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C O N T E N T S.

Reports of the Secretary Committees,

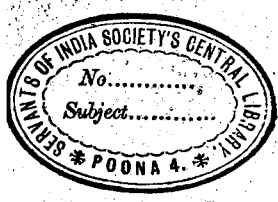
1801-1818.

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FIRST REPORT

FROM THE

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY.



Ordered to be printed 13th April 1801.



 FIRST REPORT.

THE COMMITTEE of SECRECY, to whom the several Papers, which were presented (sealed up) to the House, by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, upon the 1st and 2d Days of this Instant April, by HIS MAJESTY'S Command, were referred; and who were directed to examine the Matters thereof, and report the same, as they shall appear to them, to the House;—

HAVE proceeded, with the utmost Diligence, to the Consideration of the Matters referred to them; but, from the Extent and Variety of the Information respecting different Parts of the United Kingdom, which has been laid before them, they are under the Necessity of requesting the Indulgence of the House for a short Time, before they can submit the Result of their Investigation on all the Points to which it has extended.

Your Committee, however, think it incumbent upon them to state, without Delay, that they have received the fullest Proofs that the dangerous and treasonable Conspiracy for the Subversion of the Constitution and Government, which in the Year 1798, in Concert with a Foreign Enemy, produced the horrid and sanguinary Rebellion in Ireland, and the Progress and Extent of which, in Great Britain, is detailed in the Report of the Committee of Secrecy in the Year 1799, has never been abandoned.—The Hopes and Activity of the Disaffected were checked, and their Intentions

frustrated by the Vigilance of Government, and by the Effect of the Laws which were adopted: But their Principles and Designs remained unchanged, and they have for some Time, and more especially of late, been endeavouring to take Advantage of the Distress occasioned by the High Price of Provisions, for carrying those wicked Designs into Effect:—It has particularly appeared to Your Committee, that the Instigators of these Proceedings have, on repeated Occasions, secretly expressed their Wish for the Aggravation of those Evils, which they everywhere endeavour to use as a Pretext and Engine for exciting popular Discontent:—They appear to have derived their principal Encouragement, from the Pressure arising from the Scarcity; from the Hopes of Assistance from a Foreign Enemy upon the Invasion of Great Britain or Ireland; and from the Expiration of the Laws before referred to, which from the concurrent Testimony from different Parts of the Kingdom, they acknowledge and declare to have been the principal Obstacle to their Measures.

Within a few Weeks past, and to the latest Period to which the Information received by Your Committee can apply, their Activity has been great and encreasing in the Metropolis and in other Parts of the Kingdom; every Effort is employed that can tend to disturb the Public Tranquillity; and recent Intelligence has been received from different Quarters, which justifies Your Committee in believing, that, at this Moment, the immediate Object of the Disaffected, is to endeavour, by a sudden Explosion, to avail themselves of the Interval which may still take place before those Laws can be renewed.—The dangerous System of a secret Confederacy, under the Obligation of an unlawful Oath, which prevailed in Ireland, and afterwards extended itself to Great Britain, has been revived, with additional Precautions, for the Purpose of eluding Detection, and of ensuring Concert, Secrecy, and Dispatch: And, it appears to be in Agitation, suddenly, by these Means, to call numerous Meetings, in different Parts of the Country, at the same Day and Hour, to an Extent which, if not prevented, must materially endanger the Public Peace; and that among the Persons most forward in instigating
these

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY. 5

these criminal Proceedings, are some of those who had been detained under the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and who have been recently released from Confinement.

These Considerations, Your Committee have felt themselves bound to submit, in the first Instance, to the Wisdom of the House, believing that any Delay in so doing would be attended with material Danger to the Country; and, for the same Reason, they feel it a Duty incumbent on them, to take the first Moment of stating to the House, their strong and unanimous Opinion, grounded on the Information which they have received, that no Time ought to be lost in renewing those Measures of Precaution, which the Wisdom of the Legislature has before adopted; particularly the Act for the Suspension of the Provisions of the Habeas Corpus Act, and the Act to prevent Seditious Meetings; which, while they remained in force, were attended with the happiest Effects in preserving the Public Tranquillity, and which Your Committee have the most confident Hope would have the same salutary Operation, under the present Circumstances.

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SECOND REPORT

FROM THE

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY.

2

Ordered to be printed 15th May 1801.

SECOND REPORT.

THE COMMITTEE of SECRECY, to whom the several Papers, which were presented (sealed up) to the House, by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, upon the 1st and 2d Days of April last, by HIS MAJESTY'S Command, were referred; and who were directed to examine the Matters thereof, and report the same, as they shall appear to them, to the House;—

HAVE proceeded further in their Examination of the Papers referred to them, and in the Investigation and Consideration of other and more recent Means of Information, which have been furnished since the Period of their First Report. Part of these arising from the oral Testimony of Persons well acquainted with the State of Ireland, and particularly with the Execution of the Powers confided in the Lord Lieutenant by the several Acts for the Suppression of the Rebellion in that Part of the United Kingdom, and who but lately arrived in England, it would have been impossible for Your Committee to avail themselves of it, if they had not delayed longer than would otherwise have been necessary, the Report which they now submit to the Consideration of the House.

The Information which, through various Channels, has reached Your Committee, has developed the Views and Conduct of the Disaffected in all Parts of the United Kingdom, as well as on the Continent, since the Period when the Report was made from the Committee of Secrecy in 1799. Most of the Sources of Intelligence, both

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both on that Occasion and the present, are obviously of a Nature which, from every Consideration of good Faith, Humanity, and Policy, it would be highly improper to particularize to the House: Your Committee have not however neglected to examine into the Degree of Credit to which each of them was fairly entitled: They have enquired into the general Consistency of the Accounts themselves; the Confirmation received from collateral Sources, from the precise Coincidence of material Facts with the Information and Notice which had been previously given; from existing and unquestionable Documents, corresponding with antecedent verbal Accounts; and from the Confessions of the Actors themselves; and have seen how far all these have been combined through a Period of several Years in the Communication of any Individual. This Examination has impressed them with full Confidence in the Accuracy of the Information received; and what is now submitted to the House, is the Result of the unanimous Opinion of Your Committee as to the Truth of the Facts themselves, as well as the Consequences which have been deduced from them.

It was not to be expected that Persons who had deeply imbibed the Principles of the French Revolution; who were inflamed with the most sanguinary Animosity against all the existing Establishments of Church and State; that such of them, particularly of the lower Orders of Society, whose Hopes were instigated by the Prospect of the Plunder of the Rich, and the Partition of the Landed Property of the Country, and who had been taught to abjure all the Restraints which Divine or Human Laws have imposed on the Passions of Men; should be induced, by any Change of Circumstances, or legal Coercion, suddenly to abandon those Principles, and to return to the Duties of loyal and peaceable Subjects:—It accordingly appears manifest, that, though the Exertions of the Disaffected in this Country were suppressed by the Vigilance of Government, acting under the Powers entrusted to them by Parliament, and by the Fear of Detection and immediate Apprehension; yet their Disposition remained unaltered;—that from the Month of May 1799, notwithstanding the Detention of several of the most active Members of the late Corresponding Society, others have continued occasionally to meet, without any Form of regular Association, and studiously avoiding any constant Place of assembling, or written Memorial of their

their Transactions.—A principal Object at first was the Collection of Money for the Relief of the Persons confined under Charges of treasonable and seditious Practices, with whom they seem constantly to have preserved their former Connection.—On the 5th of November 1799, when they began to derive fresh Encouragement from the unfavourable Events on the Continent, and the Evacuation of Holland by the British Troops, a Party of them assembled to celebrate the Anniversary of *Hardy's* Acquittal, on which Occasion they appear first to have ventured on a more open Avowal of their Opinions, and to have indulged in the most treasonable and seditious Toasts and Songs. As yet, however, the Mischief went no farther; and indeed during all this Period, till late in the last Year, they seem to have despaired of any immediate Success in their Projects, for which some of them supposed no favourable Opportunity would occur till the Restoration of Peace should, as they hoped, have at once removed the legal Restraints which now impeded their Operations, and brought Home such an Addition of unemployed Hands as would increase the existing Scarcity, and add to the prevailing Discontents.—They felt themselves, and lamented, the Effect of the Powers entrusted to Government by the Act for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act: their former Leaders were dispersed and secluded, and they apprehended for themselves a similar Fate.—Particular Events, however, of the Nature before alluded to, had at different Times given some Encouragement to their Views, and diminished their Apprehensions:—The Successes of the Enemy in the last Campaign, the Disappointments of our Allies, still more of any Enterprize in which this Country was more particularly concerned, or any Danger which threatened the Life or Health of their Sovereign, were, as they occurred, a constant Source of Satisfaction, and of renewed Hope and Expectation.—The Health of the Chief Consul of France, the Success of his Arms, when opposed to those of their Country; the Progress of the Rupture with the Northern Powers, as a Means of impoverishing our Merchants, and creating Distress and Discontent among the Manufacturers, were among the first Wishes that marked the Complexion of their convivial Meetings, or expressed the Malignity of their private Reflexions.—The Dearth of Provisions early in the last Year, opened a new Field for similar Speculations, and the Return of it after the last Harvest, increased the Inducements and the Hope of converting it to their Views;

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of this, as well as of other Public Calamities, they were disposed to avail themselves in a Way that marks sufficiently the Character of those Principles which lead the Revolutionary Enthusiast to overlook, or make him seek to augment the Miseries, however extended, of Individuals, in the Hope of deriving from them the Means of subverting existing Establishments.—They affected indeed openly much Feeling for the Sufferings of the People, and fomented their Complaints against the supposed Authors of them, but in private they expressed their Satisfaction at the Continuance of the Distress, and were only apprehensive that the Cause of the Complaint might cease by a Return of Plenty; they hoped particularly that the Scarcity would press hard upon the Soldiery, and produce Discontent and Insubordination; and the better to serve their Cause, they did not scruple to hold out the most unwarranted Hopes of Success in their extensive Plans of meditated Seduction. They disapproved indeed of the Disposition to Riot which appeared in some Places on Account of the Scarcity in the Month of September last, as leading to partial and premature Insurrection, not sufficiently connected with their own more large and revolutionary Views; but they thought a Period somewhat later more favourable to their Designs, which might be better advanced by a different Line of Conduct. Under this Impression, they promoted a Meeting of a most dangerous Nature, to be held at Kennington Common on the 9th of November, by a public Advertisement, which was stated to Government at the Time to be issued under their Direction; this Fact has since been confirmed by positive Deposition upon Oath, and by concurrent Testimony which has been obtained in consequence of some of the late Apprehensions; from all which it also appears that several of the Persons above referred to attended, and that the State of the Weather alone prevented their being present in greater Numbers; other Meetings were concerted in different Parts of the Metropolis or its Vicinity, with a View to distract the Attention of Magistrates, and harass the Operations of the Military. The first of these however failed, in consequence of the Information previously afforded to the Officers of Government, and the Presence of Magistrates; and the others were prevented by the Apprehension of Detection, from the Reward offered for the Conviction of the Persons concerned in convening the first. Similar Plans were still in
Agitation

Appendix
(A.)

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY. 7

Agitation in the following Month, when a seditious and treasonable Hand-Bill, in the Form of a Proclamation, was prepared and circulated by a Person lately a leading Member of the disaffected Societies, and who Your Committee have Reason to believe was principally concerned in convening the Meeting on Kennington Common; a Copy of which is annexed to this Report.

Appendix
(B)

While such were the Views and Transactions of the Disaffected in England, many of the United Irish, who had either been driven from or voluntarily quitted their own Country, and resorted to London, seem to have resumed their former Designs, and to have prepared similar Means of carrying them into Effect. They certainly boasted of having set on foot the Fabrication of those Weapons here, which they had used in the disastrous Rebellion of their own Country; and several Pikes, though probably not to the Number which they were desirous their Friends should believe, appear certainly to have been made in different Parts of the Metropolis and its Vicinity, and shewn on different Occasions among Parties of the Disaffected; some of those actually engaged in that Rebellion undertook to teach the Use of them; and Contracts were actually in Agitation with Manufacturers, described to Your Committee, for furnishing the Members of the British Union with Daggers at a reasonable Price. No specific Place was appointed for the Meetings which were held between these different Descriptions of Persons, but sufficient Intimation was constantly given to those concerned, where they might on most Occasions meet the Associates of their criminal Designs.

It was not, however, till the Commencement of the present Year, that a settled or combined Plan of Operations seems to have been carried on by any of the Persons above referred to. The Act for preventing Seditious Meetings appears to have expired before they were generally aware of the Circumstance; but the Knowledge of it, as soon as circulated amongst them, inspired fresh Hopes, and prepared them for less concealed Operations, though for a Time they were checked by the Apprehension which they expressed from the Continuance of the Law suspending the Habeas Corpus Act; the Terror of this prevented their calling General Meetings as had been at first suggested; and it was not till both should be removed, that they intended to execute

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cute the Plan which they had concerted for renewing, in a more dangerous Shape, their secret Combinations.

Appendix
(C.)

Those Points gained, a new Association began to be formed; the Members of which were bound to each other by an Oath, and distinguished by a Sign known only to the Initiated.

In the Formation of this new Society, Ten Men were to have the Management of the whole Business, under the Title of *Executives*, who alone held Meetings for these Purposes; these communicated, by Means of a *Superintendent*, with Ten others in each District, called *Conductors*, each of whom was to have Ten Men under him, known only to himself; their Duty was to swear in fresh Members, to transmit a List of their Names and Places of Abode to the Executives, and such Money as was collected for the Use of the Society to the Treasurer. The Advantages proposed from this Arrangement were,—Secrecy, from the small Number of the Executives, and Celerity in calling large Meetings together, through the Intervention of the subordinate Gradation of Members, and thus precluding any Discovery from their Associates, by calling them all suddenly into Action, and having them immediately under the Eye of the principal Leaders. A printed Address, tending to excite the People to Insurrection, was circulated by some of these Conductors, whose Duty was prescribed in the same Paper, together with the Oath above mentioned, which is inserted in the Appendix, as also another Form of the Orders given to the Conductors.

Appendix
(D.)
(E.)

The Discoveries which had been made of similar Designs; by the Seizure of Papers at fixed Places of meeting, induced them to adopt Measures to defeat in future such Means of Detection; Clubs were formed under the Disguise of Benefit Societies, and in their own it was determined to commit as little as possible to Writing, to adjourn their Meetings to different Places, and, according to the Plan above mentioned, to entrust the Management of their Designs to a very select Body, requiring the Assistance of few confidential Officers, whose Duties might be thus shortly explained to them, without confiding to the Mass of their Associates the actual Plans and Practices, or even the Names of the principal Directors. This was the more easy, as they no longer affected the Disguise of aiming only at the Reform of alleged Abuses in the Constitution or Government, which might require long and elaborate Dissertations to explain
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and enforce. These Men wished for no Converts but those who from some Motive or other were ready to attempt by Force the direct Subversion of the Government and Constitution of their Country. They saw in Ireland the Example of such a Rebellion as they wished to promote here, and they hoped to find in the temporary Distresses of the poorer Orders, a Motive for engaging in such desperate Attempts. By the Commission of what Crimes their Objects were to be effected, seems to have been a Matter of small Concern to many of them; private and individual Assassination unquestionably was among the Measures proposed at several Meetings, as fit to precede or accompany the general Rising: And though Your Committee are willing to believe, that no great Progress has been made in preparing for the Execution of such atrocious Projects, yet it has been distinctly proved on Oath, that the Idea has been frequently thrown out and discussed, with the deliberate Purpose of familiarizing it to the Minds of the Hearers, or preparing them for its Adoption, if it should be thought necessary.

Near the same Time, Principles of a similar Nature were studiously promulgated in a Society of another Description, and disguised by Pretexts of a different Nature. It was proposed to meet in convivial Parties, as described by themselves, "after a free and easy Manner, and without encumbering themselves with Rules, to converse on the Subject recommended to them, to provoke Investigation, and answer Objections." The Topics they proposed for Discussion, and recommended for Adoption, were stated to be contained in a Pamphlet published by one *Spence*, from whom that Society had assumed the Title of *Spensonians*. This Recommendation, as well as several Extracts from the Work itself, will be found in the Appendix, from which it will appear that the principal Object of the Writer is to recommend the complete Extermination of Royalty, Nobility, and Property, for the Purpose of an equal Parochial Division of the Profits of Lands, as the Basis of a "beautiful and powerful new Republic." That this was to be effected by a general Insurrection of the People, for which the Revolutionary Outrages in France, and the Mutiny in our own Fleet, were held out as laudable Examples.

Appendix
(F.)
No 1 and 2.

The Act for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act having now expired, all the Persons detained under the Sanction of it, who chose

to enter into Recognizances for their future good Behaviour, were discharged. This was an Occasion of too much Exultation to the new Conspirators to be passed over without some Mark of Distinction. A Supper was accordingly given in Honour of those thus liberated, and at which near Twenty of them attended.—The Temper and Objects of those who composed this Meeting, which was solely of a convivial Nature, can only be collected from Accounts of the public Conversation of the Company, and the Sentiments conveyed in the Toasts and Songs with which they were entertained—the latter have been particularly described to Your Committee, and were all of the most treasonable and seditious Nature, and one of their Toasts was, “The Health of the Chief Consul of France.” The Discourse held was suited to these Incentives—Plans of Insurrection were openly avowed, and professed to be directed in the first Instance against the Lives of the chief Officers of Government, and to the Destruction of the House of Correction in Cold Bath Fields.—Some of those recently discharged, avowed their Determination to persist in the same Designs, and expressed their Confidence in the Number of their Associates, whom they reproached for not having sooner effected their Release by Force.

This Meeting seems to have occasioned a more confident Opinion of their Strength, and of the Success of their Schemes of Seduction.—They boasted of the Extension of their Society over different and remote Districts of the Metropolis. They were not however insensible to the Proceedings of Parliament on the Subject of the Martial Law Bill in Ireland, which they were apprehensive might be applied to the Suppression of their Enterprises here, or if not, at least, that the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act would be renewed, and effectually operate to counteract their Designs. Under this Impression, a particular Degree of Caution was recommended by the Executives as to the Persons to whom the Oath should be administered—they suspected they were observed, and were afraid of being apprehended before their Plan was ripe for Execution, which they admitted it would not be till they should be provided with Arms sufficient for their Purpose.—The same Apprehension operated differently on some of the most ardent Spirits of the Confederacy, who were still more sanguine as to the Numbers who would join them, and who were desirous of striking the Blow before Measures could
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be taken for their Suppression, and who thought they might supply the Want of which they complained, by a desperate Attack on several Repositories of Arms, which would at once deprive the Military of the Means of Resistance, and furnish themselves with Weapons for Attack;—others, not admitted to the Secrets of the Executives, accused them of Tardiness in their Operations, and were impatient to be called into Action. The more cautious Councils however prevailed, which were perhaps promoted by mutual Suspicion, and by the Reluctance of some, when it came near the Point, to engage in Outrages of such Atrocity.

In the mean Time other Meetings, chiefly of a convivial Nature, but adapted to the Advancement of the same Objects, continued to be held in various Parts of the Town, for the express Purpose (as avowed by one of their Associates) of bringing together the old Members of the British Union, and of encouraging them to persevere, by the Presence of their former Leaders, now again at large; who on their Part agreed to use every Effort to re-organize that Society, and some of whom, in Furtherance of that Plan, appeared at Meetings in one District of the Town, as Plenipotentiaries from the other. The Character of one of the Society before mentioned, under the Name of "*Spenstonians*," is sufficiently marked by Toasts which were given and received with Applause, and which on that Account Your Committee have inserted in the Appendix. On another Occasion, some of the more immediate Leaders of the new Association met with some of the Persons then lately liberated, and one of the most active of the latter Description gave, under the Name of "The tremendous Toast," "May the last of Kings be strangled in the Bowels of the last of Priests!"

Appendix
(G.)

At one of the most recent Meetings a Supper was given, at the Expence of some unknown Patron, to celebrate again the Release of the Champions of their Cause; when they were still entertained with the most seditious Songs and Toasts, sufficiently descriptive of their Attachment to our foreign Enemy, and Abhorrence of the Form of our own Constitution; such as, 'Bonaparte, and Success to the Army of Egypt'—'The Guillotine a Cure for the King Evil.'

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The Assiduity with which these Persons attempt to enlist in their Cause every Class of interested or visionary Reformers is apparent, not only in the Encouragement given to the Spensonian Doctrines of Partition of Property, which yet they treat as chimerical and absurd, but also in the Propagation of religious Tenets, which have obtained some Footing, and which lead (as among the Enthusiasts in the Reign of Charles the First) to the Abrogation of all Restraint from temporal Authority. The Doctrine of an approaching Millenium has found many Converts, and is glanced at in some of the Publications already noticed. The Leaders of the new Association many of them secretly professing an utter Disbelief in the Christian Religion, and even considering it as a Mark of Incivism to be possessed of a Bible, but readily embracing any Means of effecting the Subversion of all religious Establishment as a Step towards the Destruction of regal Government, willingly lend themselves to this Delusion, and direct their Agents never to advance their own Opinions in Opposition to it, but to reserve them for the more confidential Intercourse of the deeply Initiated, and even to be provided with Arguments on both Sides of the Question, in order to promote Discussion in Places of public Resort, and draw Attention to their own Doctrines.

On the 19th of April last, several of the Persons above referred to as Principals of the new Society, were apprehended under a Warrant from the Duke of Portland, while holding one of their Meetings. The only Papers discovered were another printed Copy of the Paper already referred to, and which had been previously transmitted to Your Committee, and an Address signed *Hibernicus*, directed to "Britons and Fellow Citizens," inserted in the Appendix.

Appendix
(C. and D.)

Appendix
(H.)

Your Committee have thus detailed the Proceedings of the Dissaffected carried on in the Metropolis, and as directed principally to its Disturbance; but they would afford a very inadequate Representation of the Extent of the Confederacy, if, in proceeding to advert to the State of other Parts of the Country, and even of Ireland; they omitted to notice the Concert which in some Measure pervades the Whole, and the striking Coincidence of Views, and the Means of obtaining them. While the Dissaffected in London confined themselves in the Course of the last Autumn to loose, though violent Expressions of Discontent, and endeavoured to evade Discovery by avoiding any written Evidence of their Transactions,

Transactions, or any certain Place of meeting, the same Precaution was adopted by those of similar Principles at Nottingham; accompanied by similar declarations of Hopes arising from the Dearness of Provisions, and Wishes for the Aggravation rather than the Alleviation of that Calamity; and when early in the present Year a systematic Plan was first observed here, it first began to be rumoured among the Disaffected there.

At the same Period seditious Emissaries were first detected endeavouring to excite Insurrection among the Manufacturers of different Parts of Lancashire.—This was to be done by associating as many as possible under the Sanction of an Oath nearly similar to that adopted in London, and which, with an Account of the secret Sign which accompanied it, has been transmitted from various Quarters to Government, and laid before Your Committee: Dangerous Meetings were disguised as in London, under the Appearance of Friendly Societies for the Relief of sick Members: The Persuasion of a general Revolution shortly to take place, and consequently the Inefficacy of all Resistance, was studiously diffused throughout the Country, with a View both to excite the Disaffected, and to dishearten and disunite the Loyal. On the same Account, the Numbers of those engaged in the Confederacy were exaggerated, and stated sometimes as amounting to 60,000 trained to Military Exercise; at others, including Ireland, at not less than 1,500,000. The Disposition of the People in the Part of the Country alluded to, being previously untainted to any Extent with seditious Principles, it was necessary to found the Hopes of Insurrection chiefly on the Pressure arising from the Scarcity of Provisions. It was this Feeling, fomented for other Purposes by more artful Instigators, that probably led those who took the Oath in question, to engage in those Schemes of Insurrection. The seditious Emissaries well knew, that if they could promote a general Rising of a large Proportion of the Inhabitants of a populous District under any Pretext, it would be easy to draw them on, under more desperate Leaders, to attempt the Subversion of every Establishment of the Constitution within their Reach, especially if aided by similar Exploits at the same Time in different Parts of the Country, and the Alarm, or actual Existence, of Foreign Invasion. Though this was the Pretext of Discontent, they themselves felt so little for the Distresses which they affected to relieve, that they concurred with their Associates in other Places already adverted to, in the Wish for the

Two Forms of this Oath (so transmitted) are inserted in the Appendix (I. No 1 and 2.)

D Aggravation

Aggravation of them, as a more powerful Means of exciting popular Tumult. The principal of these Emissaries are represented as delegated from London, York, Birmingham, Bristol, Sheffield, and other considerable Towns, as well as from Ireland, who conducted in private the Detail of the Conspiracy, connected with other provincial Meetings, and all these with one in the Metropolis, from whence printed Rules for their Conduct were expected to be received, and they seem to have entertained the same desperate Projects of attacking the Magistrates, and seizing the Arms of the Loyal Associations, as were proposed in London against the Government and Military Force here; and they frequently professed themselves to be provided with Arms, and even uniform Clothing, to a considerable Extent. At a late Period the Business of these Societies appears to have been conducted with peculiar Caution, by Orders issued from the Head of the District to Two confidential Persons, who associate Two others of different Classes, and having assembled in the most private Manner, issue their Orders in Form of a Ticket, to any Number whom they think proper to depute on a particular Service.

Your Committee have Reason to believe, not merely from the Probability of such a Connection, arising from a Similarity of Measures adopted, and the Notions entertained on the Spot; but from the Opinion expressed by one well acquainted with the Progress of the Conspiracy, that the Executives in London were in Correspondence with, and probably directed the Operations of the Emissaries in the Country.

As the Revolutionists in London were willing to enlist under their Banners the religious Extravagancies of the Day, those in the Country availed themselves of similar Prejudices. A Society appears to have been formed in Part of Yorkshire, under the Title of New Jerusalemites, whose Leaders have inspired them with a Belief in the pretended Prophecies of *Brothers*, and who look under his Guidance for the speedy Commencement of the Millenium. The Views of these People seem totally unconnected with any Political Object, though their Tenets, leading to an Independence on any earthly Government, and an Expectation of the Subversion of the existing Order of Things, would naturally make them indifferent Spectators at least, if not active Instruments of any Attempt to accomplish that End. The profane Perversion of
Scriptural

Scriptural Prophecy attributed to them, and which is noticed in the Appendix, sufficiently marks the practical Danger of such Enthusiasts, and the Use which might be made of them in furtherance of any Revolutionary Schemes. Whatever, therefore, might be the Objects of the first Authors of this Sect, the Scriptural Allusion was adopted by the seditious Emissaries above referred to, and read over to the Person who was to take the Oath, before it was administered.

Appendix
(K)

The Oath above described was certainly administered to very large Numbers, and the Extension of it promoted both by Offers of Money and of Military Rank in the projected Rebellion, to those whose Exertions should induce the greatest Number to engage in it. This last Temptation was particularly addressed to the Soldiery, both of the Regular and Volunteer Corps; to whom a set of Queries was also delivered, a Copy of which is inserted in the Appendix.

Appendix
(L)

The Particulars of these Attempts have been divulged by those on whom they were made, attested in legal Depositions, and one of them has lately been the Subject of a Trial at Lancaster, in which the Fact appears to have been fully proved, but it having been inadvertently stated in the Indictment, that the Oath was administered in an unlawful Assembly instead of privately (as was the Fact) by a single Individual, the Prosecution was thus for the Time defeated. On the Apprehension of one of the Parties concerned, it seems to have been a Point for Consideration with his Associates, as it had been on similar Occasions in the Metropolis, whether they should not seize that Moment for a general Rising, rather than wait, with the Apprehension of intermediate Detection, till they were better prepared in other Respects.—Though this was not adopted, they announced from Time to Time a certain Period for the Insurrection, which was represented as connected with one in Scotland and Ireland, all to take place on the same Day, and which was at last appointed for the Termination of Seed-time. Two very numerous popular Meetings were meanwhile held in a Part of Lancashire early in April, apparently calculated to forward these Designs; at one of which a considerable Number of Persons were observed practising Military Exercises; but the principal Object previous to the general Explosion, if not intended as a Part of it, was to convene a general Meeting of Districts in a central Part

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Part of the Island, and particularly of the populous and manufacturing Parts of the Counties of York, Lancaster, Chester and Derby, near which it was represented that a Kind of Congress of Delegates, from Six Districts into which the Kingdom was divided, had for some Time been occasionally sitting. The latest Accounts from that Part of the Country announce, that this Assembly has actually been held, at which many Thousands from different Parts of the Country were collected; but the Act for preventing Seditious Meetings having then passed, the Assembly was at length dispersed by the Intervention of the Magistrates, supported by a Military Force.

Your Committee have obtained from drawing the Attention of the House to any unpremeditated Tumults which have unfortunately prevailed in different Parts of the Country, and particularly in the West of England, on Account of the Dearness of Provisions; conceiving that, although these may in their Progress have been encouraged by the Disaffected, and may have assumed an Order and Concert in their Proceedings, from the Example of secret Confederacy recently practised in both Parts of the United Kingdom (which seems evidently to have formed a Part of an extensive, digested, and methodized System) they were originally unconnected with the Designs traced in this Report.

The Enterprizes and Connections of the new Society in the Metropolis, were not however confined to foment the Discontents or encourage the Hopes of the Disaffected in our own Country: They certainly were disposed, if Occasion offered, to avail themselves of any Assistance that could be derived from the Invasion of a Foreign Enemy, whose Aid was solicited by some of their Emisaries, both for this Country and Ireland, and to whom they held out the Hopes of a formidable Co-operation from internal Insurrection. Towards the End of last Year, when, as has been already stated, the Hopes of the Seditious in England began to revive; it appears that Representations were transmitted Abroad of the Progress of similar Discontents in Scotland, by the Agents concerned in fomenting them, and that they were described as connected with expected Support from the North of England, and particularly with Insurrections in London, the Plan of which was described "as perfectly organized." On the other Hand, Hopes were held forth of a projected Invasion from Holland on the Coasts

Coasts of England or Scotland, to co-operate with a general Insurrection or "Explosion," as it was called, to take place at the same Moment both in England and Ireland. Early in the present Year, when the Plan in question is stated as having arrived at Maturity in London, an Agent from thence appears to have avowed the Object of it, without Reserve, on the Continent; to have boasted of the Progress it had made amongst the Suburbs of the Metropolis; to have explained the Support to be expected from Foreign Invasion, the Design of the Insurrection breaking out at the same Time in the principal Towns of the Country, and of the Intention of directing the first Attack against the Government and Magistrates of the Country; and to have communicated these Designs, and the Means of availing themselves of them, to the Government of the Foreign Enemy.

Your Committee have next directed their Attention to the present Situation of IRELAND, both as disturbed within and threatened from without, particularly with Reference to the Necessity of those Measures, adopted by the Parliament of that Country before the Union, for the Suppression of the Rebellion there, which have since been renewed for a limited Period by that of the United Kingdom; and also of the Manner in which the Powers thus given have been exercised, and the Effect produced by them. It appears, that though the Efforts of the Disaffected in that Country have happily long ceased to assume the Aspect of Rebellion, arrayed in the Field against the Arms of their Sovereign, and though the Organization established by the United Irishmen may not have been kept up with any Regularity, and that many Parts of the Kingdom present the usual Appearance of peaceful Industry and loyal Subordination; yet, that at no Time have there been wanting in others, Demonstrations of the same systematic Plan of Insurrection, and marked with the same Characters of unexampled Atrocity. The principal Traitors in Dublin continually send their Emissaries through the Country, to keep up the Spirits of the Disaffected, by the Hopes of Support from Foreign Invasion. About a Year since, a new System of Association was about to be established, and a new Executive Directory formed in Dublin. This was to originate in a Head Committee, who were to appoint those on whom they could depend to form Regiments, of which each Colonel was to provide the Major and Captains, each Captain his Subalterns, and they, the private

Men. The Communications were to be verbal, and the Business conducted without Elections, Debates, or Committees. This Plot, however, being detected by Government, its Progress was checked, if not entirely stopped. It affords a remarkable Coincidence with the Intelligence above detailed, of what has been passing in England, that it appears to have been lately held out to the Disaffected in Ireland, that whenever an Insurrection shall take place in that Country, which it is intended shall be universally on the same Day, a similar Explosion is to be made in several of the principal Towns in England, particularly in London, where they are told the Disaffected are acting on the same Plans and Principles as the United Irish. The Manner in which the Rebellion was originally organized, the secret Springs of the Confederacy, which set in Motion, and directed to every Enormity of private and public Outrage, so large a Mass of the Inhabitants, have long been familiar to the House and to the Public. The Object of it being to disunite that Country from this, by the Cooperation of a Foreign Enemy, it may be imagined that the Cause will never appear desperate to those engaged in it, while the Continuance of the War still keeps alive the Hope of that Assistance, encouraged as it may be from Time to Time by Assurances of Support from their Ally, or at least from those Traitors to their Country who still form, in the Capital of that Enemy, a central Committee of Rebellion, to instigate Invasion on the one Hand, and prepare Insurrection on the other. Their Emissaries are continually passing into Ireland for this Purpose, where Two of them are supposed still to be concealed. The Views of this Committee, and the Means by which they are not ashamed to endeavour to accomplish them, will be sufficiently obvious from the Address to the Irish Sailors in our Fleet, which has been printed in their Name, and prepared on the Continent for extensive Circulation. Emissaries, on the other Hand, have not been wanting from Ireland, to interest the French Government in Support of their Cause—one particularly has lately passed over to the Continent, and opened a direct Communication with the Enemy, accrediting himself with them as being deputed by a great Body of the Landed Interest of his Country, whom he represents as being, like himself, so dissatisfied with the Union, that they would engage in any Concert with France to procure the Means of establishing, under the Guarantee of that Power, some new Form of Representative Government. With this View he affords them all

all the Information in his Power, of the State of the Country, and of the Force employed to protect it; and suggests the Amount of that which he recommends to be sent against it. He stipulates however with his proposed Allies, for the Assurance of their Property to all the present Possessors, in opposition to any Claim of the Catholics, whom he states still to look forward with Hopes of establishing a Popish Ascendancy; and it appears that he has been given to understand, that both the late Directory and one of the principal Ministers of the present Government of France, had coincided in the Justice and Propriety of that Stipulation.

The Peculiarity of this Situation of Ireland, both in its internal and external Relations, would undoubtedly justify extraordinary Measures of Precaution, which seem called for, not more by Attention to the Security of the Government at large, than to the Happiness and even Existence of the loyal Part of the Community. The System of Terror originally adopted by the Leaders of the United Irish, who first publicly recommended Assassination, and then formed Committees for the Purpose of concerting and directing it, has been continued to the present Hour, sometimes, as will be seen hereafter, with the same Enormities; at others, with the less fatal, though scarcely less cruel, Excesses of inhuman Beatings and Floggings. The ostensible Objects to which these Outrages were directed have been different, and are now more frequently in the first Instance, those of lowering Rents, Abolition of Tithes, Regulation of Wages and Price of Provisions, than those of an Alteration in the Form and Constitution of Government. This System could only be counteracted by the Apprehension of prompt and efficacious Punishment for the Guilty, and the Sense of Security and Protection for the Innocent. The regular Course of Law affording only periodical Occasions of Trial, and providing in the Interval no effectual Means for protecting the Witnesses from Seduction or Intimidation, or the Jurymen from Outrage, was found inadequate to the Pressure of the Case; while the Extension of the Mischief, and the Uncertainty where it might next break out into Action, required a Remedy equally prompt and universal.

It appears from the Minutes of Courts Martial held at Rathdrum, Limerick, Clonmell, Wexford, and Leixlip, that during the Year 1800, the Counties of Wicklow and Wexford were
infested

infested by Bodies of rebellious Banditti, acting under the Orders of regular Leaders, and perpetrating from Time to Time, with every Circumstance of Aggravation, the Crimes of Robbery, Burglary, and Murder: That in the Counties of Tipperary and Limerick, the Practice of breaking into Houses, and cruelly beating or flogging the Owners with Rods made of Thorns, in order to fix an arbitrary and inadequate Price on the Necessaries of Life, frequently ending in or accompanied with premeditated Acts of Murder, was very prevalent; and had spread such Terror over the whole Country in which it prevailed, as would have baffled all the Exertions of the ordinary Magistracy, if not counteracted by the Vigour and Energy of the new Jurisdiction. The peculiar Situation of that District, and the Effect of the Measures adopted to tranquillize it, are so fully and satisfactorily detailed in the Evidence of Mr. Ormsby, a very eminent Barrister, who was deputed by the Lord Lieutenant to preside at the Courts Martial which were to sit at Limerick, and from whom Your Committee have been enabled to procure a Degree of Information, which no other Person was so competent to supply, that they wish rather to refer to his Account than to impair the Precision of it by incorporating Parts of it in the Body of their Report. They have also added in their Appendix, the Evidence of Captain Bloomfield, Assistant Quartermaster General in the same District during that Period. Some Particulars however arising out of those Trials, seem so peculiarly characteristic of the Spirit which still unfortunately prevails in that Country, that they are desirous of submitting them to the Attention of the House.

Appendix
(N. No. 1.)

Appendix
(N. No. 2.)

It appears established by satisfactory Proof, that when a desperate Conspiracy was formed, for surprizing and massacring a Detachment of His Majesty's Troops stationed at Cappaghwhite, a principal Inducement avowed by those engaged in it, for undertaking so hazardous an Enterprize, was to demonstrate the Readiness of that Part of the Country to engage in Rebellion, as a Pledge to others, with whom they had not before co-operated, of their Readiness to join them when they should have resumed their former treasonable Proceedings; for they thought, as they themselves expressed it, "that Leinster would never rise till Munster would be up, as Munster did not rise when Leinster was up."— On another Occasion, the Mode by which private Assassination is planned and directed, was clearly developed. The Persons concerned,

cerned, to the Number of 14 or 15, who from their Acts must be considered as principal Conductors of these Enormities, are found meeting in Mid-day, as if by Accident, at some Public House, where they occupy a Room upstairs, and without Suspicion enter upon their Consultation of Proscription. One of them presides as Chairman; and each is called upon for Informations against any loyal Subjects, for Acts which may have incurred their Displeasure. The Chairman then puts the Question, which is determined by holding up of Hands, and Sentence of Death is regularly passed, if the Verdict of Guilty is pronounced. The Mode of Execution is then discussed, whether by a large Number to be collected from the Neighbourhood, or by a select Body of Twenty-one, to be collected in Parties of Seven, each from distant and remote Parts of the Country. Other Circumstances have occurred, expressive of the Terror produced by the Apprehension of such or the like Outrages, and of the Impediments necessarily produced by it to the Course of legal Investigation. The Information of a Person, who had since died of the severe Beating he had received from one of these Nocturnal Gangs, was produced in Evidence against them. It was proved by the Magistrate before whom it was taken, that nothing could induce him to give any Account of the Persons concerned, till (at the End of some Weeks) he was convinced of his approaching Death, and then at the Risk of the same Danger to his Wife and Children, who did all in their Power to prevent it, made the Disclosure. In another Instance, the Person beat, not only at the Time prevented his Daughter from naming the Man concerned, putting, as she expressed it, his "bloody Hand on her Mouth," and bidding her hold her Tongue;" but on the Trial itself appeared so much under the Influence of the same Terror, as to contradict, with respect to the Identity of the Person concerned, the positive Testimony of Two of his Daughters, whose general Veracity neither he nor any other Person impeached. The Motives which lead to the Adoption of this System of Terror, as well as the Effect of it, may indeed be easily conceived, when it is considered that in many Instances the Outrages are committed without any Disguise, by Persons perfectly well known to the Sufferer, and frequently his immediate Neighbours.

In the present Year, but few Instances of Courts Martial, deciding upon Offences committed within that Period, have been transmitted

transmitted to Your Committee, and those chiefly for the Trial of Outrages committed in the Wicklow Mountains, and in the Neighbourhood of Dublin. But they have received from the Reports of Magistrates and General Officers in most Parts of the Country, up to the latest Period, Accounts which have appeared so fully authenticated, and so material in themselves, that they have thought it proper to insert several Extracts from them in the Appendix to their Report. The Nature of much of this, however, as connected with the general Safety of the Empire, has laid Your Committee under some Difficulty as to the Mode of submitting it to the House, lest by endeavouring to enable them to appreciate the Danger in order to provide for the Prevention of it, they should facilitate either to the Foreign or Domestic Enemies of the Country, the Means of augmenting it; they have thought it most prudent therefore to avoid in general, the particular Description of the Counties or Districts referred to, as well as the Names of the Magistrates and Officers from whom the Information is derived.

Appendix
(O.)

From the Result of this, it appears that in one County, notwithstanding the general Tranquillity that prevails, there is one District which still perseveres in legislating for itself, and enforcing Obedience to its own Laws. That in another Barony, in the same County, the frequent Practice of killing Cattle in the Night, is represented, in the Opinion of all the Magistrates, "as connected with the Rebellion which so lately prevailed in the Country." And, recently a Paper has been found upon a Man in another Barony of the same County, dated 24th January 1801, containing, amongst other Things, some Oaths expressed in Terms which deserve very particular Attention.

Appendix
(P.)
Appendix
(Q.)

Appendix
(R.)

That a similar Disposition exists in Part of the adjoining County, where it is stated, that "nothing but the strongest Measures of Government can put down the unquenched Flame of Rebellion, while any Expectation is entertained of French Aid," and that the same County is still infested with Gangs of armed Robbers, who commit frequent Excesses. That the Practice of proscribing new Tenants of Lands, and fixing the Rent of them by public Notice in some fictitious Name, still prevails, and has been recently enforced by atrocious Acts of Murder; that in the Perpetration of it, the same Mode appears to have been adopted, which has been before noticed, in the Appendix, as facilitating similar Outrages by conveying

conveying the Gang to or from a considerable Distance; by carrying off, for that Purpose, the best Horses they can find. And Your Committee think it material to observe, that this Practice of Horse Stealing, which has been prevalent to a great Degree in different Parts of Ireland, appears to have proceeded, not so much from the Motives which lead to particular Acts of Theft or Robbery in other Countries, as from a systematic Design in the Disaffected, to acquire the Means of more readily executing their atrocious Projects against the Government of the Country, as well as against the Lives and Property of Individuals, whom they may have marked out as their Victims.

That in another adjoining County, the Practice of Flogging, to induce an arbitrary Cheapness of Provisions, often attended with Robbery, still prevails, conducted in some Instances by a Banditti of 200 Men armed and mounted. That a Difficulty is found in procuring the Assistance of the Magistrates; and that in consequence of these Outrages, the Corps of Yeomanry are ordered on permanent Duty. And this Information comes from a General Officer, who had at the Beginning of the same Month represented the general Tranquillity of that Part of the Country.

Appendix
(S.)

Appendix
(T.)

That Two Counties, in another Province, have been subject to Depredations of the most alarming Kind, accompanied with Murder where Resistance was found or expected. A general Tendency to Disorder, among the Lower Class, is stated to exist, and the Disposition to Rebellion itself, not to have been extinguished.

Appendix
(U.)

That in another County, though disturbed by no Murders or Plunder of Fire Arms, and though the ordinary Course of Law has there been found competent to bring to Trial and capital Conviction, not less than Twenty at the last Assizes; yet that no Juries would have ventured to give the Verdicts they did, but for the Protection afforded them under the Martial Law Act. That still, Apprehensions are entertained of projected Mischief, for which the Lower Orders are supposed not to be unprepared. That in a Part of the County, a new Association has lately been formed, formerly called "Defenders," but now distinguished by the Name of "*Finniballs*."

Appendix
(W.)

Appendix
(X.)

That in another County, for a Year past, One whole Barony has been tributary to and in Possession of an armed Banditti of about

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Appendix
(Y.)

about 50 Persons, under Two known Leaders, who regularly exercise their Men, station their Pickets, and march, to the Sound of a Horn, to the Commission of all Sorts of Outrages, and declare their Intention of persisting till a general Rising may enable them to overturn the existing Constitution and Government.

Appendix
(Z. N^o 1 and
N^o 2)

From Part of another Province, similar Representations are made of the State of the Public Mind; and actual Information has been received, of a Gang of 170 Men, embodied and practising regular Exercise with Poles representing Pikes, adapted to a Body formed Three deep, and calculated to resist the Charge of Cavalry; and that in many Districts the Country remains organized as before the Rebellion; and that through the whole Province Means have lately been taken of communicating with the former Leaders of the United Irish.

Appendix
(A. A.)

Other Instances have occurred, where the Proceedings appear to Your Committee to be too notorious to require the Caution which they have hitherto used in concealing the Name of the Place. Among these it has appeared, that outstanding Rebels still continue their Depredations in the County of Wicklow; that though when Military Posts were established in the Mountains last Summer, they divided themselves into several Parties, yet a Connection is still kept up between them, and they frequently join, and sometimes change Places. That innumerable Robberies were committed by them during the last Winter, though few Persons had Fortitude enough to give Information or even to confess any Knowledge of the Persons concerned, when examined by Magistrates for that Purpose, owing chiefly to the Terror inspired by the Murder of Four Witnesses, who were all shot in One Parish toward the End of 1799 and Beginning of 1800: That known Leaders of the former Rebellion, who have either availed themselves of the Pardon, or escaped from Justice, are still at large, and considered as a rallying Point for the Seditious on any future Opportunity of Insurrection; one of whom had the Audacity to propose a Treaty with the Magistrates for his Surrender, on the Terms of Remission of the Sentence under which his Brother was to suffer for an atrocious Crime, but which he afterwards refused to fulfil.

The

The Robbery of the Mail in Kildare, in the Month of April, last, by a Gang of 18 or 19 armed Men, who commenced their Attack by a Volley of Musquetry, is a striking Instance of the Manner in which these Outrages are committed; and a recent and well known Transaction of the most atrocious Nature, in the County of Tipperary, proves that the System of secret Proscription and delegated Assassination is still in Force, supported either by the Concurrence of extensive Confederacy or the Effects of general Intimidation. Your Committee refer to the Murder of Mr. Price, who having taken a Farm against the Wishes of those who take upon them to regulate the Rents of Land, received a written Intimation, which appears, from the Evidence of a Member of this House, to have been to the following Effect:

“ Liberty Hall.

“ Take Notice, that you have been tried and convicted of
 “ having taken ——— Farm—you have been sentenced to
 “ Death—you are to give up the Farm, otherwise the Warrant
 “ for your Execution is in the Hands of the Executioner.

“ Given at the Council Chamber.”

This Account, the Member received from the Brother of the Deceased; who shewed him another Letter to the same Effect, which was served on a Tenant of Mr. Price at the same Time, who in consequence fled the Country. Mr. Price was within a few Days, in the open Fields at Noon, fired at and murdered by a single Individual, who was suffered to depart at his Leisure, without any Endeavour being made to detain him, though many People were at work at no great Distance.

Having already stated the Grounds of the Necessity for resorting to the Measure authorized by the Martial Law Act, and noticed the Effects which have ensued from its Adoption, Your Committee have only to submit to the House, an Account of the Manner in which it appears to have been carried into Effect. They have been furnished with Minutes of 40 Courts Martial, held under the Authority of that Law in the Year 1800, at which 70 Prisoners were tried; and of 14 in the present Year, at which 24 were tried. They find the Court was, in none of those Instances, constituted of less than Five, and in most of Seven Officers, in One of Nine, and in another of Twelve: That at

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Limerick, where there were only Five, Mr. Ormsby, above referred to, presided as Judge Advocate, whose Conduct is completely detailed in the Appendix: That in other Instances a Professional Man also attended; in some a Captain acted as Judge Advocate: That in one, in which an Ensign acted as such, the Court consisted of a Lieutenant Colonel, Two Captains, and Four Lieutenants. That at Rathdrum, the only Place where no one attended as such, the Judges were, a Field Officer and Six Captains. That the Sentences were in all Cases transmitted to the Lord Lieutenant, who appears frequently, in Cases of Difficulty, to have referred them to the Law Officers; and who always signified his Confirmation or Alteration of the Sentence in his own Hand Writing. The Result of the above mentioned 54 Sentences upon the 94 Prisoners is as follows:

SENTENCE of Courts Martial.	Persons.	ULTIMATE SENTENCE.
Acquitted - - -	24	— — — — —
Imprisonment - -	2	Released - - - - - 1.
Fine of £. 100. - -	1	Released - - - - - 1.
Whipping - - -	9	Remitted - - - - - 3.
		Reduced 200 Lashes to 100, 1.
Service Abroad - -	5	Do. 500 Do. to 75, 5.
Transportation - -	19	Ordered for general Service, 3.
Death - - - -	34	Remitted - - - - - 2.
		Changed for Transportation, 12.
		Pardoned - - - - - 2.
	94	30.

On the Whole of this Part of the Subject, and on a full Consideration of the existing Evil, of the adequate Remedy, and of the Means of administering it, Your Committee are unanimously of Opinion, that they should be insensible to every Suggestion of preventive Policy and protecting Legislation, if they did not earnestly recommend to the House the Continuance of the Law in question.

Yours

YOUR COMMITTEE having thus laid before the House the Result of their Investigation into the Matters referred to them, deem it an indispensable Duty, before they conclude, to call the particular Attention of the House to a Consideration which appears to them of the most urgent Importance, with a View to the Efficacy of the Measures adopted for counteracting the dangerous and desperate Projects which they have described:—

They have already stated, that much of the Information, which has enabled the Government from Time to Time to detect and guard against these Projects, is of a Nature, which cannot ever, without extreme Inconvenience or Danger, be disclosed. The Safety of Individuals, who, resting on the Faith of Government, have, with great Hazard to themselves, contributed, by their secret Communications, to avert the Public Danger, would too probably in many Instances be sacrificed by such a Disclosure. Many of the secret Channels of authentic Information, from which so much Advantage has been derived at critical Periods, would be closed for the future; and the Effect intended by the Legislature, in renewing the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, would be, in a great Degree, if not wholly, defeated; while Sources of Intelligence would be laid open to the Observation of our foreign and domestic Enemies; which it is highly material, to the permanent Interests of the Public, carefully to conceal.

The peculiar Caution adopted by the present Conspirators, and noticed in the former Part of this Report, by which the Knowledge of their Plans and Operations, and even of their Places of Meeting; is endeavoured to be confined to a very select Body, who avoid as much as possible all written Evidence of their Transactions, affords at this Time an additional Motive for preserving the Means of Discovery. It is obvious therefore, that the greatest Inconvenience and Mischief might arise from any Proceeding which would subject the Government to the indispensable Necessity, of making public the Information and Evidence on which they must in many Instances have acted in the Exercise of the Powers entrusted to them, of committing and detaining Persons for Suspicion of Treason and treasonable Practices.—On the other Hand, Your Committee are aware, that
without

without bringing forward such Evidence, it would be impossible for the Government to exhibit and explain the true Grounds of their Conduct, so as to justify themselves against a Charge, however ill-founded it might be, of any undue Exercise of those Powers. It is indeed true (as has been already stated) and it has been most satisfactory to Your Committee to observe, that the Information on which Government in the first Instance proceeded, has been confirmed by so many collateral and cotemporary Sources of positive Information, as well as by subsequent Facts, as to leave no Doubt of its Authenticity. But while these Circumstances of Confirmation shew in the strongest Manner the Value and Importance of the Information thus obtained, and the Advantage which has been derived to the Public Security from the Use made of it, they furnish additional Reason for not suffering Particulars of so delicate and perilous a Nature to be made public. At the same Time the Committee think it right to call the Attention of the House, to the comparatively small Number of Persons detained, and to the Effect happily produced in preserving the Peace of the Country in spite of that restless and persevering Spirit which under so many trying Circumstances has laboured to disturb it. This Consideration of itself furnishes a strong Presumption that these Powers have, on the Whole, been cautiously and sparingly, but at the same Time judiciously exercised: But Your Committee beg to have it understood, that their Opinion does not rest on this general Presumption; they have thought it a material Part of their Duty to investigate, carefully and minutely, the Grounds on which the several Persons who were in Custody have been apprehended and detained; and they are bound in consequence to state their deliberate Opinion, that the Warrants for Apprehension were not issued but upon such Ground of Suspicion, as at least justified bringing the Parties for Examination; that according to the Result of such Examination and further Enquiry, they were either discharged or bailed, or finally committed; and that such Commitments were in all Cases founded either on such clear and positive Charges, supported by Oath, or by authentic Documents, or on such grave and solid Grounds of Suspicion arising out of the Circumstances of the Case, as abundantly warranted the Proceedings; and that Government could not have foreborne in any Instance the Exercise of those Powers, without a criminal and dangerous Neglect and Disregard of the Public Peace and Safety.

Under

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY. 29

Under these Circumstances, Your Committee cannot forbear submitting to the Wisdom of the House, the Propriety of such an Act of Indemnity, as may protect all Persons concerned in these Commitments from the Effects of any legal Proceeding, without subjecting them to the Necessity, either of suffering for a Conduct in itself meritorious, or of disclosing, in their own Defence, those Particulars, which every Consideration of Humanity, good Faith, and Policy, must render it their Duty to conceal.

A P P E N D I X.

Appendix (A.)

ADVERTISEMENT for a Meeting to be held at Kennington
Common, on the 9th of November 1800.

F A M I N E.

EVERY Journeyman, Artizan, Mechanic, and
Tradesman, every Manufacturer, Labourer, &c.
must attend at

Kennington Common,

On SUNDAY MORNING next, the 9th Inst.
to Petition the KING and PARLIAMENT to
reduce the Price of Provision, and raise their
Wages, or to furnish them with the Means to
emigrate to some Country where they may be able,
by the Exertion of their Industry, to keep their
Families from perishing by FAMINE!!!

Appendix (B.)

A P R O C L A M A T I O N.

MURDER! MURDER! MURDER!

WHEREAS a most desperate, bloody, and evil minded Gang
have for a long Time infested, and have lately broke down all
the Fences that inclosed the Common Rights of John Bull alias the
Swinish Multitude, and after having gagged and fettered the said John,
H have

have proceeded to seize upon all his Provisions, so that Numbers of the Family have been literally starved, and others are now starving: And whereas the Captain or Chief of the said Gang has declared, that he is determined to protect his Associates in the Continuance of the said Practices: Whoever will apprehend or cause to be apprehended the Captain or Chief of the said Gang, or any of his Associates, and them safely keep so as that they be brought to the Assizes of the said John, to be holden on or about the Commencement of the Nineteenth Century, shall be declared to have deserved well of their Country, and receive the Thanks of the numerous Family.

N. B. The said Chief hath for a long Time, and for the more effectually worrying and distressing the said John Bull and Family, kept a monstrous Animal, supposed from his lank Shape and insatiable Thirst for Blood to be of the Wolf Kind, has been frequently seen lurking in a PITT near Hall Wood in the County of Kent.—Whoever will bring the Heart of the said Monster to the Office of the said John Bull, No. 1, Great Britain, shall receive the Reward of Ten Thousand Pounds by applying to the said

JOHN BULL.

Appendix (C.)

DECLARATION.

IN the awful Presence of Almighty God, I *A. B.* do voluntarily declare, That I will endeavour to the utmost of my Power to obtain the Object of this Union; namely, to recover those Rights which the Supreme Being in his infinite Bounty hath given to all Men; and that neither Hopes nor Fears, Rewards or Punishments, shall ever induce me to inform on or give Evidence, directly or indirectly, concerning the Business of this or any similar Society.

So help me GOD.

Appendix (D.)

MUCH INJURED! LONG OPPRESSED COUNTRYMEN!

CAN you any longer remain dead to the Cries of suffering Humanity... Is it possible that you can await with torpid Indifference to be yourselves enslaved, your Families starved, and your Country ruined... Arouse
from

from that Apathy so degrading to your Character....Entrol yourselves under the sacred Banners of Liberty, to recover those imprescriptible Rights which have been so basely wrested from you....Do you hesitate because Activity is attended with Danger....What Dangers can equal those with which you are at present surrounded....Is it the Fear of Imprisonment that makes you shrink from your Duty....Are you not in your present State secluded from every Enjoyment that can render Life desirable....Or is it the Dread of Death that paralyzes your Exertions....Does not the TYRANT stare you in the Face in the most frightful Form....and would not a speedy and honourable Death be a salutary Refuge from the accumulated Horrors of the more protracted and lingering one—by Fatigue and Famine? ...You may reply, That your Situation in Life prevents your experiencing those Calamities: But is not the present System precipitating all Ranks to the Abyss of *Distress and Despair*; and can you expect long to escape those Evils....Look around to the Situation of your Fellow-Creatures; Numbers of whom are *pining in the most abject Misery*, beneath the Scourge of *Hunger and Oppression*—but here the Powers of Description fail, from the Inadequacy of Language to do Justice to their Sufferings—your Sympathy may conceive it more forcibly than Volumes on the Subject could describe.—If this is not sufficient to rouse your Repentment, pause for a Moment on the *devoted State of Ireland*—See her fertile Plains ravaged—her hospitable Villages plundered and burned—and her BRAVE and GENEROUS Sons *butchered and exiled*, for no other Crime than the inflexible Love of Liberty But still there is a fascinating Delusion which more than all the rest cramps the Energy of the Public Mind, and rivets the Manacles of Oppression—It is argued, that the Measures pursued by your Oppressors are fraught with their own Destruction That as they have sapped the Foundation of their Power, it must shortly moulder into Ruin, without its being necessary for the People to hazard any Risque to accelerate its Fall.

It is true, that the Ministers have so far overloaded the *tottering Edifice of the State*, that its feeble Basis cannot long support the tremendous Burthen: But it is also true, that before that Time arrives, your National Capital may be squandered away—the sacred Fund of your Industry completely absorbed—and every Thing valuable in Society ingulphed in the Vortex of Corruption—the Country so far impoverished, that on the Arrival of that Event, instead of becoming Heirs to the fair Inheritance of Liberty and Happiness, we shall find ourselves joint Proprietors of *national Infamy, Disgrace, and Poverty*—And even there, without your united Efforts, you may be subjected to a *Despotism* more sanguinary than the present.

Since then Indifference is attended with Danger—since it must lead to national Ruin—Why not immediately unite all the Talents, Experience,

rience, and Virtues of the Country; and by one *bold and decisive Effort* rescue ourselves from the Horrors that await us—consolidate the Liberties of our Country, and hurl the National Vengeance on the Heads of our Oppressors.

DUTY OF CONDUCTORS.

THERE shall be in each Department, a Number of Officers, to be called Conductors; who shall receive their Orders sealed from an Officer entitled a Superintendent. Each Conductor is required to call on Members to the Number of Ten, to convey to them the Orders of the Executive, to receive from them whatever Sums of Money they may chuse to contribute toward defraying the Public Expence; as also, the Names and Places of Abode, sealed, of all Persons entered as Members, or any other Communications they may wish to transmit to the Executive; all of which he shall faithfully deliver to the Superintendent—Each Member is required to exert himself to the utmost of his Power to unite his Friends in the Bonds of Brotherhood and Affection; which shall be done as follows—On his becoming acquainted with any Person of good Character, who has manifested a firm Attachment to the Cause of Justice and Humanity, desirous of being a Member, he shall present the Declaration for his voluntary Acceptance; his Name shall then be returned to the Conductor, who lives most contiguous to him: who shall faithfully transmit to the Superintendent his Report, to commence every Second Monday.

DECLARATION,

[As in Appendix (C.)]

Appendix (E.)

APPOINTMENT OF A CONDUCTOR.

Fellow Citizen,

THE Bx appoints you to act as a Conductor. They expect you will faithfully discharge your Duty agreeable to the Instructions you receive.

Health and Respect,

A. M. Z.

March 14th, 1801.

Appendix (F. No. 1.)

London, March 18th, 1801.

At a Meeting of
REAL FRIENDS TO TRUTH, JUSTICE,
AND
HUMAN HAPPINESS.

IT was Resolved, That the Principles of Citizen Spence's Theory of Society, are immutable and unchangeable, as Truth and Nature on which they are built, and therefore only require univerfal Investigation to be univerfally acknowledged.

Resolved—therefore, That it be recommended to all the Well-wishers to that System, to meet frequently, though in ever fo small Numbers, in their refpective Neighbourhoods, after a free and eafy Manner, without incumbering themfelves with Rules, to converse on the Subject, provoke Investigation, and answer fuch Objections as may be started, and to promote the Circulation of Citizen Spence's Pamphlets.

Resolved alfo, that fuch Convivial, or Free and Eafy Meetings fhould affume fome Appellation, indicative of their Principles, as Restorers of Society to its Natural State,* Spenfonians, &c.

* Alluding to a new Publication, which all Men for their own Sakes ought to read.

Appendix (F. No. 2.)

EXTRACTS from a Pamphlet, called "The Restorer of Society to its Natural State." By THOMAS SPENCE.

"NOW, Citizen, if we really want to get rid of these Evils from amongst Men, we must destroy not only Personal and Hereditary Lordship, but the Cause of them, which is private Property in Land. For this is the Pillar that supports the Temple of Aristocracy."

"Then what can be the Cure but this? namely, that the Land shall no longer be suffered to be the Property of Individuals, but of the Parishes. The Rents of this Parish Estate shall be deemed the equal Property of Man, Woman, and Child, whether Old or Young, Rich or Poor, Legitimate or Illegitimate."

“ It is childish, therefore, to expect ever to see small Farms again, or ever to see any Thing else than the utmost screwing and grinding of the Poor, till you quite overturn the present System of Landed Property. For they have got more completely into the Spirit and Power of Oppression now, than ever was known before, and they hold the People in Defiance by Means of their Armed Associations. They are now like a warlike Enemy, quartered upon us for the Purpose of raising Contributions; and William the Conqueror and his Normans were Fools to them in the Art of fleecing, therefore any Thing short of a total Destruction of the Power of these Samsons will not do: And that must be accomplished not by simple Shaving, which leaves the Roots of their Strength to grow again. No, we must scalp them, or else they will soon recover, and pull our Temple of Liberty about our Ears. We must not leave even their Stump in the Earth like Nebuchadnezzar, though guarded by a Band of Iron, for ill-destroyed Royalty and Aristocracy will be sure to recover, and overspread the Earth again as before. And when they are suffered to return again to their former Dominion, it is always with tenfold more Rage and Policy, and so the Condition of their wretched Subjects is quickly rendered worse, as a Reward for their too tender Resistance. In plain English, nothing less than complete Extermination of the present System of holding Land, in the Manner I propose, will ever bring the World again to a State worth living in.

“ But how is this mighty Work to be done?”

“ I answer it must be done at Once, for it will be sooner done at Once than at Twice, or a Hundred Times. For the Public Mind being suitably prepared by reading my little Tracts, and conversing on the Subject, a few contiguous Parishes have only to declare the Land to be theirs, and form a Convention of Parochial Delegates. Other adjacent Parishes would, immediately on being invited, follow the Example, and send also their Delegates, and thus would a beautiful and powerful new Republic instantaneously arise in full Vigour. The Power and Resources of War, passing in this Manner in a Moment into the Hands of the People from the Hands of their Tyrants, they, like shorn Samsons, would become weak and harmless as other Men. And being thus as it were scalped of their Revenues, and the Lands that produced them, their Power would never more grow, to enable them to overturn our Temple of Liberty.

“ Therefore talk no more of Impossibilities. How lately have we seen Unions of the People sufficiently grand and well conducted, to give sure Hopes of Success? Abroad and at Home, in America, France, and in our own Fleets, we have seen enough of Public Spirit and extensive Unanimity in the present Generation, to accomplish Schemes of infinitely

nitely greater Difficulty than a Thing that may be done in a Day, when once the Public Mind is duly prepared. In fact, it is like the Almighty saying ' Let there be Light, and it was so.' So the People have only to say ' Let the Land be ours, and it will be so.'

" For who, pray, are to hinder the People of any Nation from doing so when they are inclined? Are the Landlords in the Parishes more numerous and powerful in proportion to the People, than the brave warlike Officers in our Mutinous Fleets were to their Crews? Certainly not. The Landsmen having nothing to fear more than the Seamen, and indeed much less, for after such a Mutiny on Land, the Masters of the People would never become their Masters again."

Appendix, (G.) .

T O A S T S.

A SPEEDY Amalgamation of Party with the Mass of the People.

Religion without Priests, and Governments without Kings.

A Dish of Fish for the English, and may they always relish an Irish Pike.

Vinegar Hill, and may the Foes of the People meet with four Sauce.

The Heroes of Wexford.

The Rights of the People, and may the People never want Spirit to maintain their Rights.

Honest Men at the Head of Affairs, and those at the Head of Affairs without Heads at all.

No Lord, nor Landlord, but the Lord God, our only Lord.

May the Usurpation of the great Landholders be speedily destroyed, and every Man recover his original Share of Land.

May the Age of Superstition be annihilated, and the Age of Reason be established in its Stead.

Appendix, (H.)

Britons and Fellow Citizens,

THE happy Moment has at length arrived, so ardently wished for by Irish Freeman, to join with Britons in the Cause of Liberty, when National Prejudices and Religious Sentiments are no longer Subjects for Dispute, but Reason, triumphant over the petty Artifices of Despots, will make them speedily retire behind their discovered but hitherto successful shallow Subterfuges. The Organization of Irishmen is daily increasing with Alacrity; the steady Co-operation of their Britannic Brethren will fully complete the glorious Work. We are already assured of your Esteem, which adds redoubled Vigour to our Operations. The Emancipation of Americans is complete; they now enjoy the Rewards of their patriotic Valour. That of Frenchmen is nearly concluded, whose Names will be justly revered by Posterity, and recorded in the Annals of History, as bright Examples of Imitation. In what are Englishmen deficient? in corporeal Strength or mental Endowments, inferior to none. Why should they then hesitate to follow the Steps of continental Freeman, and obtain what Nature has so liberally bestowed on all, Liberty, which the Iron Hand of Oppression seizes with contagious Grasp, and nips the Bud before it can attain Maturity. But that genial Luminary, which has diffused its Rays on Columbia and France, already irradiates her favourite Isle, and the Twilight disappearing will burst forth with meridian Splendor. Then tremble, ye Tyrants, rejoice ye Patriots, the Reward of your godlike Exertions will then be permanent.

No more need ye fear the Mandates of your Oppressors, for Victory, for Power, the Means of Retribution, is yours. With fond Transport we enjoy the Pleasure of Anticipation, when Tyrants, prostrate at our Feet, imploring that Mercy which, in the Zenith of their Power, they would never yield even to the Innocent, when they will suffer for their numberless Crimes, universally execrated; their Fate may serve to intimidate others that pursue, or may attempt to pursue the same Career.

Britons, accept our Thanks for the Confidence you have reposed in us; we will endeavour to deserve it; it is a common Cause. Glory will be your's, but we will participate of its Blessings. The Nations, England and Ireland, will no longer be disturbed by the Fire of Civil Broils, which the wicked Policy of Administration has kindled, and Ignorance kept alive the Flame—all will be dissolved. The Channel which separates the Two Nations, will no longer be the Means of injured Patriots escaping from the Fangs of Tyrants, but the Canal of Delight; and propitious Winds will

will waite us to either Shore, and partake of the Festivities of political Regeneration. The Republics of the World, then joined in the indissoluble Ties of Friendship, cemented by paternal Love, will enjoy the wished-for Blessings of abundant Peace.

HIBERNICUS.

Appendix (I. No. 1.)

OATH.

IN the awful Presence of God, I. A. B. do vow and declare, that I will persevere in endeavouring to promote a Brotherhood of Affection among Englishmen of every religious Denomination.—I do further declare, that I will persevere in my Endeavours to obtain a free, full, and adequate Representation of all the People of England. I do likewise vow and declare, that neither Hopes, Fears, Rewards, or Punishments, shall ever induce me, directly or indirectly, to inform or give Evidence against any of this Society, for any Act or Expression of his or theirs, made or done collectively or individually in this or any similar Society, in pursuance of the Spirit of this Obligation.

Health and Fraternity.

Appendix (I. No. 2.)

OATH.

IN the awful Presence of God, I. A. B. voluntarily vow and declare, that neither Hopes nor Fears, Rewards nor Punishments, shall ever induce me, directly or indirectly, to inform or give Evidence against any one of this Society, for any Act or Expression of his or theirs, done or made collectively or individually in or out of this or other similar Societies, in pursuance of the Spirit of this Obligation.

A P P E N D I X.

Appendix (K.)

EZEKIEL, Chapter 21st.

V. 25. **A**ND thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end,

26. Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.

27. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.

Appendix (L.)

QUERIES to the SOLDIERY.

1st. **A**RE you convinced that the Spring of all our Miseries and Sufferings arises from a corrupt System, and excessive Taxation, and that nothing short of a Change of System can restore us to our Rights?

2nd. Are you convinced that the best Legacy we can bestow on Posterity is to leave them free; are you willing to do all in your Power to obtain a new Order of Things by Universal Suffrage?

3d. Will you do all in your Power to promote a Spirit of Love, Brotherhood, and Affection, amongst the Friends of Freedom, omit no Opportunity of acquiring all the political Information you can, contributing towards the Expence of conveying Information, and acting in every Respect as a good, moral, and faithful Citizen.

Appendix (M.)

The Central Committee of UNITED IRISHMEN, to the IRISH SEAMEN
in the BRITISH NAVY.

Erin go Brab!

WHAT a deplorable Circumstance is it for Ireland, that whilst she is so strenuously struggling for Liberty, you, her Children, should be the chief Instruments of her Oppressors, to keep her under their galling Yoke, and thus be branded through all Europe as a mercenary Band of nefarious Parricides! Yes, Countrymen, such is the Light in which you

you are held by all true Lovers of Liberty. They know that in the British Navy there are Three Irish Sailors for One Englishman, and that consequently you bear by far the most active Part in all her Atchievements. Struck with Horror and Indignation at the atrocious and unparalleled Barbarity with which your Countrymen at Home are treated, by Order of the sanguinary British Government, the Patriots of other Countries would fain fly to their Succour, and supply them with Arms to extirpate their execrable Tyrants. But, alas! their Efforts, in this Respect, have been and are still counteracted by the British Navy; that is to say, by a Navy almost totally composed of Irishmen. These, in consequence, they compare to mischievous Boys, who, at the Instigation of some inveterate Enemy to their Father, beat away the guardian Dogs from his Fold, whilst ravenous Wolves are destroying the Flock.—We know (what Foreigners from your present Conduct cannot feel) that your Hearts still glow with a truly filial Affection to your Mother Country; that you repine at her Woes, though unacquainted with the Hundredth Part, and that, were it in your Power, you would most gladly alleviate them. We know, at the same Time, that in order the more effectually to crush your Country, and repress your Exertions in her Favour, you yourselves are kept in a State of the most cruel Oppression; that where Discord cannot be sown amongst you, Mistrust is made to prevail; that you are surrounded with Spies and Informers, all amply rewarded for so disgraceful a Task; that the least Murmur is a capital Crime; and a Whisper, a Nod, a Wink, construed into Treason, and punished as such; in short, that Christian Slaves are less horridly treated on board the Turkish or Algerine Gallies, than Irish Sailors on board an English Ship of War.

Oh! had these Slaves the same Opportunities as yourselves; were they as you are, in the Hour of Battle, supplied with Arms to fight their Opponents, how eagerly, how unanimously, would they not turn them against their Oppressors? that such an Occasion may offer is their hourly Wish, and their most fervent Prayer to Heaven.—And you, brave Irish Sailors, you, whose Sufferings cannot be paralleled but by those of your Countrymen at Home, you tamely submit to such Usage, whilst you have it so much in your Power to avenge your Injuries and theirs! However closely watched by your Keepers, the Day of Battle is at least your own; then are you Masters, then do you dispense Victory or Disgrace.—Your Numbers are by far the greatest; many of your English and Scotch Comrades, zealous Patriots, and not less discontented than you, are ready to join you. The very Spies laid over you, seeing you unanimous, would readily take your Part; every Man on board the Ship you are engaged with would fight for you; and you know that in the Heat of Action, even Ten firm and decided Men would cause such Confusion on board a Ship, as to render her an easy Capture, and thereby
 a Deliverance

a Deliverance to yourselves. The Central Committee, in their Proclamation of last Year, summoned you, as well as all other Irishmen in the British Service, to quit that Service as soon as possible, and repair to the Defence of their Native Country, under Pain of being excluded from thence for ever as Traitors. This Summons, as soon as it reached France, induced most of the Irishmen residing there, or who fled thither for Refuge, to flock to the Sea Ports, in order to embark for Ireland. Numbers of noble hearted and sympathising French Patriots shewed the same Dispositions: Nay, the Irish Prisoners of War, though they had the Certainty of being soon exchanged, refused it, preferring the perilous Honour of assisting their Country in her Emancipation; and none remained behind, but some degenerate dastardly Fellows, whom their Comrades have excluded from the Honour of sharing in the glorious Contest.

As the Central Committee has strong Reasons to suspect both from your Inaction, and the well-known Vigilance of your Keepers, that the said Proclamation has not reached you; and confident that from the Measures they have taken, the present Address will be more successful, they here solemnly renew the Engagements they then entered into with the Irish Sailors in the British Navy, in the Name of the Irish Nation; solemnly pledging her Faith and Loyalty for the full Execution of the same; viz. 1. That all Irish Sailors returning to assist their Mother Country, in her glorious Conflict for Liberty, shall, on their Arrival, receive the full Amount of whatever Sums may be lawfully due to them by the British Government; 2. That they shall have a Share proportioned to their Services in the Division of all Church and College Lands, and other forfeited Estates, which Division is to take place immediately after the Revolution, each Man's Share not less than Two Acres; 3. That whatever British Ships, either of War or otherwise, they bring into any of the friendly Ports of Ireland, shall be, without Delay, sold or appraised, and the Amount thereof fairly distributed to the Captors. Furthermore, the Committee is *authorized to guarantee* the same Condition for all Prizes of a similar Nature brought into the Ports of France, Spain, Holland, and the Republics allied to France; 4. That for their glorious Exertions in creating at once a formidable Navy for their Country, they shall be promoted each Man according to his Merit and Abilities, to Ranks and Offices in the same.

Thus will you, brave Irish Sailors, be no longer doomed to fight for your merciless Taskmasters, but reap the Glory and Fortune for yourselves; and after having so strenuously contributed to assist your Country in ranking once more amongst the Powers of Europe, will you also spread her Fame all over the watry Surface, and make both Poles resound with the Exploits of the Irish Navy.

Appendix (N. No. 1.)

The EXAMINATION of CHARLES MONTAGUE ORMSBY,
Esquire.

WERE you employed in the Capacity of Judge Advocate in the County of Limerick, during the late Disturbances?

I was.—Towards the latter End of September last, Colonel Littlehales sent for me, and informed me that the Lord Lieutenant had been unanimously address'd while there by the Gentlemen of the County, requesting in the strongest Terms that Courts Martial should be held there, with ample Powers to put down the System of Rebellion, Murder, Burning, Flogging, and Outrage, which had lately overspread the Whole of the County; and that a Professional Gentleman should be sent there to assist at those Courts Martial, in order to arrange and expedite their Proceedings. Colonel Littlehales then told me, that His Excellency having minutely inquired into the State of the County, had complied with their Request; and that he had been pleas'd to select me as a proper Person to undertake the Conduct of those Trials. Being furnished with ample Instructions, I proceeded to Limerick.

In what State did you find the County?

On my Arrival there, Sir James Duff, who commands the District, put into my Hands a very few Informations, and at the same Time told me, that not a Night pass'd without the most dreadful Outrages being perpetrated upon the Persons and Property of the peaceable and loyal in his District, although he had station'd the Troops under his Command in such Manner, that he believ'd no Man in the County liv'd Four Miles distant from a Party of the Army. In order to attain a general Knowledge of the State of the County, and with a View of ascertaining whether these Outrages were committed by a Handful of active Villains, or that a general System of Disaffection prevail'd, I wrote circular Letters to all the Magistrates, requesting that they would give me the earliest Information of any Outrage committed in the Neighbourhood, and whether they had or had not any Means of coming to the Knowledge of the Perpetrators.—Letters for some Time pour'd in upon me from the Magistrates, in almost the Whole of which, the Outrages were stated by the Sufferers to have been committed by Strangers.—Orders were put up upon the Chapel Doors, sign'd Captain Slasher or Captain Doe, or by some other fictitious Name, and whoever in the Parish dar'd to disobey them,

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were

were sure of having their Houses destroyed, and of being flogged in the most cruel Manner.—These Orders generally went to prevent any Person giving a greater Price for Land when out of Lease, than was paid by the former Tenant—to regulate the Price of Provisions of all Kinds—to prevent Dairy Men from making more than a certain Quantity of Butter, in order that the Price of Milk might not be enhanced—to limit the Rent of Potatoo Ground, which is generally let from Year to Year, and to direct the Vengeance of all Men against Clergymen and Tythe Proctors:—These Papers generally concluded with something encouraging to all loyal United Men; such as, that the French would shortly land, together with Assurances that all these favoured Objects would then be carried into Effect:—These Orders were addressed to the Middling and Lower Ranks, who were punished, as before stated, for Disobedience; but the Upper Ranks and Gentry found themselves in perfect Security—this produced an Apathy and Unwillingness to act in the Upper Classes, the bad Consequences of which, and the Degree of Encouragement which it gave to the Disaffected, need not be stated.—I found about Thirty Prisoners, charged with the Offences above named, in the Gaol of Limerick, and scarcely in any one Instance a direct or fair Information made against them, on which I could bring them to Trial.—I quickly perceived, that my only Means of coming to the Bottom of this System, was, by Informers.—In many Instances, the Persons flogged, were really ignorant of the Perpetrators, as they were in the Habit of taking Horses and riding a considerable Distance for this Purpose; but I was conscious that, in many Instances, the Sufferers must have known the Perpetrators, but the System of Terror was so complete, that in scarce any Instance would the unfortunate Person flogged make an Information.—In the Parish of Sollyhet, 20 or 30 respectable Farmers waited on the Commanding Officer, and told him that they would bring him to the Houses of, and make Prisoners of the Heads of the United Men who flogged and governed their Parish as they pleased:—Accordingly that Night Eleven Men, none of them of the lowest Order of People, were made Prisoners.—Upon Sir James Duff being acquainted with the Fact, it appeared of so much Consequence, that he sent Notices to the Magistrates and Gentlemen in the Neighbourhood of Sollyhet, that he and I would attend there on the following Day but one, in order to take the Informations of the Farmers against the Prisoners.—Sir James Duff also sent Word to the Commanding Officer, to desire all those Farmers to meet us.—We accordingly proceeded there (a Distance of 17 Miles from Limerick) but the Farmers, and almost all the People flogged or otherwise injured by the Prisoners, had absconded.—Some Persons, lately flogged in that Neighbourhood,

Neighbourhood, were brought before us by Force; they would make no Information whatever against any Individual;—the Prisoners were however brought to Limerick Gaol, most of whom were afterwards tried and convicted of Felonies and Murders.—One of the Persons, by the Name of Connors, flogged a few Days before by this Gang, was attended by Two Physicians, who told him that he could not survive 24 Hours: Under those Circumstances he received the Sacrament, and made an Information before Two Magistrates, and expired shortly afterwards.—On this Information, with some collateral Evidence, Three of these Men were convicted, and suffered Death at Sollyhet.—Two of the Men who suffered, of the Name of Roche, were Sons of a very wealthy Farmer, at whose House Committees of United Men were constantly held, and under the Orders of those Committees these unfortunate Men acted.—I shortly began to attain, through the Means of Informers, a pretty accurate Knowledge of this System, and had Information on Oath against upwards of 300 People for various Acts of Treason, Rebellion, and Murder.—The Upper Committees, who gave out Orders, generally consisted of Nine Persons. These Committees tried Persons of all Descriptions for various Offences—Their Sentence was generally Death. In some Instances, their Orders for Assassination were countersigned by a Man called General Clarke, who had been educated for an Irish Priest, but who is now supposed to be an Officer in the French Service, and is a well-known Rebel General.—As this Man travelled a great deal, sometimes he did not countersign the Orders of those Committees—They were nevertheless carried into Execution.—When these Committees condemned any one to die, the Mode of carrying their Sentence into Execution was generally at the same Time determined on; which was, by ordering a sufficient Number of Persons from distant Parts of the County to assemble at a given Time and Place, to carry the Sentence into Execution. In short, I found the Lives and Properties, and the general Government of the County, in the Hands of those Committees.—The Members of those Committees had been all previously elected Captains or Colonels of Rebels.—They had no stated Time or Place of Meeting. Generally met on a Sunday, at the House of some innocent Publican, who was unsuspecting of their Design.—After some Trials of inferior Importance, I was enabled to proceed, with a moral Certainty of their Conviction, against Three Members of one of the most active Committees in the County.—Their Chairman had fled, and established himself in his Business, as a Shoemaker, at Carrick-on-Suir. He was there arrested, in consequence of Information I had received. On his Route to Limerick he attempted to escape from the Escort, who fired after him and killed him.—The Three
Men

Men alluded to, one of them a Steward to a Gentleman of consequence in the County, the other Two, Farmers and in Yeomanry Corps, were brought to Trial upon a Charge of conspiring the Death of Two Men of the Name of Shedy (who were accordingly murdered). These Prisoners were convicted upon the most satisfactory Evidence, and suffered Death. Their Punishment produced the best Effect in re-establishing the Peace of the County, and seemed to have disgraced the United Men in a Degree that could scarcely be hoped for.—The greatest Exertion had been previously making to prepare People in the County of Limerick for the Reception of a French Force, by Means of the System of Terror above alluded to, and by the Rewards and Advantages held out by those Committees to their faithful Subjects, and the cruel Punishments inflicted on the Loyal. Wherever they found peaceable and well-conducted People, even of the very lowest Order, they had them flogged, and sworn to sell their Provisions, such as Potatoes, Butter, Milk, &c. to the first Comers, at less than One Third of the Market Price.

The flogging Parties would go through a well affected Parish, and flog from Fifteen to Twenty Persons of a Night. Regularly at Day-light Purchasers came, between whom and the wretched Sufferers not a Word passed; they received the Price fixed by the flogging Party, not daring to remonstrate, and, perhaps, that same Day obliged to buy the same Articles in the open Market at more than Three Times the Price they had sold them, for the Support of their Families. These Means would have been probably found sufficiently efficacious to attain the Object of the United Men, had they not received a Check by the Discomfiture of their most active Committee, and of a few others of the principal Traitors in the County.—There is no Fact above stated but of which I had Information on Oath.

In what Mode were the Trials conducted at which you acted as Judge Advocate?

When I found myself enabled by clear and sufficient Evidence, to proceed against Persons whom I thought proper Objects of Punishment, I sent the Prisoners a Copy of their Charge, mentioning, that they would be tried on a given Day for the Offence therein named, and desiring that if that Day did not suit them, to name the Day on which they would be ready, supplying them also with Summonses; and undertaking, if the Prisoners were not able, to have those Summonses served myself. On the appointed Day, the President and Members of the Court were sworn, the Prisoners were arraigned and pleaded, the Witnesses of the Crown were sworn and examined in chief by me. The strictest Rules of Evidence, on the Part of the Prosecution, were uniformly adhered to, the Witnesses for

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the Crown were then cross-examined by the Counsel for the Prisoners, who in almost every Instance employed from One to Three Counsel.—The Evidence for the Crown being closed, the Prisoners were put on their Defence, their Witnesses severally sworn and examined, and cross-examined by me; the Members of the Court asking, from Time to Time, such Questions as might seem to them necessary to satisfy their Minds. Legal Evidence was also required on the Part of the Prisoners; at the same Time that Papers, such as Letters, Characters, &c. produced by the Prisoners, though not admitted as Part, were always annexed to the Proceedings for the Information of his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant. When the Prisoners had no more Witnesses to examine, and had said every Thing they could urge in their Defence, the Court was cleared, and the Opinion of the Members taken. The Sentence of the Court was signed by the President, and countersigned by me, and sent to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant. It is to be observed, that wherever a Shadow of Doubt in Favour of the Prisoners on any Point of Evidence, appeared either to the Counsel or to myself, I requested the Proceedings might, before a Warrant was granted on them, be referred to the Law Officers, which Request I have Reason to know was in every Instance complied with by His Excellency.

Confining the Court strictly to legal Evidence, also taking into Consideration other Circumstances, what do you hold to be the Advantages, in restoring Peace to the Country, of these Trials before Courts Martial, over the ordinary Trials at the Assizes and Sessions?

The Prisoner before the Courts Martial, was deprived of all formal Objection to the Charge, and of all those Objections in Point of Form, which in so many Instances, before the ordinary Courts of Justice, he is enabled to avail himself of, and to obtain his Discharge, though substantially Guilty.—He was tried immediately after the Perpetration of the Crimes committed—a Court was always open for the immediate Punishment of Acts of Treason and Rebellion, by which Means there was no Time for murdering or tampering with the Informants.—The Prisoner having named the Day on which he should be tried, the common Practice of putting off Trials by Affidavit was cut up; and I look upon it, that in the State the County of Limerick was in, had the Prisoners been enabled, as they would before the Judges, to delay their Trials by an Affidavit, containing the proper Requisites for so doing, that even their Convictions before Courts Martial would have been rendered impracticable, either through the Terror of the Witnesses for the Prosecution, or by Means of Bribery, a Mode resorted to, whenever it was possible, by the United Men in Limerick, who were amply supplied with

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Money.

Money.—Though there were but Ten Executions during my Stay in Limerick, for Three Months, the Terror infused by them into the Disloyal, and the Confidence into the Loyal, was manifested in the strongest Light.—Eleven Corps of Yeomanry had been on permanent Duty in the County since 1798. Sir James Duff, before I left it, was enabled, from the restored Tranquillity of the County, to put Nine of them off Pay and Duty.—I never proceeded to Trial without a moral Certainty of the Conviction of the Prisoners—those whom I thought must have been acquitted for Deficiency of Evidence, I took upon myself the Merit of admitting to Bail, so that there being no Acquittals, the Court became a real Object of Terror to all Offenders.—I believe I can take upon me to say, that if the Judges had come into the Town, and remained there the usual Time (a Week) not a single Trial brought to Conclusion by me, could have been proceeded in for Want of Evidence—the Magistrates had few or no Informations to return—the common Approvers that I found in Limerick, would, if uncorroborated, not have obtained Credit on their Oaths, nor in short was there any Description of Persons in the County whose Business or Inclination it would be to bring forward effectual Prosecutions before the Judges.—Latterly, when a little Spirit began to be infused in the Breasts of the Loyal, Prosecutors appeared and laid Informations, but generally were afraid, and averse to follow them up when the Trial came on.—If these Informants had been allowed to return Home after making their Informations, the most remote Expectation of their coming forward to give Evidence could not be formed.

The Advantages of Martial Law in a District so completely disturbed as that of Limerick, operate as well in preventing, as in the speedy Punishment of Crimes—For Instance, an Order was given out by Sir James Duff, that any Persons found out of their Houses without being able to give sufficient Reason for it, after Nine o'Clock at Night, should be tried by Court Martial and punished. Eight or Ten were tried and convicted for Disobedience of this Order, but in every Instance their Punishment was forgiven—the good Effects of this Measure in preventing Nightly Meetings, were manifest—it threw Difficulties in the Way of the Commanders of the Rebels to assemble their People—the Paroles searched suspected Houses late at Night, and if the Men belonging to them were not in their Beds, they were, on their Return Home, unless they could satisfactorily account for their Absence, made Prisoners.—Before my leaving Limerick, I had Information on Oath against upwards of 300 Persons for Murders, Floggings, and all those other Outrages which prevailed in the County—108 of whom were made Prisoners during my Stay, of which Number 12 were capitally convicted, of whom 10 were
executed

executed—I cannot be precise as to the Number transported—I don't think they exceeded 20—some of these were also flogged by Sentence of the Courts—four or five were flogged and not transported, and sent Home to their Friends. Of the Remainder, some few voluntarily enlisted for general Service, and great Numbers were admitted to bail—a very few remained in the Gaol at Limerick, whom I judged not fit on any Account to let loose on the Public, though I could never bring them to an effectual Trial.—Not having any Papers with me, I cannot venture to state Numbers accurately.—Had Commissions of Oyer and Terminer been perpetually sitting at Limerick, during the Time I was there, the Proportion of Acquittals to any Convictions that might have been had, would have been so great as to have been a Matter of Triumph to the Cause of Rebellion, instead of a Means of effectually putting it down, which the Court Martial proved itself to be.

Appendix (N. N° 2.)

The EXAMINATION of Captain JAMES BLOOMFIELD,
of the Royal Horse Artillery.

IN what Capacity did you act in Ireland during the last Year?
As Assistant Quarter-Master-General in the Southern District.

Was the County of Limerick included in that District?
Yes, it was.

Did your Situation enable you to acquire any Knowledge of the Outrages that were committed in the Southern District, but more particularly at Limerick and Tipperary?

During the Absence of General Lake from the District, I had Permission to go to my own House at the Village of Newport, in the County of Tipperary, very near to the Bounds of Limerick—this afforded me an Opportunity of ascertaining a Variety of Matter concerning that Neighbourhood.—In the Year 1798, the System of swearing had extended into that Parish as in other Parts of Ireland;—and at the Time that the Sheriff of Tipperary went round the Country, several Thousands of Pikes were collected in that Village and Neighbourhood.—Previous to this Period, they had come down in Parties, as was stated, in a Body of 200, and had robbed most of the Gentlemen within Half a Mile of my House of their
Arms,

Arms, publicly declaring that they would complete that Neighbourhood the following Night.—In the Autumn 1800, fresh Outrages were committed in the Neighbourhood of Newport, by Persons coming disguised to the Houses of those Farmers who were supposed to have any Stock or Potatoes, requiring them, on the Obligation of an Oath, and the Fear of being flogged, to sell their Potatoes to the first Persons who should come for them, at Seven Shillings the Barrel, when the Market Price was £. 7. 11s. 6d. or more.—This was followed by Persons coming before Day light in many Instances, but in all before 12 o'Clock the next Day, and buying the Potatoes at such a Price.—I had Information on Oath from one of my own Tenants, who had been obliged to sell his Potatoes at Seven Shillings the Barrel to a Neighbour, from whom he purchased Potatoes the same Day at Two Guineas the Barrel.—None of these Depredations were committed on Persons who had Abundance, or a Surplus of Potatoes.

Was the Information of the Facts of Flogging, and purchasing at reduced Prices, verified on Oath?

Yes.

Were the Parties who flogged, or those who came for the Potatoes, specified on Oath?

The Parties who flogged were not specified on Oath—those who came and purchased Potatoes at reduced Prices were.

Did the Persons concerned in these Outrages, shew any general hostile Views against the Government?

I don't believe the principal Conspirators were concerned in this Act of Violence, but rather believe it became the Practice from similar Outrages having been committed in the County of Limerick, although the Persons who flogged generally observed, that there would be soon other Rulers—This Information I had upon Oath from some of the Persons flogged.

Did they express any Hope of French Assistance?

I considered their Expectation of "other Rulers," a Hope of French Invasion.

Did there appear Reason to believe there was a Concert between those who flogged, and those who came for Potatoes?

In many Instances I am satisfied the Persons who came for Potatoes were priy to the Flogging, if not present, as it appeared upon the Oath of those flogged, that some Persons came for Potatoes before Day-light, and in an Hour after the Punishment had been inflicted.

Appendix (O.)

EXTRACT from a Letter written by a Magistrate to the General
of the District.

April 13th, 1801.

[————] still perseveres in legislating for itself, and in enforcing Obedience to its own Laws; any effectual Step taken to quiet that Place, would render the Country most essential Service, and would destroy the most fertile Nursery for Rebellion in the Province.

Appendix (P.)

REPRESENTATION of Justices—Barony of ———
County of ———.

— April 1801.

WE, the undersigned Magistrates, resident in the Barony of ——— are of Opinion (from the many Outrages committed in our Neighbourhood by killing Cattle in the Night) that unless some effectual Steps are taken to deter Offenders from the like Practices, by levying the Value of such Cattle on the Parish or Barony where the Offence may be committed, the most dreadful Consequences are likely to ensue to the Country; and we are further of Opinion, that though no actual Rising took Place at the Time of the aforesaid Depredations, yet we are convinced that these Practices are connected with the Rebellion which so lately prevailed in the Country.

Signed by Seven Names.

Appendix (Q.)

IN the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

BY *Virtue of my Oath*, I will from henceforth join, in the most active Manner, The United Irishmen, as far as the Strength, Power, and Exertions of an Individual, with the firm Resolution to depress that Tyranny which we at present labour under.

By Virtue of my Oath; I will, with the Spirit of a true-born Irishman, when summoned or called upon, aid and assist in whatever Plan the main Body or Conductors of the United Irishmen may think most conducive or adviseable, in banishing from our Isle the Followers of Luther and Calvin, or any Branch belonging to them, so as to make us free-born

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Sons,

Sons, as our Forefathers were, and to breathe once more in a free Country.

By Virtue of my Oath, If the French should make their Landing in any Part of this Kingdom, with an Intent of forcing it from the Hands of those Tyrants who at present most idly and wantonly live on the Sweets of it, while the true born Sons of Miliseans are made to groan under Loads of depressive Grievances, I will, by the shortest Notice imaginable, turn out, aid, and assist them in completing their Design, overturning the British Constitution, destroying any Subject or Wellwisher belonging to it, and in their Place to plant the Tree of Liberty in every Quarter of the Country.

By Virtue of my Oath, If I should be suspected or taken between my commencing in this true Cause of Liberty and seeing it completed, I will keep a strict Secrecy, and will die, before I give the Name of any Individual, or give Evidence against any Person concerned in so glorious a Cause.

The above are the Oaths to be taken by all those who would embrace this Opportunity of making themselves a free People.

Jan. 24th, 1801.

Appendix (R.)

EXTRACT of Report from a Magistrate to the General of the District.

April 6, 1801.

“FROM his own Knowledge of the Disaffected in this Neighbourhood, takes the Liberty of offering his own Opinion, that nothing but the strongest Measures of Government will be able to put down the unquenched Flame of Rebellion, so long as the Disaffected shall expect any French Aid.”

Appendix (S.)

EXTRACT of a Letter from the General of the District, April 6, 1801.

March 18, 1801.

A HOUSE in this County was broke into by near Two Hundred Fellows, armed and mounted, in Search of Two Proctors who had been collecting Tythes, fortunately they escaped their Fury, having departed some Time before they arrived; they afterwards went to the House of ——— who had given Evidence, and flogged him severely.

Appendix (T.)

April 30th, 1801.

EXTRACT of a Letter from the General of the District.

THE People in this County, particularly in this Neighbourhood, have been out in small Parties almost every Night, flogging Individuals, and swearing them not to sell Potatoes or Milk at above a certain Price.

They have unmercifully beat others for taking Ground that had been given up, and threatening them not to pay Tythes but to the Clergyman.

The System they have adopted of swearing these People, they punish, and threatening them with Death if they discover, has effectually put a Stop to our obtaining Information.

The Terror of these Proceedings has already had the Effect of preventing those Persons who prosecuted on former Occasions, and who are Evidences against several now in Confinement, from coming forward; declaring, that their doing so would be attended with certain Death to themselves and Families.

I have not been able to devise any Means of falling in with any of these nightly Parties.—The Country People will give no Information; and the Gentlemen cannot be prevailed upon to give their Assistance.

N. B. I have ordered the County of ——— Yeomen Corps on permanent Duty, as it is in their Neighbourhood where the People have been most troublesome.

Appendix (U.)

EXTRACT from the Report of the General of the District, dated April 12, 1801.

THE Whole indicate a general Tendency to Disorder among the lower Classes. On Enquiry from such Individuals of them as could be trusted, it appears that they are generally as much inclined to Rebellion and Mischief as ever. In the Month of January I received Information of some Men residing in ——— having received Letters of a treasonable Nature. They were apprehended; acknowledged the Purport of the Letters (which they confessed having destroyed for Fear of Detection) but denied having concurred in them. They had all been United Irishmen. The Author of the Letters was a Schoolmaster near ———, and

and a notorious Rebel, named ———. The Circumstances were reported to Government; and I believe he made his Escape.

The very particular State of this County renders it extremely difficult to obtain Information, there being so few Inhabitants of any Class whose Principles were decidedly loyal, or who had not contributed in some Degree towards promoting Rebellion, although various Motives restrained them from appearing in it.

Appendix (W.)

EXTRACT of a Letter from a Magistrate, dated April 4, 1801.

THERE have not been any Murders committed, or any Fire Arms taken away in my Neighbourhood since the First of September, that I know of; and I am strongly of Opinion, that many of the Robberies that have been committed, have arisen from the melancholy Situation in which the lower Orders of the People are now in, arising from the long continued high Price of Provisions, and the low Price of Labour. If, however, my Lord Lieutenant's Enquiries upon this Subject, should ultimately tend to the Expediency of continuing this Country under Martial Law, I should have no Difficulty in giving my Suffrage for the Continuance of that Measure; and if it should be stated, in Opposition to my Opinion, that there were upwards of Twenty Capital Convictions at the late Assizes in this County, before the going Judge, I should answer, that no Juries would, in my Opinion, have given the Verdicts they did, but for the Protection that the Individuals composing those Juries felt they had, from the Energy of the Government under the System of Martial Law.

Appendix (X.)

EXTRACT of a Letter from a Magistrate, dated April 11, 1801.

I THINK it my Duty to mention to you, that about Three Weeks ago, got Information that there are new Associations forming in the Country, by those who formerly went under the Name of "Defenders," and now stile themselves "*Finish Alls*."

Appendix (Y.)

INFORMATION ON OATH,

April 7, 1801.

THE Informations of _____ of _____ in the Parish of _____ in the Barony of _____ in said County, who being duly sworn on the Holy Evangelists, and examined, saith, That for these Twelve Months past, the Barony of _____ has been infested with a Banditti of Men in Arms under the Command of _____ and _____ the former being a Rebel Commander, and the latter a Defterter _____ that the said _____ and _____ have completely got Possession of the said Barony and its Vicinity, go publickly through the same in Arms, have regular Picquets by Day, and frequently assemble their Men, which, according to the best of Examinant's Opinion, now consist of near Fifty, who regularly exercise and march to the Sound of a Horn; they commit every Degree of Outrage and Excess, and declare their Intention of keeping out in Arms until an Opportunity may offer of a general Rising, in order to overturn the King and his Government: Saith, The Inhabitants of the entire Barony and its Vicinity, are become entirely tributary to said Banditti, on whom every Degree of Cruelty is committed, and the Whole of said Barony would be obliged to rise in Case of any future Insurrection. Saith, That on Account of Examinant's refusing to harbour or countenance the said Banditti, his House at _____ afore said was maliciously set on Fire by a Party of said Banditti on the Night of the _____ Day of December last, and the same, together with Furniture, consumed.—That said Banditti have shot sundry Persons of late, whom they conceived were not true to them, as well as burning Houses of those they do not like, and now keep Hounds and regularly go out a Hunting; and is convinced said Party would entirely run over the whole Country, but from the different Military Posts that are placed around the said Barony.

Appendix (Z. No. 1.)

EXTRACT of a Report from a General Officer.

April 14, 1801.

IN making my customary Report on the State of the District under my Superintendance, I am to repeat my Assurances, that with respect to the Public Mind, it is at this Time as ill disposed, if not more so than I have ever yet known it to be. The Troops are so distributed, as to keep the
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Country too much in Awe for any Thing serious to break out under our present Circumstances, and in outward Appearance it is perfectly tranquil; but I am fully persuaded, that the Tranquillity is solely to be attributed to the Presence of the Military, and that in the Event of their being reduced or withdrawn, good Order and Obedience to the Laws would cease.

The Spirit of Rebellion, and Expectation of Invasion, still operates so powerfully amongst the lower Orders, that they are in constant Agitation, and now hold their various Nightly Meetings in the Fields.

In Proof of which I have the Honour to inclose to you a Report which I received last Week, from a Person on whom I greatly rely for Intelligence; I have on so many Occasions experienced the Correctness of his Information, that I fully believe the Report he now sends me, and which is indeed strongly corroborated from other less distinct Accounts which I had received.

Appendix (X. 2.)

April 2d, 1801.

I WENT over to ——— on Sunday last, and was at a Meeting in the ———, it was ——— that commands the Men there; there were One Hundred and Seventy Men met there; they all had long Poles, but no Pikes, learning their Exercise—there were an Hundred Men fixed Three Deep, the Rear Rank had their Poles a Foot longer than the Front or Middle Rank—those Three Ranks went on their Knees as if the Horse was making a Charge, and then if Horse broke through their Ranks, there was then the Seventy-four with their Guns to fire at them; then they that were on their Knees were to make a Charge back on the Horse, and kill them.

Appendix (A. A.)

EXTRACT from Mr. KING's Report, 8th April 1801.

Wicklow } THE outstanding Rebels-upon the Establishment of the Military Posts in the Mountains, in July last, broke into several Parties, who, however, still keep up a Communication with each other, and frequently join and some Times change Places. The Number of Robberies committed by them during the last Winter is inconceivable, but very few Persons had Fortitude enough to give any Information before a Magistrate; this was chiefly owing to the Murder of Four Witnesses in

in the latter End of 1799, and Beginning of 1800; all of whom were shot by the Rebels, on Account of their having given Evidence against some of their Party.

If the Purpose of the present Inquiry is designed to ascertain how far the Spirit of Sedition and Rebellion is quelled, the following Circumstance will, in my Opinion, clear up that Point, perhaps better than any Murder or Robbery. In the latter End of 1798, Hugh Byrne alias Vesty, went off from Rathdrum, with several Leitrim Deserters, and joined Dwyer, who is his Cousin German. Hugh Byrne committed many atrocious Actions, and being taken in 1799, was tried before the Court Martial in Wicklow, and sentenced to be hanged; before the Confirmation of the Sentence came down, Byrne made his Escape, and immediately rejoined his Cousin Dwyer, with whom he has remained ever since as his chief confidential Friend, murdering and robbing in all Quarters. In January last, Michael Byrne, Brother to Hugh, and who lived just by me as a Servant, committed a Rape upon a Child of little more than Twelve Years old, for which he was tried at the last Assizes, and sentenced to be hanged; an Application was immediately made to me by the Sister and other Friends of Byrne, to know whether if Hugh, the outstanding Rebel, would surrender himself, there would be any Probability of saving the Life of Michael, both being willing to submit to Transportation for Life. I answered, that all I could do, when I was assured that Hugh was willing to surrender, would be to represent to His Excellency the State of the Case, and that from the merciful Disposition of His Excellency, I thought it not unlikely he would pardon both the Brothers, on Condition of Transportation, but that I would not stir until I was assured Hugh would surrender. The Father and Sister went off in great Spirits, and after Three Days returned, saying, they could not find Hugh; however, I knew the contrary, he being for these Three Days in Glenmalur, just by his Father's, and I know that he absolutely refused to surrender, though it might possibly have saved the Lives of himself and his Brother, well aware that he himself cannot escape a violent Death, but by an entire Overthrow of the Government; an Idea which is kept up with great Assiduity by some leading Persons in Dublin, who frequently send Messengers to Dwyer, who, in case of new Disturbances, would be a rallying Point for the Seditious to gather round.

S2227

R E P O R T

FROM THE

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY.

— (3)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be printed,
8 July 1812.

R E P O R T.

THE COMMITTEE OF SECRECY, to whom the Copies of the Information which has been received, relative to certain violent Proceedings which, in defiance of the Laws, have taken place, and continue to be carried on, in several Counties of *England*, (sealed up) were referred;—HAVE, pursuant to the Order of The House, examined the Matters thereof; and have agreed to the following REPORT.

YOUR Committee having examined the Papers and Documents referred to them, are concerned to state, that from the several sources of information therein contained, it appears that for some months past serious and alarming disturbances, destructive to property, and highly dangerous to private safety and the public peace, have prevailed in a very extensive populous manufacturing District, comprising certain parts of *Lancashire* and of the West Riding of *Yorkshire*, and certain parts of *Cheshire* bordering upon *Lancashire*.

That the outrages in the above district, brought to the notice of Your Committee, commenced about the end of February last, and continued (though not without occasional variation and temporary abatement) to the latest period (the 23rd of June) at which any information has been received. During this period, Rioters in large numbers have assembled in the night time; some of them, disguised by blackened faces, some armed with guns and pistols, and others with the implements of their trade, to be used as offensive weapons, have broken into various houses, particularly those of the manufacturers who made use of shearing frames, have destroyed the machinery, sometimes plundered the inhabitants, and burnt their houses and factories, exciting and keeping up perpetual terror in the country, by threatening letters and other means of intimidation, occasionally executing their threats against proprietors and others, not only by the destruction of the property, but by firing into the houses. It appears also, that in some instances attempts have been made on the lives of those who had been actively employed in endeavouring to suppress the tumults; and the atrocious murder of Mr. Horsfall, a very respectable manufacturer in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield, in the month of April, by four men who fired at him with flugs in the public road, in broad day, together with the other acts of violence, caused a great and general consternation over all the district.

REPORT FROM THE

It may be proper to add, that parties of the Rioters assembled, have, in several instances, demanded and obtained money from individuals by threats and terror.

Your Committee do not think it necessary to describe the numerous acts of outrage that have been committed, conceiving it sufficient for the purposes of the Report, to inform the House of the general state of the disturbed parts, without any particular detail of specific facts.

The object of these lawless proceedings, at the commencement of them, appears to have been the destruction of machinery: But very early in their progress, another object, still more formidable to the public security, has been developed; large bodies of men having assembled in the night, breaking open houses, and demanding arms with threats and violence. This practice has been actively persevered in; and though in some cases the plunder of property has accompanied both the destruction of machinery and the demanding of arms, yet it is material to observe, that in general these two objects seem exclusively to have been aimed at; and when these had been attained, every other species of property, though within their reach, has, in most instances, remained untouched. It is stated, that in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield, all the arms have been taken; and that in other parts the seizure of them has been considerable; and there is reason to apprehend, that the Rioters have different sorts of arms concealed. It appears evident to Your Committee, that these outrages have not been committed from any sudden impulse of unconnected individuals, but have been the result of organized systems of unlawful violence; that language of the most mischievous nature has been used among the Rioters, and a sort of military training and discipline has been established.

In making attacks upon houses, they sometimes appear to have been under the control of leaders, and to have acted upon signals. Rolls have been called over, distinguishing every man, not by his name, but by a number; rockets and blue lights have been seen at night, which are stated, by the persons making the communications, to have been signals made use of by the Rioters. It is also represented, that there are establishments of committees, under the name of local committees, secret committees, and executive committees; that they use signs and countersigns, to guard them against the intrusion of informers; and that they carry on their proceedings with the greatest secrecy and caution.

It appears also that delegates for various places have been appointed, and meetings of those delegates occasionally held; that there is a frequent communication between the several committees and towns, not through the ordinary conveyance of the post-office, but through the medium of delegates; and that the following Oath has been extensively administered:

“ I A. B. of my own voluntary will, do declare and solemnly swear, that I will never reveal to any person or persons, in any place or places under the canopy of heaven, the names of the persons who compose the secret committee, either by word, deed, or sign; their proceedings, meeting place, abode, dress, features, marks, complexion, connections, or any thing else that may lead to the discovery of the same; on the penalty of being put out of the world by the first brother that shall meet me, my name and character blotted out of existence, and never be remembered but with contempt and abhorrence. I further swear, that I will use my best endeavours to punish by death any traitor or traitors, should any rise up amongst us, he or them; and though he should fly to the verge of nature, I will pursue him with unceasing vengeance. So help me God, to keep this Oath inviolable.”

It

It appears that they who were sworn in, were to pay the weekly sum of twopence; and that in the meetings of delegates at Manchester, from the neighbouring towns, discord has occasionally arisen, from some of the delegates not bringing from their respective districts, the contributions that were due. No evidence or information, that has been laid before Your Committee, justifies the supposition, that any sums of Money have been distributed among the Rioters.

It appears also, that attempts have been made to create a persuasion amongst the persons engaged in these disturbances, that their proceedings are likely to be supported by similar combinations in London and in other parts of Great Britain, as well as in Ireland; and that they are countenanced by Individuals of a higher class and description, who are to declare themselves at a future time. But no evidence has been laid before Your Committee to sanction any such reports.

It appears to Your Committee, that even in the cases in which the outrages have been most clearly ascertained, it has been found extremely difficult, and in some instances impossible, to obtain evidence as to the persons by whom they were committed.

Of the numbers associated in the different parts of the disturbed District, Your Committee have not any information that can be satisfactorily relied upon; but that it is considerable, the Papers laid before them give sufficient ground to think. Neither can they presume to state, what is the ultimate object, the Persons thus associated, have in view, nor for what precise purpose it is, that these extensive combinations have been formed. But whatever may be the object, or whoever may be the secret movers, whether these combinations are confined to purposes relating exclusively to trade, or whether advantage has been taken of the distresses of the times to draw together, under that pretence, all discontented persons, with views hereafter to be developed; yet the secrecy and method apparent in the whole arrangement, the system of terror so industriously enforced by threats, assassination, and attempts at assassination, the Oath administered, the eagerness and activity in procuring arms, and the training, before-mentioned, are all circumstances which have not failed to impress upon the minds of Your Committee, a strong sense of the danger arising from such combinations, to the peace and security of the Country.

8 July 1812.

R E P O R T
FROM THE
COMMITTEE OF SECRECY.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be printed,
8 July 1812.

S 2227

R E P O R T

FROM

THE SECRET COMMITTEE

APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO

THE LATE DISTURBANCES.

4

Ordered to be printed 9th July 1812.

By the Lords Committees appointed a Secret Committee to enquire into the late Disturbances, and report to the House as they shall see Cause :

ORDERED TO REPORT AS FOLLOWS :

YOUR Committee in pursuing the Enquiry referred to their Consideration have endeavoured to ascertain the Origin of the Disturbances which have arisen in the different Parts of the Country, with respect to which they have obtained Information, the Manner in which those Disturbances have been carried on, the Objects to which they have been apparently directed, the Means used to suppress them, the Effects of those Means, and the State of those Parts of the Country within which the Disturbances have prevailed.

The Disposition to combined and disciplined Riot and Disturbance which has attracted the Attention of Parliament, and excited Apprehension of the most dangerous Consequences, seems to have been first manifested in the Neighbourhood of the Town of Nottingham in November last, by the Destruction of a great Number of newly-invented Stocking Frames, by small Parties of Men, principally Stocking Weavers, who assembled in various Places round Nottingham.

By Degrees the Rioters became more numerous and more formidable, many were armed and divided in different Parties, disturbed the whole Country between Nottingham and Mansfield, destroying Frames almost without Resistance. This Spirit of Discontent (amongst other Causes to which it has been attributed) was supposed to have been excited or called into action by the Use of a new Machine which enabled the Manufacturers to employ Women in Work in which Men had been before employed, and by the Refusal of the Manufacturers to pay Wages at the Rate which the Weavers demanded ; and their Discontent was probably heightened by the increased Price of Provisions, particularly of Corn. The Men engaged in these Disturbances were at first principally those who were thrown out of Employ by the Use of the new Machinery, or by their Refusal to work at the Rates offered by the Manufacturers, and they particularly sought the Destruction of Frames owned or worked by those who were willing to work at the lower Rates ; in consequence of the Resistance opposed to the Outrages of the Rioters, in the course of which one of them was killed, they became still more exasperated and more violent, till the Magistrates thought it necessary to require the Assistance of a considerable armed Force, which was promptly assembled, consisting at first principally

pally of Local Militia and Volunteer Yeomanry, to whom were added above Four Hundred Special Constables; the Rioters were then dispersed, and it was hoped that the Disturbances had been by these means suppressed.

Before the End of the Month of November however the Outrages were renewed, they became more serious, were more systematically conducted, and at length the Rioters began in several Villages, where they destroyed the Frames, to levy at the same Time Contributions for their Subsistence, which rapidly increased their Numbers, and early in December the Outrages were in some Degree extended into Derbyshire and Leicestershire, where many Frames were broken.

In the mean Time a considerable Force both of Infantry and Cavalry had been sent to Nottingham, and the Commanding Officer of the District was ordered to repair thither; and in January Two of the most experienced Police Magistrates were dispatched to Nottingham for the Purpose of assisting the local Authorities in their Endeavours to restore Tranquillity in the disturbed Districts.

The systematic Combination however with which the Outrages were conducted, the Terror which they inspired, and the Disposition of many of the lower Orders to favour rather than oppose them, made it very difficult to discover the Offenders, to apprehend them if discovered, or to obtain Evidence to convict those who were apprehended of the Crimes with which they were charged. Some however were afterwards proceeded against at the Spring Assizes at Nottingham, and seven Persons were convicted of different Offences, and sentenced to Transportation.

In the mean Time Acts were passed for establishing a Police in the disturbed Districts, upon the ancient System of Watch and Ward, and for applying to the Destruction of Stocking Frames the Punishment before applied by Law to the Destruction of other Machinery.

The Discontent which had thus first appeared about Nottingham, and had in some Degree extended into Derbyshire and Leicestershire, had before this Period been communicated to other Parts of the Country. Subscriptions for the Persons taken into Custody in Nottinghamshire were solicited in the Month of February at Stockport in Cheshire, where anonymous Letters were at the same Time circulated, threatening to destroy the Machinery used in the Manufactures of that Place, and in that and the following Months Attempts were made to set on fire Two different Manufactories. The Spirit of Disorder then rapidly spread through the Neighbourhood, inflammatory Placards inviting the People to a general Rising were dispersed, illegal Oaths were administered, Riots were produced in various Places, Houses were plundered by Persons in disguise, and a Report was industriously circulated, that a general Rising would take place on the First of May, or early in that Month.

This Spirit of Riot and Disturbance was extended to many other Places, and particularly to Ashton-under-Line, Eccles, and Middleton; at the latter Place the Manufactory of Mr. Burton was attacked on the 20th of April, and

and although the Rioters were then repulsed, and Five of their Number were killed by the Military Force assembled to protect the Works, a Second Attack was made on the 22d of April, and Mr. Burton's Dwelling House was burnt before Military Assistance could be brought to his Support; when Troops arrived to protect the Works, they were fired upon by the Rioters, and before the Rioters could be dispersed several of them were killed and wounded; according to the Accounts received, at least Three were killed, and about Twenty wounded.

On the 14th of April Riots again prevailed at Stockport; the House of Mr. Goodwin was set on Fire, and his Steam Looms were destroyed. In the following Night a Meeting of Rioters on a Heath about Two Miles from the Town, for the Purpose as supposed of being trained for Military Exercise, was surpris'd and dispersed; Contributions were also levied in the Neighbourhood at the Houses of Gentlemen and Farmers:

About the same Time Riots also took place at Manchester, and in the Neighbourhood; of which the general Pretence was the high Price of Provisions. On the 26th and 27th of April the People of Manchester were alarmed by the Appearance of some Thousands of Strangers in their Town, the greater Part of them however disappeared on the 28th; Part of the Local Militia had been then called out, and a large Military Force had arrived, which it was supposed had over-awed those who were disposed to Disturbance. An Apprehension, however, prevailed of a more general rising in May, and in the Neighbourhood of the Town many Houses were plundered. Nocturnal Meetings for the Purpose of Military Exercise were frequent; Arms were seized in various Places by the disaffected; the House of a Farmer near Manchester was plundered, and a Labourer coming to his Assistance was shot.

The Manner in which the disaffected have carried on their Proceedings is represented as demonstrating an extraordinary Degree of Concert, Secrecy, and Organization. Their Signals were well contrived and well established; and any Attempt to detect and lay hold of the Offenders was generally defeated.

The same Spirit of Riot and Disturbance appeared at Bolton-in-the-Moors. So early as the 6th of April, Intelligence was given, that at a Meeting of Delegates from several Places it had been resolved, that the Manufactory at West Haughton, in that Neighbourhood, should be destroyed, but that at a subsequent Meeting it had been determined that the Destruction of this Manufactory should be postponed. On the 24th of April, however, the Destruction of this Manufactory was accomplished. Intelligence having been obtained of the intended Attack, a Military Force was sent for its Protection, and the Assaultants dispersed before the Arrival of the Military, who then returned to their Quarters; the Rioters taking Advantage of their Absence, assailed and forced the Manufactory, set it on Fire, and again dispersed before the Military could be brought again to the Spot.

Symptoms of the same Spirit appeared at Newcastle-under-Line, Wigan, Warrington, and other Towns; and the Contagion in the mean Time had spread to Carlisle and into Yorkshire.

In Huddersfield, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and in the Neighbourhood, the Destruction of Dressing and Shearing Machines and Shears began early in February; Fire Arms were seized during the Course of March, and a Constable was shot at in his own House. In March a great Number of Machines belonging to Mr. Vicarman near Huddersfield were destroyed, and in April the Destruction of Bradley Mills near Huddersfield was threatened, and afterwards attempted, but the Mills were protected by a Guard, which defeated the Attempt. About the same Time the Machinery of Mr. Rhodes' Mill at Tentwistle, near to Stockport, was utterly destroyed; and Mr. Horsfall, a respectable Merchant and Mill Owner, in the Neighbourhood of Huddersfield, was shot about Six o'Clock in the Afternoon, in broad Day-light, on the 28th of April returning from Market, and died on the 30th of the same Month.

A Reward of £2000. was offered for the Discovery of the Murderers, but no Discovery has yet been made, though it appears that he was shot by Four Persons, each of whom lodged a Ball in his Body; that when he fell, the Populace surrounded and reviled him, instead of offering him Assistance, and no Attempt was made to secure the Assassins, who were seen to retire to an adjoining Wood. Some time after, a young Woman was attacked in the Streets of Leeds, and nearly murdered, her Skull being fractured; and the supposed Reason for this Violence was an Apprehension that she had been near the Spot when Mr. Horsfall was murdered; and might therefore be able to give Evidence which might lead to the Detection of the Murderers.

The Town of Leeds had for some Time before been much alarmed by Information that Attacks were intended to be made on Places in the Town and in its Neighbourhood, which induced the Magistrates to desire a strong Military Force, and to appoint a great Number of respectable Inhabitants of the Town Special Constables, by which Means the Peace of the Town was in a great Degree preserved.

Early, however, in the Morning of the 24th of March, the Mills of Messrs. Thompsons at Rawdon, a large Village about Eight Miles from Leeds, was attacked by a large Body of armed Men, who proceeded with great Regularity and Caution, first seizing the Watchman at the Mill, and placing Guards at every neighbouring Cottage, threatening Death to any who should attempt to give Alarm, and then forcibly entering the Mill, they completely destroyed the Machinery. In the following Night, notwithstanding the Precautions adopted, the Buildings belonging to Messrs. Dickinsons in Leeds, were forcibly entered, and the whole of the Goods there, consisting principally of Cloths, were cut to Pieces. Many other Persons in Leeds were threatened with similar Treatment, and the Proceedings at this Place are represented to have had for their Object, the Destruction of all Descriptions of Goods prepared otherwise than by manual Labour.

At Leverfedge, near Hockmondwicke, which is in the Neighbourhood of the Moors dividing Lancashire and Yorkshire, an Attack was made early in the Morning of the 12th of April by a Body of armed Men, represented to have been between Two and Three Hundred in Number, on a valuable Mill belonging to Mr. Cartwright. The Mill was defended with great Courage by Mr. Cartwright, the Proprietor, with the Assistance of Three of his Men and Five Soldiers, and the Assailants were at length compelled to retire, being unable to force an Entrance into the Mill, and their Ammunition probably failing. Two of the Assailants were left on the Spot deperately wounded, and were secured, but died of their Wounds. Many others are supposed to have been also wounded, and Information was afterwards obtained of the Death of one of them. When the Assailants retired, they declared a Determination to take Mr. Cartwright's Life by any Means. One of the wounded Men who was left on the Spot was only Nineteen Years of Age, and Son of a Man in a respectable Situation in the Neighbourhood; but neither this Man nor the other Prisoner would make any Confession respecting their Confederates in this Outrage. The neighbouring Inhabitants, who assembled about the Mill after the Rioters had retired, only expressed their Regret that the Attempt had failed. A vast Concourse of People attended the Funeral of the young Man before described, who died of his Wounds; and there was found written on Walls in many Places, "Vengeance for the Blood of the Innocent."

The Threats against Mr. Cartwright's Life were attempted to be put into Execution on the 18th of April, when he was Twice shot at in the Road from Huddersfield to Rawfold. About the same Time a Shot was fired at a Special Constable on Duty at Leeds, and a Ball was fired at Night into the House of Mr. Armitage, a Magistrate in the Neighbourhood, and lodged in the Ceiling of his Bed Room; Colonel Campbell also, who commanded the Troops at Leeds, was shot at in the Night of the 8th of May, upon returning to his own House, by Two Men who discharged their Pieces at him within the Distance of Twenty Yards, and immediately after a Third Shot was fired, directed towards the Room usually occupied by Colonel Campbell and his Family.

At Horbury, near Wakefield, valuable Mills were attacked on the 9th of April by an armed Body, supposed to consist of 300 Men; the Machinery and considerable Property were destroyed. The Men who committed the Outrage were seen on the Road between Wakefield and Horbury, marching in regular Sections, preceded by a mounted Party with drawn Swords, and followed by the same Number of mounted Men as a Rear Guard. They were supposed to have assembled from Huddersfield, Duesbury, Hickmondwicke, Guilderfome, Morley, Wakefield, and other Places.

In many Parts of this District of Country the Well-disposed were so much under the Influence of Terror that the Magistrates were unable to give Protection by putting the Watch and Ward Act in Execution, and the lower Orders are represented as generally either Abettors of or Participants in the Outrages committed, or so intimidated, that they dared not to interfere.

At Sheffield the Storehouse of Arms of the Local Militia was surprized in the Month of May, a large Proportion of the Arms were broken by the Mob, and many taken away; this Disturbance, however, seems to have been followed by no further Consequences, and the Remainder of the Arms were secured.

But during the Months of May and June Depredations of different Kinds, and particularly the Seizure of Arms, continued to be nightly committed in other Parts of Yorkshire; and it is represented that in the Neighbourhood of Huddersfield and Birstall the Arms of all the peaceable Inhabitants had been swept away by Bands of armed Robbers. In consequence of these Outrages the Vice Lieutenant of the West Riding, the Deputy Lieutenants and Magistrates assembled at Wakefield on the 11th of June, and came to a Resolution 'That the most alarming Consequences were to be apprehended from the nightly Depredations which were committed by Bodies of armed Men.' At the same Time this remarkable Circumstance was stated, that amongst One hundred Depositions taken by the Magistrates of the Facts of Robberies committed, there was only one as to the Perpetrator of the Crime.

During the latter Part of this Period, it is represented that nightly Robberies of Arms, Lead and Ammunition, were prevalent in the Districts bounded by the Rivers Air and Calder, and that the Patroles which went along both Banks of the Calder found the People in the ill-affected Villages up at Midnight, and heard the firing of small Arms at short Distances from them, through the whole Night, to a very great Extent; which they imagined proceeded from Parties at Drill. In the Corner of Cheshire, touching upon Yorkshire and Lancashire, in the Neighbourhood and to the Eastward of Ashton, Stockport, and Moltram, nocturnal Meetings were more frequent than ever, and the Seizure of Arms carried on with great Perseverance. Peculiar Difficulties are stated to exist in this Quarter from the Want of Magistrates.

Your Committee have not thought it necessary to detail, or even to state all the Outrages which have been committed in different Parts of the Country, but have selected from the great Mass of Materials before them, such Facts only as appeared to them sufficient to mark the Extent and Nature of those Disturbances.

The Causes alledged for these destructive Proceedings have been generally the Want of Employment for the Working Manufacturers, a Want, however, which has been the least felt in some of the Places where the Disorders have been most prevalent, the Application of Machinery to supply the Place of Labour, and the high Price of Provisions; but it is the Opinion of Persons, both in Civil and Military Stations, well acquainted with the State of the Country, an Opinion grounded upon various Informations from different Quarters now before your Committee, but which for obvious Reasons they do not think proper to detail, that the Views of some of the Persons engaged in these Proceedings have extended to Revolutionary Measures of the most dangerous Description.

Their

Their Proceedings manifest a Degree of Caution and Organization which appears to flow from the Direction of some Persons under whose Influence they act ; but it is the Opinion of a Person, whose Situation gives him great Opportunities of Information, that their Leaders, although they may possess considerable Influence, are still of the lowest Orders ; Men of desperate Fortunes, who have taken Advantage of the Pressure of the Moment to work upon the inferior Class, through the Medium of the Associations in the manufacturing Parts of the Country.

The general Persuasion of the Persons engaged in these Transactions appear however to be, that all the Societies in the Country are directed in their Motions by a Secret Committee, and that this Secret Committee is therefore the great Mover of the whole Machine ; and it is established by the various Information to which the Committee has before alluded, that Societies are formed in different Parts of the Country ; that these Societies are governed by their respective Secret Committees ; that Delegates are continually dispatched from one Place to another, for the Purpose of concerting their Plans ; and that secret Signs are arranged, by which the Persons engaged in these Conspiracies are known to each other. The Form of the Oath or Engagement administered to those who are enlisted in these Societies, also refers expressly to the Existence of such Secret Committees.

The Object of this Oath is to prevent Discovery, by deterring through the Fear of Assassination those who take it from impeaching others, and by binding them to assassinate those by whom any of the Persons engaged may be impeached. These Oaths appear to have been administered to a considerable Extent ; Copies of them have been obtained from various Quarters, and though slightly differing in Terms, they are so nearly the same, as to prove the systematic Nature of the Concert by which they are administered.

The Oath itself is of so atrocious a Nature, that Your Committee have thought it right to insert the Form, as it appears in one of those Copies :

‘ I *A.B.* of my own voluntary Will, do declare and solemnly swear,
 ‘ That I never will reveal to any Person or Persons under the Canopy
 ‘ of Heaven the Names of the Persons who compose this Secret Com-
 ‘ mittee, their Proceedings, Meeting, Places of Abode, Drefs, Features,
 ‘ Connections, or any Thing else that might lead to a Discovery of the
 ‘ same, either by Word or Deed, or Sign, under the Penalty of being
 ‘ sent out of the World by the first Brother who shall meet me, and my
 ‘ Name and Character blotted out of Existence, and never to be remem-
 ‘ bered but with Contempt and Abhorrence ; and I further now do swear,
 ‘ that I will use my best Endeavours to punish by Death any Traitor or
 ‘ Traitors, should any rise up amongst us, wherever I can find him or
 ‘ them, and though he should fly to the Verge of Nature, I will pursue
 ‘ him with increasing Vengeance. So help me God, and bless me to
 ‘ keep this my Oath inviolable.’

The Military Organization carried on by Persons engaged in these Societies has also proceeded to an alarming Length ; they assemble in large
 (158.) C Numbers,

Numbers, in general by Night, upon Heaths or Commons, which are numerous and extensive in some of the Districts where the Disturbances have been most serious; so assembled they take the usual Military Precautions of Patrols and Counter-signs; then Muster Rolls are called over by Numbers not by Names, they are directed by Leaders sometimes in Disguise, they place Sentries to give Alarm at the Approach of any Persons whom they may suspect of meaning to interrupt or give Information of their Proceedings, and they disperse instantly at the firing of a Gun, or other Signal agreed upon, and so disperse as to avoid Detection. They have in some Instances used Signals by Rockets or Blue Lights, by which they communicate Intelligence to their Parties.

They have procured a considerable Quantity of Arms, by the Depredations which are daily and nightly continued; they have plundered many Places of Lead; for the Purpose of making Musket Balls, and have made some Seizures of Gunpowder.

Their Progress in Discipline appears from the Representation before given of the Two Attacks upon the Mills of Rawdon and Henbury; and the Money, which has been in many Instances obtained by Contribution or Plunder, answers the Purpose of Support, and may serve as an Inducement to many Persons to engage in these Disturbances.

The System of Intimidation produced not only by the Oaths and Engagements before mentioned, or by Threats of Violence, but by the Attack and Destruction of Houses and Factories, by actual Assassination in some Instances, and Attempts at Assassination in others, under Circumstances which have hitherto generally baffled all Endeavours to discover and bring to Justice the Offenders, all tend to render these Proceedings greatly alarming to the Country. In many Parts the quiet Inhabitants consider themselves as enjoying Protection only as far as the Military Force can extend its Exertions, and look upon the Rest of the Country where the Disturbances take place as at the Mercy of the Rioters.

The legal Proceedings at Nottingham checked the Disposition to Disturbance in that Quarter, but this Effect did not extend to other Parts of the Country; and though the Proceedings under the Special Commissions since issued, and the Convictions and Executions at Lancaster and Chester appeared to make a considerable Impression, they have been far from restoring Peace and Security to the disturbed Districts.

A great Military Force has been assembled; the Local Militia has been in many Places called out, and has done good Service; the Yeomanry Corps have been active and highly useful. Many of the Magistrates have zealously exerted their Powers, some of them at great personal Hazard. In many Places great Numbers of Special Constables have been appointed from amongst the more respectable Inhabitants, and the Watch and Ward Act has been in some Places put in force, though attempted without Effect in others, or abandoned from Circumstances already stated. All these Efforts have proved insufficient effectually to put down the Spirit of Disturbance; and it is therefore the decided Opinion of your Committee, that
some

some further Measures should be immediately adopted by Parliament for affording more effectual Protection to the Lives and Properties of His Majesty's Subjects, and for suppressing a System of Turbulence and Disorder which has already proved destructive of the Tranquillity and highly injurious to the Property and Welfare of some of the most populous and important Districts of the Country, and which, unless effectually checked, may lead to Consequences still more extensive and dangerous.

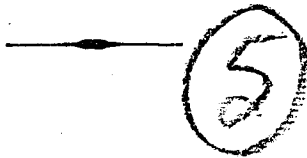
R E P O R T

FROM THE

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY,

ON

PAPERS, which were presented (Sealed up) to The House,
by Lord Viscount *Castlereagh*, on the 4th day of February, by
Command of His Royal Highness The PRINCE REGENT.



Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
19 February 1817.

R E P O R T.

THE COMMITTEE OF SECRECY, to whom the several PAPERS, which were presented (Sealed up) to The House, by Lord Viscount *Castlereagh*, on the 4th day of February, by Command of His Royal Highness The PRINCE REGENT, were referred, and who were directed to examine the Matters thereof, and report the same, as they should appear to them, to The House;—HAVE unanimously agreed to the following REPORT.

IT appears to Your Committee, from the most attentive consideration of the several Documents referred to them, that attempts have been made, in various parts of the Country, as well as in the Metropolis, to take advantage of the Distress in which the labouring and manufacturing Classes of the Community are at present involved, to induce them to look for immediate relief, not only in a Reform of Parliament on the plan of universal suffrage and annual election, but in a total overthrow of all existing Establishments, and in a division of the Landed, and extinction of the Funded property of the Country.

This hope and prospect of spoliation have been actively and industriously propagated by several Societies, openly existing in the Metropolis, distinguished by the name of *Spenceans*; a title which they have assumed in consequence of having revived the principles, with some variation, of a visionary writer of the name of *Spence*, which first appeared in a publication of his near Twenty years ago.

It appears that at some of these Societies, held during the last month, the question was discussed, whether the meetings for Parliamentary Reform are calculated to mislead or enlighten the Public. In the course of the debates upon which question, it was strongly urged "that Parliamentary Reform was only an half measure, that they must look to the Land, for nothing short of that would ever avail them: That we had no Constitution, there being no book in which it could be found, nor any man that could tell what it was." In another discussion upon the question, "Whether the practical establishment of *Spence's* Plan be an effectual remedy for the present distresses," one of the doctrines maintained was, that "the Landholder was a monster to be hunted down; but that they should not suffer themselves to be amused; that there was a greater evil, namely, the Fundholder; that these were the rapacious wretches, that took fifteen pence out of every quartern loaf."

It further appears, that in these meetings the most blasphemous expressions and doctrines are openly and repeatedly advanced; that as the meetings are professed to be of a convivial nature, the political debates and readings are usually followed by Songs, in many of which the most inflammatory topics are introduced, some of a seditious and treasonable nature, and others under the form of profane and indecent parodies of the Liturgy and of the holy Scriptures.

These Societies appear to have extended themselves; and there are traces of the existence of a Committee called *Conservative*, directing the operations of the whole. The doctrines above mentioned have been systematically and industriously disseminated amongst Mechanics and Manufacturers, discharged Soldiers and Sailors, and Labourers of all descriptions: They have been inculcated at frequent appointed meetings

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE OF SECRECY

meetings, and at various places, by Speakers, who have made the distresses of the times topics of excitement and inflammation; and they have been circulated, with incredible activity and perseverance, in cheap and often gratuitous publications. It has been proved, to the entire satisfaction of Your Committee, that some members of these Societies, acting by delegated or assumed authority, as an executive Committee of the whole, conceived the project, and endeavoured to prepare the means of raising an Insurrection, so formidable from numbers, as by dint of physical strength to overpower all resistance.

The first step towards the accomplishment of this object was, by the individual exertion of the members of the Committee, to discover and foment the prevalent distresses and discontents in the Metropolis and its vicinity. Returns were made of those, who they thought were to be relied upon for daring and hazardous enterprizes.

The design was by a sudden rising in the dead of the night, to surprize and overpower the Soldiers in their different barracks, which were to be set on fire; at the same time (plans having been arranged, and some steps taken, with a view to the accomplishment of that object) to possess themselves of the artillery, to seize or destroy the bridges, and to take possession of the Tower and the Bank. In furtherance of this design, a machine was projected for clearing the streets of cavalry. A drawing of this machine, fully authenticated, and also a manuscript sketch or plan of various important parts of the Tower, found with the drawing of the machine, have been laid before Your Committee.

This design was however relinquished a short time before its intended execution. It was thought more prudent previously to ascertain what force the Conspirators could actually call together, and this it was agreed could best be done by convening a public meeting, for the ostensible purpose of obtaining a redress of grievances in a legal way. The map of London was inspected, and Spa Fields were selected as the most eligible spot, from their vicinity to the Bank and the Tower. Advertisements were accordingly prepared, and written placards circulated, of the most dangerous and inflammatory nature; of one of which the following is a copy:

“ BRITONS TO ARMS!

“ THE whole Country waits the signal from London to fly to Arms! Haste,
“ Break open Gunsmiths and other likely places to find Arms! Run all constables
“ who touch a man of us; no rise of Bread; no Regent; no Castlereagh, off
“ with their heads; no Placemen, Tythes, or Enclosures; no Taxes; no Bishops,
“ only useless lumber! Stand true, or be Slaves for ever.”

“ N. B.—Five thousand of these Bills are up in the Town, and printed ones,
“ with further particulars, will appear in due time.”

At this time, if not before, the intended Insurrection assumed the symbols of the French Revolution; a Committee of public Safety, consisting of 24, was agreed upon, including the names of several persons, extremely unlikely to lend themselves to such a cause. A tricolor Flag and Cockades were actually prepared; the flag was openly carried and displayed at the first meeting which took place in Spa Fields on the 15th of November. No acts of violence were however encouraged on that day, though some few instances of plunder occurred after the assembly dispersed, but care was taken to adjourn the meeting to the 2d of December, by which time it was hoped that the preparations for Insurrection would be fully matured. Not a moment was lost in advertising the next meeting, and great assiduity was employed in circulating the intelligence through all the great manufacturing towns in the Country, by means of placards and hand-bills; endeavours were used to raise subscriptions; the expense hitherto incurred in forwarding the object of the Conspiracy, and in supporting such inferior members of it as had relinquished their trades and occupations in order to devote their whole time to the furtherance of the cause, having been hitherto principally defrayed by one individual of the Committee. Plans for the seduction of the Soldiers were now adopted and pursued with unremitting activity; appeals were made to excite their sympathy, and induce them not to act against the insurgents; attempts were made to inflame their hopes by promises of rank and reward, and to alarm their jealousy by the absurd fiction of the actual landing of a considerable foreign army, for the purpose of controlling them.

ON PAPERS. (SEALED UP) PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE. 3

The Barracks were again reconnoitered with a view to attack. The manufacture of tricolor-ribbon was encouraged, with a view of rendering it familiar to the eyes of the Public.

Visits were repeated to those quarters of the Town, where the distress was considered as the most prevalent; and warehouses along the River, as well as shops in other places, which were known to contain Arms, Combustibles, and Clothing, were examined and noted down, with the view of seizing those articles on the proper occasion. Plans were also formed for seducing the Sailors on the River, by offers of advancement to high rank under the new government, and for seizing and equipping such Ships as were accessible. Immediately previous to the day of meeting, Arms were provided for the immediate use of some of the persons most actively engaged. This provision was deemed sufficient for the beginning of the Insurrection, as they felt confident that if it should be successful for two hours, as many Arms might be procured as would be necessary, from the depôts and gunsmiths shops, which had been reconnoitered with that view.

Your Committee have further received undoubted information that a large quantity of Pike heads had been ordered of one individual, and 250 actually made by him, and delivered and paid for. It was also undoubtedly intended to liberate the prisoners in the principal gaols in or about the Metropolis, in the hope of their concurrence and assistance in the intended Insurrection. Addresses were introduced into some of those prisons, and recommended to be communicated to others, in which the persons confined were invited, in the name of the Tri-colored Committee, to rally round the Tri-colored Standard, which would be erected on Monday, December the 2d, and to wear Tri-colored Cockades themselves. It was promised that the Prisoners should be liberated by force, and arms were stated to be provided for them, and they were directed to be ready to assist in overpowering the turnkeys. A waggon was hired for the business of the day, in which the Flags and Banner or Standard, which had been previously prepared, together with some Ammunition, were secretly conveyed to the place of meeting. From this waggon, before the ostensible business of the day commenced, in the other part of the field, the most inflammatory speeches were delivered, tending directly to excite Insurrection, concluded by an appeal to the Multitude assembled, whether they were prepared to redress their own grievances. A Tricolor-Cockade was then exhibited, and the Tricolor-Flag was displayed, and a number of persons followed it out of the field.

The direction which they took was towards that part of the Town previously designed; gunsmiths shops were broken open, addresses and offers were made to the Soldiers at the Tower to induce them to open the gates; but from the failure of the numbers expected to join the Insurgents, no attempt was made to force the gates. An attack was however made upon the City Magistrates assembled in the Royal Exchange, a shot fired, and a Tricolor-Flag and Cockade openly displayed and seized on the offender.

In reviewing the whole of the transactions of the 2d of December, Your Committee are firmly persuaded, that, however improbable the success of such a Plan may appear, it yet was deliberately premeditated by desperate men, who calculated without reasonable ground upon defection in their opposers, and upon active support from those multitudes, whose distress they had witnessed, and whom they had vainly instigated to revolt. That consequently it was not merely the sudden ebullition of the moment, or the unauthorized attempt of any unconnected individual.

Your Committee are further convinced, that notwithstanding the failure on the 2d of December, the same designs still continue to be prosecuted with sanguine hopes of success.

Your Committee having thus stated the general result of the evidence which has been laid before them, respecting the state of the Metropolis, have now the no less painful duty of calling the attention of the House to what has been passing during the same period in different parts of the Country, a subject of equally momentous consideration. The first thing which has here forced itself upon their observation, is the widely diffused ramification of a system of Clubs; associated professedly for the purpose of Parliamentary Reform, upon the most extended principle of universal suffrage and annual parliaments. These Clubs in general designate themselves by the same name of Hampden Clubs. On the professed object of their institution, they appear to be in communication and connection with the club of that name in London.

It appears to be part of the system of these Clubs, to promote an extension of Clubs of the same name and nature, so widely as, if possible, to include every Village in the Kingdom. The leading members are active in the circulation of publications likely to promote their object. Petitions, ready prepared, have been sent down from the Metropolis to all Societies in the Country disposed to receive them. The communication between these Clubs takes place by the mission of Delegates; Delegates from these Clubs in the Country, have assembled in London, and are expected to assemble again early in March. Whatever may be the real object of these Clubs in general, Your Committee have no hesitation in stating, from information on which they place full reliance, that in far the greater number of them, and particularly in those which are established in the great manufacturing districts of Lancashire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire, and which are composed of the lower order of Artizans, nothing short of a Revolution is the object expected and avowed.

Your Committee find, from equally undoubted information, that the doctrines of the *Spencean* Clubs have been widely diffused through the Country, either by the extension of similar Societies, or more frequently by the intervention of Missionaries or Delegates, whose business it is to propagate those doctrines throughout every Society to which they have access: It is the universal practice of these Societies, to require from the members a small weekly subscription, which provides a fund for the expenses of these Missionaries, and also for the purchase of seditious tracts, which are read and commented on at their meetings. Some of these tracts, now before Your Committee, inculcate in the most artful manner, the necessity of overturning what they call "The Privileged Class," as distinguished from the People, who are described as consisting of Labourers, Artizans, Tradesmen, and every profession useful to Society. A new Order is declared to be the will of the People; Rebellion is justified by the assertion that a Nation cannot be a rebel; and all Religion is disavowed, as well as Loyalty, by the assertion, in answer to the question, "Would you live without Gods or Kings?"—"We abjure tyranny of every kind."

It seems, indeed, to be a part of the system adopted by these Societies, to prepare the minds of the People for the destruction of the present frame of Society, by undermining not only their habits of decent and regular subordination, but all the principles of morality and religion. Your Committee find, that there is scarcely any very numerous Society, in the parts above referred to, of whose proceedings they have obtained an account, in which some of the leading Speakers do not openly avow the most seditious opinions; and do not excite their hearers to be prepared for actual Insurrection. Topics for discussion are selected with this view: Amongst others, the question, Whether the Jacobin or the Loyalist was the best friend to his Country? Even where petitioning is recommended, it is proposed to be conducted in such a manner, by an immense number of Delegates attending in London at the same time, in several parties, attached to each Petition, as might induce an effort to obtain by force whatever they demanded. A general idea seems prevalent among those who compose these Societies, that some fixed day, at no very great distance, is to be appointed for a general Rising. They have been taught to look to the Meetings in London as the signal for their operations, and have been in the habit of adjourning their own assemblies simultaneously to the same day; and it is a lamentable instance of the common interest which they feel, if not of the connection which is formed with those most implicated in the outrages committed in the Metropolis, that about Manchester and some other places, the greatest exultation was manifested previous to the meeting in Spa Fields on the 2d of December; and the taking of the Tower and the ruin of the Bank were publicly and confidently predicted. The news of the result was impatiently expected, the roads were crowded during the night with a number of persons, many of them Delegates from the different Societies in the Country, waiting for the arrival of the mail coach, and the disappointment was not concealed, when it was ascertained that the riot had been quelled without much serious or extensive mischief.

It appears, that the confidence of the Disaffected is such, that they represent the numbers enrolled as amounting to several hundred thousand, and that their Societies are daily increasing; that in their lists they distinguish by particular marks those among their subscribers who are able-bodied men, and ready to act when required; and that they also keep a list of those who refuse to join them in what they call a "Black Book," and threaten vengeance against these persons when the general insurrection

insurrection shall take place. In some parts of one populous county, where nearly every village has already its Hampden Club, the members make it no secret that they consider themselves as of no other use than as being ready to act whenever they are called upon; on their admission they are said to be listed, and receive a secret card with the words "Be Ready, Be Steady."

The habits and manners of these persons seem entirely changed; they already calculate upon the share of Land which each is to possess, and point out the destruction of the churches, as the necessary consequence of their success. It appears that preparations are in progress, in several places, for providing arms; the demand upon gunsmiths, for every species of fire arms, has been beyond all former example; the intention is professed, of having recourse for a still larger supply to those towns where arms are manufactured, and where they are to be obtained at a very low rate, from the general cheapness of labour at this time; or in case of necessity they are to be seized by force. The facility of converting implements of husbandry into offensive weapons, has been suggested; and persons have been sent to observe the state of particular places, where depôts of arms for the public service were supposed to have been formed.

Your Committee find, that a system of secret association has been extended to the manufacturing population of *Glasgow*, and some other populous towns of *Scotland*; and although these Societies have availed themselves of the same pretext, of Parliamentary Reform on the broadest basis, Your Committee are firmly persuaded, from the information which has been laid before them, that their ultimate object is the overthrow by force of the existing form of Government. That the time for attempting this enterprize was to depend on the simultaneous rising of the Disaffected in *England*; with some Emissaries from whom occasional intercourse appears to have taken place, and that some provision of weapons has been made by this association.

Your Committee have now submitted to the House, what they conceive to be a fair, and not exaggerated Statement of the result of their investigation. They have thought themselves precluded from inserting in an Appendix, the information from which it is drawn, by the consideration, that unless it were extremely partial and incomplete, they could not make it public without hazarding the personal safety of many useful and many respectable individuals, and in some instances without prejudicing the due administration of public Justice.

On a review of the whole, it is a great satisfaction to Your Committee to observe, that, notwithstanding the alarming progress which has been made in the system of extending Disaffection and secret Societies, its success has been confined to the principal manufacturing districts, where the distress is more prevalent, and numbers more easily collected; and that even in many of these districts, privations have been borne with exemplary patience and resignation, and the attempts of the Disaffected have been disappointed; that few if any of the higher orders or even of the middle class of Society, and scarcely any of the agricultural population, have lent themselves to the more violent of these projects. Great allowance must be made for those who, under the pressure of urgent distress, have been led to listen to plausible and confident Demagogues, in the expectation of immediate relief. It is to be hoped, that many of those who have engaged, to a certain extent, in the projects of the Disaffected, but in whom the principles of moral and religious duty have not been extinguished or perverted by the most profane and miserable sophistry, would withdraw themselves before those projects were pushed to actual insurrection.

But, with all these allowances, Your Committee cannot contemplate the activity and arts of the Leaders in this Conspiracy, and the numbers whom they have already seduced, and may seduce; the oaths by which many of them are bound together; the means suggested and prepared for the forcible attainment of their objects; the nature of the objects themselves, which are not only the overthrow of all the political institutions of the Kingdom, but also such a subversion of the rights and principles of Property, as must necessarily lead to general confusion, plunder, and bloodshed; without submitting, to the most serious attention of The House, the Dangers which exist, and which the utmost vigilance of Government, under the existing laws, has been found inadequate to prevent.

REPORT

FROM THE

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY,

ON PAPERS which were presented (Sealed up)
to The House, by Lord Viscount *Castlereagh*,
on the 4th day of February, by Command of
His Royal Highness The PRINCE REGENT.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
19 February 1817.

SECOND REPORT

FROM THE

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 20 June 1817.

THE COMMITTEE OF SECRECY, to whom the several PAPERS which were presented (Sealed up) to The House, by Lord Viscount Castlereagh, on the 5th day of this instant June, by Command of His Royal Highness THE PRINCE REGENT, were referred, and who were directed to examine the Matters thereof, and report the same, as they should appear to them, to The House;—HAVE, pursuant to the Order of The House, examined the same accordingly, and agreed to the following REPORT:

IN forming an opinion on the present internal situation of the Country, Your Committee could not fail to bear in mind the information laid before them, at an early part of the Session, upon which their first Report was founded.

The Papers now communicated to the Committee, continue the narrative of the proceedings of the Disaffected in the counties before referred to, viz. Lancashire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire (to which, part of Yorkshire and the towns of Birmingham and Stockport, must now be added) from the period of that Report down to the present time.

Your Committee find in these Papers, not only a complete corroboration of the justness of the apprehensions, which they then expressed, but proofs equally decisive of the continuance of the same machinations, and designs, breaking out into fresh acts of violence and insurrection, up to the present moment.

Your Committee stated in their former Report; that “even where petitioning was recommended, it was proposed to be conducted in such a manner, by an immense number of Delegates, attending in London at the same time, in several parties, attached to each petition, as might induce an effort to obtain by force whatever they demanded; and that a general idea seemed prevalent, that some fixed day, at no very great distance, was to be appointed for a general rising.”

The first attention of Your Committee has been directed to the proceedings of the public meeting, held early in March, in the Town of Manchester. At that meeting, which consisted of persons assembled from various towns and populous villages in the vicinity of Manchester, as well as of inhabitants of Manchester itself, it was proposed by the same leaders, who had previously attracted the notice of your Committee, that the Petitioners should assemble, at the same place, on Monday the 10th of that month, prepared to set out on a march to London, to present their Petition themselves to The Prince Regent in person; that they should form themselves into parties of ten each; (which arrangement was proposed with the professed view of not transgressing the law) and that they should supply themselves with provisions for the march, and with blankets for the purpose of sleeping on the ground.

At many other meetings previous to the 10th, which, though comparatively private, were yet numerous attended, it was represented to them, by their orators, that they would be surrounded by the police and the military, and that they would be an easy

prey if they proceeded without arms for their protection. They were assured, however, that their numbers, which, in the course of their progress, would amount to not less than 100,000, would make it impossible ultimately to resist them. It was stated, that all the large towns in Yorkshire were adopting the same plan, that the Scotch were actually on their march, and that if the Petitioners could once reach Nottingham, or Birmingham, the business would be done. They were advised to choose leaders over each subdivision of Tens, Fifties, and Hundreds, and to appoint a Treasurer to receive contributions, which were actually made in a great number of small sums, out of which fund they were taught to expect that each man would be supplied with a daily allowance.

A Petition was accordingly prepared, with a copy of which every tenth man was furnished; and which concluded by stating to His Royal Highness, that, without the change which they demanded, "they could neither support Him, nor themselves;" and they were told, that if their Petition was rejected, they must demand it; if still rejected, they must force it, and say they would be righted. It appears, that some of the persons apprehended, were fully prepared to act up to these instructions; though it is to be presumed, that many of them had no very definite idea of the way in which their services were to be employed; and that even among their leaders, some of the more moderate reckoned rather upon intimidation, than upon the actual employment of force. At one of those more private meetings however, which preceded the general assembly, one of those persons, who appeared to have most influence, avowed himself a Republican and Leveller; and professed his determination never to give up till they had established a Republican Government: The examples of the insurrection in the reign of Richard II, and of the rebellion in Ireland in 1798, were held out, as objects of imitation; and the most violent of such declarations was generally received with the strongest marks of applause.

In consequence of these preparations, the public meeting proposed took place at the time appointed; and was attended by probably near 12,000 persons: Many of these proceeded to the ground in regular order, with knapsacks on their backs, and notwithstanding the assembly was dispersed by the military, acting under the orders of the Magistrates, and the principal leaders were apprehended, under warrants from the Secretary of State, a considerable number actually marched off on their way to London; many were intercepted before they reached Stockport, but several found their way as far as Ashbourn.

The Act for enabling His Majesty to detain suspected persons had now passed; most of those, who had rendered themselves most conspicuous in exciting disaffection in this part of the country, had either been apprehended, or had secreted themselves; and all hopes were precluded of any immediate result from the assembly which had been so long concerted; yet it appears to Your Committee, from a variety of concurrent testimony, on which they rely, that the previous organization had been extended so widely, and the expectation of ultimate success had been so confidently entertained, that these circumstances produced no other effect on the great body of the Discontented, than to delay the explosion, which had so long been meditated; to occasion the discontinuance of the more open meetings of the association; and to call forth the exertions of new leaders, who were determined (in their own phrase) to "re-organize the party." Meetings were accordingly held in several of the townships in the neighbourhood of Manchester, between the 10th and 25th of March, with more privacy, but under the established system of delegation, at which only the deputies from the disaffected places were present; and at which it was resolved to promote a general rising at Manchester, on Sunday the 30th of March, or the following day. A meeting was appointed for the leaders at Ardwick Bridge, close to Manchester, on the Friday before that day; where they expected to receive information from Birmingham, Sheffield, and other places, with which they were in communication; having previously learnt from an emissary, who had visited Huddersfield and Leeds, that the Disaffected in that part of the country were all ready to begin at any time, and were preparing arms for the purpose. The design was to assemble as many as could be collected, in the night, at Manchester; to attack the barracks, the police office, the prison, the houses of Magistrates and Constables, and the banks, in separate parties; and to set fire to the factories in the town. It was even declared by one of the conspirators, that this last atrocity was intended for the purpose of increasing the prevalent distress, in the hope of thereby adding to the numbers of the discontented, by throwing the workmen out
of

of employment. It was calculated that two or three thousand men would be enough to commence these operations, as they reckoned upon being joined by 50,000 at the dawn of day. A Proclamation was said to be prepared, in order to be produced on this occasion, justifying the revolt, and absolving the insurgents from their allegiance. Expectations were held out, that a general insurrection would take place, at the same time, in different parts of the counties of Lancaster, York, Warwick, Leicester, Nottingham, Chester and Stafford; and though some of these, particularly the two latter counties, may have been included without any sufficient ground, Your Committee see just reason to apprehend, that a successful insurrection at Manchester would have been followed by partial risings, to an alarming amount, in each of the other counties. Some preparations were made for providing ammunition, with a view to the arms, which it was intended to seize. The execution of this plan was defeated by the vigilance of the Magistrates, who being apprised of what was in agitation, made a communication to the Secretary of State, by whom warrants were immediately issued, and the ringleaders, assembled at Ardwick Bridge, were consequently seized on the 28th. The Magistrates of Manchester thereupon published an address to the inhabitants, announcing the danger, and calling upon the householders to be sworn as special constables, and to assist in preserving the peace of the town. This plan of the disaffected, being thus discovered, and deranged, they became more wary, and secret, in their proceedings; but in the moment of disappointment, declarations were made, that it would be impossible to prevent the rising for a month longer. The assassination of persons most obnoxious to their resentment was suggested by some of the most desperate of the conspirators; an attack was made upon the house of one of the Magistrates; the life of another was threatened; and a pistol was fired into the house of a gentleman, who was acting as a special constable. Shortly after this period, it appears to have been discussed, whether it would not be more prudent to discontinue the appointment of delegates, and to rely only upon one man in each town, who might call the disaffected together a short time before the intended insurrection, and seize on horses, preparatory to the attack on Manchester. But notwithstanding this proposition, the same system of connected operation by means of delegates was indefatigably persevered in.

Delegates from Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, Derby, Leeds, Sheffield, Wakefield, Huddersfield, and other places in the disturbed part of the country, either constantly or occasionally attended these meetings. The numbers assembled were not large, but the activity was unceasing; emissaries were continually passing from one of those places to another, to compare their accounts of the state of the public mind; to foment the irritation among the disaffected; and to combine some general plan of simultaneous, or connected insurrection; the object of which was, after consolidating a sufficient force, to march upon London, and there to overturn the existing Government, and to establish a Republic. The same designs were continued of attacking the barracks, and depôts, in different parts of the country; (one of which was particularly reconnoitred with that view), of plundering the houses of noblemen and gentlemen, where arms were supposed to be lodged; of seizing the Magistrates and keeping them as hostages, and as authorities for levying contributions on the country; of disarming the soldiers by night, in their quarters, or seducing them from their duty; and of providing arms for themselves, partly by these seizures, and partly by an easy method of forming pike heads out of common tools and utensils.

It appears to Your Committee, that the utmost confidence prevailed among the delegates, as to the ultimate attainment of their object; that the successive arrests of several of the principal leaders, though they occasioned momentary disappointment, did not extinguish the spirit of insurrection, or the hopes of success, in the parts of the country above mentioned; and the utmost impatience was manifested, at the delays which had taken place in fixing the day for the general rising. This, after several postponements, was appointed for the Monday in Whitsun Week, and was afterwards again postponed to the 9th of June, which was thought more favourable for a midnight insurrection, as the moon would then be in the wane. Notice of this last appointment had been so widely circulated, that it became almost of public notoriety; which while, it awakened the attention of those, whose duty it was to preserve the public peace, did not appear to derange the preparations of those, who were disposed to disturb it. Even where the planners of the insurrection suggested a farther delay, they found it impossible to restrain the impatience, which they had excited among their followers, who had forsaken their ordinary habits of industry,

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and who must either proceed to the immediate attainment of their object, or for the present relinquish it, and return to their accustomed occupations. On the 28th of May a meeting of delegates in the neighbourhood of Sheffield was dispersed, and some of the parties were apprehended; and on the 6th of June several persons described to be delegates, (and believed by Your Committee to be such,) who were assembled at another place in the same neighbourhood, were apprehended by the Magistrates of the Riding, assisted by the military; and the final arrangement of the plan, which was there to be settled, was thus happily frustrated. It was confidently expected, that these arrests would disconcert whatever measures were in preparation, and they appear to have had that effect in the immediate vicinity of Sheffield; but the spirit which had been excited could not be wholly suppressed. In the neighbourhood of Huddersfield, in the night of the 8th instant, several houses were forcibly entered and plundered of arms. A considerable body of armed men were approaching the town, when a small patrol of Yeomanry Cavalry, attended by a peace officer, fell in with them, and was received with the discharge of several shot, by which one of their troop horses was wounded. The patrol having ascertained, that they were too few to oppose such numbers, thought it prudent to retreat, when several shots were fired after them without effect. On returning with an additional force to the spot, they found that the whole of the insurgents had disappeared; but guns fired as signals, in different directions, and lights shown on the heights throughout the country, sufficiently proved the extent of the confederacy, and the concert with which it was organized. In some populous villages of Derbyshire, a more open insurrection took place on the 9th of June. A delegate from this part of the country had attended a previous meeting at Nottingham, and an active emissary from thence had joined them in the course of the night. The insurrection began, according to the general plan proposed, with attacks upon houses, for the purpose of procuring arms; in one of which, a servant was wantonly shot; about 200 insurgents were soon assembled, mostly armed either with pikes or with fire arms; and began their march towards Nottingham, in expectation of increasing their numbers as they went, and of finding that place in full insurrection and prepared to support them. They were however intercepted by detachments of cavalry, (under the orders of active and intelligent magistrates) which came up with them in different directions, and totally dispersed them. Between 50 and 60 were taken, and lodged in the different gaols; many fire arms and pikes were taken at the same time, and a quantity of ammunition was found upon the persons of the prisoners.

Your Committee have thus stated the prominent points of the information, which has been laid before them, particularly as affecting the manufacturing districts in the Northern and Midland Counties, and which has been substantiated, in almost every particular, by depositions on oath, taken before magistrates. The character of the danger remains the same as was described in the former Report. It arises from the indefatigable exertions of persons in the lower ranks of life, or but little above them; of some popular talents, inflaming and aggravating the actual distress of a numerous manufacturing population, by exciting hopes of an immediate remedy to all their sufferings from a reform in Parliament, and preparing them (in despair of attaining that object) to attempt by force the total subversion of the established constitution of government.

Your Committee stated, in their former Report, that the mode of organization, practised with such mischievous success in the populous districts, had been in very many instances conducted under the cover of associations, called Hampden Clubs, formed for the ostensible purpose of procuring a Reform in Parliament; and they now find that in many instances, where the open meetings of those societies have been discontinued, several of the members of them have assembled more privately, and been the principal leaders in the projected combinations.

In their former Report they did not think it necessary to advert to that atrocious system of combination, outrage, and hired assassination, which has prevailed in some of the midland counties, under the name of Luddism; both because the trials of persons, charged with those crimes, were then known to be depending; and because the system itself did not then distinctly appear to Your Committee to have any immediate application to political purposes. But they have since found reason to believe, that those who are concerned in instigating the people to insurrection, have availed themselves of this powerful engine for the more extended purposes of political innovation.

Upon

Upon the whole, Your Committee have been anxious neither to exaggerate, or extenuate, the nature and extent of the danger. They have not been insensible to the jealousy, with which the testimony of persons, originally implicated in the designs, of the conspirators, or even of persons who never having engaged in those designs, have attended their meetings, in order to discover and report their proceedings, ought to be received; but the facts stated by Your Committee, rest not only upon confirmatory evidence, but on distinct, substantive, and satisfactory testimony; and although Your Committee have seen reason to apprehend, that the language and conduct of some persons from whom information has been derived, may in some instances, have had the effect of encouraging those designs, which it was intended they should only be the instruments of detecting; yet it is perfectly clear to Your Committee, that before any such encouragement could have been given, the plan of a simultaneous insurrection, in different parts of the Country, had been actually concerted, and its execution fully determined on.

Your Committee have the satisfaction to continue to believe, as they have before stated, that the danger, which they have described, is to be found only among the lower order of the manufacturing population, in particular parts of the country; many of whom are labouring under considerable privations, from the low rate of wages, and the increasing price of the necessaries of life; though Your Committee cannot but remark that the most active and determined insurgents are in many instances to be found among those, whose earnings, even in the present state of the manufactures, would enable them to support their families in comfort. They find that of the promoters of these commotions many have either left the country, or are prevented from prosecuting their designs. The Disaffected appear to want leaders to conduct such enterprizes as they have conceived; are frequently disconcerted by jealousy and distrust of each other, and by the consciousness that their plans are watched; and by the arrests of the ringleaders. Great as the numbers probably are, among whom disaffection, to an alarming extent, has made considerable progress, fomented at first by popular harangues, and still by the more powerful, and general excitement of seditious publications, Your Committee are fully aware, that the number of those, who are now prepared to take the lead in any project of open insurrection, is not to be estimated by the exaggerated reports of their delegates. Though they have been all along taught to look to London for countenance and support, though some of their own immediate emissaries have, from time to time, affected to bring them hopes of encouragement from that quarter, in case of success; and though it has been stated to Your Committee, that a delegate from the country has recently been attending a meeting of delegates in London; no specific information has been laid before Your Committee of the existence of any body of men, associated in the Metropolis, with whom the Disaffected in the country appear to be acting in concert, or to hold communication. Their hopes arise from their own numbers, which if they could be excited to simultaneous movement, would distract their opponents, and would procure the means for carrying their utmost designs into execution. It is hoped, by them, that the timid, and irresolute, would thus be encouraged to stand forward; and they flatter themselves, that efficient leaders would not be wanting to put themselves at the head of a successful insurrection.

Your Committee cannot contemplate what has passed in the country, even since the date of their former Report, without the most serious apprehension. During this period, the precautionary measures adopted by Parliament have been in force; many of the most active promoters of public disturbance have been apprehended; the immediate projects of the Disaffected have been discovered, and deranged; yet nothing has deterred them from a steady pursuit of their ultimate object. Though hitherto checked, the least advance towards the attainment of that object could not but be attended with the utmost hazard to the lives and properties of His Majesty's subjects.

In the late insurrection on the borders of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, the mass of the population, through which the insurgents passed, evinced the utmost abhorrence of their designs and projects. In other instances, where the inhabitants have been called upon to aid the civil power, that call has been answered with alacrity and zeal. Such conduct increases the claim of the peaceable and loyal inhabitants of the disturbed parts of the country to the most efficient protection.

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Your Committee find that it is the concurrent opinion of many of those entrusted with the preservation of the peace, and best acquainted with the state, of the disturbed districts, as well as the admission of the disaffected themselves, that the suppression of the attempts at insurrection hitherto made, may, in a great degree, be ascribed to the existence of the extraordinary powers entrusted by Parliament to the executive government, even in cases where it has not been found necessary to call them into action; and that the tranquillity of the Country would be put to hazard, if those powers were now withdrawn. In this opinion Your Committee fully concur; and, confidently as they rely on the loyalty and good disposition of the great body of His Majesty's subjects, (even in those parts of the country in which the spirit of disaffection has shown itself in the most formidable shape) they cannot but express their conviction, that it is not yet safe to rely entirely, for the preservation of the public tranquillity, upon the ordinary powers of the law.

20 June 1817.

SECOND REPORT

FROM THE

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY,

ON PAPERS, which were presented (Sealed up)
to The House, by Lord Viscount *Castlereagh*,
on the 5th day of June, by Command of His
Royal Highness The PRINCE REGENT.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
20 June 1817.

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REPORTS
OF
THE SECRET COMMITTEES
OF
THE HOUSE OF LORDS
IN SESSION 1817,

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Ordered to be re-printed 23d February 1818.

FIRST REPORT - (Ordered to be printed 18th February 1817.)

SECOND REPORT (Ordered to be printed 12th June 1817.)

BY the LORDS COMMITTEES appointed a Secret Committee to inquire into certain Meetings and Combinations endangering the Public Tranquillity, and to report to the House as they shall see Occasion ;

ORDERED TO REPORT,

THAT the Committee have met, and have proceeded in the Examination of the Papers referred to them.

Their Attention was in the first Instance directed to those which relate to the Metropolis ; and they have found therein such Evidence as leaves no Doubt in their Minds that a traitorous Conspiracy has been formed in the Metropolis for the Purpose of overthrowing, by means of a general Insurrection, the established Government, Laws, and Constitution of this Kingdom, and of effecting a general Plunder and Division of Property.

In the last Autumn various Consultations were held by Persons in the Metropolis engaged in this Conspiracy. Different Measures of the most extensive and dangerous Nature were resolved upon ; partial Preparations were made for their Execution, and various Plans were discussed for collecting a Force sufficient for that Purpose. But at a subsequent Consultation another Plan was adopted, which was, to get a great Number of Men together, to see what Force could be raised ; and it was agreed that the best Way to get them together would be to call a public Meeting.— Spa Fields was fixed upon as the Place affording the greatest Facilities for entering the Town, and attacking the most important Points in the City. In pursuance of this Design, and in order to assemble in the Neighbourhood of London a great Number of the poorer Classes of the Community, and particularly of those in whose Minds the Pressure of the Times might be supposed to have excited Disaffection and Discontent, Advertisements were inserted in Newspapers, and Handbills were industriously distributed, inviting the distressed Manufacturers, Mariners, Artizans, and others, to assemble at that Place on the 15th of November. A large Body of People accordingly assembled at the Time and Place prescribed. The most inflammatory Language was there held to the Multitude, having a direct Tendency to excite them to Outrage and Violence ; and the Meeting

was in fact followed by some Acts of Plunder and Riot. A Petition to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent was agreed to at that Meeting, and an Adjournment to Palace Yard on the First Day after the Meeting of Parliament was proposed; but the Second of December was subsequently fixed upon (on the Proposition of one of the Persons concerned in the Plans already described) for another Meeting in Spa Fields; and that Day appears to have been determined upon for the Execution of their Design.

Various Schemes were formed for this Purpose: Amongst them was a general and forcible Liberation of all Persons confined in the different Prisons in the Metropolis; into some of which, in order to facilitate its Execution, an Address to the Prisoners was introduced, assuring them that their Liberty would be restored under a new Government; announcing the intended Attack upon all the Prisons for that Day; apprizing the Prisoners that Arms would be ready for them; exhorting them to be prepared with the National Tricolor Cockade, and to co-operate by the most violent and sanguinary Means to ensure Success.

It was also proposed to set fire to various Barracks, and Steps were taken to ascertain and prepare the Means of effecting this Purpose. An Attack upon the Tower and the Bank, and other Points of Importance, was, after previous Consultations, finally determined upon. Pikes and Arms to a certain Extent were actually provided, and Leaders were named, among whom the Points of Attack were distributed. It further appears that the Interval between the Two Meetings was employed with unremitting Assiduity by some of the most active Agitators in taking regular Circuits through different Quarters of the Town. In these they either resorted to the established Clubs or Societies, or laboured in Conversations, apparently casual, at Public Houses, to work up the Minds of those with whom they conversed into such a State of Ferment and Irritation as to render them, when collected in sufficient Numbers, for whatever ostensible Purpose, the fit and ready Instruments for the Execution of any Project, however rash and desperate. In the course of these Circuits, one of their chief Objects appears to have been to take every Opportunity of attempting to seduce from their Allegiance the Soldiers of the different Guard and at the Barracks. The principal Persons concerned in this Plan actually proceeded to Spa Fields on the Second of December, some of them with concealed Arms, and with Ammunition previously prepared; they had also provided themselves with Tricolor Flags, and with a Standard bearing the following Inscription: "The brave Soldiers are our Brothers; treat them kindly;" and also with Tricolor Cockades, evidently adopted as the Signal of Revolution. After much inflam-

inflammatory Language, a direct Invitation was by one of these Persons addressed to the Multitude to proceed immediately to actual Insurrections. And it appears quite certain, that the Acts of Plunder which were perpetrated for the Purpose of procuring Arms, and the other Measures of open Insurrection which followed, were not accidental or unpremeditated; but had been deliberately preconcerted, as Parts of a general Plan of Rebellion and Revolution. There appears also strong Reason to believe, that the Execution of those Projects at that particular Time was expected by some of the Associations in distant Parts of the Country. The Conspirators seem to have had the fullest Confidence of Success; and a Persuasion has subsequently been expressed amongst them, that their Plans could have been defeated only by casual and unexpected Circumstances. Even after the Failure of this Attempt, the same Plans appear not to have been abandoned.

Your Committee are deeply concerned to be compelled, in further Execution of their Duty, to report their full Conviction that Designs of this Nature have not been confined to the Capital, but have been extended and are still extending widely in many other Parts of Great Britain, particularly in some of the most populous and manufacturing Districts.

At the Meeting of the Second of December in Spa Fields, that Part of the Assembly which had not engaged in the Acts of Plunder and Insurrection before mentioned, came to a Resolution to adjourn the Meeting to the Second Monday after the Meeting of Parliament, namely, the Tenth of February; and it appears by the Papers referred to the Committee, that Meetings in various Parts of the Country, conformably to a Plan Yettled by the leading Persons in London at an early Period, were intended to be held on the same Day.

It appears manifest that the Persons engaged in various Parts, both of England and Scotland, in forwarding the Plans of Revolution, have constantly waited for the Example of the Metropolis. Intelligence of the Event of the Meeting there on the Second of December was anxiously expected; and as the First Report of the beginning of the Disturbance excited in a high Degree the Spirits of the disaffected, so its speedy Suppression produced the Expression of strong Feelings of Disappointment. Had it even partially succeeded, there seems much reason to believe that it would have been the Signal for a more general Rising in other Parts of the Kingdom. Since that Time it appears to be the prevailing Impression amongst the leading Malcontents in the Country, that it is expedient for them to wait till the whole Kingdom shall (according to their Expression) be more completely organized, and more ripe for Action.

What is meant by completely organizing the Country, is but too evident from the Papers before the Committee. It appears clearly that the

Object is, by means of Societies or Clubs, established or to be established in all Parts of Great Britain under Pretence of Parliamentary Reform, to infect the Minds of all Classes of the Community, and particularly of those whose Situation most exposes them to such Impressions, with a Spirit of Discontent and Disaffection, of Insubordination, and Contempt of all Law, Religion, and Morality, and to hold out to them the Plunder and Division of all Property as the main Object of their Efforts, and the Restoration of their natural Rights; and no Endeavours are omitted to prepare them to take up Arms on the first Signal for accomplishing these Designs.

It is on these Grounds that your Committee have been led to look with particular Anxiety to the Formation, Principles, and Conduct of those Societies or Clubs by which the Ends of the Disaffected have been hitherto so much forwarded, and are expected by them to be finally accomplished. Many of these Societies pass under the Denomination of Hampden Clubs. Under this Title Societies of very various Descriptions appear to have been formed, all professing their Object to be Parliamentary Reform. This Name and their Professions may have induced many Persons to become Members of such Societies who may not be aware of the ultimate Intentions of many of their Leaders; and the Committee would by no means ascribe to all these Societies the same Practices and Designs which they have found to be but too prevalent amongst a large Number of them; but they find that, particularly among the manufacturing and labouring Classes, Societies of this Denomination have been most widely extended, and appear to have become some of the chief Instruments of disseminating Doctrines, and of preparing for the Execution of Plans, the most dangerous to the Public Security and Peace.

Others of these Societies are called Union Clubs, professing the same Object of Parliamentary Reform, but under these Words understanding Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments—Projects which evidently involve not any qualified or partial Change, but a total Subversion of the British Constitution.

It appears that there is a London Union Society, and branch Unions corresponding with it, and affiliated to it. Others of these Societies have adopted the Name of Spencean Philanthropists; and it was by Members of a Club of this Description that the Plans of the Conspirators in London were discussed and prepared for Execution.

The Principles of these last Associations seem to be spreading rapidly among the other Societies which have been formed, and are daily forming, under that and other Denominations in the Country. Among the Persons adopting these Principles, it is common to disclaim Parliamentary Reform

as unworthy of their Attention. Their Objects are avowed in a Handbill dispersed by the Society of that Description in London, and in numerous other Publications. These Objects are, " a Parochial Partnership in Land, " on the Principle that the Landholders are not Proprietors in chief, " that they are but the Stewards of the Public; that the Land is the " People's Farm; that landed Monopoly is contrary to the Spirit of Christianity, and destructive of the Independence and Morality of Mankind."

The Societies under these different Names are so numerous, and so various, that it has been difficult to obtain a complete View of all of them, or to comprehend them under any general Description.

The Country Societies are principally to be found in and in the Neighbourhood of Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham, Mansfield, Derby, Chesterfield, Sheffield, Blackburne, Manchester, Birmingham, and Norwich, and in Glasgow and its Vicinity; but they extend and are spreading in some Parts of the Country, to almost every Village. In addition to all the Arts of Seduction, Resort is also had to a System of Intimidation, and Threats are held out to those who refuse to join. Their Combinations, are artfully contrived to secure Secrecy in their Proceedings, and to give to the leading Members undisputed Authority over the rest. Oaths of Secrecy have been frequently administered, some of which are of the most atrocious and dreadful Import.

They do not, however, trust to this Security alone to prevent Discovery; their Proceedings are seldom reduced to Writing; they pass and are communicated by Word of Mouth. The more numerous Meetings delegate all Authority to a managing Committee; and by that Committee, and by Meetings of Delegates from the Committees of different Societies, every Thing of Importance is transacted.

The Committees themselves are also cautious of reducing any of their Proceedings to Writing, communicating with each other only by Delegates and Missionaries.

It appears that, in some Parts of the Country, Arms have been lately procured by individual Members of these Societies in considerable Quantities, which can only have been done with a View to the Use of Force. Subscriptions are also generally required, which, although the Amount paid by each Individual may be very small, may produce, from the large Numbers of the Contributors, no inconsiderable Fund.

The destructive Objects which the leading Members of these Societies have in View, are demonstrated by their Publications and by their Proceedings, all equally calculated to inflame the Minds of the Members, and
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in general of the poorer Classes of the Community. At the ordinary Meetings of these Societies, which are often continued to a late Hour; their Time is principally employed in listening to Speeches tending to the Destruction of social Order; recommending a general Equalization of Property, and at the same Time endeavouring to corrupt the Morals of the Hearers; and to destroy all Reverence for Religion. The Landholder has been represented as a Monster which must be hunted down, and the Fundholder as a still greater Evil; and both have been described as rapacious Creatures, who take from the People Fifteen-pence out of every Quartern Loaf. They have been told that Parliamentary Reform is no more than a half Measure, changing only one Set of Thieves for another; and that they must go to the Land, as nothing short of that would avail them. Another principal Employment of their Time is to listen to Publications of the same Description as the Speeches, containing the same Doctrines, and leading to the same Purposes; and the Meetings are frequently terminated, particularly in London, by profane and seditious Songs and Parodies of Parts of the Liturgy, in which the Responses are chanted by the whole Company. By such Means, and by the Profession of open Infidelity in which some of the Members indulge in their Speeches, the Minds of those who attend their Meetings are tainted and depraved; they are taught Contempt for all Decency, all Law, all Religion and Morality, and are thus prepared for the most atrocious Scenes of Outrage and Violence.

Amongst the most effectual Means of furthering these dangerous Designs, the Committee think it their Duty particularly to call the Attention of the House to the unremitting Activity which has been employed throughout the Kingdom in circulating to an unprecedented Extent, at the lowest Prices or gratuitously, Publications of the most seditious and inflammatory Nature, marked with a peculiar Character of Irreligion and Blasphemy, and tending not only to overturn the existing Form of Government and Order of Society, but to root out those Principles upon which alone any Government or any Society can be supported.

The Committee cannot but consider the late Attack upon His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, on His Way from opening the present Session of Parliament, as an additional and melancholy Proof of the Efficacy of this System to destroy all Reverence for Authority, and all Sense of Duty, and to expose to Insult, Indignity, and Hazard the Person of the immediate Representative of the Sovereign, even in the Exercise of one of the most important Parts of His Royal Functions.

It appears to be an essential Part of the System to take Advantage of the Opportunities afforded by Public Meetings, convoked either by the Leaders of these Societies, or by others, in the Metropolis, and in populous Places and Districts, to address the Multitude in Terms of unprecedented

Licence

License and Violence, amounting even in some Instances to an open Declaration that, in case of Non-compliance with their Petitions, the Sovereign will have forfeited his Claim to their Allegiance. These Proceedings are subsequently printed and circulated, and thus become a fresh Vehicle for Sedition and Treason.

By the Frequency of these Meetings, and by the new Practice of continuing them (under various Pretexes) by frequent Adjournments, the Minds of His Majesty's well-disposed and peaceable Subjects are held in a State of perpetual Agitation and Alarm. The Appointment of such public Meetings in a Variety of different Places on the same Day appears to be considered as the most effectual Means of accomplishing the Designs of the Disaffected, and must evidently in a high Degree embarrass and impede the Exertions of all Civil Powers applicable to the Suppression of Disturbances, distract the Attention of Government, and oblige them so to subdivide and harass the Military Force which it may be necessary to call in for the Assistance of the Civil Power, as to render it inadequate to the Maintenance of Public Tranquillity.

Such a State of Things cannot be suffered to continue without hazarding the most imminent and dreadful Evils; and although the Committee do not presume to anticipate the Decision of Parliament as to the particular Measures to be adopted in the present Emergency, they feel it to be their Duty to express their decided Opinion that further Provisions are necessary for the Preservation of the Public Peace, and for the Protection of Interests in which the Happiness of every Class of the Community is deeply and equally involved.



BY the LORDS COMMITTEES appointed to take into Consideration the several Papers sealed up in a Bag, and delivered by Command of His Royal Highness The Prince Regent, and to report to the House; and to whom were referred several other Papers sealed up in a Bag, also delivered by Command of His Royal Highness;

ORDERED TO REPORT,

THAT the Committee have met, and proceeded in the Examination of the Papers referred to them.

It is their painful Duty to report, that these Papers afford but too many Proofs of the continued Existence of a Traitorous Conspiracy for the Overthrow of our Established Government and Constitution, and for the Subversion of the existing Order of Society.

The Attempts of the Conspirators have indeed hitherto been frustrated by the active Exertions of the Government, and particularly of the Magistrates in different Parts of the Country, in Execution both of the General Laws provided for the Maintenance of the Public Tranquillity, and of the Special Powers recently given by Parliament for that Purpose; but the Information contained in the Papers referred to the Committee leaves no Doubt in their Minds, that the same wicked and desperate Designs are still actively pursued. The Information from which they have drawn this painful Conclusion appears to have been collected from many various Sources often unconnected, with and unknown to each other; but it is uniform in its general Result, and it is corroborated by a striking Correspondence in many minute Particulars.

This Intelligence must be considered as resting in many of its Parts upon the Depositions and Communications of Persons who either are themselves more or less implicated in these criminal Transactions, or who have apparently engaged in them, but with the View of obtaining Information, and imparting it to the Magistrates or to the Secretary of State.

The Testimony of Persons of both these Descriptions must always be in some Degree questionable; and your Committee have seen reason to apprehend that the Language and Conduct of some of the latter may in some Instances have had the Effect of encouraging those Designs, which

which it was intended they should only be the Instruments of detecting. After making, however, to the best of their Judgment, all due Allowance for these Circumstances, the Committee are fully persuaded that the following is a correct and not exaggerated Statement of the Result of the Information which has been brought under their View.

The Papers relate almost exclusively to the principal Manufacturing Districts in some of the Midland and Northern Counties of England; and although the Disaffected in the Country appear still to be looking to the Metropolis with the Hope of Assistance and Direction, it is to the Parts of the Country above referred to that the more recent Projects of Insurrection seem to have been confined.

The Committee think it their Duty here to remark, that although in many of these Districts particular Causes of Distress have no doubt operated to expose the Minds of the labouring Classes of the Community to Irritation and Perversion, yet they are persuaded that this Distress must for the most Part be considered rather as the Instrument than as the Cause of Disaffection. In some of the Places where these Practices have prevailed, they believe the Want of Employment to have been less felt than in many other Parts of the Kingdom; while in other Places, where the Pressure has been perhaps most grievous, it has certainly been sustained with a Spirit of Patience, Loyalty, and good Order, which cannot be too highly commended. And your Committee cannot refrain from expressing their Opinion, that it is chiefly by the Means pointed out in the Report of the former Committee, by the widely-extended Circulation of seditious and blasphemous Publications, and by the Effect of inflammatory Discourses continually renewed, that this Spirit has been principally excited and diffused. By these the Attachment to our Established Government and Constitution, and the Respect for Law, Morality, and Religion, have gradually been weakened among those whose Situations most exposed them to this destructive Influence; and it is thus that their Minds have been prepared for the Adoption of Designs and Measures no less injurious to their own Interests and Happiness than to those of every other Class of His Majesty's Subjects.

Since the Period of the former Report, Manchester and its Neighbourhood have (as far as your Committee has seen) been the only Places where Meetings have been convened and assembled sufficiently numerous to create immediate Apprehensions for the Public Tranquillity. At a Meeting, which was convened there on the Third of March for the Purpose of petitioning against the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and where several thousand Persons appear to have been assembled, it was proposed and agreed to that another Meeting should be held on the following Monday, viz. the Tenth of March, with the professed Intention that Ten out of every Twenty Persons who should attend it should proceed to London with a Petition to His Royal Highness The Prince Regent.

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The Interval was employed in almost daily Meetings of the Disaffected, which were numerously attended. The real Intentions of the Leaders were there developed to their Followers in Speeches of the most undisguised Violence. One of them avowed that he was a Republican and a Leveller, and would never give up the Cause till a Republican Form of Government was established. The People were told by others, that if their Petition was rejected, they must force it: That the large Towns in Yorkshire were adopting the same Plan, and would meet them on the Road, or at least march at the same Time to London: That there was reason to believe that the Scotch were then on their March: That they should be One hundred thousand strong, when joined by the People of other Manufacturing Places upon the Road; and that it would be impossible for the Army or any Thing else to resist them. These Speakers appear in a few Instances to have been checked by some of their Associates; but their Sentiments were for the most Part received with strong Marks of Applause and Concurrence.

Arrangements for the March were also pointed out at these Meetings. It was recommended to those who intended to join in it to provide themselves with Blankets, Shoes, and Knapfacks, as well as with Money and Food. Those who remained to work were to assist with their Subscriptions. Every Ten Men were to choose One for a Leader; and One was to be set over every Hundred. Strong Intimations were also given of the Propriety and Necessity of their providing themselves with Arms; but these do not appear to have been acted upon, except perhaps in a few Instances.

On the 10th of March the proposed Meeting took place, to the Amount as is supposed, of from 10,000 to 12,000 Persons at the least. Although some of their Leaders had been previously arrested, and others were apprehended on the Spot, the Purpose was not abandoned; and large Numbers of these deluded People marched off towards London.

A considerable Body of them was stopped on the Road to Stockport; some Hundreds are stated to have passed through Leek; and one Party proceeded as far as Ashbourne; but the Activity of the Magistrates in dispersing the Meeting, and in stopping the Progress of these Bodies, effectually prevented the Execution of a Design which could not probably have failed to disturb the Peace of the Counties through which so numerous an Assemblage was to have passed; and which, if prosecuted to its full Extent, must have led to Consequences highly dangerous to the Public Tranquillity.

The Discomfiture of this Attempt does not, however, appear to have materially discouraged those who had planned it: their Measures were uninterruptedly pursued. Within a very short Time after this Failure, fresh Meetings were held in smaller Numbers; they were composed either

wholly or in part of Delegates from the Neighbourhood of Manchester, from the Borders of Derbyshire, and from the Manufacturing Districts of Yorkshire. At some of these Meetings Reports were made of the Quantity of Pikes, of Firelocks, and of Bullets, which could be provided for the intended Rising. Communications were held about this Time with Nottingham, Sheffield, and Birmingham by Delegates, who were to give Intelligence of the Plans in Contemplation, to excite the People of those Places to similar Attempts, and to ascertain the State of Preparation to which they had advanced. In these Proceedings the Pretence of Parliamentary Reform appears to have been almost wholly discarded ; they evidently point to nothing short of Revolution ; and it affords a dreadful Proof of the Extent to which the Minds of many of those who attended these Meetings have been inflamed and corrupted, that in public Speeches the Necessity of *doing away with, or disposing of* (as they term it), the Persons most obnoxious to them, has often been openly and unreservedly announced ; and that on one Occasion it is stated to have been proposed that Manchester should be made a Moscow, for the Purpose of strengthening their Cause, by throwing Numbers of People out of Employment.

It was on the Night of the Thirtieth of March that a general Insurrection was intended to have commenced at Manchester. The Magistrates were to be seized ; the Prisoners were to be liberated ; the Soldiers were either to be surpris'd in their Barracks, or a certain Number of Factories were to be set on fire, for the Purpose of drawing the Soldiers out of their Barracks, of which a Party station'd near them for that Object were then to take Possession, with the View of seizing the Magazine.

The Signal for the Commencement of these Proceedings was to be the firing of a Rocket or Rockets ; and Hopes were held out that 2,000 or 3,000 Men would be sufficient to accomplish the first Object, and that the Insurgents would be 50,000 strong in the Morning.

At this Period, and in other Parts of these Proceedings, there are Traces of an Intention to issue Proclamations, declaring the King's Subjects absolved from their Allegiance, and denouncing Death against all Opposers ; but the Committee have not found any Evidence of the actual Preparation of such Proclamations.

This atrocious Conspiracy was detected by the Vigilance of the Magistrates, and defeated by the Apprehension and Confinement of some of the Ringleaders a few Days before the Period fixed for its Execution. The timely Prevention of this desperate Attempt appears to have given a considerable Check to the Proceedings of the Disaffected in that Quarter ; and all the subsequent Intelligence which the Committee has seen from thence continues to be of a more favourable Character.

During

During Part of the Month of April an Intermiffion appears indeed to have taken place generally, at leaft of the more open Proceedings. Public Meetings in large Bodies could no longer be convened, except under the Regulations of the recent Act of Parliament. Numerous Meetings of Societies have been lefs frequently held in Public Houfes. In fome Diftricts Clubs have been diffolved; in others their Meetings have been fufpended, or have been held in Private Houfes, or in Places remote from Observation. The Necessity of greater Caution has been felt and inculcated; Communications by Writing have been difcountenanced; the Concealment of the Names of leading Perfons has been recommended; and it has been thought better that a few Perfons only fhould be intrufted with their Plans, and fhould give Notice to the different Delegates to have their Partizans in readinefs to act when required and as directed. Thefe Delegates appointed from various Places have met in fmall Numbers, and thus kept up a general but verbal Correspondence among the Difaffected.

Towards the End of April, and during the Month of May, this Correspondence appears to have been carried on with increafed Activity. As early as the Fifth of that Month, a Meeting is ftated to have been held in one of the principal Towns of the Weft Riding of Yorkfhire, and to have been attended by Perfons calling themfelves Delegates from other principal Towns of that Diftrict; and alfo from Leicefter, from Birmingham, and from Nottingham. At this Meeting Reports were made by the different Delegates of the Strength which could be collected from the Diftricts which they represented. The Numbers were ftated as very large; but the Committee are well aware of the Exaggeration to be expected in fuch Cafes. It was about this Time that the Period for another general Rifing appears to have been fixed for as early a Day as poffible after the Difcuffion of an expected Motion for Reform in Parliament. Nottingham appears to have been intended as the Head Quarters upon which a Part of the Infurgents were to march in the firft Instance. They were expected to be joined there, and on their March towards London, by other Bodies with fuch Arms as they might have already provided, or might procure by Force from Private Houfes, or from the different Depôts or Barracks of which the Attack was propofed.

At various fubfequent Meetings at different Places, Reports are ftated to have been made of a great Increafe of Numbers, fo great that it was faid on one Occafion that they were obliged daily to extend their Divifions, and enlarge their Committee.

Concurrent Information from many of the Quarters from whence thefe Delegates were faid to be deputed, confirms the Expectation of a general Rifing about the Time above mentioned, and ftates its fubfequent Postponement

ponement to the Ninth or Tenth of June, for which various Reasons were assigned.

The latest Intelligence from those Quarters had made it highly probable, that the same Causes which have hitherto thwarted the Execution of these desperate Designs, viz. the Vigilance of Government—the great Activity and Intelligence of the Magistrates—the ready Assistance afforded under their Orders by the regular Troops and Yeomanry—the prompt and efficient Arrangements of the Officers intrusted with that Service—the Knowledge which has from Time to Time been obtained of the Plans of the Disaffected, and the consequent Arrest and Confinement of the leading Agitators, would occasion a still further Postponement of their atrocious Plans. Subsequent Intelligence leaves no Doubt that the Plan, in its full Extent, has for the present been frustrated; but the Correctness of the Information which had previously been obtained, has been confirmed by the recent Appearance of Bodies of Men in Arms at the precise Period which is stated to have been fixed upon, and particularly in one of the Districts which had latterly been represented as determined to act without waiting for a general Insurrection.

The Committee think it highly important to state, that the Reports received from many of the most active Magistrates, and from Persons whose Stations, both Civil and Military, have enabled them to collect the most extensive Information, and to form the most accurate Judgment as to the State of the Country, concur in attributing in a very considerable Degree the Disappointment of the Attempts already made, and the Hopes of continued Tranquillity, to the actual Exercise of the Powers which Parliament has intrusted to the Executive Government, and to the Effect of the known Existence of such Powers ready to be called into Action when Necessity requires it,—and in representing the Danger which would threaten the Country, were those Powers to be withdrawn at the present Moment. And the Committee feel that they should ill discharge the Trust reposed in them, if they did not declare their own entire Agreement in this Opinion. With the fullest Confidence in the general Loyalty and good Disposition, not only of those Portions of the Kingdom which have hitherto remained in a great Degree untainted, but of by far the most considerable Part of those very Districts which are the chief Scenes of the Operations of the Disaffected—a Confidence which very recent Experience has satisfactorily confirmed—they cannot refrain from submitting to your Lordships, as the Result of all the Information they have received, that the Time is not yet arrived when the Maintenance of the Public Tranquillity, and the Protection of the Lives and Properties of His Majesty's Subjects, can be allowed to rest upon the ordinary Powers of the Law.

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R E P O R T

FROM THE

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY,

ON



PAPERS, which were presented. (Sealed up) to The House,
by Lord Viscount *Castlereagh*, on the 3d day of February, by
Command of His Royal Highness The PRINCE REGENT.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
27 February 1818.

R E P O R T.

THE COMMITTEE OF SECRECY, to whom the several PAPERS, which were presented (Sealed up) to The House, by Lord Viscount *Castlereagh*, on the 3d day of February, by Command of His Royal Highness The PRINCE REGENT, were referred, and who were directed to examine the Matters thereof, and report the same, as they should appear to them, to The House;—HAVE agreed upon the following REPORT.

THE First Object of Your Committee, in examining the Papers which have been referred to their consideration, has been, to form a just estimate of the internal State of the Country, from the period when the Second Report of the Secret Committee, in the last Session of Parliament, was presented, to the present time.

The Insurrection, which broke out in the night between the 9th and 10th of June, on the borders of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, shortly before the close of the sitting of that Committee, was the last open attempt to carry into effect the Revolution, which had so long been the object of an extended Conspiracy. The arrest of some of the principal Promoters of these treasonable designs, in different parts of the Country, had deranged the plans, and distracted the councils, of the Disaffected; occasioned delays and hesitation in the appointment of the day for a simultaneous effort; and finally, left none, but the most infatuated, to hazard the experiment of Rebellion.

The suppression of this Insurrection (following the dispersion of the partial rising which had taken place the night before in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield,) the apprehension and committal of the leaders for trial in the regular course of law, under the charge of High Treason, and the detention of several others of the most active delegates and agitators, under the authority of the Act of the last Session, frustrated all further attempts at open violence. But the spirit of disaffection does not appear to have been subdued; disappointment was frequently expressed by the disaffected, at the failure of an enterprize, from the success of which a relief from all distress and grievances had been confidently predicted; and the projected Revolution was considered as not less certain, for being somewhat longer delayed.

In the course of the succeeding month, Bills of Indictment for High Treason were found against forty-six persons, at the Assizes at Derby; which must have tended still further to check the progress of Sedition, by apprizing the wavering of the danger to which they were exposed, and over-awing the remainder of the more determined leaders. On the Trials which took place in October, twenty-three were either convicted by the Verdict of the Jury, or pleaded guilty; against twelve, who were mostly young men, and related to some of the Prisoners already convicted, the Law Officers of the Crown declined offering any evidence. The remaining eleven had succeeded in absconding, and have not yet been apprehended. The result of these Trials, and the examples which followed, seem to have had the effect which might be expected, of striking a terror into the most violent of those engaged in the general conspiracy; whilst the lenity shown to the deluded, was gratefully felt by the individuals themselves, and restored quiet and subordination to the district, which had been the principal scene of disturbance.

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE OF SECRECY

In the course of the Autumn, a gradual reduction in the price of provisions, and still more an increased demand for labour, in consequence of a progressive improvement in the state of agriculture, as well as of trade and manufactures in some of their most important branches, afforded the means of subsistence and employment to numbers of those, who had been taught to ascribe all the privations to which they were unfortunately subjected, to defects in the existing Constitution.

Your Committee see fresh cause to be convinced of the truth of the opinion expressed by the first Secret Committee, which sat in the last year, of the general good disposition and loyalty of the great body of the People; and they advert with pleasure to the confirmation afforded by the late Trials at Derby, of the testimony borne in the Report of the last Committee, to the exemplary conduct of the mass of the population, in the Country through which the insurrection passed. They have no doubt, that the numbers of those who were either pledged, or prepared to engage in actual insurrection, has generally been much exaggerated by the leaders of the disaffected, from the obvious policy, both of giving importance to themselves, and of encouraging their followers. It is, however, impossible to calculate the extent to which any insurrection, not successfully opposed in its outset, might have grown in its progress through a population, in a state of reduced employment, of distress, and of agitation. In such a state of things, opportunity would, no doubt, have been afforded to active and plausible demagogues, for seducing into acts of violence and outrage, persons altogether unaware of the nature and consequences of the measures, to which they were called upon to lend their assistance; that these consequences would have involved the destruction of the lives and property of the loyal and well-affected, in the event of any decided, though temporary, success of the insurgents, is sufficiently evident, from the designs which have in some instances been proved.

It was therefore the duty of the Magistracy, and of the Government, not only to prepare the means of effectual resistance to open force; but, where they had the opportunity, to defeat the danger in its origin, by apprehending the leaders and instigators of conspiracy. Your Committee indulge the hope, that the hour of delusion, among those who have been misled into disaffection, may be passing away; and that some, even of the deluders themselves, may have seen, and repented of their error. But Your Committee would deceive the House, if they were not to state it as their opinion, that it will still require all the vigilance of Government, and of the Magistracy, to maintain the tranquillity, which has been restored. It will no less require a firm determination among the moral and reflecting members of the community, of whatever rank and station they may be, to lead the aid of their influence and example, to counteract the effect of those licentious and inflammatory publications, which are poured forth throughout the Country, with a profusion heretofore unexampled.

Your Committee have hitherto applied their observations to the lately disturbed districts in the Country. In adverting to the state of The Metropolis, during the same period, they have observed, with concern, that a small number of active and infatuated individuals have been unremittingly engaged, in arranging plans of insurrection, in endeavouring to foment disturbances that might lead to it, and in procuring the means of active operations, with the ultimate view of subverting all the existing establishments of the Country, and substituting some form of Revolutionary Government in their stead. Your Committee however, have the satisfaction to find, that, notwithstanding the desperation and confidence of the leaders, the proselytes that have been gained to their cause are not numerous. The sensible improvement in the comforts and employment of the labouring part of the community, has tended to diminish at once the motives of discontent, and the means of seduction. The mischief does not appear to have extended into any other rank of life, than that of the persons referred to in the First Report of the Secret Committee of last year, nor to have received countenance from any individuals of higher condition.

Eager as these agitators are, to avail themselves of any popular assemblage, still more, of any occasion that might happen to arise of popular discontent, and capable as they appear, from their own declarations, to be of any act of atrocity, Your Committee see no reason to apprehend that the vigilance of the Police, and the unrelaxed superintendence of Government, may not, under the present circumstances of the Country, be sufficient to prevent them from breaking out into any serious disturbance of the public peace.

The

ON PAPERS (SEALED UP) PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE. 5

The attention of Your Committee has next been directed to the Documents, which have been laid before them, relative to the apprehension of the several persons suspected of being engaged in treasonable practices, who have been detained under the authority of the Acts of the last Session. They have examined the charges upon which the several detentions have been founded, and find them, in all instances, substantiated by depositions on oath. Your Committee have no hesitation in declaring, that the discretion thus intrusted to His Majesty's Government, appears to them to have been temperately and judiciously exercised, and that the Government would, in their opinion, have failed in its duty, as Guardian of the Peace, and Tranquillity of the Realm, if it had not exercised, to the extent which it has done, the powers intrusted to it by the Legislature. Of the thirty-seven Persons, which is the whole number of those who were finally committed, one was discharged on the 4th of July, one on the 31st on account of illness, ten on the 12th of November, fourteen on the 3d of December, one on the 22d of December, six on the 29th of December, and three on the 20th of January, and one died in prison. From the circumstances of the Country, as laid before Your Committee, and as publickly notorious during the period in which those imprisonments took place, Your Committee see no reason to doubt that the detention of the several Prisoners, was governed by the same sound discretion, which, as Your Committee have already stated, appears to have been exercised in apprehending them. The whole of the arduous duties confided to the Executive Government, appears to Your Committee to have been discharged with as much moderation and lenity, as was compatible with the paramount object of general security.

27 February,
1818.

R E P O R T

FROM THE

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY,

ON PAPERS which were presented (Sealed up)
to The House, by Lord Viscount *Castlereagh*,
on the 3d day of February, by Command of
His Royal Highness The PRINCE REGENT.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
27 February 1818.



R E P O R T

Of the Secret Committee of The House of Lords, appointed to examine into the matter of the several Papers, sealed up, presented to the House by Command of The Prince Regent.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,

6 March 1818.

BY THE LORDS COMMITTEES appointed a Secret Committee to examine into the Matter of the Papers presented to this House, in a Sealed Bag, by the Command of His Royal Highness The Prince Regent, and to report to the House, as they shall see cause: And to whom were referred Additional Papers (sealed up,) also presented to the House by the Command of His Royal Highness The Prince Regent:

ORDERED TO REPORT,

THAT the Committee have proceeded to examine the Papers so referred to them.

In execution of this duty they have proceeded, in the first place, to consider such of the said Papers as contained information as to the state of those parts of England in which the circumstances detailed in the Two Reports of the former Committees appear to have arisen.

In the last of those Reports, presented to the House on the 12th of June last, it was represented that the period of a general Rising, of which the intention and object were stated in the Reports, appeared to have been fixed for as early a day as possible after the discussion of an expected motion for Reform in Parliament; that Nottingham appeared to have been intended as the head quarters, upon which a part of the Insurgents were to march in the first instance; and that they expected to be joined there, and on their march towards London, by other bodies, with such arms as they might have already provided, or might procure by force from private houses, or from the different Depôts or Barracks, of which the attack was proposed. That concurrent information, from many quarters, confirmed the expectation of a general Rising about the time above mentioned, but that it was subsequently postponed to the 9th or 10th of June, for which various reasons had been assigned. The Report added, that the latest intelligence from those quarters had made it highly probable that the same causes which had to that time thwarted the execution of those desperate designs, viz. the vigilance of the Government, the great activity and intelligence of the Magistrates, the ready assistance afforded under their orders by the Regular Troops and Yeomanry, the prompt and efficient arrangements of the Officers intrusted with that service, the knowledge which had from time to time been obtained of the plans of the Disaffected, and the consequent Arrest and Confinement of the leading Agitators, would occasion a still further postponement of their atrocious plans.

REPORT of the SECRET COMMITTEE of the HOUSE of LORDS,

It now appears that in the night of the 9th of June last, a Rising took place in Derbyshire, headed by a Person who went for that purpose from Nottingham, and was therefore called "The Nottingham Captain." The Insurgents were not formidable for their numbers, but they were actuated by an atrocious spirit. Several of them had fire arms; others had pikes previously prepared for the purpose; and as they advanced towards Nottingham they plundered several houses of arms, and in one instance a murder was committed. They compelled some persons to join them, and endeavoured to compel others by threats of violence, and particularly by the terror of the murder which had been committed; and they proposed to reach Nottingham early in the morning of the 10th of June, and to surprise the Military in their barracks; hoping thus to become masters of the Town, and to be joined by considerable numbers there, and by a Party which they expected would be assembled in Nottingham Forest; and which actually did assemble at that place, as after stated. The disposition to plunder, the resistance they met with, and other circumstances, so delayed their march, that they had not arrived near their place of destination at a late hour in the morning; and the Country being alarmed, a Military force was assembled to oppose them.

The language used by many persons engaged in this enterprize, and particularly by their Leaders, leaves no room to doubt that their objects were the overthrow of the established Government and Laws; extravagant as those objects were, when compared with the inadequate means which they possessed. In the course of their march, many of their body felt alarmed at the atrocious projects in which they had engaged, which had actually led to a cruel and deliberate murder; they found that their confederates had not arrived to their support, as they had been led to expect; and in the villages through which they passed, a strong indisposition being manifested towards their cause and projects, some of them threw away their pikes and retired, before the Military Force appeared; and on the first show of that force the rest dispersed, their leaders attempting in vain to rally them: many were taken prisoners, and many guns and pikes were seized.

This Insurrection, of small importance in itself, is a subject of material consideration, as it was manifestly in consequence of measures detailed in the Two Reports above mentioned, and appears to have been a part of the General Rising proposed to take effect on the 9th or 10th of June, as stated in the last of those Reports.

At the Assizes at Derby, in the month of July following, the Grand Jury found Bills of Indictment for High Treason against forty-six of the persons charged with having been engaged in this Insurrection; and several of those persons having been taken, were arraigned upon the Indictment before a Special Commission issued for that purpose, which sat at Derby, in the month of October following. Four of the principal offenders were separately tried and convicted; Three of them were executed; and the capital punishment of the Fourth was remitted, on condition of Transportation. The conviction of these four induced nineteen of the other persons indicted, whose conduct had been deemed in the next degree most criminal, to withdraw their pleas of Not Guilty, and to plead Guilty to the Indictment, in hopes of thus avoiding a capital punishment; and the sentence of death on these persons, was afterwards remitted, on different conditions. Against all the other persons indicted, who were in custody, the law officers of the Crown declined producing any evidence, and they were accordingly acquitted. The rest of the persons included in the Indictment, had fled from justice, and have not yet been taken.

The fact of this actual Insurrection first proved to the satisfaction of a most respectable Grand Jury of the County of Derby, who found the Bill of Indictment, and afterwards proved in open Court, to the satisfaction of the several Juries, sworn on the four several Trials of the persons convicted; proved also, by the acknowledgment of the same guilt by those who withdrew their pleas of Not Guilty, and pleaded Guilty to the same Indictment, and thus submitted themselves to the mercy of the Crown, appear to the Committee to have established, beyond the possibility of a doubt, the credit due to the information mentioned in the last Report, respecting the plans of more extended Insurrection, which had previously been concerted, and respecting the postponement of these plans to the 9th or 10th of June.

But this Insurrection in Derbyshire was not the only circumstance occurring since the period described in the last of the Two Reports before mentioned, which demonstrates the correctness of the information on which the Committee who made that

that Report proceeded, in representing such a General Rising to have been intended, and to have been postponed; and that Nottingham was the head quarters upon which a part of the Insurgents were to march in the first instance; and that they were expected to be joined there by Insurgents from different quarters.

Early in the same night on which the Derbyshire Insurgents began their operations, the town of Nottingham was in a state of considerable agitation. It appears from the evidence given upon the trials at Derby, that during the march of the Derbyshire Insurgents towards Nottingham, one of their leaders, afterwards convicted of High Treason, was sent forwards on horseback, to obtain intelligence. On his return to the main body of the Derbyshire Insurgents, it was pretended that the state of Nottingham was favourable to their designs; the actual state of Nottingham and its neighbourhood, appears from the evidence given on the trials at Derby. In the night of the 9th of June, some persons, stated to be in number about one hundred, had assembled on the Race Course, in Nottingham Forest, where the Derbyshire Insurgents, according to their original plan, were to have arrived at an early hour on the morning of the 10th, and expected to be joined by such a party. This party was seen about twelve at night; they were drawn up in line, two deep, and a part of them were armed with pikes or poles. They remained assembled on the Race Ground until past two o'clock in the morning, about which time they dispersed. Some appearances of disturbance in the town of Nottingham early in the night of the 9th, induced the Magistrates to send for a Military Force from the Barracks; and order being quickly restored, the Military returned to their barracks, and were not again called out, until the morning of the 10th, when they were required to assist in dispersing the Derbyshire Insurgents, who were then on their march.

Connected with these disturbances in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, a disposition to similar conduct was manifested in a part of the West Riding of Yorkshire. On the 6th of June a meeting of Delegates was assembled at a place called Thornhill Lees, near Huddersfield; and at this meeting it was understood, that the time to be fixed for a general Rising would be announced. The persons assembled at that meeting were surprised by the Magistrates, assisted by a military force, and some were taken into custody. This arrest deranged the plans of the Disaffected; and the greater part of the districts in that part of Yorkshire, in which a general Rising had been proposed, remained quiet. But in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield, in the night of the 8th of June, a considerable body assembled, some with fire arms, and others with scythes fixed on poles, and proceeded to various outrages, plundering houses for arms, and firing on the Head Constable of Huddersfield, and upon a person of the Yeomanry Cavalry, who went out of the Town to learn their objects. Indictments were preferred both for the felonies and the burglaries at the Assizes at York in the month of July. The facts of the outrages there committed appears to have been established by the finding of the Bills by the Grand Jury; but sufficient evidence was not produced on the trial to bring the crimes home to any individuals.

From the Evidence given at the trials at Derby, it appeared that the Derbyshire Insurgents had expected a considerable reinforcement from this part of Yorkshire, believing that a general Rising would take place at the time to be fixed for that purpose; and it appears likewise, that in Yorkshire, as well as in all the other districts where these designs were carrying on, great reliance has uniformly been placed upon the hope of powerful support and co-operation from London, however erroneous such an expectation may have been, with respect to the extent to which it was supposed to have existed.

The Committee have the satisfaction of delivering it as their decided opinion, that not only in the Country in general, but in those districts where the designs of the disaffected were most actively and unremittingly pursued, the great Body of the People have remained untainted, even during the periods of the greatest internal difficulty and distress.

The arrests and trials which have taken place, and the developement of the designs of the leaders of the disaffected, together with the continued activity and vigilance of the Magistrates and of the Government, must have had the salutary effect of checking the progress of disaffection, where it existed; and the improved state of the Country, and the increased employment now afforded to the labouring classes, have contributed to render those who were most open to seduction, less disposed

4 REPORT of the SECRET COMMITTEE of the HOUSE of LORDS, &c.

disposed to embrace the desperate measures which the pressure of distress might have led them to hazard.

Some of the Persons engaged in these projects, particularly in London, are still active, and appear determined to persevere, though with decreasing numbers and resources. It appears, therefore, to the Committee, that the continued vigilance of Government, and of the Magistrates in the several districts which have been most disturbed, will be necessary.

Having thus taken a view of the state of the Country in the disturbed districts, from the period described in the Report made to the House towards the close of the last Session of Parliament, the Committee have proceeded to examine such of the Papers referred to them, as relate to the arrests of several persons under warrants issued by one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, and the detention of several of the persons so arrested under the authority of Two Acts passed in the last Session of Parliament, to empower His Majesty to secure and detain such Persons as His Majesty shall suspect are conspiring against His Person and Government.

With respect to those, against whom Bills of Indictment were found by different Grand Juries, and those who have been brought to trial or have fled from justice the Committee conceive that it is unnecessary for them to make any particular statement. Warrants were issued by the Secretary of State against ten persons, who have not been taken. Forty-four persons appear to have been arrested under Warrants of the Secretary of State, on suspicion of High Treason, who have not been brought to trial; of these, seven were discharged on examination, without any subsequent warrant of detention. Against thirty-seven, warrants of detention, on suspicion of High Treason, were issued by the Secretary of State; but one, who was finally committed, was soon after released; another was soon discharged on account of illness; and a third died in prison. The grounds upon which those warrants were issued, have been severally examined by the Committee; on that examination it has appeared to the Committee, that all these Arrests and Detentions have been fully justified by the various circumstances under which they have taken place; and in no case does any warrant of detention appear to have been issued, except in consequence of information upon oath.

It appears to the Committee, that all the Persons who were so arrested and detained, and who were not prosecuted, have been at different times discharged, as the state of the Country, and the circumstances attending the several Trials which had taken place, were judged to permit.

The Committee understand that, up to a certain period, expectations were entertained of being able to bring to trial a large proportion of the Persons so arrested and detained; but that these expectations have from time to time been unavoidably relinquished.

On the whole therefore, it has appeared to the Committee, that the Government, in the execution of the powers vested in it, by the Two Acts before mentioned, has acted with due discretion and moderation; and as far as appears to the Committee, the Magistrates in the several disturbed districts have, by their activity and vigilance, contributed materially to the preservation of the Public Peace.

R E P O R T

OF THE

Secret Committee of The House of Lords, appointed
to examine into the matter of the several
Papers, sealed up, presented to The House by
Command of The Prince Regent.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,

6 March 1818.
