

Dear Sir - 22389 A. - B

You will, I am assured, feel as I do upon the result of the late Trials - The Constitution is shaken to its foundation by the licence of the Press, and the Licentiousness of the press is incited and upheld by the only means prescribed by the Laws for its control - you will do me the justice to admit that my views upon the subject have been consistent, & that all my anticipations have been unfortunately realised - I saw the rawning mischief in the first factions & unmanly labels upon the best of Princes - I hoped for a vigorous and powerful exertion to stem the torrent, which threatened to accumulate from these beginnings - an opinion (I must still consider an erroneous one) that silent contempt was the best shield against the effects of this Rebaldry prevailed - To me it appeared to be no shield, but on the contrary, the most ingenious mode of sharpening the arrows of the opposing party - If the public of this country hear only one side of the question the chances are always in favour of their adopting it, or if the opponents of it are only capable of

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making a weak Defence, Wit and Talent, however, prostituted will confirm them in it. The selfish and unprincipled conduct of a disappointed Faction at the commencement of the Regency, - the part which certain Individuals bore in it, and the conspicuous & obvious motives which influenced them, were all so many points in which they were vulnerable, and if skilful exertions had been then embodied and led boldly to the attack, the contest would soon have been decided, & the Example of Success in a traitorous & licentious Combination against the Throne & Constituted Authorities would have been wanting as a future Incitement to still more degraded Agents of Sedition now rendered triumphant through their means - When, however, the evil had proceeded to a very great and injurious Extent, when the regular Journals of the Country, it is too true, had outraged the Decencies of life, and carried their unconstitutional Insults to the foot of the Throne, still the law operated to inflict Penalties, because the influence of the press had not been able to penetrate and poison the whole mass of the lower orders of Society - The Plague might have been stayed, or at least, mitigated in its

Effects, whilst the law still continued to be in any degree, a Terror to the Delinquents, but by an inconceivable oversight (I say inconceivable, because to me a very humble Individual in the scale of Society, it was obvious from the beginning) a new Engine was suffered to erect itself in defiance of all usage & precedent, and (as I must still believe) of all law, through whose Machinery, the price of political poison was reduced to the lowest possible Scale, and therefore accessible to the very lowest orders of the people. Here no antedote (of any permanent Effect) could be applied, and the Consequences which were inevitable, displayed themselves in the course of a few weeks. The stream of public opinion was polluted, overt acts of Insurrection and Riot succeeded - Justice in vain attempted to raise her Sword. Juries were either corrupted or intimidated, and every attempt and Effort at Control, only added new power & efficacy to the traitorous and seditious attacks upon the public peace - our Courts of Justice have been rendered mere courts of Record for triumphant Sedition, and the Institutions of the Country, at this moment are laid open, naked & abandoned to the insults & aggression of their avowed Enemies. There appears to me to be but one Channel open

to our Security - a bold, steady, and manly appeal
from these Innovations and Breaches in the Consti-
tution, to the sober sense of the Country. a late
but vigorous determination of adopting preventive
measures, and Parliamentary Interference for the
purpose of enforcing existing laws, or if necessary
of making new Enactments to prevent the publi-
cation of unstamped Journals. That there is
nothing chimerical in the notions I have constantly
entertained upon this subject may be inferred
from the mere notoriety, & popularity of men
like Stone & Woolley. Had preventive measures
been adopted a few months ago, the public
would not have known that such Bungs
existed. by penal Prosecution they are raised up
and armed for any mischief, to any extent they
may think fit to carry it. The policy of
Government which is expedient & applicable to
Treason, is the very Reverse of Right when applied
to libel. In the first Instance, the best
security against ultimate success may be to
suffer it to ripen into action; in the latter,
to nip it in the Bud. although in both Cases

22389.C-D.²
Exceptions may be rendered necessary by the particular
state or exigencies of the Country. Libel, it is true
may go very far, & no precautionary measures may
have the power to affect it, still even in this case, the
press is open as a mean of counter action, but where
preventive measures can be resorted to, I must con-
sider the Policy, more than doubtful which would
reject them. Had the penalties which Cobbett
supposed himself to have incurred, & which the
Public was fully prepared to expect would be enforced,
been actually levied against him even as an Exile,
these men whose names resound from one quarter
of the Country to the other, as intended martyrs to
the liberties of the People would never have been
heard of - They would have been as much
unknown as Hundreds, who now lost & absorbed
among the mass of the people, will hereafter
rise up into notoriety, if a different Policy
be not speedily adopted - Do not the sad
of the men, which the present posture of public
affairs presents to the mind, severely enhanced by
the recollection that their open resistance to the
March of the Constitution is made even during
the suspension of the Habeas Corpus! what are we

to look to when all restraint is removed, when we find
the laws impeded in their operation in the moment of
their supposed greatest power; Sedition & Blasphemy
are triumphant at a period in which the hands of
Government are strengthened beyond the legitimate
usage of the constitution. overt acts are only just
restrained within the strictest limits. If something
be not done before the suspension be taken off,
what is to prevent the fearful encroachments of popular
disaffection, heated by seditious harangues, and
drawn forth by new and triumphant leaders?
I trust and hope the Impression of the late Events
has coloured this prospective view in my mind, and
that my apprehensions are more gloomy than future
Circumstances may warrant; still with every deduction
of this nature, the prospect before us is pregnant
with alarm, and presents at least, difficulties of
no ordinary magnitude. We have a population
divided by religious Dissent which gives its own
peculiar colour to civil Institutions. - we have,
I grieve to say, a church, rent internally by a
Schism which threatens mischief and Confusion.
we have affiliated societies hostile to the Government
in Church & State, extending & corresponding through

22389.D

every part of the Country; & to these combustible ma-
terials is held forth the Torch of triumphant Division
and the scarcely concealed Embus of recent Insur-
rection and Rebellion. If we suppose only par-
tial success, we must anticipate a powerful
division in favor of the Enemies of the Constitution
and eventual victory over them, may be ascertained
only, by a Struggle that would shake the Empire
to its foundations. Surely, these are considerations
which must awaken attention and strengthen every
nerve in the ruling Powers of the Country - If such
Results are only possible (and who shall say that
they are not so) no Effort should be left untried
to ward them off from the Constitution - I cannot
then but revert to the system which has been hitherto
adopted, and ask what has been gained by silent
Dignity, to the support & defence of the Throne &
Government! What benefit has been derived to these
from the forbearance of the public Functionaries, in
not enforcing the preventive restraints upon the law
pres. The answer is to be found in the present posture
of affairs - & if it be denied that any specific
measures of Policy would have prevented such a
Parade, still it cannot be assumed that those of forbearance
have been effectual. The pres is at all times

22389.D
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a most powerful Instrument in this Country - It may
be the safeguard of liberty, but it may also be the
Tribunal of Seditious - it is a two edged sword which
every Knave or Fool is at liberty to brandish -
No man of Common sense or common Honesty
will therefore deny that some Control or Counteraction
is necessary for the common safety - But the
law has so contrived its restraints, that the
parties concerned become the ultimate Judges of
their own Submission to them - for the Law Facts
are both left to the interpretation of those who
are avowedly ignorant of the Rules by which they
are to judge of one of these, and in times when Cir-
cumstances require an appeal to this judgment -
in a more particular & urgent manner, the suc-
cession of Juries become arbitrary, because the
men composing them are identified (or at least
suppose that they are) in Interest with the
Delinquents who are brought before their Tribunal.
Thus the institutions of the Country are laid open, in
their most vulnerable points & are directly available
by the most formidable arms, which their adversaries
possess. & thus it is clear that the only effectual
control upon the licence of the Press must be
exercised through the indirect means of preventive
Laws, one of the most efficient & valuable

of which arises out of the Stamp Duties - or by a vigorous and systematic union of Wit and Talent, subservient to the Interests of Government, and kept constantly active & operative in every Stage, Degree, & Department of Literature & Politics - a man who has been observant of the Change which has taken place in the Tone & Character of Public Opinion, within the last twenty years, cannot but perceive how infinite a portion of this change is demonstrably chargeable upon the Influence of two Publications only, the Edinburgh Review & the Morning Chronicle - If it be answered that the anti-Ministerial Side of the question will from the nature of things, be always more easily and readily served, and that the assumed Zeal on popular questions will invariably attract more admirers and proselytes than the Defenders of specific Measures, connected with Revenue & Taxation, it is only evading the general question for admitting the fact in its greatest latitude. It cannot be contended in sound Policy that because an Opponent enjoys certain Advantages we are therefore to increase them, by withholding the means of aggression or self-Defence which

me actually possess - But I refer to a matter of fact - and popular & fascinating as the principles of the French Revolution had been rendered in this Country, through the arts & machinations of the English Reformers, I have no hesitation in affirming that a Revolution scarcely less important (if we calculate all possible consequences of the unimpeded Career of Jacobinism) was effected in this Country, by the one single publication on the Anti-Jacobin Weekly Paper - This mean of Defence however has been rejected, in the face of what appears to me to be the obvious policy of Governments in times like the present - Not only has an attempt been made to draw within the Circle of Government Influence, the loose Talent and purchaseable ability of the Metropolis, but common support appears to have been systematically withheld from the efforts of voluntary auxiliaries & independent & attached Partisans of the Constitution - & it is only within a few days that I have heard (from the Man

to whom I gave whatever advantage he might be able
to derive from the Publication of the Good Old Times
guaranteeing to him his Expenses) that on leaving the
Penny numbers at the door, even of Ministers
of State, they were rejected until an assurance
was given that no demand was intended to
be made for them! I know, humble & imperfect
(from the Variety of my professional Duties &
Avocations) as was this little effort in the
cause, that effectual good has been done by
the Combination of Individuals to circulate it,
and you would be surprised at the Bulk
of the Correspondence, communicated to the
unknown author, respecting the benefit derived
from it in numberless Instances, in various
parts of the country - and had a few official
channels been opened to it (I say it without the
smallest taint of Vanity) I am satisfied from
the nature of the Publication, it might have
been rendered an effectual Instrument of
working considerable good upon the minds of
the lower classes, who err more from the
ignorance of facts, & the consequent Impositions
practised upon their credulity, than from any

Direct object of perception, when truth is laid
before them, or any inveterate viciousness of
disposition. - Even so far back as the period
of Mr Pitt's administration, when Cobbett was
in the Zenith of his Influence, I remember stating
in conversation with that great man, the policy
of counteracting the mischief which was then
in rapid progress; His observation was perfectly
consonant with the practice which has
ever since been followed. "It is better to have
him rope enough. he will hang himself -
he will soon write himself out. He has
certainly written himself out, but not before
he has set the Country in a Flame, to which
from the Example he has afforded, very inferior
Talents may add a perpetual supply of Fuel.

It will not be disputed that in the present
posture of public Affairs, something ought,
something must be done, to rescue the Country
the Country from the perils by which it is
surrounded. The Direct Restraint upon the
press, I may say is for the present at least,
wholly lost, & I apprehend it will be worse
than fruitless for some time to come. to bring a

22389.G.H. 4
Libeller into a Court of Justice. at least in London
for it is a curious fact, that we have now
in the County Gaol in this Town, Williams
who was only the Republishee of Stone's
Paradise for which he is condemned to a
twelvemonth's Imprisonment. The remaining
the only remaining restraint rests upon the
indirect mode then of preventive Laws, which
appears to me to be still open. If it is not,
where is our abiding place? we are without
hope or defence; for to expect Forbearance
from those who have attained power & influence
in proportion to their defect of Principle and
Patriotism is to look for fruit from the Bramble.
Such men will be as intemperate in the use
of the advantages which they have gained, as
they have been unsolicitous concerning the means
by which they have obtained them. & it must
be recollected that the Press is at this moment
lawless; that a Revolution has taken place, &
that an anarchy of Principles, be their tendency
what they may, is unshackled. How long

Actions can be controlled in such a state of things is the great question with which we have now to do, & a fearful one it is - never was the union of vigour & temper more imperiously called for, and never, in my opinion were these essentials more intimately combined than in the present administration. They have only, not been directed towards one particular object, which does not however lessen the importance of it - Consciousness of deserving well of their country, has, I fear, induced the conviction of securing it without the aid of Representation; and the conviction is, I verily believe well founded as far as the great Body of the higher & middle classes of the Country are concerned but the most inflammable portion, & those most open to delusion, combining and comprehending the vast mass of physical strength, has been left open to the operation of a new and malignant Process of Irritation, to which no one Bar, let

or Restraint has been apposed! 22389.H.

Enforce the Stamp Duties without Exception through the regular official Channels, and this Hydra is cut off at a single Blow -

Responsibility is created, which these men cannot make good - Capital is necessary and they have none! Thus at the trial of your patience, have I, without restraint, poured out the Result of those painful Reflections which have arisen in my mind in consequence of the late Events which have disgraced and degraded our Courts of Justice - The War Whoops of the Morning Chronicle has proclaimed the Victory of its Subsidiaries! - May the Strength of Government yet prevail, to snatch these Paper Laurels from its Brow - In the hope that the same Indulgence I have always experienced from you may be extended to this magnified

apence-

I have the honour to be

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful
devoted & humble Servant

J. M.