

**THE CONTRAST. IN  
THREE  
VOLUMES. VOL. II**

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The contrast. In three volumes. Vol. II by Constantine Henry Phipps Normanby

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**CONSTANTINE HENRY PHIPPS NORMANBY**

**THE CONTRAST. IN  
THREE  
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THE  
C O N T R A S T,

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MATILDA," "YES AND NO,"  
&c. &c.

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Take but degree away—untune that string,  
And hark! what discord follows,

SHAKESPEARE.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,  
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1832.



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# THE CONTRAST.

## CHAPTER I.

Knights and dames I sing,  
Such as the times may furnish: 'tis a flight  
Which seems at first to need no lofty wing  
Plumed by Longims, or the Stogyrite:  
The difficulty lies in colouring,  
(Keeping the due proportions still in sight,)  
With nature, manners which are artificial,  
And rendering general that which is especial.  
BYRON.

He's justice of the peace, ay, and rotulorum.  
SHAKESPEARE.

SOME years had passed over Sir North Saunders' head since we were last in his company, and yet we shall find him much as we left him, neither richer nor poorer, wiser nor better, nor,

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except "quoad" baptismal register, much older than when, upon first establishing himself for the summer season at Hornscliff Abbey, he had accompanied Castleton and Lady Madelina to Morden Bay. He still looked much the same; he could still eat as much, and walk as little. True, in the interval one great epoch had occurred in the life of a politician of his calibre; *he had sworn off*, or, to explain it in other words to the uninitiated, he was now turned sixty: a fact which, when sworn to, gives a member of Parliament an exemption from attendance on committees, it being "in the wisdom of the legislature" thought that to rise by ten o'clock in the forenoon would be very injurious at that advanced age, though to sit up all night, and decide the most important questions at five o'clock in the morning, is a duty constantly exacted

Coeval, however, with this survival of part



of his senatorial functions, he had assumed new provincial duties. He had lately acted as a justice of the peace! in the jargon of the sessions, he had sued out his *dedimus*, and become one of the *quorum*, a phrasology probably retained to contradict the proverbial assertion, that translation of the dead languages is of benefit to country gentlemen.

It may be thought a little late for an elderly gentleman, turned sixty, to take upon himself, for the first time, the complicated duties of administering the laws; but then it should be recollected that he had passed the last forty in making them, and from the singular ease with which he had, during that period, executed his part in the former process, it is no wonder that he thought himself perfectly adequate to the subordinate department he now undertook. It may not be understood with what sort of "hocus pocus" facility most of the

enactments, on the construction of which Sir North had undertaken to decide, had become the law of the land. Provided they touched not the interests of any one within hearing, the whole process seems to consist in a bit of parchment being subjected to the magic touch of a certain number of men with wigs on their heads and gowns on their backs, a certain number of times; true, it is also said to be read a certain number of times, which, however, consists in one of the gownsmen mumbling the first unmeaning half line in a tone somewhat lower than that in which every voice is talking around him. The chief of the gownsmen then, in somewhat the same tone, invites all of one opinion to say "ay," and all of the other "no;" an invitation to which, whilst all are equally unconscious to what it alludes, no one can pay the slightest attention. Having undergone this mystic touch the prescribed

number of times in one room, it for once gets into the hands of a man without either gown or wig, who, with sundry "kotous," carries it into another room, where it is again subject, a similar number of times, to the same touching process, when at last all the wigs being now collected in one room, one of them stands in the middle, produces a few strange sounds of barbarous French, and the magic parchment at once becomes the law of the land, without ninety-nine in a hundred, upon whose authority it has so become, ever having heard more of it than the cabalistic syllable, equally applicable to all, of "Whereas."

The fact is, from the day of the Druids down to our own inclusive, there never was any mummery more unmeaning than that with which an unopposed law is passed through the British legislature. Therefore, though from being constantly at the beck of every