

Instructions to a Statesman

Humbly Inscribed to the Right Honourable George Earl Temple

William Godwin

Contents

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE GEORGE EARL TEMPLE.	3
INSTRUCTIONS TO A STATESMAN.	6

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE GEORGE EARL TEMPLE.

MY LORD,

THE following papers fell into my hands by one of those unaccountable accidents, so frequent in human life, but which in the relation appear almost incredible. I will not however trouble your lordship with the story. If they be worthy of the press, it is of no great consequence to the public how they found their way thither. If they afford your lordship a moment's amusement, amidst the weightier cares incident to your rank and fortune, I have obtained my end.

I have endeavoured in vain to investigate who was their author, and to whom they were addressed. It should seem, from the internal evidence of the composition, that they were written by a person, who was originally of a low rank or a menial station, but who was distinguished by his lord for those abilities and talents, he imagined he discovered in him. I have learned, by a kind of vague tradition, upon which I can place little dependence, that the noble pupil was the owner of a magnificent *chateau* not a hundred miles from your lordship's admired seat in the county of Buckingham. It is said that this nobleman, amidst a thousand curiosities with which his gardens abounded, had the unaccountable whim of placing a kind of artificial hermit in one of its wildest and most solitary recesses. This hermit it seems was celebrated through the whole neighbourhood, for his ingenuity in the carving of tobacco-stoppers, and a variety of other accomplishments. Some of the peasants even mistook him for a conjuror. If I might be allowed in the conjectural licence of an editor, I should be inclined to ascribe the following composition to this celebrated and ingenious solitaire.

Since however this valuable tract remains without an owner, I thought it could not be so properly addressed to any man as your lordship. I would not however be misunderstood. I do not imagine that the claim this performance has upon the public attention, consists in the value and excellence of it's precepts. On the contrary, I consider it as the darkest and most tremendous scheme for the establishment of despotism that ever was contrived. If the public enter into my sentiments upon the subject, they will consider it as effectually superseding Machiavel's celebrated treatise of *The Prince*, and exhibiting a more deep-laid and desperate system of tyranny. For my part, I esteem these great and destructive vices of so odious a nature, that they need only be exposed to the general view in order to the being scouted by all. And if, which indeed I cannot possibly believe, there has been any noble lord in this kingdom mean enough to have studied under such a preceptor, I would willingly shame him out of his principles, and hold up to him a glass which shall convince him how worthy he is of universal contempt and abhorrence.

The true reason, my lord, for which I have presumed to prefix your name to these sheets is, that the contrast between the precepts they contain, and the ingenuous and manly character that is universally attributed to your lordship, may place them more strongly in the light they deserve. And yet I doubt not there will be some readers perverse enough to imagine that you are the true object of the composition. They will find out some of those ingenious coincidences, by which *The Rape of the Lock*, was converted into a political poem, and the *Telemaque* of the amiable Fenelon into a satire against the government under which he lived. I might easily appeal, against these treacherous commentators, to the knowledge of all men respecting every corner of your lordship's gardens at Stowe. I might boldly defy any man to say, that they now contain, or ever did contain, one of these artificial hermits. But I will take up your lordship's defence upon a broader footing. I will demonstrate how contrary the character of your ancestors and your own have always been to the spirit and temper here inculcated. If this runs me a little into the beaten

style of dedication, even the modestly of your lordship will excuse me, when I have so valuable a reason for adopting it.

I shall confine myself, my lord, in the few thoughts I mean to suggest upon this head, to your two more immediate ancestors, men distinguished above the common rate, by their virtues or their abilities. Richard earl Temple, your lordship 's immediate predecessor, as the representative of your illustrious house, will be long remembered by posterity under the very respectable title of the friend of the earl of Chatham. But though his friend, my lord, we well know that he did not implicitly follow the sentiments of a man, who was assuredly the first star in the political hemisphere, and whose talents would have excused, if any thing could have excused, an unsuspecting credulity. The character of lord Chatham was never, but in one instance, tarnished. He did not sufficiently dread the omnipotence of the favourite. He fondly imagined that before a character so brilliant, and success so imposing as his had been, no little system of favouritism could keep its ground. Twice, my lord, he was upon the brink of the precipice, and once he fell. When he trembled on the verge, who was it that held him back? It was Richard earl Temple. Twice he came, like his guardian angel, and snatched him from his fate. Lord Chatham indeed was formed to champ the bit, and spurn indignant at every restraint. He knew the superiority of his abilities, he recollected that he had twice submitted to the honest counsels of his friend, and he disdained to listen any longer to a coolness, that assimilated but ill to the adventurousness of his spirit; and to a hesitation, that wore in his apprehension the guise of timidity. What then did Richard earl Temple do? There he fixed his standard, and there he pitched his tent. Not a step farther would he follow a leader, whom to follow had been the boast of his life. He erected a fortress that might one day prove the safeguard of his misguided and unsuspecting friend.

And yet, my lord, the character of Richard earl Temple, was not that of causeless suspicion. He proved himself, in a thousand instances, honest, trusting, and sincere. He was not, like some men, that you and I know, dark, dispassionate, and impenetrable. On the contrary, no man mistook him, no man ever charged him with a double conduct or a wrinkled heart. His countenance was open, and his spirit was clear. He was a man of passions, my lord. He acted in every momentous concern, more from the dictates of his heart, than his head. But this is the key to his conduct; He kept a watchful eye upon that bane of every patriot minister, *secret influence*. If there were one feature in his political history more conspicuous than the rest, if I were called to point out the line of discrimination between his character and that of his contemporaries upon the public stage, it would be the *hatred of secret influence*.

Such, my lord, was one of your immediate ancestors, whose name, to this day, every honest Briton repeats with veneration. I will turn to another person, still more nearly related to you, and who will make an equal figure in the history of the age in which he lived, Mr. George Grenville. His character has been represented to us by a writer of no mean discernment as that of "shrewd and inflexible." He was a man of indefatigable industry and application. He possessed a found understanding, and he trusted it. This is a respectable description. Integrity and independency however mistaken, are entitled to praise. What was it, my lord, that he considered as the ruin of his reputation? What was it, that defeated all the views of an honed ambition, and deprived his country of the services, which his abilities, under proper direction, were qualified to render it? My lord, it was *secret influence*. It was in vain for ministers to be able to construct their plans with the highest wisdom, and the most unwearied diligence; it was in vain that they came forward like men, and risked their places, their characters, their all, upon measures, how ever arduous, that they thought necessary for the salvation of their country. They were defeated, by what, my

lord? By abilities greater than their own? By a penetration that discovered blots in their wisest measures? By an opposition bold and adventurous as themselves? No: but, by the *lords of the bed chamber*; by a "band of Janiffaries who surrounded the person of the prince, and were ready to strangle the minister upon the nod of a moment."

With these illustrious examples ever rushing upon your memory, no man can doubt that your lordship has inherited that detestation of *influence*, by which your ancestors were so honourably distinguished. My lord, having considered the high expectations, which the virtues of your immediate progenitors had taught us to form upon the heir of them both, we will recollect for a moment the promises that your first outset in life had made to your country.

One of your lordship's first actions upon record, consists in the high professions you made at the county meeting of Buckingham, in that ever-venerable aera of oeconomy and reform, the spring of 1780. My lord, there are certain offices of sinecure, not dependent upon the caprice of a minister, which this country has reserved to reward those illustrious statesmen, who have spent their lives, and worn out their constitutions in her service. No man will wonder, when he recollects from whom your lordship has the honour to be descended, that one of these offices is in your possession. This, my lord, was the subject of your generous and disinterested professions. You told your countrymen, that with this office you were ready to part. If a reformation so extensive were thought necessary, you were determined, not merely to be no obstacle to the design, but to be a volunteer in the service. You came forward in the eye of the world, with your patent in your hand. You were ready to sacrifice that parchment, the precious instrument of personal wealth and private benevolence, at the shrine of patriotism.

Here then, my lord, you stood pledged to your country. What were we not to expect from the first patriot of modern story? Your lordship will readily imagine that our expectations were boundless and indefinite. "Glorious and immortal man!" we cried, "go on in this untrodden path. We will no longer look with drooping and cheerless anxiety upon the misfortunes of Britain, we have a resource for them all. The patriot of Stowe is capable of every thing. He does not resemble the vulgar herd of mortals, he does not form his conduct upon precedent, nor defend it by example. Virtue of the first impression was never yet separated from genius."

"We will trust then in the expedients of his inexhaustible mind. We will look up to him as our assured deliverer. --We are well acquainted with the wealth of the proprietor of Stowe. Thanks, eternal thanks to heaven, who has bestowed it with so liberal a hand! We consider it as a deposit for the public good. We count his acres, and we calculate his income, for we know that it is, in the best sense of the word, our own."

My lord, there are the prejudices, which Englishmen have formed in your favour. They cannot refuse to bull a man, descended from so illustrious progenitors. They cannot suspect anything dark and dishonourable in the generous donor of 2700*l.* a year. Let then the commentators against whom I am providing, abjure the name of Briton, or let them pay the veneration that is due to a character, in every view of the subject, so exalted as that of your lordship.

I have the honour to be,
MY LORD,
with the most unfeigned respect,
your lordship's
most obedient,
most devoted servant.

INSTRUCTIONS TO A STATESMAN.

MY LORD,

I HAVE long considered as the greatest happiness of my life, the having so promising a pupil as your lordship. Though your abilities are certainly of the very first impression, they are not however of that vague and indefinite species, which we often meet with in persons, who, if providence had so pleased, would have figured with equal adroitness in the character of a shoe-black or a link-boy, as they now flatter themselves they can do in that of a minister of state. You, my lord, were born with that accomplishment of secrecy and retentiveness which the archbishop of Cambray represents Telemachus as having possessed in so high a degree in consequence of the mode of his education. You were always distinguished by that art, never to be sufficiently valued, of talking much and saying nothing. I cannot recollect, and yet my memory is as great, as my opportunity for observation has been considerable, that your lordship, when a boy, ever betrayed a single fact that chanced to fall within your notice, unless indeed it had some tendency to procure a school-fellow a whipping. I have often remarked your lordship with admiration, talking big and blustering loud, so as to frighten urchins who were about half your lordship's size, when you had no precise meaning in any thing you said. And I shall never forget, the longer day I have to live, when I hugged you in my arms in a kind of prophetic transport, in consequence of your whispering me, in the midst of a room-full of company, in so sly a manner that nobody could observe you, that you had just seen John the coachman bestow upon Betty the cook-maid, a most devout and cordial embrace. From your rawest infancy you were as much distinguished, as Milton represents the goddess Hebe to have been, by "nods and becks and wreathed smiles;" with this difference, that in her they were marks of gaiety, and in you of demureness; that in her they were unrestrained and general, and in you intended only for a single *confidant*. My lord, reflecting upon all these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that I treated your lordship even in clouts with the reverence due to an infant Jove, and always considered myself as superintending the institution of the first statesman that ever existed.

But, my lord, it has ever been my opinion, that let nature do as much as she will, it is in the power of education to do still more. The many statesman-like qualities that you brought into the world with you, sufficiently prove, that no man was ever more deeply indebted to the bounty of nature than your lordship. And yet of all those qualities she has bestowed upon you, there is not one that I hold in half so much esteem, as that docility, which has ever induced you to receive my instructions with implicit veneration. It is true, my coat is fustian, and my whole accoutrement plebeian. My shoes are clouted, and it is long since the wig that defends this penetrating brain, could boast a crooked hair. But you, my lord, have been able to discover the fruit through the thick and uncomely coat by which it was concealed; you have cracked the nut and have a right to the kernel.

My lord, I thought it necessary to premise these observations, before I entered upon those important matters of disquisition, which will form the object of my present epistle. It is unnecessary for me to inform a person of so much discernment as your lordship, that education is, by its very nature, a thing of temporary duration. Your lordship's education has been long, and there have been cogent reasons why it should be so. God grant, that when left to walk the world alone, you be not betrayed into any of those unlucky blunders, from the very verge of which my provident hand has often redeemed your lordship! Do not mistake me, my lord, when I talk of the greatness of your talents. It is now too late to flatter: This is no time for disguise. Pardon me therefore, my

dear and ever-honoured pupil, if I may seem to offend against those minuter laws of etiquette, which were made only for common cases. At so important a crisis it is necessary to be plain.

Your lordship is very cunning, but I never imagined that you were remarkably wise. The talents you received at your birth, if we were to speak with mathematical strictness, should rather be denominated knacks, than abilities. They consist rather in a lucky dexterity of face, and a happy conformation of limb, than in any very elevated capacities of the intellect. Upon that score, my lord, --you know I am fond of comparisons, and I think I have hit upon one in this case, that must be acknowledged remarkably apposite. I have sometimes seen a ditch, the water of which, though really shallow, has appeared to careless observers to be very deep, for no other reason but because it was muddy. Believe me, my lord, experienced and penetrating observers are not so to be taken in.

But, as I was saying, education is a temporary thing, and your lordship's, however lasting and laborious, is at length brought to a period. My lord, if it so pleases the sovereign disposer of all things, I should be very well satisfied to remain in this sublunary state for some years longer, if it were only that I might live to rejoice in the exemplification of my precepts in the conduct of my pupil. But, if this boon be granted to my merits and my prayers, at any rate I shall from this moment retire from the world. From henceforth my *secret influence* is brought to its close. I will no longer be the unseen original of the grand movements of the figures that fill the political stage. I will stand aloof from the giddy herd. I will not stray from my little vortex. I will look down upon the transactions of courts and ministers, like an ethereal being from a superior element. There I shall hope to see your lordship outstrip your contemporaries, and tower above the pigmies of the day. To repeat an idea before delivered, might be unbecoming in a fine writer, but it is characteristic and beautiful under the personage of a preceptor. The fitnesses which nature bellowed upon your frame would not have done alone. But joined with the lessons I have taught you, they cannot fail, unless I grossly flatter myself, to make the part which your lordship shall act sufficiently conspicuous.

Receive then, my lord, with that docility and veneration, which have at all times made the remembrance of you pleasant and reviving to my heart, the last communications of the instructor of your choice. Yes, my lord, from henceforth you shall see me, you shall hear from me no more. From this consideration I infer one reason why you should deeply reflect upon the precepts I have now to offer. Remembering that these little sheets are all the legacy my affection can bestow upon you, I shall concenter in them the very quintessence and epitome of all my wisdom. I shall provide in them a particular antidote to those defects to which nature has made you most propense.

But I have yet another reason to inforce your attention to what I am about to write. I was, as I have said, the instructor of your choice. When I had yet remained neglected in the world, when my honours were withered by the hand of poverty, when my blossoms appeared in the eyes of those who saw me of the most brown and wintry complexion, and, if your lordship will allow me to finish the metaphor, when I stank in their noses, it was then that your lordship remarked and distinguished me. Your bounty it was that first revived my native pride. It is true that it ran in a little dribbling rivulet, but still it was much to me. Even before you were able to afford me any real assistance, you were always ready to offer me a corner of your gingerbread, or a marble from your hoard. Your lordship had at all times a taste for sumptuousness and magnificence, but you knew how to limit your natural propensity in consideration of the calls of affinity, and to give your farthings to your friends.

Do not then, my dear lord, belie the first and earliest sentiments of your heart. As you have ever heard me, let your attention be tripled now. Read my letter once and again. Preserve it as a sacred deposit. Lay it under your pillow. Meditate upon it fasting. Commit it to memory, and repeat the scattered parcels of it, as Caesar is said to have done the Greek alphabet, to cool your rising choler. Be this the amulet to preserve you from danger! Be this the chart by which to steer the little skiff of your political system safe into the port of historic immortality!

My lord, you and I have read Machiavel together. It is true I am but a bungler in Italian, and your lordship was generally obliged to interpret for me. Your translation I dare say was always scientific, but I was seldom so happy as to see either grammar or sense in it. So far however as I can guess at the drift of this celebrated author, he seems to have written as the professor of only one science. He has treated of the art of government, and has enquired what was wise, and what was political. He has left the moralists to take care of themselves.

In the present essay, my lord, I shall follow the example of Machiavel. I profess the same science, and I pretend only to have carried to much greater heights an art to which he has given a considerable degree of perfection. Your lordship has had a great number of masters. Your excellent father, who himself had some dabbling in politics, spared no expence upon your education, though I believe he had by no means so high an opinion of your genius and abilities as I entertained. Your lordship therefore is to be presumed competently versed in the rudiments of ethics. You have read Grotius, Puffendorf, and Cumberland. For my part I never opened a volume of any one of them. I am self-taught. My science originates entirely in my unbounded penetration, and a sort of divine and supernatural afflatus. With all this your lordship knows I am a modest man. I have never presumed to entrench upon the province of others. Let the professors of ethics talk their nonsense. I will not interrupt them. I will not endeavour to set your lordship against them. It is necessary for me to take politics upon an unlimited scale, and to suppose that a statesman has no character to preserve but that of speciousness and plausibility. But it is your lordship's business to enquire whether this be really the case.

I need not tell you, that I shall not, like the political writers with which you are acquainted, talk in the air. My instructions will be of a practical nature, and my rules adapted to the present condition of the English government. That government is at present considerably, though imperfectly, a system of liberty. To such a system the most essential maxim is, that the governors shall be accountable and amenable to the governed. This principle has sometimes been denominated responsibility. Responsibility in a republican government is carried as high as possible. In a limited monarchy it stops at the first ministers, the immediate servants of the crown. Now to this system nothing can be more fatal, than for the public measures not really to originate with administration, but with secret advisers who cannot be traced. This is to cut all the nerves of government, to loosen all the springs of liberty, to make the constitution totter to its lowest foundations.

I say this, my lord, not to terrify your lordship. The students and the imitators of Machiavel must not be frightened with bugbears. Beside, were cowardice as congenial to the feelings of your lordship as I confess it has sometimes been to mine, cowardice itself is not so apt to be terrified with threats hung up *in terrorem*, and menaces of a vague and general nature. It trembles only at a danger definite and impending. It is the dagger at the throat, it is the pistol at the breast, that shakes her nerves. Prudence is alarmed at a distance, and calls up all her exertion. But cowardice is shortsighted, and was never productive of any salutary effort. I say not this therefore to intimidate, but to excite you. I would teach you, that this is a most important step

indeed, is the grand *desideratum* in order to exalt the English monarchy to a par with the glorious one of France, or any other absolute monarchy in Christendom.

In order, my lord, to annihilate responsibility, nothing more is necessary than that every individual should be as free, and as much in the habit of advising the king upon the measures of government, as his ministers. Let every discarded, and let every would-be statesman, sow dissension in the royal councils, and pour the poison of his discontent into the royal ear. Let the cabinet ring with a thousand jarring sentiments; and let the subtlest courtier, let him that is the most perfect master of wheedling arts and pathetic tones, carry it from every rival. This, my lord, will probably create some confusion at first.. The system of government will appear, not a regular and proportioned beauty, like the pheasant of India, but a gaudy and glaring system of unconnected parts, like Esop's daw with borrowed feathers. Anarchy and darkness will be the original appearance. But light shall spring out of the noon of night; harmony and order shall succeed the chaos. The present patchwork of three different forms of government shall be changed into one simple and godlike system of despotism. Thus, when London was burned, a more commodious and healthful city sprung as it were out of her ashes.

But neither Rome nor London was built in a day. The glorious work I am recommending to you must be a work of time. At first it will be necessary for the person who would subvert the silly system of English government, to enter upon his undertaking with infinite timidity and precaution. He must stalk along in silence like Tarquin to the rape of Lucretia. His horses, like those of Lear, must be shod with felt. He must shroud himself in the thickest shade. Let him comfort himself with this reflexion: "It is but for a time. It will soon be over. No work of mortal hands can long stand against concussions so violent. Ulysses, who entered troy, shut up in the cincture of the wooden horse, shall soon burst the enclosure, shall terrify those from whose observation he lately shrunk, and carry devastation and ruin on whatever side he turns."

My lord, I have considered the subject of politics with as much acuteness as any man. I have revolved a thousand schemes, which to recommend to the pursuit of the statesman of my own creation. But there is no plan of action that appears to me half so grand and comprehensive, as this of *secret influence*. It is true the scheme is not entirely new.

It has been a subject of discussion ever since the English nation could boast any thing like a regular system of liberty. It was complained of under king William. It was boasted of, even to ostentation, by the Tory ministers of queen Anne. The Pelhams cried out upon it in lord Carteret. It has been the business of half the history of the present reign to fix the charge upon my lord Bute.

And yet in spite of these appearances, in spite of all the deductions that modesty can authorise I may boldly affirm that my scheme has something in it that is truly original. My lord, I would not have you proceed by leaps and starts, like these half-fledged statesmen. I would have you proceed from step to step in a finished and faultless plan. I have too an improvement without which the first step is of no value, which yet has seldom been added, which at first fight has a very daring appearance, but which I pretend to teach your lordship to practise with perfect safety. But it is necessary for me, before I come to this grand *arcanum* of my system, to premise a few observations for the more accurately managing the influence itself.

My lord, there are a variety of things necessary to absolute secrecy. There is nothing more inconvenient to a political character than that gross and unmanageable quantity of flesh and blood that fortune has decreed that every mortal should carry about with him. The man who is properly initiated in the *arcana* of a closet, ought to be able to squeeze himself through a key hole,

and, whenever any impertinent Marplot appears to blast him, to change this unwieldy frame into the substance of the viewless winds. How often must a theoretical statesman like myself, have regretted that incomparable invention, the ring of Gyges! How often must he have wished to be possessed of one of those diabolical forms, described by Milton, which now were taller than the pole, and anon could shrink into the compass of an atom!

But I forget the characteristic of my profession. It is not ours, my lord, to live in air-built castles, and to deal in imaginary hypotheses. On the contrary, we are continually talking of the weakness and the frailty of humanity. Does any man impeach one of our body of bribery and corruption? We confess that these practices may seem to run counter with the fine-spun systems of morality; but this is our constant apology, human affairs can be no otherwise managed. Does any man suggest the most beautiful scheme of oeconomy, or present us with the most perfect model of liberty? We turn away with a sneer, and tell him that all this is plausible and pretty; but that we do not concern ourselves with any thing but what is practicable.

In conformity to these ideas, I beg leave, my lord, to recal the fantastic wishes that have just escaped me. To be corporeal is our irrevocable fate, and we will not waste our time in fruitlessly accusing it. My lord, I have one or two little expedients to offer to you, which, though they do not amount to a perfect remedy in this case, will yet, I hope, prove a tolerable substitute for those diabolical forms of which I was talking.

I need not put your lordship in mind how friendly to such practices as ours, is the cover of darkness, and how convenient those little machines commonly called back-stairs. I dare say even your lordship, however inconsequently you may often conduct yourself, would scarcely think of midday as the most proper season of concealment, or the passing through a crowded levee, the most natural method of entering the royal closet unobserved.

But, my lord, you will please to recollect, that there are certain attendants upon the person of the sovereign whom I find classed in that epitome of political wisdom, the Red Book, under the name of pages. Most wise is the institution, (and your lordship will observe that I am not now deviating into the regions of fable) which is common to all the Eastern courts, of having these offices filled by persons, who, upon peril of their life, may not, in any circumstances whatsoever, utter a word. But unfortunately in the western climates in which we reside, the thing is otherwise. The institution of mutes is unknown to us. The lips of our pages have never been inured to the wholesome discipline of the padlock. They are as loquacious, and blab as much as other men. You know, my lord, that I am fond of illustrating the principles I lay down by the recital of facts. The last, and indeed the only time that I ever entered the metropolis, I remember, as my barber was removing the hair from my nether lip: --My barber had all that impertinent communicativeness that is incident to the gentlemen of his profession; he assured me, that he had seen that morning one of the pages of the back-stairs, who declared to him, upon the word of a man of honour, that he had that moment admitted a certain nobleman by a private door to the presence of his master; that the face of the noble lord was perfectly familiar to him, and that he had let him in some fifty times in the course of the past six months. "How silly is all this!" added the page; "and how glad should I be," licking his lips, "that it were but an opera girl of a countess! And yet my mistress is the very best mistress that ever I see!" *Oh this was poor, and showed a pitiful ambition in the man that did it!* I will swear, my lord, that the nobleman who could thus have been betrayed, must

¹ Vide Burke's Speech upon Economy.

have been a thick-headed fellow, and fit for no one public office, not even for that of *turnspit of his majesty's kitchen*!¹

My lord, if you would escape that rock, upon which this statesman terminated his political career, ever while you live make use of bribery. Let the pages finger your cash let them drink your health in a glass of honest claret, and let them chuckle over the effects of your lordship's munificence. I know that you will pour forth many a pathetic complaint over the money that is drawn off by this copious receiver, but believe the wisest man that now exists, when he assures you, that it is well bestowed. Your lordship's bounty to myself has sometimes amounted to near ten pounds in the course of a twelvemonth. That drain, my lord, is stopped. I shall receive from you no more. Let then the expence, which you once incurred for my sake, be henceforth diverted to this valuable purpose.

I believe, my lord, that this is all the improvement that can be made upon the head of pages. I think we can scarcely venture upon the expedient that would otherwise be admirable, of these interviews being carried on without the intervention of any such impertinent fellows, from whom one is ever in danger, without the smallest notice, of having it published at St. James's-Market, and proclaimed from the statue at Charing Cross. If however you should think this expedient advisable, I would recommend it to you not to mention it to your gracious master. Courts are so incumbered and hedged in with ceremony, that the members of them are always prone to imagine that the form is more essential and indispensable, than the substance. Suppose then, my lord, you were, by one of those sly opportunities, which you know so well how to command, to take off the key in wax, and get a picklock key made exactly upon the model of it. The end, my lord, take my word for it, would abundantly sanctify the apparent sordidness of the means. In this situation I cannot help picturing to myself the surprise and the joy, that would be in a moment lighted up in the countenance of your friend. Your rencounter would be as unexpected and fortunate as that of Lady Randolph and her son, when she fears every moment to have him murdered by Glenalvon. You would fly into each others arms, and almost smother one another in your mutual embrace.

But another thing that is abundantly worthy of your lordship's attention, is the subject of disguises and dark lanthorns. Harley, afterwards earl of Oxford, was in the practice, if I remember right, for it is some time since I read Dr. Swift's political pamphlets, of crossing the park in a horseman's coat. But this is too shallow and thin a disguise. A mask, on the other hand, might perhaps be too particular. Though indeed at midnight, which is the only time that I would recommend to your lordship in which to approach within a hundred yards of the palace, it might probably pass without much observation. A pouched hat, and a bob wig, your lordship may at any time venture upon. But there is nothing that is of so much importance in this affair as variety. I would sometimes put on the turban of a Turk, and sometimes the half breeches of a Highlander. I would sometimes wear the lawn sleeves of a bishop, and sometimes the tye-wig of a barrister. A leathern apron and a trowel might upon occasion be of sovereign efficacy. The long beard and neglected dress of a Shylock should be admitted into the fill. I would also occasionally lay aside the small clothes, and assume the dress of a woman. I would often trip it along with the appearance and gesture of a spruce milliner; and I would often stalk with the solemn air and sweeping train of a duchess. But of all the infinite shapes of human dress, I must confess that my favourite is the kind of doublet that prince Harry wore when he assaulted Falstaff. The nearer it approaches to the guise of a common carman the better, and his long whip ought to be inseparable. If you could add to it the sooty appearance of a coal-heaver, or a chimney-sweep, it would fit, upon

this more precious than velvet garb, like spangles and lace. I need not add, that to a mind of elegance and sensibility, the emblematical allusion which this dress would carry to the secrecy and impenetrableness of the person that wears it, must be the source of a delightful and exquisite sensation.

And now, my lord, for the last head, which it is necessary to mention under this division of my subject, I mean that of lanthorns. Twenty people, I doubt not, whom your lordship might consult upon this occasion would advise you to go without any lanthorn at all. Beware of this, my lord. It is a rash and a thoughtless advice. It may possibly be a false and insidious one. Your lordship will never think of going always in the same broad and frequented path. Many a causeway you will have to cross, many a dark and winding alley to tread. Suppose, my lord, the pavement were to be torn up, and your lordship were to break your shin! Suppose a drain were to have been opened in the preceding day, without your knowing any thing of the matter, and your lordship were to break your neck! Suppose, which is more terrible than all the rest, you were to set your foot upon that which I dare not name, and by offending the olfactory nerves of majesty, you were to forfeit his affections for ever!

So much, my lord, by way of declamation against the abolition of lanthorns. Your lordship however does not imagine I shall say any thing upon affairs so common as the glass lanthorn, the horn lanthorn, and the perforated tin lanthorn. This fall indeed is most to my purpose, but it will not do, my lord, it will not do. There is a kind of lanthorns, your lordship has seen them, that have one side dark, and the other light. I remember to have observed your lordship for half a day together, poring over the picture of Guy Faux, in the Book of Martyrs. This was one of the early intimations which my wisdom enabled me to remark of the destination which nature had given you. You know, my lord, that the possessor of this lanthorn can turn it this way and that, as he pleases. He can contrive accurately to discern the countenance of every other person, without being visible himself. I need not enlarge to your lordship upon the admirable uses of this machine. I will only add, that my very dear and ever-lamented friend Mr. Pinchbeck, effected before he died an improvement upon it so valuable, that it cannot but preserve his name from that oblivious power, by which common names are devoured. In his lanthorn, the shade, which used to be inseparable, may be taken away at the possessor's pleasure, like the head of a whisky, and it may appear to all intents and purposes one of the common vehicles of the kind. He had also a contrivance, never to be sufficiently commended, that when the snuff of the candle had attained a certain length, it moved a kind of automatus pair of snuffers that hung within side, and amputated itself. He left me two of these lanthorns as a legacy. Such is my value for your lordship, that I have wrought myself up to a resolution of parting with one of them in your lordship's favour. You will receive it in four days from the date of this by Gines's waggon, that puts up in Holborn.

But, my lord, there is a second object of consideration still more important than this. It is in vain for your lordship, or any other person, to persuade the sovereign against any of the measures of his government, unless you can add to this the discovery of those new sentiments you have instilled, to all such as it may concern. It is the business of every Machiavelian minister, such as your lordship, both from nature and choice, is inclined to be, to prop the cause of despotism. In order to this, the dignity of the sovereign is not to be committed, but exalted. To bring forward the royal person to put a negative upon any bill in parliament, is a most inartificial mode of proceeding. It marks too accurately the strides of power, and awakens too pointedly the attention of the multitude. Your lordship has heard that the house of lords is the barrier between the king and

the people. There is a sense of this phrase, of which I am wonderfully fond. The dissemination of the royal opinion will at any time create a majority in that house, to divert the odium from the person of the monarch. Twenty-two bishops, thirteen lords of the bedchamber, and all the rabble of household troops, will at any time compose an army. They may not indeed cover an acre of ground, nor would I advise your lordship to distribute them into a great number of regiments. Their countenances are not the most terrific that were ever beheld, and it might be proper to officer them with persons of more sagacity than themselves. But under all this meekness of appearance, and innocence of understanding, believe me, my lord, they are capable of keeping at bay the commons and the people of England united in one cause, for a considerable time. They have been too long at the beck of a minister, not to be somewhat callous in their feelings. And they are too numerous, not to have shoulders capacious enough to bear all the obloquy, with which their conduct may be attended.

But then, my lord, as I would not recommend it to you to bring into practice the royal negative, so neither perhaps would it be advisable for the sovereign, to instruct those lords immediately attendant upon him, in person. Kings, you are not to be informed, are to be managed and humoured by those that would win their confidence. If your lordship could invent a fort of down, more soft and yielding than has yet been employed, it might be something. But to point out to your master, that he must say this, and write that, that he must fend for one man, and break with another, is an unpleasant and ungrateful office. It must be your business to take the burden from his shoulders. You must smooth the road you would have him take, and drew with flowers the path of ruin. If he favour your schemes with a smile of approbation, if he bestow upon your proceedings the sanction of a nod, it is enough. It is godlike fortitude, and heroic exertion.

But secrecy is the very essence of deep and insidious conduct. I would advise your lordship to bring even your own name into question, as little as possible. My lord Chesterfield compares a statesman, who has been celebrated for influence during the greatest part of the present reign, to the ostrich. The brain of an ostrich, your lordship will please to observe, though he be the largest of birds, may very easily be included in the compass of a nut-shell. When pursued by the hunters, he is said to bury his head in the sand, and having done this, to imagine that he cannot be discovered the keenest search. Do not you, my lord, imitate the manners of the ostrich. Believe me, they are ungraceful; and, if maturely considered, will perhaps appear to be a little silly.

There is a contrivance that has occurred to me, which, if it were not accompanied with a circumstance somewhat out of date, appears to me in the highest degree admirable. Suppose you were to treat the lords of the bedchamber with a sight of St. Paul's cathedral? There is a certain part of it of a circular form, commonly called the whispering gallery.

You have probably heard, that by the uncommon echo of this place, the weakest sound that can possibly be articulated, is increased by that time it has gone half round, into a sound, audible and strong. Your lordship, with your flock of geese about you, would probably be frolic and gamesome. You may easily contrive to scatter them through the whole circumference of this apartment. Of a sudden, you will please to turn your face to the wall, and utter in a solemn tone the royal opinion. Every body will be at a loss from whence the mandate proceeds. Some of your companions, more goose-like than the rest, will probably imagine it a voice from heaven. The sentence must be two or three times repeated at proper intervals, before you can contrive to have each of the lords in turn at the required distance. This will demand a considerable degree of alertness and agility. But alertness and agility are qualities by which your lordship is so eminently distinguished, that I should have very few apprehensions about your success. Meanwhile it will be proper to have a

select number of footmen stationed at the door of the gallery, armed with smelling-bottles. Some of your friends, I suspect, would be so much alarmed at this celestial and ghost-like phenomenon, as to render this part of the plan of singular service.

But after all, I am apprehensive that many of the noble lords to whom I allude, would be disgusted at the very mention of any thing so old-fashioned and city-like, as a visit to this famous cathedral. And even if that were not the case, it is proper to be provided with more than one scheme for the execution of so necessary a purpose. The question is of no contemptible magnitude, between instructions *viva voce*, and a circular letter. In favour of the first it may be said, that a letter is the worst and most definite evidence to a man's disadvantage that can be conceived. It may easily be traced. It can scarcely be denied. The sense of it cannot readily be explained away. --It must be confessed there is something in this; and yet, my lord, I am by all means for a letter. A voice may often be overheard. I remember my poor old goody used to say, (heaven rest her soul!) That walls had ears. There are some lords, my dear friend, that can never think of being alone. Bugbears are ever starting up in their prolific imagination, and they cannot be for a moment in the dark, without expecting the devil to fly away with them. They have some useful pimp, some favourite toadeater, that is always at their elbow. Ever remember, so long as you live, that toadeaters are treacherous friends. Beside, it would be a little suspicious, to see your lordship's carriage making a regular tour from door to door among the lords of the bed-chamber. And I would by no means have Pinchbeck's dark-lantern brought into common use. Consider, my lord, when that is worn out, you will not know where to get such another.

A letter may be disguised in various ways. You would certainly never think of signing your name. You might have it transcribed by your secretary. But then this would be to commit your safety and your fame to the keeping of another. No, my lord, there are schemes worth a hundred of this. Consider the various hands in which a letter may be written. There is the round hand, and the Italian hand, the text hand, and the running hand. You may form your letters upon the Roman or the Italic model. Your billet may be engrossed. You may employ the Ger[man] text or the old primero. If I am not mistaken, your

lordship studied all these when you were a boy for this very purpose. Yes, my lord, I may be in the wrong, but I am confidently of opinion, that this is absolutely the first, most important, and most indispensable accomplishment of a statesman. I would forgive him, if he did not know a cornet from an ensign, I would forgive him, if he thought Italy a province of Asia Minor. But not to write primero! the nincompoop! the numbscull!

If it were not that the persons with whom your lordship has to correspond, can some of them barely spell their native tongue, I would recommend to your lordship the use of cyphers. But no, you might as well write the language of the Mantcheux Tartars. For consider, your letters may be intercepted. It is true, they have not many perils to undergo. They are not handed from post-house to post-house. There are no im

pertinent office-keepers to inspect them by land. There are no privateers to capture them by sea. But, my lord, they have perils to encounter, the very recollection of which makes me tremble to the inmost fibre of my frame. They are ale-houses, my lord. Think for a moment of the clattering of porter-pots, and the scream of my goodly hostess. Imagine that the blazing fire smiles through the impenetrable window, and that the kitchen shakes with the peals of laughter. These are temptations, my lord, that no mortal porter can withstand. When the unvaried countenance of his gracious sovereign smiles invitation upon him from the weather beaten signpost, what loyal heart but must be melted into compliance.

From all these considerations, my lord, I would advise you to write with invisible ink. Milk I believe will serve the purpose, though I am afraid, that the

milk that is hawked about the streets of London, has rather too much water in it. The juice of lemon is a sovereign recipe. There are a variety of other preparations that will answer the purpose. But these may be learned from the most vulgar and accessible sources of information. And you will please to observe, that I suffer nothing to creep into this political testament, more valuable than those of Richelieu, Mazarine, and Alberoni, that is not entirely original matter. My lord, I defy you to learn a single particular of the refinements here communicated from the greatest statesman that lives. They talk of Fox! He would give his right hand for an atom of them!

I will now suppose you, my lord, by all these artifices, arrived at the very threshold of power. I will suppose that you have just defeated the grandest and the wisest measure of your political antagonists. I think there is nothing more natural, though the rule will admit of many exceptions, than for people who act uniformly in opposition to each other, upon public grounds, to be of opposite characters and dispositions. I will therefore imagine, that, shocked with the boundless extortions and the relentless cruelties that have been practised in some distant part of the empire, they came forward with a measure full of generous oblivion for the past, providing with circumspect and collected humanity for the future. I will suppose, that they were desirous of taking an impotent government out of the hands of Jews and pedlars, old women and minors, and to render it a part of the great system. I will suppose, that they were desirous of transferring political power from a company of rapacious and interested merchants, into the hands of statesman, men distinguished among a thousand parties for clear integrity, disinterested virtue, and spotless fame. This, my lord, would be a held worthy of your lordship's prowess. Could you but gain the interested, could you eternize rapacity, and preserve inviolate the blot of the English name, what laurels would not your lordship deserve?

I will therefore suppose, that your gracious master meets you with a *carte blanche*, that he is disposed to listen to all your advices, and to adopt all your counsels. Your lordship is aware that the road of secret influence, and that of popular favour, are not exactly the same. No ministry can long preserve their seats unless they possess the confidence of a majority of the house of commons. The ministry therefore against which your lordship acts, we will take it for granted are in this predicament. In this situation then an important question naturally arises. Either a majority in the house of commons must be purchased at any rate, or the government must be conducted in defiance of that house, or thirdly, the parliament must be dissolved. Exclusive of these three, I can conceive of no alternative. We will therefore examine each in its turn.

Shall a majority in the house of commons be created? Much may be said on both sides. A very ingenious friend of mine, for whose counsels I have an uncommon deference, assured me, that nothing would be so easy as this. Observing with a shrewdness that astonished me, that ministry, upon a late most important question, mustered no more than 250 votes, and that there were 558 members, he inferred, that you had nothing more to do than to fend for those that were absent out of the country, and you might have upwards of 300 to pit against the 250. It is with infinite regret that I ever suffer myself to dissent from the opinion of this gentleman. But suppose, my lord, which is at least possible, that one half of the absentees should be friends to the cause of the people; what would become of us then? There remains indeed the obvious method of purchasing votes, and it might be supposed that your lordship's talent of insinuation might do you knight's service in this business. But no, my lord, many of these country gentlemen are at bottom no better than boors. A mechlin cravat and a smirking countenance, upon which your

lordship builds so much, would be absolutely unnoticed by them. I am afraid of risking my credit with your lordship, but I can assure you, that I have heard that one of these fellows has been known to fly from a nobleman covered with lace, and powdered, and perfumed to the very tip of the mode, to follow the standard of a commoner whose coat has been stained with claret, and who has not had a ruffle to his shirt. My lord, if common fame may be trusted, these puppies are literally tasteless enough to admire wit, though the man who utters it be ever so corpulent, and to discover eloquence in the mouth of one, who can suffer himself to spit in an honourable assembly. I am a plain man, my lord; but I really think that among marquisses and dukes, right honourables and right reverends, these things are intolerable.

I would therefore have your lordship give up at once, and with a grace, the very idea of bringing over to your side the partisans of these huge slovenly fellows. The scheme of governing the country without taking the house of commons along with you, is much more feasible than this. This might be done by passing an act of parliament by the authority of two estates of the realm, to declare the house of commons useless. For my part, I am far from thinking this so bold a step as by some it may be imagined. Was not Rome a free state, though it had no house of commons? Has not the British house of commons been incessantly exclaimed upon, as corrupt and nugatory? Has not a reform respecting them been called for from all quarters of the kingdom? I am much of opinion in the present case, that that is the most effectual reform, which goes to the root. Rome had her hereditary nobility, which composed her senate. She had her consuls, an ill-imagined substitute for monarchical power. In these, my lord, was comprehended, in a manner, the whole of her government. I shall be told indeed that they had occasionally their *comitia*, or assemblies of the citizens of the metropolis. But this is so far from an objection to my reasoning, that it furnishes me with a very valuable hint for the improvement of the English constitution.

Let the present house of commons be cashiered, and let the common council of the city of London be placed at St. Stephen's chapel in their room. These your lordship will find a much more worthy and manageable set of people, than the representatives of the nation at large. And can any sensible man doubt for a moment, which are the most respectable body of men? Examine their persons. Among their predecessors I see many poor, lank, shriveled half-starved things, some bald, some with a few straggling hairs, and some with an enormous bag, pendant from no hair at all. Turn, my lord, to the other side. There you will see a good, comely, creditable race of people. They look like brothers. As their size and figure are the same, so by the fire in their eyes, and the expression in their countenances, you could scarcely know one of them from another. Their very gowns are enough to strike terror into the most inattentive. Each of them covers his *cranium* with a venerable periwig, whose flowing curls and voluminous frizure bespeak wealth and contentment. Their faces are buxom, and their cheeks are florid.

You will also, my lord, find them much more easy and tractable, than the squeamish, fretful, discontented wretches, with which other ministers have had to do. There is but one expence that will be requisite. It is uniform, and capable of an easy calculation. In any great and trying question, I was going to say debate, but debates, I am apt to think, would not be very frequent, or very animated, --your lordship has nothing to do, but to clear the table of the rolls and parchments, with which it is generally covered, and spreading a table cloth, place upon it half a score immense turtles, smoking hot, and larded with green fat. My lord, I will forfeit my head, if with this perfume regaling their nostrils, a single man has resolution enough to divide the house, or to declare his discontent with any of the measures of government, by going into the lobby.

So much, my lord, for this scheme. It is too considerable to be adopted without deliberation; it is too important, and too plausible, to be rejected without examination. The only remaining hypothesis is that of a dissolution. Much, I know, may be said against this measure; but, for my own part, next to the new and original system I have had the hour of opening to your lordship, it is with me a considerable favourite. Those, whose interests it is to raise an outcry against it, will exclaim, "What, for the petty and sinister purposes of ambition, shall the whole nation be thrown into uproar and confusion? Who is it that complains of the present house of parliament? Is the voice of the people raised against it? Do petitions come up from every quarter of the kingdom, as they did, to no purpose, a few years ago, for its dissolution? But it is the prerogative of the king to dissolve his parliament. And because it is his prerogative, because he has a power of this kind reserved for singular emergencies, does it follow, that this power is to be exercised at caprice, and without weighty and comprehensive reasons? It may happen, that the parliament is in the midst of its session, that the very existence of revenue may be unprovided for, and the urgent claims of humanity unfulfilled. It is of little consequence," they will perhaps contend, "who is in, and who is out, so the national interests are honestly pursued, and the men who superintend them be not defective in abilities. That then must be a most lawless and undisguised spirit of selfishness, that can for these baubles risk the happiness of millions, and the preservation of the constitution."

All these observations, my lord, may sound well enough in the harangue of a demagogue; but is it for such a man, to object to a repetition of that appeal to the people in general, in the frequency and universality of which the very existence of liberty consists? Till lately, I think it has been allowed, that one of those reforms most favourable to democracy, was an abridgment of the duration of parliaments. But if a general abridgment be so desirable, must not every particular abridgment have its value too? Shall the one be acknowledged of a salutary, and yet the other be declared of a pernicious tendency? Is it possible that the nature of a part, and of the whole, can be not only dissimilar, but opposite? But I will quit these general and accurate reasonings. It is not in them that our strength lies.

They tell us, that the measure of a dissolution is an unpopular one. My lord, it is not so, that you and I are to be taken in. Picture to yourself the very kennels flowing with rivers of beer. Imagine the door of every hospitable alehouse throughout the kingdom, thrown open for the reception of the ragged and pennyless burgess. Imagine the whole country filled with the shouts of drunkenness, and the air rent with mingled huzzas. Represent the broken heads, and the bleeding noses, the tattered raiment, and staggering bodies of a million of loyal voters. My lord, will they pretend, that the measure that gives birth to this glorious scene, is unpopular? We must be very ill versed in the science of human nature, if we could believe them.

But a more important consideration arises. A general election would be of little value, if by means of it a majority of representatives were not to be gained to the aristocratical party. If I were to advise a dissolution, it would be from the fear of a sinister event. It is true, your lordship has a thousand soft blandishments. You can smile and bow in the newest and most approved manner. But, my lord, in the midst of a parcel of Billingsgate fishwomen, in the midst of a circle of butchers with marrow-bones and cleavers, I am afraid these accomplishments would be of little avail. It is he, most noble patron, who can swallow the greatest quantity of porter, who can roar the best catch, and who is the completest bruiser, that will finally carry the day. He must kiss the frostbitten lips of the green-grocers. He must smooth the frowzy cheeks of chandlersshop women. He must stroke down the infinite belly of a Wapping landlady. I see your lordship tremble at the

very catalogue. Could you divide yourself into a thousand parts, and every part be ten times more gigantic than the whole, you would shrink into non-entity at the disgusting scene.

In this emergency I can invent only one expedient. Your lordship I remember had six different services of plate when you were in Ireland, and the duke of P----- could boast only of three. You had also five footmen and a scullion boy more than his grace. By all this magnificence I have been told that you dazzled and enchanted a certain class of the good people of that kingdom. My lord, you must now improve the popularity you gained. Import by the very first hoy a competent number of chairmen. You are not to be told that they are accustomed to put on a gold-lace coat as soon as they arrive upon our shore, and dub themselves fortune-hunters. It will be easy therefore to pass them here for gentlemen, whose low familiarity shall be construed into the most ravishing condescension. No men, my lord, can drink better than they. There is no constitution, but that of an Irish chairman, that can dispense with the bouncing whisky. They are both brawny and courageous, and must therefore make excellent bruisers. Their chief talent lies in the art of courtship, and they are by no means nice and squeamish in their stomach for a mistress. They can also occasionally put off the assumed character of good breeding, and if it be necessary to act over again the celebrated scenes of Balse and M'Quirk, they would not be found at a loss. My lord, they seem to have been created for this very purpose, and if you have any hope from a general election, you must derive every benefit from their distinguished merit. I own however, I am apprehensive for the experiment, and after all would advise your lordship to recur to the very excellent scheme of the common -council men.

There is only one point more which it remains for me to discuss. I have already taken it for granted, that you are offered your choice of every post that exists in the government of this country. Here again, if you were to consult friends less knowing than myself, you would be presented with nothing but jarring and discordant opinions. Some would say, George, take it, and some, George, let it alone. For my part, my lord, I would advise you to do neither the one nor the other. Fickleness and instability, your lordship will please to observe, are of the very essence of a real statesman. Who were the greatest statesmen this country ever had to boast? They were, my lord, the two Villiers's, dukes of Buckingham. Did not the first of these take his young master to the kingdom of Spain, in order to marry the infanta, and then break off the snatch for no cause at all? Did he not afterwards involve the nation in a quarrel with the king of France, only because her most christian majesty would not let him go to bed to her? What was the character of the second duke? This nobleman,

Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was every thing by starts, and nothing long,
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon.

My lord, I do not flatter you so far as to suppose that your abilities are as great, or that you will ever make so distinguished a figure as either of these noblemen. But I would have you imitate them in your humbler circle, and venture greatly, though the honour you should derive from it, should be only, that you greatly fell. Accept therefore, my lord, of one of the principal responsible offices with thought and without hesitation. Through terror or manly spirit, or whatever you choose to call it, resign again the next day. As soon as you have done this, make interest for another place, and if you can obtain it, throw it up as soon again. This, my lord, is not, as an ignorant and coxcomical writer has represented it, "the vibration of a pendulum," but a conduct, wise, manly, judicious, and heroic. Who does not know, that the twinkling stars are of a more

excellent nature, than those which shine upon us with unremitted lustre? Who does not know that the comet, which appears for a short time, and vanishes again for revolving years, is more gazed upon than either? But I am afraid the comet is too sublime an idea for your lordship's comprehension. I would therefore recommend to you, to make the cracker the model of your conduct. You should snap and bounce at regular intervals; at one moment you should seem a blazing star, and the next be lost in trackless darkness.

My lord, there is nothing, which at all times I have taken more pains to subdue, than that overweening pride, and immeasurable conceit, which are the principal features of your lordship's character. Nature, indeed, has furnished you with one corrective to them, or they must infallibly have damned you. It is timidity. Other people may laugh at this quality. For my part I esteem it worthy the loudest praise and most assiduous cultivation. When the balance hangs in doubt between the adventurousness of vanity and the frigidity of fear, ever incline to the latter side. I had rather your lordship should be a coward, than a coxcomb. If however you could attain to that reasonable and chastised opinion of yourself, which should steer a proper mean between these extremes, should make you feel your strength, when menaced by the most terrible adversaries, and your weakness, when soothed by the most fawning parasites, this, my lord, would be the highest perfection to which you could possibly attain. I will therefore close my epistle with the discussion of a case, which your lordship may think parallel to the species of behaviour I have recommended to your cultivation. I mean that of the celebrated and incomparable earl Granville, in the year 1746. I will show you what this nobleman did, and in how many particulars you must forever hope in vain to resemble him.

I remember, my lord, that you and I once studied together the History of England, in Question and Answer. If your lordship recollects, the year 1746 began in the very height of the celebrated rebellion. The ministers of the sovereign at this time, were, that mixed and plausible character, Mr. Pelham, and that immortalized booby, the duke of Newcastle. These gentlemen possessed their full proportion, of that passion, so universally incident to the human frame, the love of power. They had formed such a connection with the monied interest of the kingdom, that no administration could go on without them. Conscious to this circumstance, they had no toleration for a rival, they could "bear no brother near the throne." From this sentiment, they had driven that most able minister I have mentioned, from the cabinet of his sovereign, in no very justifiable manner, about twelve months before. The same jealousy kept alive their suspicions: they knew the partiality of their master: they imagined their antagonist still lurked behind the curtain. The distresses of the kingdom were to them the ladder of ambition. This was the language they held to their sovereign: "The enemy is already advanced into the heart of your majesty's dominions. We know that you cannot do without us. You must therefore listen with patience to what we shall dictate. Drive from your presence forever the wisest and the ablest of all your counsellors. This is the only condition, upon which we will continue to serve you in this perilous moment." Majesty, as it was but natural, was disgusted with this language. The Pelhams resigned. Lord Granville accepted the seals. And he held them I believe for something more than a fortnight.

My lord, I will tell you, what were the Pelhams, and what was the true character of lord Granville. Whatever may be said, and much I think may justly be said, in favour of the former, they were not men of genius. Capable of conducting, and willing upon the whole to conduct with loyalty and propriety the affairs of their country, while they kept within the beaten channel, they were not born to grapple with arduous situations. They had not that commanding spirit of adventure, which leads a man into the path of supererogation and voluntary service: they had not

that firm and collected fortitude which induces a man to look danger in the face, to encounter it in all its force, and to drive it from all its retrenchments. They were particularly attached to the patronage, which is usually annexed to their high situations. They did not come into power by the voice of the people. They were not summoned to assume the administration by a vote of the house of commons. They were introduced into the cabinet by an inglorious and guilty compromise of sir Robert Walpole; a compromise, that shunned the light; a compromise, that reflected indelible disgrace upon every individual concerned in it. We will suppose them ever so much in the right in the instance before us. For certainly, the same responsibility, that ought to remove a minister from the helm, when he is become obnoxious to his countrymen, equally makes it improper that he should be originally appointed by the fancy or capricious partiality of the sovereign. But were they over so much in the right, it will yet remain true, that they took a poor and ungenerous advantage of the personal distresses of their master, which men of a large heart, and of sterling genius, could never have persuaded themselves to take.

Such were the ministers, whom it appears that king George the second would have had no objection to strip of their employments. I will tell you who it was, that he was willing to have substituted in their place. It was a man of infinite genius. His taste was a standard to those, who were most attached to the fine arts, and most uninterruptedly conversant with them. His eloquence was splendid, animated, and engaging. Of all the statesmen then existing in Europe, he was perhaps the individual, who best understood the interests and the politics of all her courts. But your lordship may probably find it somewhat more intelligible, if I take the other side of the picture, and tell you what he was not. He was not a man of fawning and servility. He did not rest his ambitious pretensions upon any habitual adroitness, upon the arts of wheedling, and the tones of insinuation. He rested them upon the most solid talents, and the most brilliant accomplishments. He did not creep into the closet of his sovereign uncalled, and endeavour to make himself of consequence by assiduities and officiousness. He pleaded for years, in a manly and ingenuous manner, the cause of the people in parliament. It was by a popularity, great, and almost without exception, that he was introduced into power. When defeated by the undermining and contemptible art of his rivals; when convinced that it was impossible for him, to employ his abilities with success in the service of his country, he retired. And it was only by the personal intreaties of his sovereign, and to assist him in that arduous and difficult situation, in which those who ought to have served, deserted him, that he once again accepted of office. He accepted it, for the temporary benefit of his country, and till those persons, who only could come into administration with efficiency and advantage, should again resume their places. He made way for them without a struggle. He did not pretend to set practical impotence, though accompanied with abilities incomparably the superior, against that influence and connexion by which they were supported. Of consequence, my lord, his memory will always be respected and cherished by the bulk of mankind.

I do not mean to propose him to your lordship for a model. I never imagined that your talents qualified you for the most distant resemblance of him; and I wished to convince you how inferior they were. Beside, my lord, he did not act upon the Machiavelian plan. His system was that of integrity, frankness, and confidence. He desired to meet his enemies; and the more extensive the ground upon which he could meet them, the better. I was never idle enough to think of such a line of conduct for your lordship. Go on then in those crooked paths, and that invisible direction, for which nature has so eminently fitted you. Intrench yourself behind the letter of the law. Avoid, carefully avoid, the possibility of any sinister evidence. And having uniformly taken

these precautions, defy all the malice of your enemies. They may threaten, but they shall never hurt you.

They may make you tremble and shrink with fancied terrors, but they shall never be able to man so much as a straw against you. Immortality, my lord, is suspended over your head. Do not shudder at the found. It shall not be an immortality of infamy. It shall only be an immortality of contempt.

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



William Godwin
Instructions to a Statesman
Humbly Inscribed to the Right Honourable George Earl Temple
1784

http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/godwin/instruct.html

theanarchistlibrary.org