

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle Willis
Baum Henry Nietzsche Dumas Flaubert Turgenev Balzac Crane
Leslie Stockton Vatsyayana Verne
Burroughs Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Curtis Homer Tolstoy Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato
Potter Zola Lawrence Stevenson Dickens Harte
Kant Freud Jowett Andersen London Descartes Cervantes Burton Hesse
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chambers Irving
Bunner Richter Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse
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Political Pamphlets

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INTRODUCTION

It is sometimes thought, and very often said, that political writing, after its special day is done, becomes more dead than any other kind of literature, or even journalism. I do not know whether my own judgment is perverted by the fact of a special devotion to the business, but it certainly seems to me that both the thought and the saying are mistakes. Indeed, a rough-and-ready refutation of them is supplied by the fact that, in no few cases, political pieces have entered into the generally admitted stock of the best literary things. If they are little read, can we honestly say that other things in the same rank are read much more? And is there not the further plea, by no means contradictory, nor even merely alternative, that the best examples of them are, as a rule, merged in huge collected 'Works,' or, in the case of authors who have not attained to that dignity, simply inaccessible to the general? At any rate my publishers have consented to let me try the experiment of gathering certain famous things of the sort in this volume, and the public must decide.

I do not begin very early, partly because examples of the Elizabethan political pamphlet, or what supplied its place, will be given in another volume of the series exclusively devoted to the pamphlet literature of the reigns of Eliza and our James, partly for a still better reason presently to be explained. On the other hand, though another special volume is devoted to Defoe, the immortal *Shortest Way with the Dissenters* is separated from the rest of his work, and given here. Most of the contents, however, represent authors not otherwise represented in the series, and though very well known indeed by name, less read than quoted. The suitability of the political pamphlet, both by size and self-containedness, for such a volume as this, needs no justification except that which it, like everything else, must receive, by being put to the proof of reading.

There is no difficulty in showing, with at least sufficient critical exactness, why it is not possible or not desirable to select examples from very early periods even of strictly modern history. The causes are in part the same as those which delayed the production of really capital political verse (which has been treated in another volume),

but they are not wholly the same. The Martin Marprelate pamphlets are strictly political; so are many things earlier, later, and contemporary with them, by hands known and unknown, great and small, skilled and unskilled; so are some even in the work of so great a man as Bacon. But very many things were wanting to secure the conditions necessary to the perfect pamphlet. There was not the political freedom; there was not the public; there was not the immediate object; there was not, last and most of all, the style. Political utterances under a more or less despotic, or, as the modern euphemism goes, 'personal' government, were almost necessarily those of a retained advocate, who expected his immediate reward, on the one hand; or of a rebel, who stood to make his account with office if he succeeded, or with savage punishment if he failed, on the other. A distant prospect of impeachment, of the loss of ears, hands, or life if the tide turns, is a stimulant to violence rather than to vigour. I do not think, however, that this is the most important factor in the problem. Parliamentary government, with a limited franchise of tolerably intelligent voters, a party system, and newspapers comparatively undeveloped, may not suit an ideally perfect *politeia*, but it is the very hotbed in which to nourish the pamphlet. There is also a style, as there is a time, for all things; and no style could be so well suited for the pamphlet as the balanced, measured, pointed, and polished style which Dryden and Tillotson and Temple brought in during the third quarter of the seventeenth century, and which did not go out of fashion till the second quarter of the nineteenth. We have indeed seen pamphlets proper exercising considerable influence in quite recent times; but in no instance that I can remember has this been due to any literary merits, and I doubt whether even the bare fact will be soon or often renewed in our days. The written word—the written word of condensed, strengthened, spirited literature—has lost much, if not all, of its force with an enormously increased electorate, and a bewildering multiplicity of print and speech of all kinds.

Whatever justice these reasonings may have or may lack, the facts speak for themselves, as facts intelligently regarded have a habit of doing. The first pamphlets proper of great literary merit and great political influence are those of Halifax in the first movement of real party struggle during the reign of Charles the Second; the last which

unite the same requisites are those of Scott on the eve of the first Reform Bill. The leaflet and circular war of the anti-Corn Law League must be ruled out as much as Mr. Gladstone's *Bulgarian Horrors*.

This leaves us a period of almost exactly a hundred and fifty years, during which the kind, whether in good or bad examples, was of constant influence; while its best instances enriched literature with permanent masterpieces in little. I do not think that any moderately instructed person will find much difficulty in comprehending the specimens here given. I am sure that no moderately intelligent one will fail, with a very little trouble, to take delight in them. I do not know whether an artful generaliser could get anything out of the circumstances in which the best of them grew; I should say myself that nothing more than the system of government, the conditions of the electorate and the legislature, and the existence from time to time of a superheated state in political feeling, can or need be collected. In some respects, to my own taste, the first of these examples is also the best. To Halifax full justice has never been done, for we have had no capable historian of the late seventeenth century but Macaulay, and Halifax's defect of fervour as a Jacobite was more than made up to Macaulay by his defect of fervour as a Williamite. As for the moderns, I have myself more than once failed to induce editors of 'series' to give Halifax a place. Yet Macaulay himself has been fairer to the great Trimmer than to most persons with whom he was not in full sympathy. The weakness of Halifax's position is indeed obvious. When you run first to one side of the boat and then to the other, you have ten chances of sinking to one of trimming her. To hold fast to one party only, and to keep that from extremes, is the only secret, and it is no great disgrace to Halifax, that in the very infancy of the party and parliamentary system, he did not perceive it. But this hardly interferes at all with the excellence of his pamphlets. The polished style, the admirable sense, the subdued and yet ever present wit, the avoidance of excessive cleverness (the one thing that the average Briton will not stand), the constant eye on the object, are unmistakable. They are nearly as forcible as Dryden's political and controversial prefaces, which are pamphlets themselves in their way, and they excel them in knowledge of affairs, in urbanity, in adaptation to the special

purpose. In all these points they resemble more than anything else the pamphlets of Paul Louis Courier, and there can be no higher praise than this.

No age in English history was more fertile in pamphlets than the reigns of William and of Anne. Some men of real distinction occasionally contributed to them, and others (such as Ferguson and Maynwaring) obtained such literary notoriety as they possess by their means. The total volume of the kind produced during the quarter of a century between the Revolution and the accession of George the First would probably fill a considerable library. But the examples which really deserve exhumation are very few, and I doubt whether any can pretend to vie with the masterpieces of Defoe and Swift. Both these great writers were accomplished practitioners in the art, and the characteristics of both lent themselves with peculiar yet strangely different readiness to the work. They addressed, indeed, different sections of what was even then the electorate. Defoe's unpolished realism and his exact adaptation of tone, thought, taste, and fancy to the measure of the common Englishman were what chiefly gave him a hearing. Swift aimed and flew higher, but also did not miss the lower mark. No one has ever doubted that Johnson's depreciation of *The Conduct of the Allies* was half special perversity (for he was always unjust to Swift), half mere humorous paradox. For there was much more of this in the doctor's utterances than his admirers, either in his own day or since, have always recognised, or have sometimes been qualified by Providence to recognise. As for the *Drapier's Letters* I can never myself admire them enough, and they seem to me to have been on the whole under-rated rather than over-valued by posterity.

The 'Great Walpolian Battle' and the attacks on Bute and other favourite ministers were very fertile in the pamphlet, but already there were certain signs of alteration in its character. Pulteney and Walpole's other adversaries had already glimmerings of the newspaper proper, that is to say, of the continual dropping fire rather than the single heavy broadside; to adopt a better metaphor still, of a regimental and professional soldiery rather than of single volunteer champions. The *Letters of Junius*, which for some time past have been gradually dropping from their former somewhat undue pride of place (gained and kept as much by the factitious mystery of their

origin as by anything else) to a station more justly warranted, are no doubt themselves pamphlets of a kind; but they are separated from pamphlets proper not less by their contents than by their form and continuity. The real difference is this, that the pamphlet, though often if not always personal enough, should always and generally does affect at least to discuss a general question of principle or policy, whereas Junius is always personal first, and very generally last also. On the other hand, Burke, whether his productions be called Speeches or Letters, Thoughts or Reflections, is always a pamphleteer in heart and soul, in form and matter. If the resemblance of his pamphlets to speeches gives the force and fire, it is certain that the resemblance of his speeches to pamphlets accounts for that 'dinner-bell' effect of his which has puzzled some people and shocked others. Burke always argued the point, if he only argued one side of it, and it is the special as it is the saving grace of the pamphlet that it must, or at least should, be an argument, and not merely an invective or an innuendo, a sermon or a lampoon.

Sydney Smith belonged both to the old school and the new. He was both pamphleteer and journalist; but he kept the form and even to some extent the style of his pamphlets and his articles well apart. I may seem likely to have some difficulty in admitting the claim of Cobbett after disallowing that of Junius under the definition just given, but I have no very great fear of being unable to making it good. Much as Cobbett disliked persons, and crotchety as he was in his dislikes, they were always dislikes of principle in the bottom. The singular Tory-Radicalism which Cobbett exhibited, and which has made some rank him unduly low, was no doubt partly due to accidents of birth and education, and to narrowness of intellectual form. But boroughmongering after all was a Whig rather than a Tory institution, and Cobbett's hatred of it, as well as that desire for the maintenance of a kind of manufacturing yeomanry (not wholly different from the later ideal of Mr. William Morris,) which was his other guiding principle throughout, was by no means alien from pure Toryism. His work in relation to Reform, moreover, is unmistakable—as unmistakable as is that of Sydney Smith, who precedes him here, with regard to Catholic Emancipation. I should have voted and written against both these things had I lived then; but this does not make me enjoy Cobbett or Sydney any the less.

As for the latest example I have selected, it is a crucial one. The *Letters of Malachi Malagrowther* come from a man who is not often rated high as a political thinker, even by those who sympathise with his political views. But here as elsewhere the politician, no less than the poet, the critic, the historian, bears the penalty of the pre-eminent greatness of the novelist. Nothing is more uncritical than to regard Scott as a mere sentimentalist in politics, and I cannot think that any competent judge can do so after reading *Malagrowther*, even after reading Scott's own Diary and letters on the subject. As he there explains, he was not greatly carried, as a rule, to interest himself in the details of politics. As both Lockhart and he admit, he might not have been so interested even at this juncture had it not been for the chagrin at his own misfortunes, which, nobly and stoically repressed as it was, required some issue. But his general principle on this occasion was clear; it can be thoroughly apprehended and appreciated even by an Englishman of Englishmen. It was thoroughly justified by the event, and, I may perhaps be permitted to observe, ran exactly contrary to a sentiment rather widely adopted of late. No man, whether in public writings or private conduct, could be more set than Scott was against a spurious Scotch particularism. He even earned from silly Scots maledictions for the chivalrous justice he dealt to England in *The Lord of the Isles*, and the common-sense justice he dealt to her in the mouth of Bailie Jarvie. But he was not more staunch for the political Union than he was for the preservation of minor institutions, manners, and character; and the proposed interference with Scotch banking seemed to him to be one of the things tending to make good Scotchmen, as he bluntly told Croker, 'damned mischievous Englishmen.' Therefore he arose and spoke, and though he averted the immediate attempt, yet the prophecies which he uttered were amply fulfilled in other ways after the Reform Bill.

These, then, are the principles on which I have selected the pieces that follow (some minor reasons for the particular choices being given in the special introductions):—That they should be pamphlets proper (*Malachi* appeared first in a newspaper, but that was a sign of the time chiefly, and the numbers of Cobbett's *Register* were practically independent pieces); that they should deal with special subjects of burning political, and not merely personal, interest; and that

they should either directly or in the long-run have exercised an actual determining influence on the course of politics and history. This last point is undoubted in the case of the examples from Halifax, Swift, Burke (who more than any one man pointed and steered the resistance of England to Jacobin tyranny), and Scott; it was less immediate, but scarcely more dubious in those of Defoe, Cobbett, and Sydney Smith. And so in all humility I make my bow as introducer once more to the English public of these Seven Masters of English political writing.

I. — 'LETTER TO A DISSENTER'

BY GEORGE SAVILE, MARQUESS OF HALIFAX

(There is no doubt that Halifax's work deserves to rank first in a collection of political pamphlets. He signed none; it was indeed almost impossible for a prominent person in the State then safely or decently to do so, and different attributions were made at the time of some of them, as of the Character of a Trimmer to Coventry, and of this Letter (this 'masterly little tract,' as Macaulay justly calls it) to Temple. But shortly after his death all were published as his unchallenged, and there never has been any doubt of their authorship in the minds of good judges. Four of them are so good that extrinsic reasons have to be brought in for preferring one to the other. The Character of a Trimmer is rather too long for my scheme; the Anatomy of an Equivalent is too technical, and requires too much illustration and exegesis; the Cautions for Choice of Members of Parliament, though practically valuable to the present day, is a little too general. The Letter to a Dissenter escapes all these objections. It is brief, it is thoroughly to the point, it is comprehensible almost without note or comment to any one who remembers the broad fact that by his Declaration of Indulgence James the Second attempted to detach, and almost succeeded in detaching, the Dissenters from their common cause with the Church in opposing his enfranchisement of the Roman Catholics, and his preferment of them to great offices. As for its author, his most eminent acts are written in the pages of the universally read historian above quoted. But he was in reality more of a Tory than it suited Macaulay to represent him, though he gloried in the name of Trimmer, and certainly showed what is called in modern political slang a 'crossbench mind' not only during the madness of the Popish plot, during the greater madness of James's assaults on the Church, the Constitution, and private rights, but also (after the Revolution) towards William of Orange. Born about 1630 he died in April 1695, leaving the fame, unjustified by any samples in those unreported days, of the greatest orator of his time, a reputation as a wit which was partly inherited by his grandson, Chesterfield, and the small volume of Miscellanies, on which we here draw. The pamphlet itself appeared in April 1687.)

A LETTER TO A DISSENTER, UPON OCCASION OF HIS MAJESTY'S LATE GRACIOUS DECLARATION OF INDULGENCE

Sir—Since addresses are in fashion, give me leave to make one to you. This is neither the effect of fear, interest, or resentment; therefore you may be sure it is sincere: and for that reason it may expect to be kindly received. Whether it will have power enough to convince, dependeth upon the reasons of which you are to judge; and upon your preparation of mind, to be persuaded by truth, whenever it appeareth to you. It ought not to be the less welcome for coming from a friendly hand, one whose kindness to you is not lessened by difference of opinion, and who will not let his thoughts for the public be so tied or confined to this or that sub-division of Protestants as to stifle the charity, which besides all other arguments, is at this time become necessary to preserve us.

I am neither surprised nor provoked, to see that in the condition you were put into by the laws, and the ill circumstances you lay under, by having the Exclusion and Rebellion laid to your charge, you were desirous to make yourselves less uneasy and obnoxious to authority. Men who are sore, run to the nearest remedy with too much haste to consider all the consequences: grains of allowance are to be given, where nature giveth such strong influences. When to men under sufferings it offereth ease, the present pain will hardly allow time to examine the remedies; and the strongest reason can hardly gain a fair audience from our mind, whilst so possessed, till the smart is a little allayed.

I do not know whether the warmth that naturally belongeth to new friendships, may not make it a harder task for me to persuade you. It is like telling lovers, in the beginning of their joys, that they will in a little time have an end. Such an unwelcome style doth not easily find credit. But I will suppose you are not so far gone in your new passion, but that you will hear still; and therefore I am also under the less discouragement, when I offer to your consideration two things. The *first* is, the cause you have to suspect your new friends. The *second*, the duty incumbent upon you, in Christianity

and prudence, not to hazard the public safety, neither by desire of ease nor of revenge.

To the *first*. Consider that notwithstanding the smooth language which is now put on to engage you, these new friends did not make you their choice, but their refuge. They have ever made their first courtships to the Church of England, and when they were rejected there, they made their application to you in the second place. The instances of this might be given in all times. I do not repeat them, because whatsoever is unnecessary must be tedious; the truth of this assertion being so plain as not to admit a dispute. You cannot therefore reasonably flatter yourselves that there is any inclination to you. They never pretended to allow you any quarter, but to usher in liberty for themselves under that shelter. I refer you to Mr. Coleman's Letters, and to the Journals of Parliament, where you may be convinced, if you can be so mistaken as to doubt; nay, at this very hour they can hardly forbear, in the height of their courtship, to let fall hard words of you. So little is nature to be restrained; it will start out sometimes, disdainingly to submit to the usurpation of art and interest.

This alliance, between liberty and infallibility, is bringing together the two most contrary things that are in the world. The Church of Rome doth not only dislike the allowing liberty, but by its principles it cannot do it. Wine is not more expressly forbid to the Mahometans, than giving heretics liberty to the Papists. They are no more able to make good their vows to you, than men married before, and their wife alive, can confirm their contract with another. The continuance of their kindness would be a habit of sin, of which they are to repent; and their absolution is to be had upon no other terms than their promise to destroy you. You are therefore to be hugged now, only that you may be the better squeezed at another time. There must be something extraordinary when the Church of Rome setteth up bills, and offereth plaisters, for tender consciences. By all that hath hitherto appeared, her skill in chirurgery lieth chiefly in a quick hand to cut off limbs; but she is the worst at healing of any that ever pretended to it.

To come so quick from another extreme is such an unnatural motion that you ought to be upon your guard. The other day you were

Sons of Belial; now you are Angels of Light. This is a violent change, and it will be fit for you to pause upon it before you believe it. If your features are not altered, neither is their opinion of you, whatever may be pretended. Do you believe less than you did that there is idolatry in the Church of Rome? Sure you do not. See, then, how they treat, both in words and writing, those who entertain that opinion. Conclude from hence, how inconsistent their favour is with this single article, except they give you a dispensation for this too, and not by a *non obstante*, secure you that they will not think the worse of you.

Think a little how dangerous it is to build upon a foundation of paradoxes. Popery now is the only friend to liberty, and the known enemy to persecution. The men of Taunton and Tiverton are above all other eminent for Loyalty. The Quakers, from being declared by the Papists not to be Christians, are now made favourites, and taken into their particular protection; they are on a sudden grown the most accomplished men of the kingdom in good breeding, and give thanks with the best grace in double-refined language. So that I should not wonder, though a man of that persuasion, in spite of his hat, should be Master of the Ceremonies. Not to say harsher words, these are such very new things, that it is impossible not to suspend our belief, till by a little more experience, we may be informed whether they are realities or apparitions. We have been under shameful mistakes, if these opinions are true; but for the present we are apt to be incredulous, except that we could be convinced that the priest's words in this case too are able to make such a sudden and effectual change; and that their power is not limited to the Sacrament, but that it extendeth to alter the nature of all other things, as often as they are so disposed.

Let me now speak of the instruments of your friendship, and then leave you to judge whether they do not afford matter of suspicion. No sharpness is to be mingled, where healing only is intended; so nothing will be said to expose particular men, how strong soever the temptation may be, or how clear the proofs to make it out. A word or two in general, for your better caution, shall suffice. Suppose then, for argument's sake, that the mediators of this new alliance should be such as have been formerly employed in treaties of the same kind, and there detected to have acted by order, and to

have been empowered to give encouragements and rewards. Would not this be an argument to suspect them?

If they should plainly be under engagements to one side, their arguments to the other ought to be received accordingly. Their fair pretences are to be looked upon as a part of their commission, which may not improbably give them a dispensation in the case of truth, when it may bring a prejudice upon the service of those by whom they are employed.

If there should be men, who having formerly had means and authority to persuade by secular arguments, have, in pursuance of that power, sprinkled money among the Dissenting ministers; and if those very men should now have the same authority, practise the same methods, and disburse where they cannot otherwise persuade; it seemeth to me to be rather an evidence than a presumption of the deceit.

If there should be ministers amongst you, who by having fallen under temptations of this kind, are in some sort engaged to continue their frailty, by the awe they are in lest it should be exposed; the persuasions of these unfortunate men must sure have the less force, and their arguments, though never so specious, are to be suspected, when they come from men who have mortgaged themselves to severe creditors, that expect a rigorous observance of the contract, let it be never so unwarrantable. If these, or any others, should at this time preach up anger and vengeance against the Church of England; may it not without injustice be suspected that a thing so plainly out of season springeth rather from corruption than mistake; and that those who act this choleric part, do not believe themselves, but only pursue higher directions, and endeavour to make good that part of their contract, which obligeth them, upon a forfeiture, to make use of their enflaming eloquence? They might apprehend their wages would be retrenched if they should be moderate: and therefore, whilst violence is their interest, those who have not the same arguments have no reason to follow such a partial example.

If there should be men, who by the load of their crimes against the Government, have been bowed down to comply with it against their conscience; who by incurring the want of a pardon, have drawn upon themselves a necessity of an entire resignation, such