

# Imperial Parliament.



HOUSE OF LORDS, JUNE 21.

## CONVERSATION ON THE ADDRESS.

At the conclusion of the Speech his Majesty retired. The House adjourned, and resumed at five o'clock. The order of the day having been moved by Earl Grey, the Lord Chancellor commenced the reading of his Majesty's Speech, but he was interrupted by Lord Ellenborough, who begged leave to remind the House that it was customary, previous to the reading of the King's Speech, to move the first reading of a Bill.—Earl Grey said he was willing to comply with the usual forms of the House; and, in accordance with the Noble Lord's suggestion, he would move the first reading of the select Vestry Bill. The select Vestry Bill being then read, the King's Speech was read, first by the Lord Chancellor, and then by the clerk at the table.—The Duke of Norfolk rose to propose the Address; but in consequence of the embarrassment under which the Noble Duke laboured, and the low tone in which he spoke, very few passages of his discourse were heard. He commenced by apologizing for the task he had undertaken, unaccustomed as he was to address any assembly, much less such an assembly as he had then to see before him; but he was anxious to avail himself of the privilege, as a member of the House, which he had attained by the favour of their Lordships, and by an act of justice of the legislature, to express his high opinion of the gracious Speech his Majesty had that day made from the throne and which was in accordance with all the sentiments of attachment to the cause of civil and religious liberty, and to the best interests of the country, which he had entertained from the earliest period of his political life. He was happy to have that opportunity of expressing his cordial approbation of the views of his Majesty's present ministers, and of giving to them his best support, as he was assured they were desirous to uphold the true interests of the crown and of the country. He justified the dissolution; and thought the answer of the country to his Majesty's appeal was decisively in favour of reform. There was no wish for revolution—to say so was a libel; but the people sought the restoration of their rights. [Hear.] The Noble Duke continued his comment on the various topics of the speech, and concluded by moving the adoption of the address which he held in his hand.—Earl Mulgrave was about to second the address, but several noble Lords cried out that the address should be read, while others called on the Lord Chancellor to proceed.—The Lord Chancellor said he had not the slightest objection to read the address, and he desired to follow the usual course of their Lordships' proceedings; but he really did not know what to do, as one noble Lord called out to him to read, while another exclaimed not to read; and he was equally ignorant of their Lordships' wishes, as he was of the order of their proceedings in this respect. [Cries of "Read read," "No, no."]—Lord Ellenborough said the course adopted was irregular. A resolution for an address should be moved, and a committee appointed to prepare it.—The Earls of Shaftesbury and Eldon spoke against adopting an address prepared in this manner, and not by a committee.—Earl Grey and the Lord Chancellor were unwilling to debate an inconsequential form.—The Lord Chancellor confessed his ignorance on the subject, but he was not enlightened by the House. He would suggest that he should be allowed to read the address, which might be then submitted to a committee for verbal amendments.—Earl Grey had no difficulty in saying that the regular course would have been for the noble Duke near him to have moved that an address be presented to his Majesty, and then that the address should be prepared as usual, by the committee. But the noble Lords who had raised the difficulty could not define it. The time of their Lordships was then unprofitably employed. The error and the inadvertence were mainly to be attributed to him, as he had furnished his noble friend with the form of an address to be submitted to their Lordships for adoption or rejection, instead of having allowed him to propose a resolution, on which the address would afterwards appear. He would withdraw the address, if it could be proved that their privileges were affected by its formality.—Lord Ellenborough had no doubt but that the noble Earl had erred, as he declared, from inadvertence; but the House should recollect, that was the second error of inadvertence which the noble Earl had committed that evening—the first being when he moved the reading of the speech without the bill being first read; and he thought those errors should be watched, lest the privileges of their Lordships should suffer by them. Those errors of inadvertence were very slight, but they might be drawn into precedents on future occasions, and it was fit that their Lordships should not allow their rights and privileges to depend on matters of inadvertence. It was impossible to refer to a committee what their Lordships here adopted as their own. He would, however, withdraw his opposition.—The Duke of Buckingham pointed out a third inadvertence, or neglect of the forms of business in that House, an attention to which was expected from Ministers. It was the noble Duke's and not the noble Lord's, duty to propose that the address be read.—The

Lord Chancellor, after considering the matter, allowed that an alteration of the usual course might lead to inconvenience, and establish a precedent. In deference to the opinion of others, and in respect to the House, he would put the motion—Is it your Lordships' pleasure that this address be now read?—Another debate arose on the point suggested by the Lord Chancellor that the address be altered from the first to the third person.—The Earl of Carnarvon said, it was not competent to the noble Lord to make such alteration.—Lord Rolle thought the address should be read, as an amendment might be moved.—Lord Holland suggested an alteration in the motion by the noble Duke himself.—Lord Farnham and Earl Eldon spoke against the referring to a committee sentiments and words adopted by their Lordships.—The Marquis of Londonderry, regretting that the noble Duke was not better prompted, was called to order, and Lord Holland observed, that nothing could be more disorderly than a debate upon order. The noble Marquis had drawn from him that remark, by carrying disorder to its very summit. In fact, disorder could go no farther than the noble Marquis had carried it.—[Hear, hear.] In one short sentence he contrived to violate no less than three distinct and positive orders. [A laugh.] He had contrived to speak on a debate which had passed—to revive a question of order which had been decided—and to transgress the decorum of debate. The Address was at length read by the Lord Chancellor as altered to the third person by the Duke of Norfolk. The Earl of Mulgrave, then seconded the Address, alluding delicately to the embarrassment of his noble friend, the mover, who had been so long withheld from the exercise of public speaking, and to whom justice had been done so tardily. He was, in his opinions on civil and religious liberty, and on the great question of Parliamentary reform, along with the Noble Duke. The friends of reform were attacked as levellers, as the violators of vested rights, and as enemies to the institutions of the country; though it was a matter of public notoriety, and well known to those who were loudest in making the charge, that the Noble Duke and others were prepared to make considerable personal sacrifices to the success of the measure he was alluding to. The Noble Lord then dissected the Speech, congratulating the country on its different topics, and on the wise course pursued by ministers in their policy foreign and domestic. He would not believe that at this time the barons of England would deny the vindication of those liberties so loudly called for by the people.—His Lordship concluded by seconding the address. The Earl of Winchester, rose on the opposition to explain his reasons for occupying the place he did, and for withdrawing the confidence he had placed in the ministry. He had been willing, and was willing to support the ministry, not from an union of sentiment with those who professed what are called Whig principles, many of which he had hitherto opposed, and should, to the last hour of his life, continue zealously and strenuously to oppose, from a conscientious conviction that they were inconsistent with the best interests, the security, the welfare, and the happiness of the country; but from respect to the honesty, integrity, and consistency which had marked the public life of the prime minister. He did not want his supporting of the least importance. The influence he possessed arose merely from the consistency with which he supported the views, correct or otherwise, which he, after most careful scanning, had adopted. He was a reformer, had been, and was a consistent reformer. But he objected to the bill of the ministry, and had declared on paper, the day after its introduction, his determination to oppose it. He had thought the differences between Whig and Tory were at an end, by the concession of the Test and Corporation Repeal, and by the Catholic Emancipation Bills. He had differed from the Whigs in their desire to extend political liberty so far, as, in his opinion, would cause the overthrow of the prized equilibrium between the three parts of the state; in their countenancing whatever tended to the separation between the church and state, the groundwork of the moral character of the nation, and in this coldness towards the upholding of those Protestant principles and institutions which he considered the foundation of our civil and religious liberty, and of all the blessings we had received from the Almighty hand. How could he, a lover of the liberty, but a deserter of the licentiousness of the press, look calmly back on the attacks made within the last few months on the Protestant religion, and on that House, by that part of the press which professed to be ministerial? He felt that he owed it to the public and private character which he enjoyed, that he should not be charged with inconsistency in not adhering to a party who, under a mask of correcting abuses, which, to a certain extent, he was ready to admit existed—(cheers,) and he should be ready to give his assistance to correct them—were trying, in the present excited state of men's minds, to overturn the remaining institutions of the country, and to introduce anarchy and confusion in the state, and to establish republicanism upon the ruins of the constitution. The government, in allowing the quibble of the most unprincipled agitator who had ever disgraced a country—(cheers)—yes, he said, disgraced—and might the words be wafted far beyond these walls—to divert their justice, and to give impunity to him who, deluded to rebellion, had forfeited his confidence. He was once a Protestant Tory of this coun-

try, and many would follow his example. He briefly alluded to the Speech and declared that he felt himself bound to his character for consistency to give this early explanation of his conduct. Earl Grey rose with regret at so early a period. He wished to have heard more from those who seemed inclined to make an active, he had almost said a violent, opposition, from the symptoms which had manifested themselves to-night, to his Majesty's government, to hear their objections to the ministry or its measures, and the grounds of their objections. He regretted that the Noble Earl opposite had found reason to withdraw his confidence. He had listened in vain for these reasons. He did not find them in the Reform Bill because, upon the necessity of the case upon the general principles upon which the measure was proposed, the Noble Earl agreed, and taught them to hope for his support; but his reason for withdrawing was because certain persons, under the mask of reform, were aiming at a subversion of the constitution. (Cheers from the Duke of Cumberland and other Noble Lords.) The illustrious Duke opposite delivered that sentiment, and he [Earl Grey] should be glad to know how he would support it. The illustrious Duke did not agree with the Noble Earl in thinking any reform at all necessary, and by his consistent and unvarying opposition at any time, or under any circumstances, to extend the liberties or confirm the rights of the people.—The Marquis of Londonderry rose to order. It was not consistent with the usages of that House to answer upon the sentiments of a member of their Lordships' House, who had never expressed his sentiments on the subject. Earl Grey said it was quite consistent with the duty of any Earl or any Duke, or any Marquis, or any Viscount, or any Baron, or any member of that House, to express his opinion upon the proceedings of any other noble Lord, when he confined himself to the public conduct of that noble Lord. He might certainly have been led into rather more heat than was necessary, when the illustrious Duke by his cheer seemed to imply that the charge made by the noble Earl opposite was well founded. He regretted to hear such a charge made against him, or those who acted with him; and he had treated it as he should always treat such a charge from whatever quarter it might come. (Cheers.) The noble Earl avowed himself a reformer. He undertook the ministry and promoted reform, not to subvert but to preserve the constitution; to enable that and the other House of Parliament to support the prerogatives of the crown, their own privileges, and the liberties of the country, against any measures which could be detrimental to them. He was a member of the established church and a sincere Protestant. He believed that church the best that had ever existed in the world. But as to its union with the state; the moral effects of its precepts and example in making better subjects, and the necessary protection towards it, was the union he sanctioned. When the church interfered in politics, it seldom did so with advantage to itself, seldom to the cause which it advocated, and often to the detriment of the public. [Hear, hear.] Its ascendancy should be owing to its purity alone. He deprecated all religious distinctions. As to the charge brought against the government with respect to a political delinquent in Ireland, such was the singularity of that individual's case, that the law authorities of the crown, both in this country and in Ireland, were of opinion that the act had expired with the dissolution of Parliament, and that consequently the judgment confessed by him could not be enforced. There were decisions of the judges here to that effect: on those decisions the Irish government had acted, and he could assure the noble Lord, that any remission of the law, as respected the individual, had never been even contemplated by the present administration. There was no dissentient voice as to their conduct in foreign affairs; and as to reform, such was the loud demand, and such the general feeling of the times in which we lived, that if through any opposition which it should meet in this or the other House, the measure of reform were denied to that call and that feeling, the consequences would most probably be such as neither he nor the other noble Lords would have the courage to contemplate. [Hear, hear.] The Earl of Winchester stated that a member of government had sanctioned the toast of "The sovereignty of the people, the only legitimate principle of government." Another had drunk to the "Liberal clergy of England," where that toast was followed by the "Dissenters of England." If the colleagues of the noble Earl avowed such language, his fears were justified. Earl Grey complained of this attack, which he felt more sensibly than if levelled at himself. The toast at an election dinner, to which the noble Earl had referred, was not correctly stated; and the corrected toast, "the people, from whom all sovereignty was gathered," was the principle of the Revolution of 1688. There was no one who more objected even to this toast than the individual to whom the noble Earl referred. The Duke of Cumberland had not the slightest objection to the address, but he had been charged by the noble Earl with being always adverse to the liberties of the people. In the face of their Lordships he repelled the charge. No one would more strenuously fight for the liberties of the people than he would. He challenged the noble Earl to point out one act of hostility to those liberties in his public conduct for the last thirty years. He sought only the preservation of the just equilibrium be-

tween Kings, Lords, and Commons. He would neither support nor oppose the Reform Bill on any other ground but its merits. He apologized for his warmth, but he could not allow this unfounded charge to go forth uncontradicted. [Cheers.] Earl Grey explained, and immediately afterwards Lord Falmouth complained of some reference to an ancestor of his, which Lord Grey said he had read in the *Diary of Bubb Doddington*, but knew nothing of as connected with the charge of the Noble Lord; the complaint and the explanation were both inaudible. Lord Wharfedale regretted to find personalities already mingle in such important debates as would no doubt engage their Lordships. He did not think the Noble Earl was justified in his anticipations of an organized opposition from the pertinacity displayed on a point of order. It was no proof of hostility to Ministers. They were there to do the duty they owed their country, and not to oppose a particular set of men. They knew their countrymen—they wanted only the truth set before them—away then with altercation! The Noble Earl opposite had said it was conservative to take away from that House certain power which they ought not to have. Now, the quarrel which he had with the Noble Earl, in common with all those who opposed the measure, was, that having taken away from that House, and given to the people, the latter would become too strong for the balance of the constitution. (Cheers.) In the elections the reports circulated by the government as to the personal wishes of the King had as to the most decided effect. In answer to the Tories canvassing their tenants or neighbours they were told, "We are for the King and the bill." With regard to the bill, their Lordships were most awkwardly circumstanced, and he trusted coolness and decision would characterise their conduct. It was said of the bill that it would be dangerous to reject it, and that the property of their Lordships would be endangered. If so, the property of the whole country was subject to the same fatality. But he the Noble Lord would sooner forfeit his dignity than vote for a measure which his conscience told him would endanger the rights of the King and the constitution of his country. The Marquis of Lansdown, after all he had heard of the impolicy of the late dissolution of Parliament, did not shrink from avowing himself one of the advisers of that measure—(hear)—and there never was a measure more necessary to the weal of the country, and the sense of the people responded to his conviction. [Cheers.] And if any justification was required, he would only solicit their Lordships' attention to the result of the late elections. Montesquieu had panegyrised the institutions of this country; the contemplated reform would make the panegyric true. Out of the difficulties, stated by the Noble Lord, into which the House was plunged, they had no way but one, and that way was, the temperate and conscientious discharge of their duty in applying themselves to the impartial consideration of the bill. If even at the eleventh hour he should see danger in the proposed change, he declared solemnly to God that he would come forward and declare himself in the wrong, and join with the Noble Lords opposite in conspiring to defeat the bill. The Marquis of Londonderry complained of the dissolution, of the interference in the elections in Ireland, of the state of our foreign relations, and expressed his disapproval of the whole conduct of ministers. The Lord Chancellor said, although he had been alluded to from the earliest period of the discussion till the conclusion of the Speech of the Noble Earl (Mansfield) he had hitherto abstained from offering himself to their Lordships' notice, because he preferred rather to grapple with the important parts of the subject than to engage in controversy on matters of a personal nature; but, after having listened to the speech of the Noble Earl, he found it impossible any longer to refrain from stating something for the candid consideration of the House and of the Noble Earl himself, with respect to some points as to which the Noble Earl—he must forgive him for saying so—had shown himself to be partly ignorant and partly forgetful.—The speech of the Noble Earl had evidently undergone some preparation. He was pleased to meet an adversary who had buckled on his armour for the fight, and come into the field with his lions girded up. When he heard the incorrect statements of the three Noble Lords, he could not help asking—how could confidence be placed in any history when three contemporary historians were so lamentably defective in every material circumstance of a scene which passed no longer ago than Friday, the 22d of April last? The Noble Lords had charged him with having stated as a ground for the dissolution of Parliament a vote of the House of Commons of Thursday, the 21st of April. If he did make that statement, he must have been the very idiot that ever yet rose to address a public assembly: for a debate had raged in the House of Commons on the subject of the expected dissolution of Parliament for five hours before the vote in question occurred. Did he not know that he had previously advised the King to dissolve the Parliament? Was not the fact known to half a dozen people in that room had he not issued orders for preparing a commission the night before, it being very much on the cards that Parliament would be dissolved that evening? He would tell the house what he had said.—[Hear, hear.] From the opposition. Though he was not bound to do so, yet he would adopt the report of his observations which he had never seen before. [A cry of

"Hear they are," and the printed report was passed along the opposition bench until it reached his lordship.] "With great submission," said the noble and learned lord, "I have the honour to hold the first seat in this assembly. I will be treated as every man in the House has a right to be treated, and not be assailed, as I fear is attempted, for the purpose of interrupting my argument with cries of 'read,' which is a thing not permitted in either House of Parliament, or at any meeting out of doors." [Hear, hear.] The noble and learned lord then took the printed report, and read as follows:—"I never until now heard that the King had not the right to dissolve Parliament when he saw fit, the more particularly when the House of Commons have considered it proper to take the extreme and unprecedented step of refusing the supplies." He was sure that any twelve men who read those words, and who were acquainted with the circumstances under which they were spoken, would put the same construction upon it that he did. It mattered little whether in technical terms the House of Commons refused the supplies, or whether they adjourned without discussing them. The effect was the same. If a man want to borrow money from another, it was the same to him whether the latter shut the door in his face and told him he would lend none, or whether, without saying a word, he walked away, adjourned himself, and left his friend to look at the walls instead of the cash. [A laugh.] It had been his constant endeavour on all occasions to treat all men, be they his superiors, as their Lordships were, or his inferiors, if he had any, or his equals, with the courtesy which one gentleman, or he would rather say, man of right feeling, owed to another. The story which the noble historians had related was untrue from beginning to end. After the character which he had just given of himself, their Lordships might be surprised at his using those words. [A laugh.] He, however, did not mean them in an offensive sense. It had been said that he threw his hat on the woolsack, and flounced out of the house in an unbecoming manner, at a time when he well knew that the King was no nearer to the house until he received a positive order from the King, communicated to him by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod in these words—"The King doth command the Lord Chancellor instantly to give his attendance upon his Majesty, who waits at the bottom of the staircase." It appeared to him that the only person who had any right to be offended on that occasion was the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, who, finding him slow to obey the summons, pulled him, with his usual courtesy, by the sleeve—[laughter]—and added, "Did you hear what I said? The King has arrived, and is at the bottom of the staircase." Whereupon he ran, or rather walked as swiftly as he could, to meet his Majesty. He now came to the subject of the illumination, and the noble Marquis's domestic calamity, the recollection of which the noble Marquis seemed delighted to cherish. With respect to the handbill, which it was said, had been issued by the Lord Mayor, no man now charged the Lord Mayor with being the author of that bill, for the paper which had published the bill had been prosecuted in a court of law, and it was found that no such bill had been issued. Still it was lodged in the minds of men that there was something in it. It had been said, that the illumination might have been prevented by sending for the Lord Mayor and counselling him. As the Lord Mayor had taken upon himself to counsel the late administration, the present administration were to counsel the Lord Mayor to put his head into a nest of hornets. [Hear.] Prevent the illumination!—Repress the demonstration of popular feeling!—Bridle the joy with which all London was exulting!—Cham down the minds of 600,000 or 700,000 of his fellow-citizens, by throwing a little of the Home Office dust in their eyes!

—huc certamina tanta

Pulveris exigui jactis compressa quiescent ne (the Lord Chancellor) know, indeed, the effect of popular feeling on this head, and he suffered from it; for missiles were no respectors of persons—they smote Whig as well as Tory. He remembered when a certain bill, after sixty-four days debate, was laid aside, there was a ferment in the public mind, which led to an illumination, and he (the Lord Chancellor,) from no disinclination to show a respect for that deeply injured and persecuted individual, and from no desire to conceal his unbounded joy at the great triumph of justice, but by accident, forgot to illuminate, and he was pelted, and his house was pelted. Who were his Majesty's ministers in those days? Men with whom he had no connexion, nor his noble friends. Did they send to counsel the magistrates to tell the people not to put up lights? No; they had too much sense; they knew their duty better than to think of such nonsense. They had a right to prevent a breach of the peace, but they had no right to tell the people that they were not to testify their joy. He would merely call the attention of the house to the awful situation in which the legislature was now standing. Every man's mind told him that he alluded to the authority of that House, to the fundamental constitution of either House of Parliament, and now when a great excitement existed out of doors, and a vehement desire of an unanimous people, expressed with one shout of acclamation in favour of the measure, unhappily, the other House was much divided upon the subject, and though their Lordships were only the virtual representatives of the people, like the House of Commons they were divided amongst themselves.

(See second Page.)