

**A LETTER TO EDWARD LYTTON
BULWER, ESQ. M.P. ON THE
PRESENT CRISIS, IN ANSWER TO
HIS LETTER TO A CABINET
MINISTER**

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A letter to Edward Lytton Bulwer, Esq. M.P. on the present crisis, in answer to his Letter to a cabinet Minister by Alfred Caswell

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ALFRED CASWELL

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BULWER, ESQ. M.P. ON THE
PRESENT CRISIS, IN ANSWER TO
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CABINET MINISTER**

A LETTER

TO

EDWARD LYTTON BULWER, Esq. M.P.

ON THE

PRESENT CRISIS,

IN ANSWER TO HIS

LETTER TO A LATE CABINET MINISTER,

BY

ALFRED CASWALL,

MEMBER OF THE HONOURABLE SOCIETY OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

TO WHICH IS ADDED THE

ADDRESS FROM SIR ROBERT PEEL

TO HIS CONSTITUENTS.

LONDON:

J. HATCHARD AND SON, 187, PICCADILLY.

1834.

429.

A LETTER,

ſc.

SIR,

Your name, and the extraordinary circulation it has given to your "Letter to a late Cabinet Minister on the present crisis," requires that an answer should be given to it; which, otherwise, the production itself is not, in my opinion, of sufficient importance to require.

In stating this, I speak advisedly, for surely, never did I see a publication abounding more in vague assumption—more destitute of argument—more ungenerous in its suggestions—and, I must add, more unworthy of the undoubted high talent of its author.

I could have wished, that an abler hand than mine, with a name noted in the annals of England's literature had engaged in this contest; but having taken up the cudgels, I feel a determination to persevere in the task I have set myself; and

while I look upon your letter, which lies open before me, it seems as though the spirit of British honour exclaimed,

Upon him bravely I do thy worst,
And foul fall him who blenches first.

My task is harder, when I consider, that I put myself in array against one, whose writings have excited in me feelings which it were vain to struggle to forget. Never shall I cease, or wish to cease to remember the thrill of delight which many a bright passage full of high, moral, and poetic feeling in the "Pilgrims of the Rhine" has excited in me; and often as I have read which elegant and truly eloquent work, which appeals so directly to the reader's heart, I have exclaimed to myself, "Would to God I knew that man. No mean, no degrading, no selfish thought can find a dwelling in a heart like his." I read the "Letter on the present Crisis," and fully did I expect, and anxiously look in the papers of the day for an indignant denial of the authorship of such a work; but edition after edition hurried from the press, and at last, facts were too strongly against my supposition; and however reluctantly I was compelled to adopt the belief, that one bright orb had left its native sphere, and like the brightest of the stars of the morning, had shot down into that abyss, whence

Revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,
Hic labor, hoc opus est.

It were in vain to attempt an *answer* to your

letter, in the true acceptance of the word answer : in one respect it is almost unanswerable, and that is, it is pretty nearly untangible. There are, it is true, eighty-two pages of printing, that reflect great credit on Messrs. Ibotson and Palmer, the printers of the work ; but in vain I look for argument—in vain for proof—all is a chaos of confused, desultory, and vague assertions, and declamations—in vain I look for passages of moral truth, or in some degree worthy, if not of admiration, at least of attention ; but wherever I look I meet with sentiments so uncharitable, and suggestions imputing motives so mean, that I cannot but deem it to have been written in a hasty moment—hastily sent to the press, and that it would long ere this have been amended or withdrawn, had it not been from a delicate apprehension of convicting so discerning a public of the folly of trusting their opinions and judgments to the guidance of a writer, however popular ; and to show them how easily they could be led astray if they looked only to men in preference to measures, or to the name of an author in preference to his work. Perhaps, indeed, with this praiseworthy intention your letter was written, and if so, I have only to apologize for the obtuseness of my understanding. And now, not to fall into that rambling desultory style, I have so much objected to in you, I will at once go through your letter, and make such comments upon it as common sense and truth seem to require.

And firstly, how ungenerous, to use the mildest expression, and how utterly unworthy of you, are the first words with which you commence, viz. "The Duke of Wellington has never yet obtained a victory over the English People!"—Is this the language of a man entering on a calm disquisition, which he is about to lay before his fellow countrymen? Must the first words with which he would claim their attention, infer a stigma against him, who, whatever his opponents may deem his faults, has raised the British to the level of the old Roman name? Oh, believe me, sir, however you may argue yourself into the conviction that reiterated abuse, well persevered in, at last obtains the outward garb of truth; and that constant slander, like water dropping on stone, may in time disperse the halo which his noble acts have wreathed around the name of Wellington. It needs no prophet's eye to foretell the utter failure of hopes that are built on so rotten a foundation; and if such hopes and thoughts be yours, little do I envy you the enjoyment of them; yet, however unwilling to assume the existence of such sentiments, how else is any common reader to understand the object you have in view, considering your systematic style of attack? Did you display any open front—did you attempt to grapple with facts, it would be a totally different thing; but, Sir, you content yourself with assumptions. On your own assumption you argue, and the result of your arguments

on these grounds you would have your readers take for conviction. It would seem as if the eloquent writer on the ideal world had raised up an ideal bugbear in his mind, a *κακοθηριον* * clothed with all the attributes of arrogance, pride, and tyranny; and being in want of a hero for his dream, had, by some unlucky chance mistaken Britain's hero for his own. What else is there in the parallel attempted to be drawn between his Grace of Wellington and the Duke of Marlborough?

Where are your data? what historical evidence can you produce? we only hear, on your authority, that there is a sort of undoubted parallel between the two illustrious characters—somebody else may start a parallel between Lord Durham and Socrates.

The passage runs thus;—"With a genius for war, it may be, equal; with a genius in peace, incontestably inferior; with talents far less various; with a knowledge of his times far less profound; with his cunning and his boldness, without his eloquence and his skill, the Duke of Wellington has equalled the glory of Marlborough,—is he about to surpass his dotage? Marlborough was a trickster, but he sought only to trick a court; has the Duke of Wellington a grander ambition, and would he trick a people?"

The Duke of Marlborough was a great warrior; his victories are registered in the annals of his

* Evil beast.

country. The Duke of Wellington is a great warrior, and his victories have not been inferior to those of Marlborough—their genius for war is as nearly on a par as we can conceive; we now come to “with a genius for peace *incontestably* inferior.” We find, A.D. 1711, Queen Anne, in her speech to the two houses, expressed her joy in being able to inform them, that, “*notwithstanding the arts of those who delight in war*, both time and place were appointed for opening the treaty of a general peace.” True, the Duke of Marlborough denied the charge, but when was the Duke of Wellington *even suspected* of wishing to embroil his country in a war? On the contrary, his opponents allow that his policy has usually been almost too pacific. Marlborough was dismissed from his office, and obliged by the unrelenting fury of his enemies to retire to another country. The Duke of Wellington was obliged to resign his offices, but maintained, through all the confusion that ensued, the integrity of his own great name, and has again been recalled to the direction of affairs—“with talents far less various”—a bare assertion:—“with a knowledge of his times far less profound”—equally a naked assertion, which the plain statements of facts above totally disprove:—“with his cunning and his boldness, without his eloquence and his skill.”—What is eloquence? A long string of words elegantly arrayed? or a clear, perspicuous, and brief statement of facts? In the