



WEDNESDAY,

NOVEMBER 17, 1802.

St. JOHN: PRINTED and PUBLISHED by JOHN RYAN, Printer to the KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY, at his Office, No. 9, LONG-WHARF, South side Market-Street, where ESSAYS, ADVERTISEMENTS, &c. will be thankfully received.

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EULOGIUM

ON THE LATE

DUKE OF BEDFORD,

DELIVERED BY Mr. FOX,

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON THE 16TH OF MARCH, 1802,

Previously to his moving a new Writ for the Borough of Tavistock, vacant by the succession of

LORD JOHN RUSSELL TO THE TITLE.

Mr. Speaker,

"THE motion I am about to make is so much of course, that in common instances I should not be justified in introducing it by any preface. If the calamitous event which has lately happened had only robbed me of a friend, I must have sought another opportunity of testifying my affection, my veneration, and my grief. Even now I shall by no means give vent to my private feelings, nor think of expressing my sense of the loss I have sustained. But the noble person, who is now no more, was a character so extraordinary and so meritorious, that if I were not to deviate from the usual forms of proceeding, I should be wanting in due respect to his memory, and I believe I should disappoint the expectations of the public. Never did any event of this nature excite such general regret; the deepest grief pervades every rank; the whole community seems impressed with the death of a parent. It is from a conviction that a public loss has been sustained that I now rise to say a few words, and I trust, that every one present, sharing in that conviction, I shall be heard with indulgence. [*A loud cry of hear! hear! hear!*] However, Sir, I shall not detain you long. This is not the place, and certainly not the occasion, to detail the events of his life, or to describe the features of his character. Such was the admiration excited by his virtues, that, to expatiate upon them at large, were it proper, would be unnecessary. He is as deeply and universally lamented as ever any subject was, and he must long live in the recollection of a grateful posterity. There was something so peculiar and striking in his character, it was marked by so many distinctive excellencies, that to do justice to it is impossible, but at the same time all panegyric is needless. [*Mr. Fox was here much affected*] I will not give way to the warmth of friendship, nor go into that minuteness which his many good qualities would demand, and in which on another occasion I might be indulged. Suffice it to say, that his loss is to be the more deplored, as he was carried off at a period of life when he was young enough to enjoy all its blessings, and vigorous enough to perform all its duties; when he himself looked forward to years of happiness, and when society might have expected to be long benefited by his benevolence, his energy, and his wisdom. His character was formed; he had passed all the dangers to which he was exposed. The public enjoyed a certainty of continuing to derive from him the benefits he was conferring; and had his life been unusually long, it would have still gathered lustre as it advanced to its close. Had he been snatched away in early youth, however distressing the event to his relatives, the public calamity would not have been so considerable. The fairest promises are often fallacious; the best founded hopes are not always fulfilled. It might have been thought that, like others, he would have plunged into dissipation, that he would have been corrupted by flattery, that he would have bartered his principles for power. His life was cut off at a moment when a certainty had been obtained of the way he would have employed it. His death deprives society of a large sum of happiness, which he would have been the means of bestowing. Again, had his career been fully run through, our admiration and our gratitude might indeed have been in-

creased; but we should have felt less acutely the pang of regret. He would have done all the good for which he was destined, and have fallen maturely into the tomb.

Every thing conspires to raise our admiration. His merit was the greater, not only because he was entirely the work of his own hands, but because virtue is greater in high stations, as it is more difficult to be practised, and as it embraces a wider diversity of objects. He was not so much distinguished from others either by his high birth, or opulent fortune, as by a peculiar character, which he owed entirely to the native force and vigour of his own mind. This led him to the pursuit of *utility*, which became the prevailing motive and the distinguishing characteristic of all his actions. He was born to a situation the most difficult to keep pure the affections of the heart, and to cultivate the faculties of the understanding. When yet a child he came into the possession of his honours and his fortune. He was surrounded by dangers which have perverted and corrupted the best disposed minds. He saw nothing in the world but what was fair and inviting. Under these circumstances, would it have been surprising if his heart had been hardened, if his views had become contracted, if he had wanted the common sympathies with distress, if he had thought of little else but unusual gratification? The Roman satirist had justly observed;—

*Rarus enim sensus communis in illa fortuna;* but he remained untainted. He became a man such as the most favourable situations have seldom formed. Amidst prosperity he learned all the virtues of adversity. No man ever placed himself so low in his own estimation, or raised himself so high in that of others. I mean, that a selfish idea never lurked in his mind; that, indifferent about personal comfort, he looked only to the community; that the grand study of his life was to make his fellow citizens wiser, better, and happier. Nor did he, as some who have acquired the name of philanthropists, consider them only in the bulk, regard them merely as a body corporate. He was tenderly attached to individuals, and alive to all the charities of domestic life. From his station the sphere of his acquaintance was more extensive than almost that of any other man, and no one did know in whose welfare he was not interested. Here he made no distinction of ranks, and to be a fellow creature was a sufficient title to his regard. He not only liberally visited with his purse, but he took a lively concern in the objects of his bounty, and often communicated as much happiness by his friendly solicitude as by his unbounded munificence. It may be said, that he has left behind him no children to lament his untimely end, and to imitate his brilliant example. But if all those are to be considered as our children whom we have cherished and protected, whom we have rendered happy by our good offices, and whom we have bound to us by all the ties of affection and gratitude, no man ever had a family more numerous, or was more piously mourned. This disconsolate circle does not comprehend only his relations, his tenants, his servants, and his intimate friends, but all who came within the sphere of his benevolence, all whose welfare he could in any way promote.

Sir, I will not dwell upon his amiable dispositions in private life. But there was one quality which so particularly distinguished him, that, for the sake of others, I cannot forbear holding up this part of his character to imitation. I mean his *steadiness in friendship*. Some are warm, but volatile and inconstant. He was warm too, but firm and unchangeable. Never once was he known to violate any of the duties of this sacred virtue;—where his attachment was placed, there it remained. Of

him it might be said, what can be said of few, that if you enjoyed his friendship at the beginning of the year, you were sure of possessing it in a still greater degree, when the year had elapsed. His discrimination was too quick to be blind to imperfections and vices, but his selection of friends was so judicious, that he scarcely ever had occasion to discard them.

It has so happened that some have grown better as they advanced in years. But it is to be feared, that it is a more common case for men to lose that openness of heart, and generosity of spirit, which had formerly distinguished them, and which are reckoned the attributes of youth. Here it was the reverse:—no one ever laboured more to make himself master of any art or science; no one, in the hope of wealth, power, and immortality, ever studied with greater ardour to excel in poetry or eloquence than this truly noble person studied to do good. He had made this the regular discipline of his mind; it had become the fixed habit of his life. High as was the pitch he had reached, he daily improved. [*Mr. Fox was here again much affected*] It would not be easy to speak of such a man, though I had not loved him, though he had not always behaved to me in such a manner as to fill my bosom with eternal gratitude. Upon a stranger who has heard of his name the most afflicting reflections must intrude.

One great feature of his character was, that he neglected what was merely ornamental, and devoted his whole attention to public utility. This was so much his object, that by degrees he studied it in his private amusements. He wished that not a moment of his time should be lost to society, and that none of his pursuits should have his own gratification solely in view. So totally had he given himself up to this object, that it became his amusement and delight, and he carried it to a length that might; if any thing appear censurable in his character,—if it had pleased heaven to spare him to us some years longer; that might have exposed his almost princely fortune, and his zeal for the most laudable and useful pursuits, to embarrassment and difficulty. He did not seek to enjoy life himself, but render happy his friends and fellow-creatures, and as few ever studied this end so completely, so few have ever so completely attained it. I am not qualified to speak of some particulars which do the highest honour to his memory. But some who know how much the welfare of the country depends upon agricultural improvement, and how he, more than any man, has been instrumental in promoting it, could shew that in this respect he conferred the most solid obligations on his country. His motive I am perfectly competent to appreciate; he thought that at this particular moment it was the most useful pursuit in which he could be engaged, and I know well that if any way had been pointed out to him, in which he could have been more extensively useful, he would have entered upon it with equal ardour.

With regard to his political principles and opinions, said Mr. Fox, this is not the opportunity which I should take for descending upon them, particularly in addressing myself to this House. The cast of those opinions, undoubtedly, was so widely different from that of the majority of this House, that instead of forming a subject of panegyric, they might rather think it required excusation and apology. To those who feel so, the only apology I can offer is, that there are some families in which it may be remarked, that the love of public virtue is hereditary; and that if the Duke of Bedford may be thought to have carried this sentiment too far, and even to have retained something of a high or aristocratical demeanour in times which we are taught to look upon as the best, the times of Athens and of Rome, those who were most eminent were always

those who were most influenced by the example of their ancestors. It could not have been material to have remarked in one of the family of the Claudii, a partiality and predilection for the privileges of the Patricians. It was not unnatural in a descendant of the great Earl of Bedford and Lord Russell to be animated by a fervent love, and to discover more than a common leaning towards the rights and liberties of the People of England. But of this I am sure, whatever contrariety of opinion may divide parties in this House, that steadiness of principle, and firmness and consistency of character, are qualities which, in themselves, will ever claim, from the liberality of political difference, a lasting approbation and esteem; on those I am confident it will be needless for me to expatiate in the Duke of Bedford. The House and the public know to what an uncommon degree they were his.

I now close what I had to offer. To those who look for perfection of character it is some consolation in the midst of their grief, that his exit corresponded with the part he had acted. I have said that disinterestedness was the most striking feature of his character. I have said that in the height of prosperity he had all the virtues which are supposed to spring from affliction. Another trial awaited him, and he went through it with the same spirit. It was yet to be seen how he would be affected by bodily torture and the near prospect of dissolution. At a moment like this it would have been excusable if his feelings had been concentrated upon his own sufferings and the awful event which awaited him. But he was still himself. The welfare of others still engrossed his attention. Indifferent to his own situation, he coolly employed the few minutes allotted to him, in making various arrangements which might secure the comfort of those who were to live when he was gone. At last he resigned his being with all the fortitude and resignation of those who have been held up to the imitation of mankind.

Let it not be thought, Sir, to whatever degree I may be supposed to feel the obligations of private gratitude or affection, or in whatever light I may view actions which, whether in relation to the largest and most important, or to the very least concern, of my life, will endear his memory to my heart to the latest hour of it: let it not be supposed, that safely as I might trust to the generous indulgence of the House to state my feelings of the excellent man whose death we deplore, I have taken this unusual opportunity of expressing them only to strew flowers over his grave. No, Sir! It is for the sake of impressing his great example upon the public; it is that men may see it, that they may feel it, that they may talk of it in their domestic circles, and hold it up, wherever it can be imitated, to the imitation of their children.

Thus it is, that if we can suppose him now to look down upon us, and to be sensible of what is transacting in the world we may be sure he rejoices that his death is as useful as was his life, since its effect is beyond all others to teach mankind, according to the philosophical, although perhaps the too sanguine notion of an illustrious orator of antiquity, that although the actions of vice are confined in their influence to the immediate mischief, they produce virtuous lives again in its example, which is made to endure for ever. There is a beautiful passage in the speech of a young orator, which, to be sure, favours more of the generous ardour of youth, than the cool reflection of age. "We have this," says he, "to comfort us amidst all the ills of our condition, that crime is only a curse to the time in which it is committed; but that virtuous actions are a benefit to posterity, by the example which they afford, and the emulation which they excite."

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