

To the Hon. CHARLES JAMES FOX.

SIR,
I HAVE never till now thought you a person of any political importance. I have from my infancy, heard you talked of; I have seen you nominally at the head of a party; I have read the accounts of the celebration of your election-day, your birth-day, &c. I have also read your speeches in the Parliament House, in Covent Garden, at the taverns, and your testimony at the assizes at Maidstone; I have regarded you, of course, as the cause of much noise and strife, but, some how or other, I have never, till now, been able to persuade myself, that it was possible for you ever to have any considerable weight in the councils of this nation. Now I do think it possible; now, that Bonaparte has decidedly and openly signified his approbation of you, I think it not only possible, but likely, that you may, after a life of defeats, be crowned with victory.

But, before I speak of the motives and probable consequences of your journey to Paris, I cannot refrain from making some remarks on what has been said here respecting your visit to Bonaparte.

The Jacobin, or republican, (for they are only different degrees of the same quality) newspapers of London, which, for reasons too obvious to mention, are all deeply interested in preserving the apparent consistency of your political character, have found themselves strangely embarrassed by your visit to the "capital of the world." Perceiving that Bonaparte was endeavouring to restore the Christian religion in France, that he had somewhat slackened in his persecution of the royalists, and that he had not only formed a resolution, but taken effectual means, to crush, for ever, the spirit of republicanism in that country, the news-writers above-mentioned began to attack him with almost as much rancour and falsehood as if he had really been lawful sovereign.—You yourself, Sir, never poured out upon the family of Stuart or of Brunswick, a fouler collection of terms and epithets, than these your enraged friends belov'd on the First Consul of France. They did not, indeed, so many words, propose to "cashier" him; but, in every other respect, their paragraphs bore a perfect resemblance to your scurrilous harrangues at the Shakespeare Tavern.

The Consul, who had been a witness of the consequences resulting from despising the press, resolved to disarm himself an enemy, which, if suffered to continue its attacks, might become more formidable than any he had overcome. He, therefore, as far as related to himself and his Government, put an end to the liberty of the English press. To enter into a detailed description of the means and the manner of doing this would be useless. The thing was done; and the news-writers of this country are now, with respect to the Consul and Government of France, obliged most strictly to practise that virtue, which I hope you, though late in your life, will learn during your residence in that all-regenerating country. I mean *la science de se taire* or, in plain English, *the art of keeping your tongue within your teeth*. That these men must hate the Consul is evident. They do hate him most cordially, and they wish all mankind to make common cause with them. What, then, must be their disappointment, their mortification, their shame, and their rage, at seeing you, just at this time, amongst the foremost of the crowd, who are cringing at the feet of Bonaparte! At seeing you, "the champion of freedom"—"the man of the people"—"the patron and protector of the press," publicly receiving the commendations of Bonaparte for having *assisted his endeavours*, the endeavours of him, to whom they have imputed every quality and crime that can designate a tyrant!

During the first impulse of their resentment, honest nature seems to have seized the opportunity for making all effort to overcome their inveterate and unnatural hatred of their country; and for a day or two, I really was in hopes, that they were about to give you up. They regretted that Mr. Fox could not find better company than Talleyrand—they were sorry that Mr. Fox should have gone to Paris just at this time—they could not perceive the necessity of Mr. Fox's waiting on such a person as Bonaparte. But taking a few days to cool, to consider, and to calculate, and having, perhaps, received, in the mean time, explanations from your more confidential friends here, or from yourself, they began to change their tone; and, on the third or fourth day, gave a quite different turn to the thing itself, as well as to their sentiments respecting it. The visit was now become very proper. "So high a character as Mr. Fox could not avoid it, living in the metropolis of the Chief Consul, and indebted for favours in his literary researches, without giving an *affront*, which it is not in the nature of Mr. Fox to give to any one;" and, on this account, they excused you for having, by your attendance at the Consular levee, given Bonaparte consequence in the eyes of the world. That Bonaparte, to whom Princes make a pilgrimage for the purpose of obtaining a knowledge of their fate, who is the sole and absolute disposer of titles and of dominions; that such a man should derive consequence in the world, because he has been visited by Charles Fox, by the poor forlorn and fallen patriot, who has been supplanted by Sir Francis Burdett, and who actually blubbered, at the desertion of the Covent Garden mob, who thought that to chair him after his late election was an office too vile even for them, the vilest of mankind, to submit to; to suppose, that the homage of such a man could give consequence to Bonaparte is, indeed, to be most brutally stupid; but this was the turn which these expert politicians chose to give to the affair, and the good-natured public are now left to believe, that your visit to Paris has no other object than that of teaching manuscripts, and that it will be attended with no other consequence than that of exalting Bonaparte in the opinions of mankind.

That man, however, who does really believe this, must be blessed with an uncommon portion of credulity. For my own part, I am fully persuaded, that far other motives led to this visit, and that consequences widely different will probably result therefrom. I am not apt to be suspicious, but, when, to use the language of the French official paper,

"the first man in England meets *tête-à-tête* the First Consul of France." I cannot so soon forget the late meeting at Memel, which was, at first, attributed to mere whim, but the consequences of which have proved, that the parties did not meet merely to compliment each other, though that was given out as their only object.

It is impossible to state positively and precisely what was the real object of your visit to Bonaparte; but a tolerably correct opinion, with respect to it, may perhaps, be formed from a review of your conduct since the signature of the Preliminary Treaty.

When the disgraceful terms of that Treaty were first made known, there were persons sanguine enough to believe, that you would not give it your approbation; that, in spite of the long workings of faction, you still loved your country, and never would voluntarily sanction the deed by which she was dishonoured. Others were of a different opinion. Though, on one hand, they could not but perceive a fair opportunity for retrieving your character, and of obtaining the forgiveness, at least, of genuine Englishmen, they could, on the other, see nothing to hope for in the friend and advocate of Fitzgerald and O'Connor.—This opinion, which I, for one, entertained from the beginning, you took a very early opportunity to verify. In the speech, delivered at the Shakespeare, on the 10th of October last, which was at once the anniversary of your triumph over loyalty in Westminster, and the day of the arrival of that Treaty, by which the triumph of France over England was acknowledged, and proclaimed to the world; in that speech, you, even at the time of its delivery, appeared to me to be paving the way for the very steps, which you have now taken. You congratulated the factious dupes, who were spending their time and money upon you, on the return of peace, and repeatedly declared, that the terms of it you considered as of no consequence.—"The peace," said you, "is glorious to France and to the First Consul, and I rejoice at it. We have not gained the object of the war; and I like the peace so much the better."—"France has set an example, which will be highly useful to all the nations of the earth, and above all to Great-Britain."—"I fear, that, from the nature of the contest, in which you have been engaged, you may have contracted principles of admiration for unlimited monarchy, but the peace, followed up by a good understanding between the two countries, will do them away. I hope we shall return to the temper which we were in, when we reckoned the time of the expulsion of James II. a glorious era, when we cashiered one King and elected another."—It was suspected, that the "remarkable coincidence of events," noticed by Mr. Erskine, was not quite accidental, and that the ratification of the Treaty was retarded for no other purpose than that it might arrive in London on the anniversary of that day, which you and your partizans have chosen for offering an annual insult to your Sovereign, and to the sense and loyalty of the country.—This suspicion was strongly corroborated by the words of a Song, which was "written for the occasion," and which, that all might be of a piece, issued from the lips of a hired singer.

"Bless be the man by Heav'n design'd
To set the world from slavery free;
In every age, in every clime,
His matchless fame eternal be."
Hail! lovely peace, with olive crown'd,
O, come, and spread thy blessings round!"

What "man" was meant here, as the person designed by Heaven to deliver the world from slavery, one might have doubted, had it not been for a little piece of printed paper, which was handed round to the convives, and which had on it a red liberty cap between the letters N. B. the initials of NEAPOLÉONE BUONAPARTE, with the following device beneath: "to the man whose glorious victories have gained peace to the world."

After reading this, who will wonder, that you are now in Paris? Who will wonder, that the pompous eulogium bestowed on you by the Moniteur, at the gracious reception given you by Bonaparte, at the compliments paid you by "the man by heaven designed to set the world from slavery free," or at the long conversations which you have had with that man? And who will not easily guess at the subject of those conversations?

Bonaparte, we are told by the Moniteur, informed you of a fact extremely interesting, and to most people, somewhat new. "There are, Mr. Fox," said he "but two nations in the world, one of which occupy the East, and the other the West. The English, the French, the Germans, the Italians, &c. living under the same civil code, having the same manners, the same customs, and almost the same religion, are all members of one family; and those men who wish to re-kindle war among them, are advocates for civil war. These principles, Sir, you have maintained in your speeches, with an energy which does equal honor to your head and your heart."—Really! I did not know this before. I have read falsehood and nonsense enough under the title of speeches of Mr. Fox; but never did I know, till informed of it by the First Consul, that you had maintained, in those speeches, that the English, French, Germans, Italians, &c. (mind the *et cetera*) made but one family, and all lived under the same civil code. If this be so, however, it is pretty evident that Bonaparte is at the head of all this family; France is the home of it, and England, like Italy, is no more than a branch, or colony, which may be governed by a Vice President. I do not say, that you view the matter in this light; but, the First Consul, "the man by heaven designed to set the world from slavery free," certainly does view it in this light, or else his words amount to nothing more than mere gibberish.—The Moniteur does not inform us whether the Chief Consul discoursed with you about the English revolution, that "glorious time when we cashiered one King and elected another in his stead." This topic, so delicious to all those, who, like the Consul and you, are such ardent and sincere friends of liberty, was, probably, referred for a *tête-à-tête*. I do not know, that I have to accuse myself of being over curious; but I should really like to have heard what passed between you on this head.

Accuse me of dealing in dark and cowardly inuendoes to convince you that I do not, I will now tell you plainly, that I am sincerely persuaded, that the only object, of your journey to Paris and of your visits to Bonaparte, was to make yourself minister of this country by his means. You have long despaired, and not without good reason, of any efficient support here. The respectable part of your friends have dropped away from you by degrees; and other demagogues of more nerve and activity than yourself have supplanted you in the hearts of the rabble: So that, as to interest, of any kind, in this country, you have none worth speaking of; not so much, at any rate, as could possibly procure you even a subaltern situation amongst the servants of the King. Thus circumstanced, you had, I believe, previous to the peace, fallen into a state of indifference with respect to politics. That event seems to have roused your dormant ambition. During the long season of the prosperity, the honor, the glory of England, you were perfectly insensible; but her shame, her disgrace, the prospect of her speedy ruin and destruction, awakened you from your torpor, excited your exultation, and animated your hopes. You knew the Treaty to be disgraceful and pregnant with mischief; you did, I dare say, perceive the opportunity which offered for retrieving your character and consequence by an honourable and honest display of those antipathetic sentiments, which you formerly affected to entertain; but this road to the summit of your wishes was too long, presented too many obstacles, required more patience, more fortitude, more courage, and infinitely more real patriotism than you ever had at your command. The friendship of Bonaparte might well be regarded as more efficacious than all these virtues put together. You might readily, and, indeed, not unreasonably, hope, that the man, who had been able to impose such a peace upon the country, would also be able to impose a minister upon the King; and, as to the chance of that minister, you might be very certain, that he who had demanded and obtained the release of Napper Tandy, could have no objection either to the principles or the person of the friend of O'Connor.

There will be little need of force to effect this object.—The recommendations of superiors are tantamount to commands; and it would be perfectly natural for Bonaparte to recommend, as prime minister of England, the only man in it, who understands, and who has supported the principles, according to which "the English, the French, the Germans, the Italians, &c. are all but one nation;" the man who has repeatedly declared, that England is enslaved, and who has publicly given his sanction to the sentiment, that Bonaparte is designed by heaven to free the world from slavery. That the Chief Consul and the honest Talleyrand would interfere in the internal affairs of this country nobody can believe, who has heard the speeches of Lords Hawkebury and Castlereagh, or who has attended to that most excellent illustration of them—the current transactions in Germany; but, Bonaparte may without incurring the charge of interference, make a tender of his advice, especially as the French and English are now "one nation." He may, at any rate, just venture to hint (through the channel of the Moniteur, at least) that Mr. Fox is the only English statesman who possesses his esteem, and who has influence enough with him to preserve to this country "the blessings of peace." This is the spell by which we are bound. Only let the people (in their present degraded temper) be thoroughly convinced, that your exaltation is absolutely necessary to the preservation of peace, and the Hawkeburies will be summoned to surrender their places, upon precisely the same principle as that on which they surrendered Malta and the Cape.

Exactly how you will proceed, I cannot, of course, pretend to say. Nor will I lengthen out a letter, which is already too long, with an anticipation of the joy, which the republican prints in London will soon begin to express at the good understanding existing between you and the Chief Consul; and as to a serious exposure of your pretended motives for visiting Paris, to wit, the examination of the manuscripts of the Scotch College, you will certainly not be so unreasonable as to require it at any hands. I cannot, however, conclude, without asking, on this subject, a few questions which will not, I hope, be deemed impertinent, and to which I think the public have a right to expect an answer. What need had you to see the manuscripts, which it is pretended you went to examine? If you hoped to find in them something wherewith to add to your cowardly libels against the House of Stuart (libels for which you ought to have been called to account long enough ago) could you not have deputed some one to make the examination, especially as, from the well known state of your eyesight, it is absolutely impossible for you to read a single line of the manuscripts? But, suppose, for a moment, that you were really obliged to go to Paris on this affair, was Arthur O'Connor obliged to meet you at Calais, and to pass the evening with you *tête-à-tête*? Was he, soon after your arrival at Paris, obliged to follow you thither, in the company and in the carriage of Lord Oxford; and was Mr. Erskine obliged to break off from the enchantments of a jubilee, in order to meet you, in the capital of the world? Did all these, together with Mr. Adair, and many other persons of the same description; did they want to read the manuscripts too? Again: to what are we to attribute the military honours, paid you at Calais, at St. Omers, at Lille, &c. &c.? Soldiers, and particularly the soldiers of Bonaparte, do not move without orders: the garrisons of these towns knew nothing of Charles Fox: they had, I dare say, never heard your name: must not your reception, then, be ascribed to directions which they had received from their superiors? And does not this prove that Bonaparte was not only apprized of your intended visit, but minutely informed of all the circumstances of the time and manner of it? I have already spoken of the personal notice, which Bonaparte has taken of you; but, how came Bonaparte's wife to break through the rules of her court, in favour of Mrs. Fox, who is the only English woman (not before presented to the Queen) whom Mrs. Bonaparte has condescended to receive? Why this marked exception? And here let me ask too, by way of conclusion, how your marriage, which had been a secret for eight years, should have been divulged