tism, its contempt for the well-being of men and the justice of things." Mr. Perceval was an eminent champion of this hideous school, which we thus find the leading men of England, France and America uniting to condemn. And shall a musty Latin proverb protect such a politician from the avenging page of history? The human mind is not to be so fettered. Already the work of retribution is in progress.

Mr. Perceval the younger, with something of fatuity, hath called up Mr. Cobbett to testify to his father's political merit. Commending that rugged monitor of evil statesmen for his "vigorous sentences," for his "real English spirit and feeling." he cannot now demur to his authority; let him then read and reflect deeply on the following passages from that eminent writer's works, and he may perhaps discover, that to defend his father's political reputation with success will prove a difficult and complicate task. If the passages are painful to Mr. Perceval, if the lesson is severe, I am not to blame. It is not I, but himself who has called up the mighty seer, and if the stern grim spirit, thus invoked, will not cease to speak until all be told it is not my fault.

EXTRACTS FROM MR. COBBETT'S WRITINGS.

[History of George IV.]

Extract 1.—*Of Mr. Perceval's harshness.*

"But there now came a man amongst them who soon surpassed all the rest in power, as well as in impudence and insolence towards the people. This was that Spencer Perceval of whose signal death we shall have to speak by and bye. This man, a sharp lawyer, inured from his first days at the bar to the carrying on of state prosecutions; a sort of under-strapper in London to the attorneys-general in London, and frequently their deputy in the counties; a short, spare, pale-faced, hard, keen, sour-looking man, with a voice well suited to the rest, with words in abundance at his command, with the industry of a laborious attorney, with no knowledge of the great interest of the nation, foreign or domestic, but with a thorough knowledge of those means by which power is obtained and preserved in England, and with no troublesome scruples as to the employment of those means. He had been solicitor-general under Pitt up to 1801, and attorney-general under Addington and Pitt up to February, 1806. This man became the *adviser of the princess* during the period of the investigation and correspondence of which we have just seen the history; and as we are now about to see, the power he obtained by the

means of that office *made him the prime minister of England to the day of his death*, though no more fit for that office than any other barrister in London, taken by tossing up or by ballot."

Extract 2.—Of Perceval's illiberal, factious and crooked policy.

"We have seen that the king was told that the *publication*" (the publication of the princess of Wales's justification) "would take place on *the Monday*. That Monday was *the 9th of March*. In this difficulty, what was to be done? The Whig ministry, with their eyes fixed on the *probable speedy succession of the prince*, or at least *his accession to power*, the king having recently been in a very shaky state; the Whig ministry, with their eyes fixed on this expected event, and not perceiving as Perceval did the power that the *unpublished book*" (for 'The Book' it is now called) "*would give them with the prince* as well as with the king, the Whig ministry would not consent to the terms of the princess, thinking too, that in spite of her anger and her threats, she would not throw away the scabbard as towards the king.

"In the meanwhile, however, Perceval, wholly unknown to the Whigs, had got the book actually *printed* and bound up *ready for publication*, and it is clear that it was intended to be published on the Monday named in the princess's letter; namely, on the *9th of March*, unless prevented by the king's *yielding to the wishes of Perceval*. He did yield, that is to say, he resolved *to change his ministers!* A *ground* for doing this was however a difficulty to be got over. To allege and promulgate the *true* ground would never do, for then the public would have cried aloud for the publication which contained matter so deeply scandalous to the king and all the royal family. Therefore *another ground* was alleged; and herein we are going to behold another and another important consequence, and other national calamities proceeding from this dispute between the prince and his wife. This other ground that was chosen was the Catholic Bill. The Whigs stood pledged to grant a bill for the further relief of the Catholics. They had in September, 1806, *dissolved the parliament*, though it was only *four years* old, for the purpose of securing a majority in the House of Commons; and into this new House, which had met on the 19th of December, 1806, they had introduced the Catholic Bill, by the hands of Mr. Grey (now become Lord Howick), with the *great and general approbation of the House*, and with a clear understanding, that notwithstanding all the cant and hypocrisy that the foes of the Catholics had at different times played off about the *conscientious scruples* of the king, the king had now explicitly and cheerfully *given his consent* to the bringing in of this bill.

"The new ministry had nominally at its head *the late Duke of Portland;* but Perceval, who was *chancellor of the exchequer*, was in fact the master of the whole affair, coöperating however cordially with Eldon, who now again became chancellor. The moment the dismission of the Whigs was resolved on, the other party set up the cry of 'No Popery.' The walls and houses, not only of London, but of the country towns and villages, were covered with these words, sometimes in chalk and sometimes in print; the clergy and corporations were all in motion; even the cottages on the skirts of the commons, and the forests heard fervent *blessings* poured out on the head of the good old king for preserving the nation from a rekindling of the 'fires in Smithfield!' Never was delusion equal to this! Never a people so deceived; never public credulity so great; never hypocrisy so profound and so detestably malignant as that of the deceivers! The mind shrinks back at the thought of an eternity of suffering, even as the lot of the deliberate murderer; but if the thought were to be endured, it would be as applicable to that awful sentence awarded to hypocrisy like this."

Extract 3.

"The great and interesting question was, not whether the act (Regency Act) were agreeable to the laws and constitution of the country or not; not whether it was right or wrong thus to defer the full exercise of the royal authority for a year; but whether, limited as the powers were, the prince, upon being invested with them, would take his old friends and companions, the Whigs, to be his ministers."—"Men in general unacquainted with the hidden motives that were at work, no more expected that Perceval and Eldon would continue for one moment to be ministers under the regent than they expected the end of the world."

"But a very solid reason for not turning out PERCEVAL was found in the power which he had with regard to the PRINCESS and the BOOK. He had, as has been before observed, the power of bringing her forward and making her the triumphant rival of her husband. This power he had completely in his hands, backed as he was by the indignant feelings of an enterprising, brave, and injured woman. But it was necessary for him to do something to keep this great and terrific power in his own hands. If he lost the princess he lost his only prop; and, even without losing her, if he lost the book, or rather, if the secrets of the book escaped and became public, he then lost his power. It was therefore of the greatest importance to him that nobody should possess a copy of this book but *himself!*

"The reader will now please to turn back to paragraph 73, which he will find in chap. 11. He will there find that Perceval ousted the Whigs by the means of the book, and not by the means of the Catholic question, as the hoodwinked nation were taught to believe. The book had been purchased by Perceval himself; it had been printed in a considerable edition, by Mr. Edwards, printer, in the strand; and the whole edition had been put into the hands of a bookseller; the day of publication was named, that being the 9th of March, 1807; but on the 7th of March, or thereabouts, the king determined upon turning out the Whigs and taking in Perceval. Instantly PERCEVAL suppressed THE BOOK; took the edition out of the hands of the booksellers, thinking that he had every copy in his own possession. The story has been in print about his having burned the books in the court yard of his country house; but be that as it may, he certainly appears to have thought that no one but himself had a copy of THE BOOK. In this however he was deceived; for several copies of this book, as many as four or five at least, were in the hands of private individuals."—"To get at these copies advertisements appeared in all the public papers, as soon as the prince had determined to keep Perceval as his minister. These advertisements plainly enough described the contents of the book, and contained offers of high prices for the book to such persons as might have a copy to dispose of. In this manner the copies were bought up: one was sold for £300, one or two for £500 each, one for £1000, and the last for £1500."

Extract 4.—*Of Mr. Perceval's harshness and illiberality.*

——"Thus Perceval really ruled the country in precisely what manner he pleased. Whole troops of victims to the libel law were crammed into jails, the corrupt part of the press was more audacious than ever, and the other part of it (never very considerable) was reduced nearly to silence. But human enjoyments of every description are of uncertain duration: political power, when founded on force, is of a nature still more mutable than human enjoyments in general; of which observations this haughty and insolent Perceval was destined in the spring of 1812, to afford to the world a striking, a memorable, and a most awful example. He had got possession of the highest office in the state, by *his secret*, relative to the princess and her BOOK, had secured his influence with the prince regent for their joint lives; he had bent the proud necks of the landlords to fine, imprisonment and transportation, if they attempted to make inroads on his system to support the all-corrupting paper-money; the press he had extinguished or had rendered the tool of his absolute will; the most eminent amongst the

writers who opposed him, Cobbett (the author of this history,) Leigh and John Hunt, Finnerty, Drakard, Lovel, together with many more, were closely shut up in jail, for long terms, with heavy fines on their heads and long bail at the termination of their imprisonment. Not content with all this, he meditated the complete subjugation of London to the control and command of a military force. Not only did he meditate this, but had the audacity to propose it to the parliament; and if his life had not been taken in the evening of the 11th of May, 1812, he, that very evening, was going to propose, in due form, a resolution for the establishment of a permanent army to be stationed in Mary-bonne-park, for the openly avowed purpose of *keeping the metropolis in awe.*

Extract 5.—Mr. Perceval's unpopularity.

"Upon the news of the death of Perceval arriving at Nottingham, at Leicester, at Truro, and indeed all over the country, demonstrations of joy were shown by the ringing of bells, the making of bonfires, and the like; and at Nottingham particularly, soldiers were called out to disperse the people upon the occasion."——"At the place of execution, the prisoner (Bellingham) thanked God for having enabled him to meet his fate with so much fortitude and resignation. At the moment when the hangman was making the usual preparations; at the moment that he was going out of the world, at the moment when he was expecting every breath to be his last, his ears were saluted with—*God bless you! God bless you! God Almighty bless you! God Almighty bless you!* issuing from the lips of many thousands of persons."——"With regard to the fact of the offender going out of the world amidst the blessings of the people, I, the author of this history, can vouch for its truth, having been an eye and ear witness of the awful and most memorable scene, standing, as I did, at the window of that prison out of which he went to be executed, and into which I had been put in consequence of a prosecution ordered by this very Perceval, and the result of which prosecution was a sentence to be imprisoned *two years* amongst felons in Newgate, to pay *a thousand pounds* to the Prince Regent at the end of the two years, and to be held in bonds for *seven years* afterwards; all which was executed upon me to the very letter, except that I rescued myself from the society of the felons by a cost of twenty guineas a week, for the *hundred and four weeks;* and all this I had to suffer for having published a paragraph, in which I expressed my indignation at the flogging of English local militiamen, at the town of Ely, in England, *under a guard of Hanoverian bayonets.* From this cause I was placed in a situation to witness the execution of this

unfortunate man. The crowd was assembled in the open space just under the window at which I stood. I saw the anxious looks; I saw the half horrified countenances; I saw the mournful tears run down; and I heard the unanimous blessings."

"The nation was grown heartily tired of the war; it despaired of seeing an end to it without utter ruin to the country; the expenditure was arrived at an amount that frightened even loan-mongers and stock-jobbers; and the shock given to people's confidence by Perceval's recent acts, which had proclaimed to the whole world the fact of the depreciation of the paper-money; these things made even the pretended exclusively loyal secretly rejoice at his death, which they could not help hoping would lead to some very material change in the managing of the affairs of the country."

Extract 6.—*Of Mr. Hamlyn, the Tinman.*

"I shall now address you, though it need not be much at length, upon the subject of Lord Castlereagh's conduct.* The business was brought forward by Lord Archibald Hamilton, who concluded his speech with moving the following resolutions: '1. That it appears to the House, from the evidence on the table, that Lord Viscount Castlereagh, in the year 1805, shortly after he had quitted the situation of President of the Board of Control, and being a Privy Councillor and Secretary of State, did place at the disposal of Lord Clancarty, a member of the same board, the nomination to a writership, in order to facilitate his procuring a seat in Parliament. 2. That it was owing to a disagreement among the subordinate parties, that this transaction did not take effect. And 3. That by this conduct Lord Castlereagh had been guilty of a gross violation of his duty as a servant of the crown; an abuse of his patronage as President of the Board of Control; and an attack upon the purity of that House.'

"Well, but what did the House agree to? Why, to this: 'Resolved, that it is the duty of this House to maintain a *jealous guard* over the *purity of election;* but considering that the attempt of Lord Viscount Castlereagh to interfere in the election of a member *had not been successful*, this House does not consider it necessary to enter into any criminal proceedings against him.'

"Now, then, let us see what was done in the case of Philip Hamlyn, the tinman of Plymouth, who offered a bribe to Mr. Addington, when the latter was minister. The case was this: in the year 1802, Philip Hamlyn, a tinman of Plymouth, wrote a letter to Mr. Henry Addington, the First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, offering him the sum of £2000

* Cobbett's Register.

to give him, Hamlyn, the place of Land Surveyor of Customs at Plymouth. In consequence of this, a criminal information was filed against the said Hamlyn, by *Mr. Spencer Perceval*, who was then the King's Attorney General, and who, in pleading against the offender, asserted *the distinguished purity of persons in power in the present day.* The tinman was found guilty; he was sentenced to pay a fine of £100 to the king, and to be imprisoned for three months. His business was ruined, and he himself died, in a few months after his release from prison.

"Hamlyn confessed his guilt; he stated, in his affidavit, that he sincerely repented of his crime; that he was forty years of age; that his business was the sole means of supporting himself and family; that a severe judgment might be the total ruin of himself and that family; and that, therefore, he threw himself upon and implored the mercy of his prosecutors and the Court. In reference to this, Mr. Perceval, *the present Chancellor of the Exchequer*, observe, said: 'The circumstances which the defendant discloses, respecting his own situation in life and of his family are all of them topics very well adapted to affect the private feelings of individuals, and as far as that consideration goes, nothing further need be said; but, there would have been no prosecution at all in this case, upon the ground of personal feeling; it was set on foot upon grounds of a public nature, and the spirit in which the prosecution originated still remains; it is therefore submitted to your lordships, not on a point of individual feeling, but of PUBLIC JUSTICE, in which case your lordships will consider how far the affidavits ought to operate in mitigation of punishment.'—For Lord Archibald Hamilton's motion, the speakers were, Lord A. Hamilton, Mr. C. W. Wynn, Lord Milton, Mr. W. Smith, Mr. Grattan, Mr. Ponsonby, Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Whitbread, and Mr. Tierney. *Against it*, Lord Castlereagh himself, Lord Binning, Mr. Croker, Mr. PERCEVAL, (who prosecuted Hamlyn,) Mr. Banks, Mr. G. Johnstone, Mr. H. Lascelles, Mr. Windham, and Mr. Canning."

Extract 7.—Of Mr. Quentin Dick.

(On the 11th of May, 1809, Mr. Maddocks made a charge against Mr. Perceval and Lord Castlereagh, relative to the selling of a seat in Parliament to Mr. Quentin Dick, and to the influence exercised with Mr. Dick, as to his voting upon the recent important question.) Mr. Maddocks, in the course of his speech, said:—'I affirm, then, that Mr. Dick *purchased a seat in the House of Commons* for the borough of Cashel, through the agency of the Hon. Henry Wellesley, who acted for and on behalf of, the Treasury; that upon a *recent question* of the last importance, when Mr. Dick

had determined to vote according to his conscience, the noble lord, Castlereagh, did intimate to that gentleman the necessity of either his *voting with the government, or resigning his seat in that house;* and that Mr. Dick, sooner than vote against principle, did make choice of the latter alternative, and vacated his seat accordingly. To this transaction, I charge the right honorable gentleman, *Mr Perceval, as being privy and having connived at it.* This I will ENGAGE TO PROVE BY WITNESSES AT YOUR BAR, if the House will give me leave to call them. Mr. Percenal argued against receiving the charge at all, putting it to the House, *whether* AT SUCH A TIME *it would be wise to warrant such species of charges as merely introductory to the agitation of the great question of reform, he left it to the House to determine;* but as far as he might be allowed to judge, he rather thought that it would be more consistent with what was due from him to the House and to the public, *if he* FOR THE PRESENT *declined putting in the plea* (he could so conscientiously put in) *until that House had come to a determination on the propriety of entertaining that charge or not.*"

The House voted *not* to entertain the charge, and Mr. Ponsonby and others declared, in the course of the debate, that such transactions ought not to be inquired into, because they "were notorious," and had become "as glaring as the noon-day sun."

Now let the younger Mr. Perceval grapple with this historian and public writer, whose opinions he has invoked, whose "*true English spirit and feeling*" he has eulogized. Let him grapple with these extracts from his works, which, however, are but a tithe of the charges Mr. Cobbett has brought against his father. For my part I have given my proofs and reasons, and authorities, and am entitled to assert, that my public character of Mr. Perceval, the minister, is, historically "*fair, just, and true.*"

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