?
A. Yes.
Q. How many persons might be assembled for the purpose of observing that fact?
Court. How is that evidence?
Mr. Attorney-General. In order that that may be understood, your Lordships will recollect that there has already been read from the Constitutional Society's book, a resolution, thanking the people of Sheffield for the manner in which they had spent the fast day.

Mr. Garrow. With the addition that this printed paper was found in the prisoner's possession.
Q. (To witness) How many do you think there were assembled?
A. There might be a thousand or two.
Q. Be so good as to tell us the manner in which you, together with that assembly, of a thousand or two of the inhabitants of Sheffield, celebrated that fast day?
A. With the hymn that is there printed.
Q. In order to shorten it, I will put it thus: Is the manner in which it is represented in this printed paper, correct?
A. To the best of my knowledge it is.

Mr. Garrow. (Reads) "A Royal Proclamation having been issued, commanding February 8, 1704, to be observed as a General Fast, the friends of Peace and Reform in Sheffield determined to honour the day in the most distinguished manner. Accordingly, the thousands of that town assembled upon a spacious plain, near Welf-street, Back-fields, where the meeting was opened with prayer; after which a serious lecture, suitable to the occasion, was read with great energy."

Mr. Gibbs. Take the legal course in introducing the paper.

Mr. Garrow. There are several legal courses.—If you approve of it better, I will authenticate the paper.

Mr. Gibbs. The legal course is the best.
Q. What might the number of your society amount to at Sheffield?
A. Nearly six hundred, more or less.
Q. Are you divided into divisions or sections?
A. Such a mode has been advised, but has not been regularly and orderly kept.
Q. By whom had that mode been advised?
A. I cannot recollect, because it was advised before I was secretary.
Q. Do you suppose that six hundred were the full amount of the members of the society at its greatest extent of your numbers—did they amount to two thousand?

A. No,
A. No, no such thing.—I wrote the tickets.
Q. You think about six hundred was the number.
A. Yes.
Q. You say the distribution into divisions or sections was not regularly executed; what was done towards it?
A. There were a kind of books delivered, called district-books, but they were not regularly attended to.

Lord Chief Justice. Where did those books issue from?
A. They were printed by Joseph Gale.
Q. By whose directions?
A. They were printed before I became a member; before I joined the society.
Q. They were the societies books, printed by Mr. Gale?
A. Yes.
Q. To whom were they distributed, to what manner of persons, and for what purpose?
A. For the members of the societies to divide into districts, or you may call it sections.
Q. It was not regularly effected; what was the mode in which these districts were to assemble themselves?
A. They were to meet, if they thought proper, but principally to collect a penny per week from each member.
Q. That was the contribution towards the fund of the society?
A. Yes.
Q. Were there any regular periods at which the different sections were to communicate in one general assembly, or was that left to emergency?
A. Such a thing was mentioned but never executed.
Q. What was mentioned but not executed?
A. The district meetings; but they were not properly attended to.

Mr. Lanyon called in again.
Q. Look at this paper, (a pamphlet entitled Fast-Day, as observed at Sheffield) where did you find that?
A. At Mr. Hardy's house.
Q. Look at this (A Serious Lecture.)
A. I found that at Mr. Hardy's.
Q. (To Broomhead) After the Serious Lecture was read, there was a hymn prepared
A. Yes.
Q. Who composed it?
A. It was composed by one Montgomery.
Q. It is stated to be sung in full chorus by the assembly.
A. It was sung,
Q. By whom were these two pamphlets printed and published—by whose order?
A. I believe
A. I believe they were printed by Joseph Gale,
B. But by whose order—at whose expense?
A. They were sold,
B. Who ordered them to be printed?
A. I believe it was a private matter.
B. But there is an expense incurs, you know, before the sale of printing and publishing?
A. He was not paid till after it was done.
B. Who furnished the copy to Gale?
A. I don't know for certain.
B. Who read the lecture?
A. A gentleman from Halifax.
B. Do you know of any proceedings of the Society, or committee, or of Yorke, respecting the printing and publishing these two pamphlets?
A. I do not.
B. Do you know whether they were generally distributed in the town of Sheffield?
A. They were sold.
B. Do you or not, from your own knowledge, know whether the sale was extensive?
A. I think not very.
B. There is a prayer; who composed that?
A. I did.
B. You composed it yourself?
A. Yes.
B. Who was it delivered by?
A. By myself.
B. From notes or extempore?
A. It was extempore.
B. You had written it and committed it to memory, perhaps?
A. Yes.
B. What became of your copy?
A. I do not know, there was no account taken of it; it was delivered to Gale, to be printed.
B. At whose direction?
A. I do not know, it was a private meeting of several members of the society that that was spoken of.
B. Be so good as tell me if you know these names; John Payne Newhill?
A. I have heard the name, but I do not know the person.
B. Was he member?
A. I believe so.
B. Joseph Gale?
A. Yes, I know Joseph Gale.

Z z 2.

Q. He
Q. He was a member?
A. Yes.

Q. Do you know Joseph Smith?
A. Yes.

Q. Do you know David Martin?
A. Yes.

*Mr. Garrow.* It is not worth while going through the names; it is a sufficient evidence that they were sent up to the Constitutional Society, to be affiliated with them, which is proof they were members.

(Read by the Clerk of the Court)

"Proceedings of the public meeting held at Sheffield in the open air, 2d of April, 1794, and also an Address to the British nation, being an exposition of the motives which had determined the people of Sheffield to petition the House of Commons no more on the subject of Parliamentary Reform.

(Page 9.) "Fellow Citizens, the day is at length arrived, when fanaticism and superstition, deprived of their tinfoil trappings, and exposed in their native ugliness, to the view of mankind, flink feowing back to the cave of obscurity, there I hope they will for ever remain."

*Mr. Erskine.* Let the whole of it be read.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE PUBLIC MEETING.

"In pursuance of a public advertisement, a General Meeting of the Friends of Justice, Liberty and Humanity, was held, at three o'clock on Monday the 7th of April, 1794, on the Castle-hill, in Sheffield, to consider upon the propriety of addressing the King, in behalf of the persecuted patriots, Citizens Muir, Palmer, Skivring, Margaret and Gerald; also of again petitioning the House of Commons for a Reform in the Representation of the People, and to determine upon the propriety of petitioning the King, for the total and unqualified Abolition of Negro Slavery.

"Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, (very severe rains having fallen until within a quarter of an hour of the appointed time of meeting,) from ten to twelve thousand people were assembled on the occasion:

"Henry Tuke having been voted to the Chair, The business was opened by reading the following Address to the King, in behalf of the suffering Patriots.

"TO THE KING.

"An Address from Inhabitants of the Town and Neighborhood of Sheffield, in the County of York.

"SIRE,

"WE, the undersigned, being warm friends of Liberty, and the Rights of Man, feel ourselves deeply affected by the sentences
stances which have lately been passed in your Majesty's Courts of Scotland, upon citizens Muir, Palmer, Skirving, Margarot and Gerald.

"Had these men been really guilty of crimes, their punishment should doubtless have been proportionate to their offences; but, so far from considering it as a crime for a man to use every constitutional means in his power to effect a Reform in the Commons House of Parliament, we think that every man who thus exerts himself, deserves well of his country; since we are persuaded that nothing short of the accomplishment of such a Reform, will restore peace and happiness to our present aggrieved and injured nation.

"We trusted also, that your Majesty entertained the same opinion with us of such exalted conduct, from your Majesty's having chosen for your most confidential servants in the state, men who had singularly distinguished themselves by their patriotic exertions in the cause of Parliamentary Reform.

"But the friends of these sufferers having brought their case before Parliament, without producing the desired effect—the principal of these very servants of your Majesty having opposed the measure with all his corrupt, but irresistible influence—seeing no other resource, we approach your Majesty in this Address, to interreat your Majesty to interfere in behalf of these innocent men, with that power which the British constitution has placed in your Majesty, of pardoning whom your Majesty pleases—a privilege which is sometimes graciously extended even to real and palpable criminals.

"Let it not be recorded in the history of this country, that King George III. or any of his judges, transported men for fourteen years, because they had dared to speak the same words upon a speculative subject, which, if they were not the immediate means of advancing his Majesty's then prime minister to his high situation, caused his election to be remarkably popular. Let it not be said, that men of education, of refined sentiments, of the most virtuous and benevolent characters, were severed from their dearest connections, and plunged into dungeons with thieves and prostitutes. Let it not be said, that fathers were torn from their wives and children, and sons from their aged parents, because they had the virtue openly to condemn the acknowledged corruptions of government, and to exert every peaceable means in their power to remove them. Let it not be said, that it was as great a crime to speak the truth as to be guilty of felony.

"But rather, O King, let it be recorded, that George III. had the wisdom, the humanity, and the justice, to step in between these severe and cruel sentences and their execution.

"These
"These are our desires—these our plain sentiments. We know they are such as your Majesty is unaccustomed to hear; but, if they are supported by truth and reason, suffer not the homeliness of our manner to offend your Majesty. We are plain men, and will not flatter a King. If our wishes be attended to, we are persuaded it will, in some good degree, hush the murmurs which unreasonable severity in a government never fails to excite; and it may also avert that Storm, which it is but too evident has long been awfully gathering, and which may burst forth in a moment when your Majesty thinks not."

"The Address being read, and received with repeated applause, The Henry Yorke addressed the meeting in support of the measure. He observed, that the cause for which our countrymen were now suffering, was the same as had been advocated in the year 1783, by Mr. Pitt, the Duke of Richmond, and other men, who were at this time pensioners and placemen under the actual government; that a convention, for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, had been held at the Thatched House Tavern, in which these men went as delegates, or acted as assistants; that it was cruel, if not unjust, to punish men for following the example which those in power had set them. The question was not a question of convenience, but of right. It was not enough to say, that the people were formerly represented, but that they had a right to be represented now. Did the ministry, therefore, mean to assert, that what was right to-day, was wrong to-morrow? Did they mean to declare, in the face of the world, that what was in conformity to the maxims of justice at that time, should, in so short a space, be deemed unjust, and punished as a crime?"

"After having expatiated considerably on this very important subject, he proceeded with observing, that in all countries where severe and fangurious punishments were encouraged, men could have no affection for the government under which they lived, and their obedience to it could result solely from motives of fear. That liberty of opinion could not be denied to any free country, without denying at the same time the rights of the people. That nothing argued more strongly against a government than the uniform design of depriving the people of this liberty; that it was a proof that something went wrong; and that even governors were ashamed of their conduct, when the right of discussion was violated or put an end to. The civil liberty we enjoyed in our country was the effect of political discussion; and its political liberty would have long since been restored and secured, if our rulers had not interposed to weaken or annihilate this right: First, by giving a power of decision to judges, which the ancient law of the land did not acknowledge; Secondly, by con-
founding the truth with the fact of publication: And, thirdly, by having punished with the utmost severity libels in private cafes, to prepare the public mind for those severe sentences in public ones, which dishonoured and irritated the nation. It had been lately the fashion to confound government with the constitution, and the ministry with the government. To oppose, therefore, the mad and wild, if not criminal schemes of administration, was to oppose government, and, by this mode of reasoning, to oppose government was to be an enemy to the constitution. A government can never give a more authentic proof of its propensity to tyranny, and of the impropriety, as well as impolicy of its measures, than by restraining or forbidding the liberty of discussing publicly matters of legislation and policy. It is debasing the character of man, as an intellectual being, to deny him the right of enquiring into that which even governors allow was made for his use, namely, government.

"To punish inquiry, severity is exercised for imaginary guilt. But what is the effect? Mischief is prolific. Violence in government begets resentment in the people, who murmur and exclaim. Government is provoked, and studies vengeance. When one act of vengeance is exposed, more always follow. Affection is lost on both sides, and what is worse, is irrecoverable. Hatred begins; and the government and the people being a variance, consider each other no longer as magistrate and subject, but as mutual enemies. Hence the inhuman will of Caligula, that he could murder all the people at one blow. The unequal is in order: he is continually destroying them; they are continually wishing him destroyed.—Such conduct had the fatal tendency of cramping the genius of men, and of plunging the nation into a state of barbarism with regard to their religion, their laws, their morals, and their government, and to keep them ignorant of the most important concerns in their trade, their splendor, their felicity; whilst all the nations around them were improving themselves in morals and policy, by the daring efforts and concurrence of enlightened men, whose views were directed to those objects alone which were really worth their attention. The reasoning of a government, which prohibits information, is defective in every particular; its progress is not to be stopped, nor even to be checked, without manifest disadvantage. Prohibition has no other effect than to irritate men; to inspire them with an idea of insurrection, and to give to all their writings a libellous tendency. Severe and arbitrary sentences may intimidate, but they cannot convince a nation. It is by reason and argument alone, opposed to apparent reason and apparent argument, that a government can hope to be victorious over its internal enemies, or render itself permanent by the quiet
quiet and conscientious concurrence of all its citizens. It is
doing too much honor to innocent subjects to be alarmed at a
good few pages of writing, or at a few fugitive orations, when bar-
racks are erected in a country, and 60,000 armed mercenaries
are ready to execute the mandates of government. Experience
had proved, that the rigorous prosecutions which had lately

taken place throughout England, and that the cruel sentences
which had disgraced the capital of Scotland, had not answered
the purpose of establishing arbitrary power, and of crushing the
rebellion of honest minds. Although there is no spirit so erect
and independent as not to be broken by the long continuance of
the silent and inglorious sufferings of a jail; yet it had been
found, that men were proud to step forward in this most flabby
seafar, when such terrible examples of legal vengeance had been
held up before them to plead the ancient rights of their country,
to unmask the infamy, intrigue, and murderous projects of ad-
ministration, and according to the principles of the purest benevo-

cence, to assert the liberty of the whole human race. The pre-
sent times bore a strong and marked resemblance to those ter-

tific ages when priests held their dominion over the minds and
consciences of men, and when they endeavoured to establish
the reign of intolerance and orthodoxy amidst flames of fire,
and streams of human blood. All history had evinced, that
every attempt to curb and bridle the expansion of the human
mind had been ineffectual; it had evinced, that opinions, though
smothered for a time, burst forth with redoubled fury, and were
victorious over power; it had evinced the triumph of reason
and truth over prejudice and superstition, and that liberty, whe-
ther of opinion or person, however slow in its progress, had
uniformly moved forward towards its defined goal; and that
even, at this moment, the interruptions which had been op-
posed to it in our own country, although they might be injuri-
ous to individuals, would finally obtain, confirm, and establish
the rights of the people. Conscious of their uprightness, the
friends of freedom had persevered in their noble cause, unap-
palled by the influence of spies and informers, and by the threats
of a corrupt, a crazy, and wicked administration. In so doing,
they had acted in perfect conformity to the principles of virtue;
without which no man could be a friend to his country, and a
lover of mankind. Its essence consisted in the regulation of our
conduct by such moral axioms as are best calculated to promote
the general happiness of our fellow-creatures; and as it fre-
quently happened, that the happiness of the individual stood in
direct opposition to that of the public, it is the perfection of vir-
tue in individuals to sacrifice their own happiness to that of the
public. A man, in possession of this virtuous principle, feels
delight
delight whilst actually burning in the brazen bull of Phalaris; and such, he trusted, was the actuating principle of those generous patriots, who are become willing victims of the most barbarous and savage sentences that ever had been pronounced in Britain; who had made a glorious stand against arbitrary power, and who broke loose from the fondest endearments of human life, in the hope of redeeming their lost country from the fangs of a dark and brooding prejudice, and from the horrors and turpitude of an ignominious slavery.

"It was the tyranny of the British government which drove William Penn, with the philosophic people called Quakers, to the delectable regions of Pennsylvania, where, by toleration, industry, and permanent credit, they revived the simplicity of the primitive ages of society. It was the same tyranny which has driven into voluntary exile, or forced by law into banishment, the most virtuous of men, the first of philosophers, the most exalted and courageous band of patriots that ever honoured the soil of Britain. Among the former Joseph Priestly, one of the most profound philosophers of the age, and most meek and amiable of citizens, claims the sad pre-eminence; and among the latter, stand the names of those persecuted patriots, in whose behalf we are now about to address the executive magistrate of our country—a noble and a generous band, whose sufferings do not claim our pity, because they boil up our rage; whose sentences disgraced those who pronounced them, not those on whom they were pronounced; whose condition is enviable, because honourable, and to the whole of whose opinions and conduct, no good man, or honest citizen, can give one dissentient voice! In times like these, when a man is mocked and insulted, because he bears the name of a patriot, an epithet once honoured by the people of England; at a time when those who have the courage and magnanimity not to flatter their country, are deserted, betrayed and persecuted, what honours are sufficient for those who thunder truth against tyranny? What disgrace ought not to await those timid beings, those negative patriots, who keep aloof from the scene of action, and riot on their country's wrongs? When our nation shall be regenerated, these persecuted men will wear civic crowns. In the political, as in the moral world, the friend who appears to soothe our distresses, excites our esteem; and he who, in calamitous times that try men's souls, sacrifices interest, friends and home, in order to save his sinking country, merits well, not only of every Briton, but of all mankind, and even of the government under which he lives.

"Fellow citizens, the day is at length arrived, when fanaticism and superstition, deprived of their tinel trappings, and ex-
profed, in their native uprightness, to the view of mankind, shrink back to the cave of obscurity; there I hope they will for ever remain. The energy of Englishmen will no longer endure this strange uproar of injustice. I trust my countrymen are sick of religious and political imposture; and that their decisive and manly conduct will command, in an imperious tone which will take no denial, not a melioration of these enormous abuses, which would be to compromise with injustice; but I trust they will demand the annihilation of corruptions and abuses, and a restitution of the original rights of human nature. I ask of our governors, this plain question, Is it better that the people should be in a constant state of stupidity, than that they should be sometimes turbulent? Ministers of state, if ye mean to be wicked, suffer the people to write and speak; you will find men corrupt enough to serve you according to your evil desires, and who will improve you in the art of Scipio. If you mean to be good, permit them to write, you will find some honest men, who will improve you in the art of a Turgot. How many things are ye still ignorant of, before you can become great either in goodness or evil? I see no glory, no advantage, no pleasure, no safety, in any man reigning as a Sultan over slaves. Such a horrid preeminence tarnishes the lustre of the most exalted station. It is, besides, precarious, for Sultans are frequently deposed, and vengeance wreaked upon them.

"I need not invite you, fellow citizens, to feel for any human being who suffers, much less need I solicit your approbation of the present measure, after the general testimony of satisfaction you have given of it. You are too enlightened to need the aid of any instruction from me, and your understandings are too much awakened to require that your passions should be played upon. Whilst the unerring tribunal of posterity shall condemn, with scorn and derision, with execration and disgust, those inhuman beings who have been the causes of such unexampled and inhuman severity, our persecuted brethren will obtain a verdict of honour and glory. I may venture to say, that, beloved by the present age, future ages shall heap around their monuments trophies of undying fame; and an exasperated and repentant people shall enrol their names in the volume of history, which records also the names of Sidney, Hampden, and Locke!"

"The following resolutions were then read three times over, and, with the exception of one or two persons, were unanimously adopted:

1. "That the people being the true and only source of government, the freedom of speaking and writing upon any subject cannot be denied to the members of a free government, without offering the grossest insult to the majesty of the people.

2. "That
2. "That therefore the condemnation of citizens Muir, Palmer, Skirving, Margarot, and Gerald, to transportation, for exposing the corruptions of the British government, was an act better suited to the maxims of a despotic than a free government.

3. "That the address which has now been read, be presented to the King, in behalf of the above persecuted patriots."

"On the second resolution being proposed, all hiss was heard from different parts of the meeting, in consequence of one or two persons holding up their hats against it; on observing which, H. Yorke thus addressed the meeting:

"FELLOW-CITIZENS,

"As your chairman, I call you to order. As an individual I must observe, that this hiss is repugnant to the principle of toleration or freedom, which we wish to see established. We have this moment read and given our assent to, an Address to the King in favour of liberty of opinion; let it not be said, that we are the first to violate that liberty in others, which we claim for ourselves. Opinions will always vary, even amongst the wisest and best of men. We are bound, therefore, to shew tenderness to the opinions of others, and compassion even to their prejudices. Let our enemies see that we consecrate by our example, what we desire to see established as a principle. Hisses do not convince; they tend only to irritate the minds, and to beget the ill-will of our fellow-citizens; let us, on the contrary, confront them with the weapons of reason and truth, the only logic of liberal minds. Every thing which has a tendency to stir up the passions without awakening the understanding, is unbecoming of freemen, or of men who would be free."

"These well-timed observations had the good effect of preventing any further signs of intolerance, and the utmost decorum prevailed throughout the conduct of the business.

"It was next moved, that a Petition be presented to the House of Commons, for a Reform in the Representation of the People in Parliament:" but so marked was the disapprobation given by the whole meeting to this measure, that not one single person seconded the motion, but a most profound silence, interrupted only by a few murmurs, was observed: upon which Henry Yorke again rose, and addressed the meeting in an animated speech of an hour long, and of which it is impossible for us to give our readers a just conception. He took a general view of the British constitution, and stated its most prominent defects; among which the want of a perfect national representation was the most glaring. He dwelt a considerable time upon this subject, and then proceeded to take a rapid survey of the
the exertions which had been made at different periods, and by
different persons, to promote the cause of Parliamentary Reform,
"He observed, that the subject was become a mere bugbear,
employed to deceive the people, and worked upon as an engine
to raise into power, needy and ambitious men; that the very
same men, who, in opposition, had declared, that it was the only
measure of saving the country from ruin, were the first to re-
probaté and securé the measure of Reform when they were in
power. From the corruptions of the British government, par-
ties had been generated, which, in their route to power, had
convulsed and plundered the empire. Under the distinctions of
names, principles had been forgotten; and for the sake of
leaders, whom the people had foolishly idolized, the machine of
government rolled on amidst the feuds and contentions of party.
Eternally the peace of our country had been disturbed by the
rancour and animosities of factions, and the people, instead of
turning themselves to correct the gross evils which existed in it,
had ever been the tools of base and designing men, and seemed
prepared to whet and sharpen their swords one against another.
"It was now high time that the people should lay aside
leaders, discard factions, and act for themselves. He strongly
inforced these principles, and then entered into a compleat de-
tail of the ancient constitution as established by Alfred, which
he proved to be at this time totally defaced, if not lost. He
then pursued the gradual decline of popular liberty in England,
from the anarchy which was the consequence of Danish and
Norman invasion; and taking a general sketch of our history,
so far as it was connected with the subject of popular represen-
tation, he made some strong and pointed remarks on the revolu-
tion of 1688, the object of which, he said, was not, could
not be answered, unless annual parliaments and general suffrage
were restored. For this he had the authority of Lord Somers,
who drew up the Declaration of Rights, and who was promoted
by William III. for his popular exertions at that memorable
epoch.
"In order to prove that the revolution had not corresponded
with the expectations of the people, no sooner was the Prince of
Orange established on the throne of England, than all ideas of
the ancient mode of annual parliaments were effaced, and the
triennial act was palpéd in the very face of that revolution, and
in direct contradiction to its principles; for the revolution, at
least, so far as it respected the people, was not intended to be a
compromise between the King and the aristocracy, for the joint
inheritance of the people, but to establish on unequivocal prin-
ciples the right of the people to govern themselves, and to recall
those delegated powers which they had entrusted to their ser-
vants.
wants for this purpose, when they were either abused, or neglected to exercise them. If the revolution were not a revolution for the people, it was no revolution at all, but a conspiracy of a few ennobled oppressors against the liberties and happiness of the many. But if it were designed to comprehend the people, and its end has been perverted, or purposely laid aside, the people are not warranted in petitioning, but are justified in demanding as a right, agreeably to the tone of language used in the Declaration of Rights, the restitution of annual parliaments, and the establishment of universal suffrage. But the shock which was given to the stability of these principles, was most infamously flagrant, by the enacting of the septennial act, in the reign of George I. If the act of parliament in the reign of Henry VI. erated from the roll of citizenship some of the best members of the community, the enacting of the triennial and septennial acts, filled up to the brim the measure of governmental iniquity, and poured forth the waters of bitterness throughout our land."

"FELLOW-CITIZENS,"

"Enough of precedent. The human race has long been rolling down the tide of ages neglected, unpitied and oppressed. It is high time that the devious course of human policy should not be left to the uncertain issue of storms and of elemental wars; but that the machine of state should be guided by the polar star of reason alone, which is never seen but when the majesty of the people is resplendent. What is beneficial in the example of ages, we ought to reserve with caution. What is injurious, and what is only tolerably competent to answer the common purposes of society, ought to be abolished. We insult ourselves, when we abjectly distrust the powers which nature has given us; nor ought we passively to acquiesce in institutions, which, though injurious, may be preferable to those that may be endured by others. We insult ourselves, when we foolishly balance between tolerable vices and positive good; between unnatural systems, and novel, untried, but just maxims. The human mind is progressive; so is the social mind. That the one therefore should remain stationary, amid the rapid course of the other towards perfection, is a prejudice as unnatural as it is injurious to the happiness of man. The governments of Europe present no delectable symmetry to the contemplation of the philosopher—no enjoyment to the satisfaction of the citizen. A vail, deformed and cheerless structure, the frightful abortion of haste and usurpation, presents to the eye of the beholder no systematic arrangement—no harmonious organization of society. Chance, hate, faction, tyranny, rebellion, massacre, and the hot, inclement action of human passions, have begotten them. Utility
Utility has never been the end of their institution, but partial interest has been its fruit. Such abominable and absurd forms; such jarring and dissonant principles, which chance has scattered over the earth, cry aloud for something more natural, more pure, and more calculated to promote the happiness of mankind. Experience must regulate the mechanism of government, by which I mean not a narrow and confined, but a liberal and enlightened experience, which, hearing without passion or prejudice, the testimony of ages and nations, collects from its general principles, to further the progress of civilization. It is in history that we are to dive for those rich materials of legislative experiment, which are to ameliorate the social order, and repair those breaches which injustice has long since made. But if this experience be found inadequate to the purpose of alleviating human miseries; if it afford nothing but the melancholy prospect of outrageous despotism—of excessive vices on the part of the governing, and debasement and vassalage on that of the governed; if it ascribe the commotions of suffering countries to the designs of factions, and not to principles; if it shew, that in consequence of national ignorance, after the first ebullitions of revolt, they have fat down in a torpid calm, and borne with usurpations still heavier than those by which they were roused to arms—it must be granted that this experience is important, because it teaches the suffering nations of the present day, in what manner to prepare their combustible ingredients, and humanists in what manner to enkindle them, so as to produce with effect, that grand political explosion, which at the same time that it buries despotism, already convulsive and agonising in ruins, may raise up the people to the dignity and sublime grandeur of freedom.

"To effect this just and useful purpose, revolution of sentiment must precede revolution of government and manners. The popular energies must be excited, that the popular voice may be felt and heard. The people must grow wise, in order that the people may rule. It is said we preach anarchy; but what is anarchy but the establishment of confusion on the wreck of popular opinion? It is said we are Levellers; but those are Levellers who would wish to reduce man to the condition of the brute; guided by passion and uninfluenced by reason. Those are Levellers whose hands are dipped in the public spoils; who affect impunity for crimes, and inviolability of persons; who would make humanity take a retrograde motion; who would pull the arm of justice, and defeat the end of equal laws. We have ever disclaimed the foolish idea of levelling property; because our own property, the fruit of our labour, or of our talents, might, by the example, be exposed to the invasion of
the first intruder. It were well, if those who confound justice with crimes, would consider that the poor man's property, little as it is, is as precious to him, as is the wealthy stock of the rich man. It were well, if feeling the force of this principle, the aristocracy would unite with us in the cause in which we are embarked. Property, they say, is sacred. Is not, then, the property of the poor man as sacred as that of the rich; and ought it to be filched or forced from him without his consent, any more than that of the rich man? Can those who do not respect the property of others, expect others to respect their property? We wish to exalt, not to level. We wish to better the condition of the wretched; to equalize men under the influence of law, but to give to merit, industry, talents, patrimony, virtue, their proper weight and correspondent dignity in the social order. Are we, then, ungovernable, because we reject mis-government? Are we ungrateful, because we defend our liberty and property against those who ought to respect them? Are we rebels in maintaining our violated laws, against those who are open rebels to laws, and who set themselves above those laws which they ought to have venerated? I know, that in all ages of the world, people who would not be oppressed, have been reckoned ungovernable, by men who are, or who would be oppressors. I know that the enemies of oppression have always been stigmatized as enemies of government. I know that it is sedition to blame the excesses of power, and inoffent to mention the infolence of those who abuse power. I know that it is sedition to distinguish between public right and public wrong, between government and tyranny. Nor is it enough to acknowledge all good government to be irrefutable; but the worst, and the abuse of the best, must be irrefutable also. I know, that to complain of tyranny is faction, and to throw it off rebellion; but they who oppress are the greatest rebels, and for the oppressed to turn upon them, is but to reject rebellion—it is but to do a just and natural action. Whoever violates the laws of reason, equity and nature, whatever station or name he may bear, is a rebel, subject to laws against tyrants and rebellion. Tyrants, therefore, and oppressors, are the highest and most consummate rebels in the world—capital traitors to God and man, and punifiable by all the laws of God and man. Amid all the absurdities and chimeras of Paganism, it was never believed that tyranny was warranted by Heaven. It was never believed that the bloody Caligula was the vicegerent of God, and that the worst of men had a commission from Heaven to oppress the human race. It was never believed that murder, rapine and mis-rule, were government, and that lawless and bloody-crowned robbers were governors divinely appointed. It was
was never believed that society had no remedy against devouring
lust and the raging sword, which were destroying all the ends
of society, and even society itself. Such indignities to God and
man, were never broached by Pagans; they never propagated
doctrines which would have turned men into idiots, defitute of
reflection and feeling; into beasts of burden, and beasts of
sacrifice; turned Heaven into Hell; human society into a chaos
of blood and carcasses; and the earth into a place of torments.
It never entered into the heart of a Greek or a Roman, nor into
any heart that felt the sentiments of virtue and humanity, that
it was unlawful to defend nature; a crime to ward off murder,
barbarity and desolation; and an impiety to do the most godlike
action which can be done on this side Heaven, that of disarming
tyrants, and of saving our country from perishing. Govern-
ment is doublets a sacred thing, and justly claims our reverence
and duty; but when government is general oppression; when
havoc, spoil and persecution prevail, to the destruction of all
who do well; when law and justice are banished, and military
despotism triumphs; when property is attacked and seized with-
out the consent of its owner, and lives are wantonly destroyed?
—Is this government too? If it be, tell me what is not govern-
ment? I do not think, in an age like this, that the people of
this, or any country, can ever be so sunk or deadened by
oppression, but that repeated provocation will raise a spirit
amongst them capable of accomplishing the greatest projects.
Even the most professed and degraded slaves, the people of
Turkey, often rout themselves, and casting their proud rider
to the earth, trample him to death. A little spark often kin-
dles a great flame, and a flame soon spreads to a conflagration.
An ignorant nation routed to assert its liberties, will be mad and
furious; for, when men are used like beasts, they will act like
like beasts! But, when an enlightened people, knowing their
rights, are reduced to a state of degradation, they will know
that their condition cannot be worse, but, by their own efforts,
their condition must be better. An ignorant people, incited
by repeated injury to shake off the load of injustice, will risk
unseen evils and calamities—will risk even a civil war, to
be revenged on their oppressors. Such was the temper
of the Romans upon the revolt of Sacrovir—they even
exulted in it, and, in hatred to Tiberius, wished success
to the public enemy. Such were the injured people of
Spain, who, when the Romans came, joyfully received them
as their deliverers from the tyrannous yoke of Carthage. But
an enlightened people will never fully the victories of patriotism
by such irregular conduct. Revenge will never be adopted as a
principle. Peace will actuate their demeanour, and they will
glory in awaiting the slow process of universal information, as
a prelude
a prelude to universal emancipation, rather than tarnish the career of liberty, by involving their country in scenes of terror, waste and depredation. Oppressed nature will, at a proper season, depart from passive principle; and, should an attempt be made to wrest what remains of liberty from us, I trust all men will concur to vindicate their violated rights—for, if the attempt be suffered once, it will be often repeated. A few repetitions create a habit, and habit will claim prescription and right. For governors to be omnipotent, the race of man must be extinct; and no argument for destroying anarchy can be used, but what is full as strong for the overthrow of tyranny. It is difficult to restore public affairs, when once disconcerted, to their former steady principle—numbers will engage in the corruption, and will try every art and power to support it; and they will continue to do so, until nature, which is always uppermost in man, signs their tragic doom!

"Citizens,

"I repeat my former assertion. Go on, as you hitherto have done, in the culture of reason. Disseminate throughout the whole of your country, that knowledge which is so necessary to man's happiness, and which you have yourselves acquired. Teach your children, and your countrymen, the sacred lessons of virtue, which are the foundations of all human polity. Teach them to respect themselves, and to love their country. Teach them to do unto all men, as they would that they should do unto them, and their love shall not be confined to their country, but shall extend to the whole human race. When such a revolution of sentiment shall have dispersed the mist of prejudice; when, by the incessant thunderings from the press, the meanest cottager of our country shall be enlightened, and the sun of reason shall shine in its fullest meridian over us; then the commanding voice of the whole people shall recommend the five hundred and fifty-eight gentlemen in St. Stephen's Chapel to go about their business."

"After having concluded the above speech, Henry Yorke observed, that as there might be many persons present who came from motives of curiosity, and others who came for a more criminal purpose, he should adduce in justification of the reasonings he had employed, the writings of a man, who was the first to reduce into a system the study of the Human Understanding, and the Principles of Government—he meant John Locke, whose excellent discourse on Civil Government he then held in his hand, and from which he read the following extracts:

"No government can have a right to obedience from a people who have not freely consented to it; which they never can be supposed to do, till either they are put in a full state of liberty to
chufe their government and governors, or at leaft till they have such standing laws, to which they have, by themselves or their representatives, given their free consent, and also till they are allowed their due property, which is so to be proprietors of what they have, that nobody can take away any part of it without their own consent, without which, men under any government are not in the state of freemen, but are direct slaves under the force of war.

"There is another way whereby governments are dissolved, and that is, when the legislative, or the prince, either of them, act contrary to their trust. First, the legislative acts against the trust reposed in them, when they endeavour to invade the property of the subject, and to make themselves, or any part of the community, masters, or arbitrary disposers of the lives, liberties, or fortunes of the people. The reason why men enter into society, is the preservation of their property; and the end why they chuse and authorize a legislative is, that there may be laws made, and rules set, as guards and fences to the properties of all the members of the society, to limit the power, and moderate the dominion of every part and member of the society: for since it can never be supposed to be the will of the society, that the legislative should have a power to destroy that which every one designs to secure, by entering into society, and for which the people submitted themselves to legislators of their own making; whenever the legislators endeavour to take away, and destroy the property of the people, or to reduce them to slavery under arbitrary power, they put themselves into a state of war with the people, who are thereupon absoved from any farther obedience, and are left to the common refuge, which God hath provided for all men, against force and violence. Whenever therefore the legislative shall transgress this fundamental rule of society, and either by ambition, fear, folly or corruption, endeavour to grasp themselves, or put into the hands of any other, an absolute power over the lives, liberties and estates of the people; by this breach of trust they forfeit the power the people had put into their hands for quite contrary ends, and it devolves to the people, who have a right to resume their original liberty, and, by the establishment of a new legislative (such as they shall think fit) provide for their own safety and security, which is the end for which they are in society. What I have said here, concerning the legislative in general, holds true also concerning the supreme executor, who having a double trust put in him, both to have a part in the legislative and the supreme execution of the law, acts against both, when he goes about to fit up his own arbitrary will as the law of the society. He acts also contrary to his trust, when he either employs the force,
force, treasure and offices of the society, to corrupt the repre-
sentatives, and gain them to his purposes; or openly pre-en-
gages the electors, and prescribes to their choice, such, whom
he has, by solicitations, threats, promises, or otherwise, won
to his designs; and employs them to bring in such, who have
promised beforehand what to vote, and what to enact. Thus
to regulate candidates and electors, and new-model the ways of
election, what is it but to cut up the government by the roots,
and poison the very fountain of public security? for the people
having referred to themselves the choice of their representatives,
as the fence to their properties, could do it for no other end,
but that they might always be freely chosen, and so chosen,
freely act, and advise, as the necessity of the commonwealth,
and the public good should upon examination, and mature de-
bate, be judged to require. This, those who give their votes
before they hear the debate, and have weighed the reasons on all
sides, are not capable of doing. To prepare such an assembly
as this, and endeavour to set up the declared abettors of his
own will, for the true representatives of the people, and the
law-makers of the society, is certainly as great a breach of
trust, and as perfect a declaration of a design to subvert the go-
vernment, as is possible to be met with. To which, if one
shall add rewards and punishments visibly employed to the same
end, and all the arts of perverted law made use of to take off
and destroy all that stand in the way of such a design, and will
not comply and consent to betray the liberties of their country,
it will be past doubt what is doing. What power they ought
to have in the society, who thus employ it contrary to the trust
went along with it in its first institution, is easy to determine;
and one cannot but see, that he who has once attempted any
such thing as this, cannot any longer be trusted.

"To this perhaps it will be said, that the people being ig-
norant, and always discontented, to lay the foundation of go-
vernment in the unstable opinion and uncertain humour of the
people, is to expose it to certain ruin; and no government will
be able long to subsist, if the people may set up a new legisla-
tive, whenever they take offence at the old one. To this I
answer, Quite the contrary. People are not so easily got out
of their old forms, as some are apt to suggest. They are hard-
ly to be prevailed with to amend the acknowledged faults in the
frame they have been accustomed to.

"But it will be said, this hypothesis lays a ferment for fre-
quent rebellion. To which I answer, first, No more than any
other hypothesis; for, when the people are made miserable, and
find themselves exposed to the ill usage of arbitrary power, cry
up their governors as much as you will for sons of Jupiter;

3B2
let them be sacred and divine, descended, or authorized from heaven; give them out for whom or what you please, the same will happen. The people generally ill-treated, and contrary to right, will be ready upon any occasion to ease themselves of a burden which fits heavy upon them. They will wish and seek for the opportunity, which in the change, weaknesses and accidents of human affairs, seldom delays long to offer itself. He must have lived but a little while in the world, who has not seen examples of this in his time; and he must have read very little, who cannot produce examples of it in all sorts of government in the world. Secondly, I answer, that such revolutions happen not upon every little mismanagement in public affairs. Great mistakes in the ruling part, many wrong and inconvenient laws, and all the slips of human frailty, will be borne by the people, without mutiny or murmuring; but, if a long train of abuses, prevarications and artifices, all tending the same way, make the design visible to the people, and they cannot but feel what they lie under, and see whither they are going, it is not to be wondered at, that they should then ruise themselves, and endeavour to put the rule into such hands which may secure to them the ends for which government was at first erected; and without which, ancient names and specious forms, are so far from being better, that they are much worse than a state of nature, or pure anarchy—the inconveniences being all as great and as near, but the remedy farther off and more difficult.

"After reading the above, Henry Yorke continued," I must observe to you, that for this discourse on Civil Government, John Locke was preferred by King William, to the important place of Master of the Mint, and was universally beloved and honoured at Court. This book was generally considered at the time it came out, to have been a more powerful means of securing the King upon his throne, than even the arms of Holland and Britain; and it has contributed perhaps more than any other publication, to secure the present Royal Family upon the throne of these kingdoms. Although it was written a century ago, it was a principal in establishing the American Revolution; it has confounded the overthrow of despotism in France; and, before long, its principles will have driven despotism from the face of Europe. To such a book there can be no exception; and I think I cannot better serve the King, or my fellow-citizens, than in bringing it before the public. I understand it is not to be purchased, because I am told ministry have bought them all up, or they were purchased to be sent to America; but I will defeat their ends; I will extract its spirit, and give it you in a small compass, and as cheap as the press can print it.—(Loud and reiterated applause.)

"The
"The following resolutions were next read and unanimously approved of, amidst the loudest applauses.

4. "That in every country where the people have no share in their government, taxation is tyranny.

5. "That therefore a government is tyrannical or free, in proportion as the people are equally or unequally represented.

6. "Convinced of this truth, it is the opinion of this Meeting, that the people ought to demand as a right, and not petition as a favour for universal representation.

7. "That therefore we will petition the House of Commons no more on this subject."

"After which Henry Yorke, according to a requisition which had been made to him a few days before, presented the following Petition to the King for the total and unqualified emancipation of the Negro Slaves. He prefaced the Petition with a most eloquent and animated speech on the subject; but from the fatigue which he had undergone from the preceding part of the oration, it was impossible for him to carry to his intended length, a discourse which had already drawn tears and sighs from a great part of his auditory. As we understand he means to make an appeal to the public on the subject, in which, of course, will be included the observations which he made at this meeting, we trust no apology will be necessary for our omitting to give any sketch of them here."

"TO THE KING.

"SIRE,

"Justice is eternal. Unconfined by time, person, circumstance, or place, it ought to form the basis of all legitimate government, and the motive of all human intercourse.

"As intellectual beings, we conceive it to be a sacred obligation, imposed on us by the Supreme Being, to think for ourselves. In conformity to which principle, we are naturally led to desire the extension of knowledge throughout the world. As we ourselves feel, we are naturally led to sympathise with those who feel also. Wishing to be rid of the weight of oppression under which we groan, we are induced to compassionate those who groan also, and to desire an alleviation of their sufferings.

"On our own account we have repeatedly petitioned the Lower House of Parliament—but petitioned in vain. We are weary of the practice. We are disgusted to hear the hallowed name of liberty made the sport of corrupt placemen; and we are shocked to see, that in the practice of legislation, humanity is but a name. We are now petitioning, not for ourselves, but for others—for those, whose sorrows harrow up the feeling soul, and terrify the Christian heart; for those, who are the victims
victims of avarice, cruelty, rapine, immorality, and luxury. We have the sanction of one of your Majesty’s sons, in declaring, that the Negro Slaves, in the West Indies, are full as happy as the lower classes of people are in England. We employ our great authority in justification of our petition; and considering, that we who supplicate your Majesty are generally men of that description, we are bound to conclude, that if our African brethren be no happier than we are, they must be wretched indeed. For we groan, Sire, under great and grievous burdens, and we see no prospect of redress before our eyes, nor have we a hope that our miseries will shortly end. Our wives and little ones are starving, and ourselves unable to provide them with the common necessaries of life, are sunk in sorrow, and compelled to join in their bitter agony and deep despair. But the contemplation of our distressed state becomes additionally alarming, at the certainty of having more burdens accumulated upon us, which may be productive of consequences injurious to the cause of humanity, and fatal even to the interests of government itself. Such, Sire, is our state, and such, from the comparison drawn by the Duke of Clarence, is the state of our Negro brethren in the colonies. But in addition to the testimony of so high an authority, we have a volume of respectable evidence delivered into the House of Commons, which proves, beyond contradiction, that our condition is by no means so deplorable as that of the wretched Africans. They are Slaves; under which odious epithet, man is reduced to the condition of the brute, and is deprived of a country, and of the tenderest ties of human life. The rights of a social being are denied to him, and every principle of moral obligation is destroyed. The liberty, the person, and the industry of the Slave, are at the disposal of the master. Far different is our state; and although from not being represented in the House of Commons, our property may be taken from us without our consent—although from the erection of barracks throughout our country, and from the unconstitutional introduction of foreign troops into it—from the encouragement given to a system of state inquisition, and from the violent measures employed to wrest the liberty of the press from the hands of the subject—we cannot call ourselves free men in the strict sense of the word. Yet our lives cannot be taken from us, but for crimes previously defined and declared punishable by law; nor can our persons be wantonly insulted with, to gratify the lust, the avarice, or the cruelty of overseers and slave-drivers. So far we have undoubtedly the advantage over the Negro Slaves; and we cannot help thinking, in justice to the Royal Personage who drew the resemblance, that he reasoned more from our actual condition,
tion, than from what we were, and what we ought to be—a free, a happy, and contented people.

"Quitting, therefore, the comparison which has been drawn between the poor of this country and the Negro Slaves in the colonies, we beseech your Majesty to take into your gracious consideration our Petition in their behalf. We are happy to congratulate your Majesty, that we not only cultivate reason ourselves, but we are daily exerting ourselves to diffuse its influence universally. Our success, Sire, has been wonderful! We glory in announcing to your Majesty, that, by the use of that reason, we have discovered that society is made for man's happiness; that liberty is the first and best gift of God to man—which it would be impious not to assert, and sacrilege to surrender. In the names, therefore, of Liberty, of Justice, and of Humanity, and for the sake of those, whose cries of 'Mercy! Mercy, Master!' are ringing eternally in our ears, we petition, we implore your Majesty, to put an end to that devilish commerce in human flesh; which is a thousand times more abominable in the eyes of God and of man, than the practice of selling human flesh in Germany—because accompanied with acts more profoundly cruel, and more deliberately inhuman. The voice of an immense majority of the whole nation has invoked the humanity of the House of Commons for the partial abolition of injustice—but in vain. It was told, that the Slave Trade was inhuman, impolitic, and unchristian. Eighty-eight only, out of 558, voted agreeably to the will of the nation for its abolition!! Did the remaining 470 mean thereby to sanction inhumanity and impolicy, and to oppose the holy Christian Religion, the fundamental maxim of which is, 'Do unto all men as you would they should do unto you.' One melancholy fact, however, it has proved, that the sense of a majority of the people was not regarded in that House, and that Justice and Humanity are of no consideration, when put in competition with avarice, wealth and power. But what makes humanity more than shudder, one of the members of that House, who had his leg bit off by a shark, and whose life was saved by poor negro, declared, that he should vote against the abolition of the Slave Trade, because the Negroes contumely the refuse of our fisheries. Such marked ingratitude, such unfeeling barbarity, publicly avowed in the British Senate, instead of fending the author to prison for an abuse of speech, met with repeated applause. And what grieves us more, we find, that this very man has been appointed, by your Majesty's ministers, to superintend the provisionment of the army now carrying on the dreadful work of human slaughter on the blood-stained fields of Flanders."

"So
"So many bars having been thrown in the way to prevent the abolition of the Slave Trade, by those unfeeling barbarians, who, unblushingly, call themselves Slave Dealers, West India Merchants and Planters; so many obstacles having been opposed to the reclamations of humanity in favour of the wretched—we petition your Majesty, in whose hands is mercy, to recommend, or command, the British Senate immediately to abolish, in the fullest manner, and without any qualification, Negro Slavery in the West India Islands—because it is inflicting to human nature in an age of reason and philosophy—because it tends to open wide the flood-gates of patronage, corruption, and dependance; inflames and stimulates the fordid passion of avarice, which is ever ready to feed ambition, to furnish the first means of engaging in ruinous, bloody, and destructive wars, by which courtiers are enriched and nations beggaredit because its abolition will redeem the national honor, too long sullied by the trade of blood—because it will promote the cause of liberty, which is striding apace throughout all the regions of the world—because it will avenge peaceably ages of wrongs done to our negro brethren—because it will give to industry its just latitude—because it will put an end to injustice, impolicy, cruelty, avarice, havoc, spoil, blood—because it will cover a multitude of national sins, and in the head of national falls, which are too frequently the dreadful preludes of blood and sorrow, it will be a national feast, grateful to God, and pleasing to man. It will extend the empire of benevolence, the brotherhood of the human race, and immortalize your Majesty's reign, for having established, on their purest principles, the claims of Justice, and the Rights of Man."

"The above petition and the following resolutions were received with unbounded applause, and without one dissenting voice, except that the word humbly, which was several times used in the petition, was objected to, and on being put to the vote, was unanimously agreed to be expunged.

8. "That we feel ourselves not only ashamed, but indifferent, that the British government should be actively engaged in the traffic and slavery of human beings.

9. "That as no compromise can be made between freedom and tyranny, between virtue and vice, justice and injustice, we think it our duty not to confine ourselves to the mere abolition of the Slave Trade, which would be sacrificing a right to a convenience, but to petition for the total emancipation of the Negro Slaves.

10. "That the petition to the King, now read, for the total and unqualified abolition of Negro slavery, is approved.

11. "That a congratulatory letter be transmitted to Thomas Walker,
Walker, of Manchester, on his victory over Church and King associations, and that the letter now read be approved.

12. "That the above petition and address be transcribed on parchment; and that they be forwarded to Earl Stanhope, and that he be requested to present the Address and Petition to his Majesty.

13. "That the thanks of this meeting are given to all those Juries, who, in these inquisitorial times, have acted like freemen in acquitting those of their fellow-citizens who have been brought to trial for speaking what they thought.

14. "That the proceedings of this meeting be publicly advertised, and transmitted to the friends of liberty, of justice, and of humanity, throughout the kingdom.

15. "That a voluntary subscription be immediately opened for defraying the expenses attending these proceedings.

16. "That the committee of the Sheffield Constitutional Society be desired to see that the above resolutions be carried into effect; and that they prepare an Address to the British Nation, explanatory of the motives which have induced this meeting to adopt the resolution of no more petitioning the House of Commons on the subject of Reform."

"The above resolutions being passed, and a congratulatory letter to Thomas Walker, of Manchester, read, on his acquittal from an infamous prosecution at Lancaster, the meeting was dissolved.

"Notwithstanding the largeness of the company, so great were Henry Yorke's exertions, and so close the attention paid to him, that there was scarcely a person present who did not distinctly hear: many, indeed, we are told, who were not heretofore remarkable for their liberality of sentiment, have acknowledged themselves greatly enlightened by what they heard.—To shew the high esteem entertained of Henry Yorke's services at this meeting, by the populace, he was no sooner seated in the coach which attended on him, than the horses were taken from the carriage, and the people drew him through most of the public streets in Sheffield, amid the acclamations of thousands:—which done, after a few admonitory words from the orator, every man went peaceably to his own home."

Mr. Garraw. (To Brookhead.) There was an Address to the British Nation published in this book; look at that Address?

A. Yes, this is the Address.

(The Clerk reads.)

"An Address to the British Nation.

"FRIENDS and COUNTRYMEN,

"We have this day decided, with the exception of only one dissentient voice, that the House of Commons shall never again be petitioned by us, on the subject of Parliamentary Reform.

"We
“We owe to the nation, to posterity, even to foreign countries, and to the government itself under which we live, an explication of our motives. To the nation we owe this duty, because we are of opinion, that the will of the majority of the people should be, at all times, the supreme law; and that if the few dissent from the opinion of the many, however obligatory the will of the majority may be to them as a rule of action, yet opinion is always free and sacred, the right of man to enjoy, and the conscientious duty of man to diffuse. Under the full conviction of this principle, we feel ourselves, at present, the minority, because we are the first to agitate the question, and to repel the monstrous idea of petitioning when our petitions are not received by the House of Commons. But, we are numerous—we are many thousands; and as nothing opens the eyes of men so much as their interests, we demand, fellow-citizens, nay, we are entitled to it from our numbers, that you lead an attentive ear to the truths we are about to utter, and to the reclamations we are about to make in favour of oppressed humanity. Hearken unto our voice, for we think it will strike conviction; attend to our reasoning, for we know that your applauding sentiments will give solemnity to our meaures, and consequence to our example. To posterity this duty is owing, because they will expect justice at our hands, liberty from our exertions, happiness and peace from the success of our cause. To foreign countries, because they will then form some estimate of the degree of confidence which we who live under the British government repose in it; and of the affection, respect, and obedience, paid by our rulers to the majesty of the people. To the government itself, because it will discover, in our firm and manly tone of conduct, materials for serious and solemn debate. It will discover that the exercise of a power, undervived from even magisterial authority, is totally repugnant to the genius of a legislative assembly, (which ought to be an emanation from the public will, and therefore obedient to it,) because it has a tendency to loosen the bands of subordination, and to weaken that reverence which should always be frown to a government which regards the condition, and fulfils the mandates of its sovereign, the people. It will be taught a lesson, which is sanctioned by the testimony of both ancient and modern story, that when a government contemns the people, the people will in their turn contemn the government: it will be taught, that when there exists a want of confidence between the governors and the governed, confusion, the worst of national disturbances, is the issue.

“*Our petition was received with the utmost indignation by the House of Commons; which was no more than we expected.*
We knew that the homely truths, we uttered, would be very un-
welcome guests in that house. We never expected that a body
in which there were so many placemen and pensioners, would
listen to the palpable facts stated in that petition; the object of
which was to root out injustice, and to curb licentiousness and
corruption. Nevertheless, as we were called upon by our coun-
trymen to unite with them, we thought ourselves bound to com-
ply with their wishes. And although our petition was disdain-
fully rejected, because not couched in language sufficiently po-
lite and respectful for the five hundred and fifty-eight Gentlemen
who sit as the House of Commons, yet, believe us, Fellow-
citizens, we are still of opinion, that the matter it contained,
was not only just and proper, but, we think, that even the lan-
guage, which gave so much offence to the honorable Gentlemen,
was much too polite and too moderate for us. For, if the
House of Commons were the real Representatives of the peo-
ple, we certainly had a right to dictate, and not to petition, be-
dcause they could be considered in no other light than as the or-
gans of the public will. And, if they refused to obey that
will, they would be usurpers, and not representatives. If, on
the contrary, they are not the representatives of the people, what
have we to do with them? If they are not our representatives,
we cannot be their constituents; and to petition those who are
not our representatives as our representatives, would be a mani-
fest absurdity, if not an insult and mockery of ourselves. How-
ever, the petition, such as it was, being termed disrespectful,
was thrown out by a majority of 79, there being 29 only who
voted for its being received, and 108 who voted against it. Such
imperious treatment rather gives warning, than strikes terror.
The abuse of representation can never come in the place of a
rule, for no legal power can be derived from injury or in-
justice. On this ground alone, therefore, we are justified in
preserving a full silence in respect to the House of Commons.
For, if grievances, abuses, complaints, and truth, are to be
discarded from that House, because not dressed in a gentleman-
like language, how are we, plain mechanics, ever to obtain re-
dress, who are not gentlemen, and who are, consequently, igno-
rant of those polite and courtly expressions which are neces-
sary to gain a hearing in that House. We are ignorant of the
art of displaying truth by halves, and, as we love plain dealing
ourselves, we detest hypocrisy in others, and pity those who
would wish us to follow their example.—We said to the House
of Commons, we are wronged and aggrieved—will you right
us, and redress our grievances, or will you not? If you will,
we shall be satisfied; if you will not, we shall seek redress some-
other way.—This is the sole question with us, and we put it, as

3 C 2

Wg
we thought, in a most becoming style to the House of Commons. But, our petition being scouted, we shall trouble them no more with our cease and unmannerly language. It will be our duty to proceed, as we have uniformly done hitherto, in enlightening the public mind; and, when a complete revolution of sentiments shall take place (as will shortly be the case) in our country, we shall open our mouths, in that key we think most agreeable to ourselves. And our voice, together with that of our disfranchised countrymen, will resemble, perhaps, the thunderings from Mount Sinai!*

WILLIAM BROOKHEATH, cross examined by Mr. GIBBS.

Q. You were saying about the time these pikes were talked of, there had been a mischievous hand-bill put about for the purpose of provoking the members of this society as you suppose, can you tell what were the terms of that hand-bill?

A. I had one of them in my hand, but I cannot speak directly of every thing it contained.

Q. I don't ask you to speak to every thing it contained, but what was the general substance of it?

A. It was a call upon the people to arm against foreign and internal enemies; and the reply that was made to it was couched in the same language.

Q. At what time was this published, was it before or after this meeting?

A. I do not recollect the exact time, but I read them both; I should have been happy to have had them both here.

Q. The object was to provoke the people?

A. It was given out about the town of Sheffield, we can never do anything against these people till we ourselves cause a riot; I saw myself several persons ride up and down and through the market place full gallop, to ride over the people.

Q. Then the cry was, that they could not do any thing with you without causing a riot against you?

A. It has been said so, but I cannot recollect the people that said it, but this wicked hand-bill being spread about, and if I had thought of this, I would have brought it here; and this was the cause of the arms first being spoke about.

Q. So I understand. This you say was the occasion of arms being first talked of; now let me ask you from all this, from whom you ever heard any conversation respecting these arms, the pikes, were they intended for making any attack against any power in this country, or only for defending yourselves against any attack?

A. I never understood them in any other light; all that ever I heard about them was in reference to this wicked hand-bill.

Q. I un-
Q. I understand that the conversation of the pikes, and the production of them, was in consequence of this hand-bill; what I want to know is this, whether those who talked of these pikes, and attempted to produce them, whether you ever recollect from them that they meant to attack or to defend yourselves being attacked?

A. This was the very truth. It was to oppose illegal force, direct violation of the law of the land made upon us, as was the cafe in Manchester and Birmingham.

Q. Then they were meant only to be used on the defensive?

A. Yes; and Mr. Gale had this hand-bill in his hand when he mentioned it, and there was an advertisement in Mr. Gale’s paper about the week after, a direct answer thereto; I would have brought them both with me, if I had thought any thing of this.

Q. Had any of the people in this society, to which you belonged, any idea of altering the government, doing without a King and House of Lords?

A. I think they ought to have been sent to Bedlam if they had.

Q. Had you, as one of that society, any such intention yourself?

A. Just the same as flying to the sun.

Q. Speak plain.

A. No, no; I had never such a thought in my mind.

Q. What was it you wished to produce by these meetings of yours?

A. To enlighten the people, and shew them the ground of all their sufferings and complaints; when a man works hard for a week through, thirteen or fourteen hours in a day, and yet cannot maintain his family.

Q. Was not the object of your meeting a Parliamentary Reform?

A. Yes, it was, and as such we corresponded with the Society of the Friends of the People as well as the Constitutional Society.

Q. Who were the members of the Friends of the People?

A. I do not directly know the secretary. I know several communications were received from that society.

Q. Mr. Stuart, I believe, is the secretary?

A. Yes.

Q. Should you have continued a member of this society if you had thought they had intended to have attacked the King or the Lords, or had an idea of deposing the King from his throne?

A. No, I would not.

Q. Should you not have abhorred such an idea?

A. Yes.
Q. Have you any reason to believe that any single member entertained such a notion?
A. I do not believe there is such a wicked man amongst them.

Q. The object of your meeting, you say, was to state to the people the grounds of certain evils you conceived to exist, and you wished to bring about a Parliamentary Reform; where was that Parliamentary Reform to be—in the House of Commons?
A. Yes.

Q. You meant that the King and the Lords should remain as they were?
A. Yes.

Q. Did you believe, and was that the ground upon which you acted, that a Parliamentary Reform would do away those evils in the House of Commons?
A. That the King, and the Lords and Commons, with the concurrence of the nation, might reform them things themselves. As to we reforming the Parliament, we pretend in Sheffield! we had not the vanity to think of such a thing.

Q. Do I understand you right, when I suppose this to have been your principle, that you thought the King and the House of Lords, with the Commons so reformed, would redress all your grievances?
A. Yes.

Q. Your object was to obtain it peaceably?
A. Yes, and there is no man doubts it in Sheffield.

Q. Was it your own object?
A. It was.

Q. Have you any reason to think it was the object of any other man in the society at Sheffield to use any thing but peaceable means?
A. Not to my knowledge; what persons might do if a convention had been called, I do not know what wicked people might have done;—we cannot answer for their wickedness.

Mr. Garrow. Repeat that again.

A. If there had been a convention, those societies who sent them, I suppose, would have put confidence in them, and in their consultations, supposing them to be more competent to devise and direct the means to the end for a Parliamentary Reform. I understood it in that light.

Mr. Gibbes. When that meeting was held, to be sure, no man can answer for the acts of those who should compose it—certainly not.

Q. Had you any reason to suppose that those whom you should have sent to that meeting would have acted peaceable?
A. No, we should not have sent any else.

Q. And
Q. And you have no reason but to think that others would have so acted?
A. No, we have no reason to think otherwise at all.

Q. When national representation was talked of by Mr. Yorke at this meeting, was it not meant the representation of the people of England in the House of Commons?
A. I always understood it so.

Mr. Garrow. This conversation between you and my friend makes it necessary, that I should put a question or two to you. In the first place I wish to ascertain whether I took you correctly; you meant, and as far as you understood your society, meant to produce a Reform in the Representation of the Commons House of Parliament by peaceable means?
A. Yes.

Q. But you apprehended that when you should depute your delegates to a convention, that you trusted to that convention, and that when they were met, you could not answer for what they might do, not being able to answer for the wickedness of individuals. Did I take you correctly?
A. Yes.

Q. For the purpose of obtaining this object, a Parliamentary Reform, you say you corresponded not only with the Constitutional Society, but with others, the Society of the Friends of the People. Did you know the answer that that society returned to your communications as early as the 26th of May?
A. I do not recollect.

Q. Do you know a person of the name of Ashton?
A. Yes.

Q. Did he ever act as secretary to your society?
A. Yes.

Q. Do you recollect Ashton writing, by the direction of the society, or your committee, a letter—I ask you whether you do not know, that on the society of the Friends of the People returning some answer to your society, that your society wrote a letter to the secretary of the Constitutional Society, disclaiming all connection with the Friends of the People, as not fit for their purpose; did he not?
A. Disclaiming this, I do not deny, but I do not know of a certainty, that he did, because great part of the time that he was secretary I was not in the society.

Q. Was this measure of discarding the Friends of the People as not fit for your purpose, discussed in your society at any meetings?
A. Yes, it may have been—I do not recollect it was.

Q. Was it in any of your divisions, or was it any meetings of your division?
A. Yes,
A. Yes, it may have been.

Q. Was it in any meetings of your society discussed, the propriety of having nothing further to do with these men, the Friends of the People, because they would not go lengths to make them fit for your communication?

A. It was discussed.

Q. Was the consequence of that discussion, your writing to the Constitutional Society, that the Friends of the People were not fit for your purpose?

A. I do not know of such a letter being communicated.—No such a letter received.

Q. I do not ask you whether you know such a letter was received or sent; but I ask you whether the result of that deliberation was not, that they were unfit for the communication of your society?

A. I am not certain it was the determination of that meeting. I rather think it was determined afterwards.

Q. Did Mr. Yorke take any part in that discussion?

A. No, he was not there, I think.

Q. Who were the parties that engaged in that discussion of the misdemeanour of the Friends of the People?

A. There were several persons said something at that meeting, among whom I was one.

Q. Have you read the declarations published by that society called the Friends of the People?—Doubtless you have for your information.

A. I believe I might.

Q. Do you not know, that in language, to which I can do no justice, they declared their firm intention by all constitutional and proper means to produce that very thing, which you state to have been your object, a Reform in the Commons House of Parliament?

A. A great number of people did not believe them to be honest.

Q. Perhaps the language was too fine to believe it honest; however, they had made this profession

A. Yes, there was something of that.

Q. But that you did not quite believe?

A. No, a number of them did not.

Q. Was that as early as the 26th of May, 1792, that you disclaimed the communications of this society of the Friends of the People?

A. It may, I think it was about that time.

Q. That was long before Mr. Yorke came among you upon his last motion?

A. Yes, it was.

Q. And
Q. And of course long before all these discussions?
A. Yes.
Q. Now be so good as tell me a little more distinctly what this mischievous hand-bill was that excited you to arms; I think it was calling upon the people to arm against foreign invaders and domestic enemies?
A. Yes, I think it was; and upon the consultation at the meeting, when arms were spoken of, it was determined in several resolutions to get these arms for the same purpose in reply to that hand-bill.
Q. Did you adopt that hand-bill, and arm in consequence of it, or was you alarmed from its unconstitutional injunction, or did you arm?
A. I never did.
Q. In what terms was your reply couched?
A. Their words were taken and put into resolves, and put in Gale's paper the next week, to arm against foreign and internal enemies of the present government.
Q. The reason of this was, because you were afraid of illegal force being used against you, as had been done at Manchester and Birmingham; did you apply to any magistrate to protect you?
A. No, nor did those people that published this.
Q. Will you be so good to answer my question; did you, upon those alarms which were communicated by this wicked hand-bill, lay your complaints before any magistrate, or apply for protection to the civil power?
A. No, not to my knowledge.
Q. But, on the contrary, published resolutions for arming?
A. To this purport, couched in their words.
Q. You had no intention at all of altering the government, but of applying to the House of Commons to redress the grievances under which the people suffered?
A. I always understood it in that light.
Q. How early was it that you came to the resolutions in your society to petition them no more, and that they were too fine gentlemen for you, and that your language was not fine enough to please their courtly ears?
A. These articles and resolves were drawn up by Gale and Yorke, and therefore were winked at, thinking they were better judges, out of complacency, supposing them to have superior knowledge.
Q. And you, who were too rough for the House of Commons, were courtly enough to pass these resolutions to please Mr. Yorke and Mr. Gale?
A. Viewing them to be men of understanding.
Q. After having determined to petition the House of Commons no more, the next step was to procure a convention, and by the delegates to procure a full, free, and fair representation?
A. There was at first a motion to petition the King.
Q. That was about the Slave Trade?
A. Yes, and about a Reform too.
Q. Whether this forms a part of those resolutions which you paused upon the subject of arming, “that the landing of Hessian troops in this country, a ferocious and unprincipled herd of butchers, without consent of Parliament, has an alarming and fictitious appearance, and is contrary to the spirit of our constitution,” when you printed the hand-bill was that passed?
A. That was passed when the lecture was read.
Q. That was passed long after the hand-bill?
A. No, long before.
Q. “That it is high time to be upon our guard, since these armed monsters may in a moment be let loose upon us, particularly as the erection of barracks throughout the kingdom may have only been an introduction to filling them with foreign mercenaries,” was that the other resolution that you passed before the hand-bill?
A. Some time before, I cannot say how long.
Q. Will you be so good as to tell me, as you were to arm at Sheffield, very properly for the sake of preventing attacks upon you, whether you communicated your plan of arming or of communicating your instruments to any other parts of the kingdom?
A. I did not, nor do I know that any body else did.
Q. I ask if you do not now know that your society communicated the plans of arming, the mode of procuring the instruments, and the models of the weapons?
A. I never heard a syllable of it till I was informed of it by the gentlemen of the Privy Council.
Q. Then if Davidson, in the name of the society, sent such a letter to any society at London, you were not informed of that secret?
A. No, I was not.
Q. If such a thing was done, you were not informed of it?
A. I was not.
Q. You know Davidson very well?
A. Yes, some little time.
Q. He was a member of the society?
A. Yes, I suppose he was.
Q. You have told me there was no man in Sheffield foolish enough to arm; do you include Davidson in the number of those whom you say were not to be found in Sheffield with any kind
kind of intention against the Government, or against his Majesty's person?

A. I will say this, that he did it without the knowledge of the society; he did it without my knowledge.

Henry Alexander called, but not answering immediately,
Mr. Attorney-General proposed, while this witness was coming, to read part of the publication concerning the fast day, and how it was kept at Sheffield.

(The Clerk reads the fast day.)

"Fast Day as observed at Sheffield.

A serious Lecture delivered at Sheffield, February 28, 1794. Being the day appointed for a general fast; to which are added a Hymn and Resolutions.

Resolved Unanimously,

1. "That war, the wretched artifice of courts, is a system of rapine and blood, unworthy of rational beings, and utterly repugnant to the mild and benevolent principles of the Christian religion.

2. "That if the present war, be a war of combined Kings against the people of France to overthrow that liberty which they are struggling to establish, it is, in our opinion, a war of the most diabolical kind.

3. "That when public fasts and humiliations are ordered with the fame breath, which commands the shedding of oceans of human blood—however they may answer the purposes of state policy—they are solemn prostitutions of religion.

4. "That the landing of Hessian troops in this country (a ferocious and unprincipled herd of butchers) without consent of Parliament, has a suspicious and alarming appearance, is contrary to the spirit of our constitution, and deserving of the marked indignation of every Englishman.

5. "That it is high time to be on our guard, since these armed monsters, may, in a moment, be let loose upon us; particularly, as the erection of barracks throughout the kingdom, may only have been an introductory measure to the filling them with foreign mercenaries.

6. "That the high and free-born minds of Britons, revolt at the idea of such a filthy system, and cannot be so far broken as to kiss the hand which would chain them to its will.

7. "That peace and liberty are the offspring of Heaven, and that life without them is a burden.

8. "That the thanks of this meeting are due to Earl Stanhope, for his motion and spirited speech for acknowledging the French Republic, and restoring peace to our distressed country; for his motions and able speech in behalf of the persecuted and suffering patriots, Meff. Muir, Palmer, Skirving and Marga..."
rot, in which he nobly stood alone; and also for the whole of his truly animated and benevolent exertions in support of the injured Rights of the People.

9. "The thanks of this meeting are also due to Mr. Sheridan, for his nervous and eloquent speeches in the cause of injured patriotism, and in support of the constitution; and also to every other member of Parliament who has nobly stood forward at this important crisis, in support of the constitutional liberties of Englishmen.

10. "That if any thing had been necessary to have convinced us of the total ineffect of argument against a ministerial majority, the decisions which have lately taken place in Parliament, would have fully confirmed our opinion.

11. "That, therefore, the people have no remedy for their grievance, but a Reform in Parliament—a mea sure which we determine never to relinquish, though we follow our brethren in the same glorious cause to Botany Bay.

"W. CAMAGE, Chairman."

Mr. Garrow. Now read Mr. Camage's lecture.

(The Clerk reads.)

A SERIOUS LECTURE.

"In every age of the world, the cause of truth has always met with its opposers, whenever it chanced to clash with the interests of a venal tribe of Kings, Courtiers, Priests, and their accomplices. By reading over the 18th chapter of 1 Kings, we find that this was the case; yet the Almighty was pleased by an act of Omnipotent Power, to overturn the malice and wicked intentions of that infamous tyrant Ahab, and the satellites who surrounded him: for, in the presence of them all (though it made against them). Truth shone forth with redoubled splendour; and the very judgment which Elijah would probably have met with, had not God been for him, fell on those abominable deceivers of mankind.—I refer you to the chapter itself, and without further introduction, I shall make a few remarks on the events of that period, as it must be obvious, to every ingenious mind, that there is a great similarity betwixt the conduct of the rulers of that day and those of the present: therefore it may be needful to observe.

"First. Baal's priests could not possibly succeed, because he to whom they prayed could not help them. Baal, being a name given to an heathen God, who had no existence, except in the imagination of his devotees. And 2dly, they had a bad cause in hand, therefore, were not likely to prevail; no motives to induce them but pride; no appetites to serve but what were sensual and devilish, so that if they had offered sacrifice to the true God, in a bad cause, they would not have obtained their end
end—for 'the ears of the Lord are not open to the cries of the foolish, but unto the wise.'

'It is in this point of light, I view with concern, a combination of Kings apparently leagued against the cause of freedom; a combination which I believe to be odious in the sight of heaven, although for its support we are commanded a second time from the throne, (not of God) to fast and pray for the success of our arms over our brethren, who are struggling for every thing that is dear to man, and which is the will of God he should be possessed of—Liberty, civil, political and religious. Life without them is a burden. To pray then, for a re-establishment of despotism, tyranny, and oppression (which we do if we pray to conquer freemen) would be to mock Heaven, to insult his divine Majesty, to pour contempt on his word, and in the heart to say, 'Who is the Lord, that we should obey him?' Oh! ye, who fill the throne of power, tremble at the thought of approaching your Maker with a lie in your right hand; tremble at approaching the God of Peace, when war and bloodshed are your views. 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'

HENRY ALEXANDER sworn, examined by Mr. WOOD.

Q. Was you a member of the London Corresponding Society?
A. Yes.

Q. How long is it since you first became a member?
A. The latter end of the year 1793, I do not know the week.

Q. What division was you of?
A. The twenty-ninth.

Q. Did you meet at Robins's coffee-house?
A. Yes; in Shire-lane.

Q. How many might your division consist of?
A. I think I was the ninety-fifth member when I went in.

Q. Did you know Mr. Yorke?
A. Yes, by sight.

Q. Was he a member of the London Corresponding Society?
A. He became a member while I was there.

Q. Do you remember his being with you the latter end of 1793, at Robins's coffee-house?
A. Yes.

Q. What number of people might there be assembled at that time?
A. I suppose there was between sixty and a hundred; the room was quite full.

Q. Did Mr. Yorke tell you whether he was going to leave you or not?
A. The last night he was there he did; the last night he was at that society he took leave of them by a long speech; he said he was going to Belgium.

Q. Did he say for what purpose?
A. Yes, he was going to head the French army, which would be ripe by Christmas.

Q. Repeat that?
A. He had received a letter from a friend of his at Belgium, that they would be ripe by Christmas.
Q. For what?
A. For a revolution.
Q. Did he say whether he meant to return to England again?
A. He did.
Q. What more did he say?
A. He said he was in hopes he should come at the head of them into England.

Jury. Where was he to come to?
A. To London.
Q. Mr. Alexander, you say he made a long speech upon his taking leave?
A. Yes.
Q. Will you be so good as to tell us what he said in making that speech, the substance of it?
A. The substance of it was, that he had received a letter to go over to them, and that he had the honour of being a Member of the National Convention of France, and hoped he should have the pleasure of coming here either at Christmas or the beginning of the year, and that he should see that society all ready to join them; and that he was in hopes that Mr. Pitt, and the different ministers he mentioned, and the King's head, would be upon Temple-bar.

Lord President. That who would join him?
A. That the society would.
Q. Whose heads were to be upon Temple-bar?
A. Mr. Pitt's, mentioning the ministers and the King.
Q. Will you recollect as much of the statement as you can?

Jury. What time did this meeting take place?
A. Upon the 5th of last November, 1793.

Mr. Wood. Did he say any thing about the King and Queen of France?
A. Yes, he did, but I cannot recollect the words now.
Q. But try and recollect the substance?
A. He said they had met with their defeat, it was what they deserved.
Q. Did he say any thing to you about the war?
A. I do
A. I do not recollect that he did.
Q. Did he say anything to you about the Sans Culottes?
A. He did make mention of them; they were a set of brave fellows; he said a deal about them; but I cannot recollect further.
Q. Do not you recollect what he said besides?
A. I do not.
Q. Did he say anything about arms?
A. He did.
Q. Be so good as to tell us what he said about arms?
A. He said, when he came he hoped they would be ready to join; and that he hoped when the time came, they would not cringe or shrink from what they pretended to be: he said it was impossible to do anything without some bloodshed.
Jury. Who do you mean by they?
A. The society he was speaking to.
Mr. Wood. What did he say about bloodshed?
A. He said there would be no good done without some bloodshed.
Q. Did he say anything to you about Sheffield, or the people of Sheffield?
A. He said there was a set of brave men there.
Q. Did he tell you how or in what they were brave?
A. I cannot say that he did.
Q. What more did he say about the Sheffield men?
A. I do not recollect.
Q. Where was the blood to be shed?
A. He did not say.
Q. Did he say anything about bread and cheese, that you recollect?
A. There was such a thing mentioned in the society one night before. A person came in from Sheffield, and said they had pikes made at Sheffield for sixpence apiece; another made answer and said, it would be a good notion for them to have the fame, and that it would be only living upon bread and cheese for one day.
Q. Was this the preceding night?
A. No, it might be two or three nights before.
Q. How was Mr. Yorke’s speech received amongst them?
A. They all appeared unanimous, and roared and shook hands with him when he got up and left the room.
Lord President. Did you see Mr. Yorke any more?
A. No.
Q. Do you know where he went?
A. No.

Mr. Wood.
Mr. Wood. Did you continue with the society after that night, or did you leave it?
A. I went after that to Mr. Dundas's office, and after that to the Lord Mayor, Sir James Sanderson.
Q. Look at that; have you ever seen any bills like that before?
A. No, I never saw this before.
Q. Why did you go to the Lord Mayor or to Mr. Dundas?
A. Because I thought it was proper Government should know what they were proceeding upon; immediately I knew what they were I went and told them.
Q. How came you first to go there?
A. At first I went with Mr. Smith, a delegate. I was asked if I would be made a member; I did not know what it was; I agreed to be made a member, not knowing what it was.
Q. How long was you there?
A. I think I was there seven times.

Henry Alexander crossed-examined by Mr. Erskine.
Q. What are you?
A. A Linen-draper.
Q. Where do you live?
A. At the Rolle, in Fleet-market. I am a servant at present.
Q. What time did you first go with your friend to this society?
A. Towards the latter end of the year 1793.
Q. Did you go there for the purpose of being a member?
A. I did not, though I became one.
Q. What did you go for the purpose of?
A. I went for the purpose of going to the club; my friend asked me to go with him to a society, and I went.
Q. Who is this friend?
A. Mr. Whitehall; he said Mr. Smith had asked him frequently.
Q. You went there out of curiosity, it may be?
A. It was nothing else.
Q. Was Mr. Yorke there?
A. No.
Q. Who might be there that first night?
A. Smith was there as delegate, Ashby was there, and Baxter was there; these were all I knew by name.
Q. What day of the month was it?
A. I cannot say.
Q. What day of the week?
A. Tuesday.
Q. What month?
A. I cannot say.
9. Try, you may by thinking a little?
A. I cannot.
9. Did you hear any thing that offended you that night?
A. Nothing at all.
9. How long did they sit?
A. 'Till twelve o'clock, and some of them until one o'clock.
9. What did they converse about?
A. They had papers of different kinds; Mr. Smith in general used to bring papers of some kind.
9. Were they read?
A. I believe there was something read by Mr. Smith.
9. Did you become a member that night?
A. Yes.
9. Then you approved, I suppose, of what you heard?
A. As soon as we got in the room we sat down. Mr. Smith asked immediately if I would become a member; he asked Mr. Whitehall; he read something to me, but I did not pay any attention to what it was.
9. Whitehall went out of curiosity too?
A. I do not know what purport he went for.
9. When did you go next, afterwards?
A. I do not know whether I went next night or no; I missed two or three times; I attended seven times.
9. You very soon became a convert; you say that immediately upon Mr. Smith's starting up you became a member?
A. Yes.
9. Was Mr. Yorke there the second time?
A. No, he was not.
9. Who was there the second time?
A. Mr. Smith was there as delegate.
9. Did not you, after you became a member, become acquainted with the people there, by conversing with them, by going there?
A. No, I spoke to Ashley two or three times.
9. Then you became a member to propagate their doctrines?
A. No.
9. When you became a member you went for the purpose of becoming a spy?
A. After I was there I went as a spy.
9. Did you wish a Reform in Parliament?
A. I did not.
9. Then, if you did not wish for a Reform in Parliament, why did you become a member of that society but for the purpose of becoming a spy?
A. When I became a member I did not know what they were.