

Vain are his frowns. They have justice on their side, and their cause must prevail. Indeed the day is not far distant when the whole system of ecclesiastical tyranny, which has never had any other support than fraud and force, must be abandoned in both countries. (Loud Cheers.) The mind of the people is now at war with every species of hoary abuse and inveterate oppression, none of which, of what boasted antiquity, of fictitious sacredness soever, can much longer resist the iterated and reiterated shocks of free and unfettered discussion. I have the honour to propose, The Liberty of the Press, which is like the air we breathe; if we have it not we die. (Loud Cheers.)

SPIRIT OF THE BRITISH JOURNALS.

ABERDEEN OBSERVER.

THE Session of Parliament was, on Thursday se-enight, terminated by his Majesty in person, and Parliament has been prorogued till the 16th October; but it is not expected that the present self-condemned House of Commons, unless in some unforeseen case of extreme urgency, will again meet for the despatch of public business. The proceedings of the present Parliament have been of the most important character, and whether the changes in our institution, which it has effected, may ultimately prove advantageous or inimical to the interests of the people, is a problem which yet remains to be solved. That the consequences resulting from the change in the representation may be beneficial, every friend to the welfare of the community must devoutly desire; and the people, having now the power committed to them, on a broad basis, of sending to Parliament, as their representatives, properly qualified persons, will deserve all the future fatal consequences which may ensue, and the execration of mankind, if they do not exercise their choice with a sound discretion. Party men, to answer party purposes, will recommend to the electors those who they think, will promote their own interests, or political views; but the public, if they do their duty, must not be led away by the interested and designing, but, on the contrary, select men of good sense and moderation,—men who will be anxious to remove any existing abuses, and, at the same time, have the spirit to oppose that senseless and restless spirit of innovation, which, for the mere love of change, would sweep away before it all the most valued institutions of the kingdom. In the King's speech there is nothing particularly worthy of remark. His Majesty's confident expectation is expressed that the tranquillity of Europe will be preserved, but there is nothing definite—nothing specific in the speech as to the exact relation in which we stand with those nations with the affairs of which we are at present most intimately concerned. The speech concludes with a recommendation that, during the recess, the most careful attention should be given to the preservation of the public peace, and a hope is expressed that the measures which have been sanctioned (allowing, of course, to Reform,) will not prove fruitless in promoting the security of the State, and the contentment and welfare of the people. This recommendation was particularly well-timed, for there is a spirit of despotism abroad in the country which must be checked if there is to be a remnant preserved of the liberties of the people. The change in the representation of the country, if it could have had any justifiable object, was unquestionably to grant to the people a more enlarged system of free election, but if the same spirit which was manifested at the last elections be continued—if men are to be annoyed, insulted, and persecuted, for exercising their choice in the selection of their representatives, then there is an end to all freedom, and instead of the measure of reform being a benefit, it will prove one of the greatest curses that was ever inflicted on the people. But this spirit of despotism is abroad, and the party from whom its manifestations are most to be dreaded, are those who are the greatest clamourers for freedom and liberty. But let these be Whig, Tory, or Radical, no punishment can be too severe for the exercise of such unwarrantable despotism. It may be practised against all parties, and therefore all ought to join cordially in its condemnation. The Lord Advocate at a former election was grossly assaulted and abused at Forfar; the present Attorney-General has been threatened and insulted at Nottingham; Mr Irving was attacked at Clitheroe; and our excellent representative Mr Ross, shared the same fate at Arbroath. If such proceedings are to be continued at future elections, then we would cheerfully bid farewell to freedom, for a military despotism would be infinitely superior to the bludgeon and brick-bat system which those terming themselves reformers so mercilessly employed at the last election. As the unreserved friends of liberty, as the enemies of despotism, whether exercised by kings or mobs, we cannot too often lift up our testimony in favour of genuine freedom, both civil and ecclesiastical, for real liberality, both in politics and religion, seems to be the last lesson that mankind are disposed to learn.—

August 24.

EDINBURGH COURANT.

It is somewhat singular, considering the zeal evinced for the passing of the Reform Bill, that the registration of voters should in all places proceed so slowly. The number of voters registered in this city amounted yesterday to 3900, though it is calculated that the qualified voters cannot be greatly under 10 or 11,000. And in other popular places, as in Glasgow, Dundee, &c. the disproportion is said to be greater, as well as in most of the country villages and districts, where we understand very few comparatively, have come forward to pay 3s. 6d. for the registration of their vote. In England, the assessed taxes and poor rates is found to be an obstacle to registration, and has operated to such an extent, that from a calculation made in the *Spectator*, it appears that the effect of the Reform Bill will be greatly to narrow the constituency in many towns. A petition, it will be observed, has been presented to Parliament on this subject, by the electors of Westminster. In the four parishes of St. James, St. Johns, St. Pauls, and St. Annes, Westminster, there were in 1818, 1073 persons who voted, and the number of registered voters under the Reform Bill, will not, it is said, amount to more than one half of that number. According to Sir J. Hobhouse, the disproportion will be much greater; for he states, that though he has been sent to Par-

liament by the votes of 18,000 electors, he will only be returned by 4,000. The assessed taxes and poor rates amount in England, on a rent of £30 a year, to £10 or £15. The householder does not find it convenient to advance this sum, at the time required by the reform act, and he rather gives up the privilege of voting for a member of Parliament, which brings him no direct or immediate advantage. At least this is the explanation given in the English journals of the slowness of the people to avail themselves of the privilege for which they so warmly contended before. There is, it will be observed, a clause in the end of the bill, providing, that if Parliament be dissolved before the 1st December, in Scotland, then "all persons shall be entitled to vote in such election, although they may not be registered, according to the provisions of the act; any thing herein contained, notwithstanding;" the poll may also be continued for fifteen days in counties, and for eight days in towns. Provided the voters are not found to be registered in sufficient number, it is rumoured that this clause will be enforced, that the poll will be kept open for the period specified in the bill, and that all qualified persons, whether registered or not, will be permitted to vote.—August 16.

ABERDEEN OBSERVER.

Ministers, instead of continuing to be popular, and to enjoy the cheers and huzzas of the multitude, are likely, from appearances, soon to become as hateful to the people as any former administration, notwithstanding their attempt to establish and support their administration, by courting popular applause. Mr. O'Connell, the great Irish agitator, speaks in terms of the greatest commendation of Ministers, particularly of that part of them to whom the administration of Irish affairs has been entrusted. He is to have petitions got up for the impeachment of Anglesea, Stanley, and Blackburne, and he says that more human blood has been shed in Ireland, since the accession of Earl Grey's ministry, than in five times the number of years of any former ministry. Government have, in the present Session, used their exertions to place the tithe system on a satisfactory footing; but Ministers must now begin to have their eyes opened, and to perceive, that they must act with more rigor and discretion—for just in proportion as they have been inclined, to make concessions, the spirit of dissatisfaction has been increased. They ought not, however, on this account, to relax in their exertions to remedy and remove real grievances; but then they must be convinced that their desire and attempts to conciliate and win over to their party such men as O'Connell, only tend to increase the importance of the agitators, and to promote the agitation which is the first duty of every good Government to suppress. So much for their prospects in Ireland. At the National Political Union, one of the Speakers said, in allusion to reform, that the people could feel interested in no measure emanating from the Whigs, whom he described as greater knaves than fools. Lord Brougham and Palmerston and Earl Grey, are already attacked by some of the liberal papers, which formerly sounded the praises of the ministry; and the present administration will in all probability soon discover, what they seemed formerly to be ignorant of—how vain a thing it is to court popularity, and experience; after it has been obtained, by how frail a tenure it is held. A large proportion of the supporters, on the reform question, had no confidence in them, but merely cheered them on their measures, that they might obtain changes, and further views which they knew ministers would resist, and because they expected that a Reformed Parliament would dispense with their services. The class whom ministers have raised into importance, begin now to develop their views. At the grand Jubilee of the Metropolitan National Political Union, at which Mr. Hume presided, the Chairman first proposed as a toast—The Sovereignty of the People, and next the Majesty of the People; next came 'The King,' but how was the toast received?—with the greatest dissatisfaction, and amidst a Babel-like confusion. The King, in his return from the House of Peers, was greeted by the most marked displeasure on the part of the populace; he was assailed with hisses, yells, and groans, by the rabble; and every person decently attired, who took off his hat to the King, was immediately visited with the disapprobation of the populace. During the whole time it is said, his Majesty preserved perfect composure, but his countenance evinced a seriousness seldom before witnessed. And was it surprising that he should be shocked at the ingratitude of the people? The King evinced a strong disposition to meet the wishes of the people in changing the representation of the country, and this is his reward? Is it to be marvelled at, that the Continental Governments, after witnessing the effects of the revolution in France, and the disposition of the people in this country, should dread innovations, and use unjustifiable means to suppress the revolutionary spirit that is abroad? For such proceedings on the part of the foreign Kings we have, of course, to offer no justification, but it is a matter of extreme regret, that the professed friends of liberty should evince by their conduct, how unworthy they are to enjoy freedom, and also be the occasion of other Governments making inroads on the freedom of the people. To come nearer home. Mr. Christie, banker in Dundee, at the Jubilee dinner said—The voice of the people was—restore Lord Grey's Administration, or a Republic may be the speedy result—(great cheering), a consummation which we are destined to see at no distant date (great cheering.) Thus the real sentiments and intentions of the most ardent patriots begin to fulfil the predictions of their opponents, and to show that it was not merely Reform they were anxious to obtain—not a moderate and reasonable change in our institutions, but a subversion of the constitution of the country. The Political Unions are still determined to continue their self-constituted authority—they will spread revolutionary doctrines and promote agitation among the people; and if Government does not destroy these assemblies, they will speedily destroy the Government. The Reform Bill now also begins to give dissatisfaction. A petition to the House of Commons, from Manchester, prays that all the clauses in the Reform Bill, save the disfranchising clause, may be repealed. Sir George Warrender said, that none but the Lawyers would be benefited by the Bill; Mr. Hume thought it probable, that owing to the blunders and obscurity of the bill, there would not be a sufficient number of members in the next Parliament to form even an Election Committee, to try the validity of the Elections; Mr. Cobden joins

in the condemnation of the Bill, and the *MORNING CHRONICLE* has at length discovered, that without election by ballot, the Bill must operate prejudicially to the interests of the electors, and frustrate the design and intention of free elections.

Such are the opinions now expressed by those who were loud and clamorous for 'the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill,' which ministers said was to be a final measure! Such is the gratitude which is now expressed for a measure which they thought would make their fame imperishable; secure them in the retention of office; and afford satisfaction and contentment among the people! Ministers will by and by become sick of their short-lived popularity; they will see how dangerous it was to court the friendship of revolutionary mob-meetings and Political Unions; and if they continue in office, they must perceive the necessity of curbing that spirit of dissatisfaction, and that restless desire for innovation which they have engendered among the people.—

August 24.

COMMUNICATIONS.

MR EDITOR,

THE vile, and infamous practice of Placarding and circulating Anonymous Letters, which has for some time existed in this place, has induced me to send you the following remarks upon this subject for insertion. No possible event can, in my opinion, be more big with danger to the peace and happiness of our circles than this. It is like calling down on our own heads the withering curse of the prophet; and it is therefore high time for the prudent to stand forward, to give the watch-word of danger, and to alarm the community with the fearful consequences which may ultimately result from this system, should it not be checked and rooted out; and it becomes the duty of every parent and master to look well to their children and to the persons in their employ.

We all know enough of human nature to be aware, that there is a lingering malvolence in the heart of man which rejoices over the follies of his compeers, and will even smile or sneer at the faults and follies of friends. It is gratifying to self-pride to be enabled to draw comparisons between our own, and the evil propensities of our neighbours; and the more striking the latter are, the higher will be the satisfaction, because they will speak a more consolatory and acceptable language. To feed this taste is not a very difficult task. Genius it needs not, talents even raised above mediocrity it does not require, because you have only to state the weak points of the person you wish to wound, in vulgar language, and the object is gained. To tolerate, therefore, this practice, is, in the first place, to indulge those passions that degrade man from the exalted station in the scale of moral being which it ought to be his fondest wish to occupy; and, in the second place it puts it in the power of every unprincipled villain, who can use a pen, to wreak his vengeance upon any one who may chance to offend him.

I ask Sir, if this system gains footing, and be sanctioned by use, who can be safe? What man is there, who has passed so pure and spotless a life, that there are not some shades in his conduct, over which he would not wish to cast the friendly mantle of oblivion? Who is it that has not had his hours of transgression; who, that has not 'sinned the sin that calleth for repentance;' to whom has it not happened, as is written by the Father, 'that the armour of virtue has been unguilt, and the sword of righteousness for a time has changed into a reed;'—who can conduct himself in a mercantile community, without giving offence; and if every one who is compelled to treat his debtor with unrelenting justice; if the magistrate in the performance of his public duties; if a private individual for private acts and opinions, is to be posted at the corner on the succeeding morning, and the whole faults of a past life are to be raked up from obscurity, and embodied in a placard farewell to the peace and happiness of society. It is a fundamental principle of English justice, that no prisoner can be condemned unheard. But how is it with the charges contained in a placard? They are written in secret and stuck up in the dark; whether they are true or false they are unsanctioned by authority, and no gentleman can even notice, far less answer them without sinking his character by comprising his dignity. Still they have influence; malice circulates them with busy tongue, and although they are so untenable that their very author dares not avow them, the individual against whom they are directed, is nearly as much injured as if they were the oracles of Truth herself. This, Sir, is a matter which not only affects one but every person in the community; that person who stands to day and smiles at the caricature of his neighbour, may on the morrow be hung up in his turn.

If I have succeeded in pointing out the dangers of the practice, the public mind must catch the alarm. Let the community, then, act as one man, in hunting out the scoundrel who thus perverts his private hours; let the hand writing be examined and compared; and on discovery, let him be made a signal example of public indignation. Were this done but in one instance I will venture to assert that the practice will disappear.

Chatham, October 1.