

# The White Hat.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE affairs of this country have now evidently reached that important crisis, the approach of which has long been anticipated by reflecting men, and no very long period must determine our fate. We shall obtain Reform, complete effectual Reform, in spite of that boroughmongering oligarchy which has so long lorded it over the purses and persons of the people; or we shall sink into a slavery, the most debasing and hopeless that ever nation was cursed withal; a slavery made tenfold more galling by the remembrance of past times of freedom and glory, when England towered in proud pre-eminence above the countries around; by the base and pitiful character of the agents in this loathsome work of degradation; and by the contrast with other countries, once the objects of contempt, or subjects of our dominion, who rise as we are sinking, and go on gaining fresh privileges as we are loaded with additional fetters. At such a period, it becomes no man to be silent or inactive, who thinks that he can serve his country. The hosts of Corruption are busy enough; they see very well, that they must bestir themselves to retain their supremacy and guard their spoils. They have shewn us what they can do, and what they dare do; they have gone from oppression to insult, and from insult to violence and bloodshed. It is time for the friends of their country, of liberty, and of man, to be firmly banded against them, to achieve the triumph of reason and justice over chicanery and brute force. There should be no temporizing now with any who prefer equal rights and laws to military despotism. In them, neutrality is treason. The voice of the country, as that of one man, should cry aloud for RADICAL REFORM. To promote that cry is the object of this publication. It is added to the many already in circulation, with the hope of aiding in the same good cause; to increase the stimulus of a friendly and generous rivalry to do most for the public good; and to discharge the sacred duty of contributing something, (whether effectually or not, time must shew,) towards the salvation of the country.

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No one, it is hoped, will quarrel with the title of this paper, or think it an unapt emblem of the principles which we are neither afraid or ashamed to avow, and which we hope yet to see greatly triumphant. The *WHITE HAT*, worn by so many steady and decided patriots, battered by the bludgeons of special constables, slashed by the sabres of Yeomanry Cavalry, the horror of paid magistrates, and welcomed by the applauding shouts of hundreds of thousands of the people, is become a badge too explicit to be mistaken, too honorable to be neglected, and too formidable to be despised. It is not adopted to pledge us to the support or approbation of any man or set of men, any further than they support the principles with which it is identified. Of these, the most important is, the right and necessity of *Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage*, for which we shall ever be found the consistent and zealous advocates.

In the prosecution of our labours, it is by no means intended that the discussions, which find a place in this paper, should be restricted to temporary and passing events, although these, of course, will always be prominent, according to their degree of importance. The insidious encroachments of corruption shall be exposed, and the nefarious sapper of the constitution dragged from his hole to public gaze and reprobation. The attacks of open hostility shall be met with a just indignation. The sufferings of meritorious individuals, the martyrs of Reform, shall not go unrecorded; and every patriotic effort shall meet with prompt applause and ready co-operation. At the same time it is an important part of our plan to call the frequent attention of our readers to those great principles of government and liberty which change not with time or place, but have their foundation deep in the constitution of our nature; thoroughly to understand which, is the duty of those who aspire to be freemen, and the only safeguard of rational and lasting freedom; those principles, the application of which, to a corrupt government, is reformation; whose triumph over a despotism, is revolution; the uniform regard to them in making and executing laws, liberty; and their violation, slavery, by whatever power it may be enforced, and by whatever forms it may be sanctioned. We have had a great deal too much, in politics, of the jargon of expediency. The term is much more appropriate as the plea of tyranny, than as the justification of liberty. There are such things as the *RIGHTS OF MAN*, above all expediency, inherent and inalienable. It shall be our object, to

aid in making them understood, and in making them venerated.

A short outline of the condition to which the people of this country are reduced, by a long course of misgovernment, and of the resources which they yet possess for bettering that condition and righting themselves, may not be amiss as an introduction to our future remarks; it may serve to bring us and our readers a little acquainted, and ascertain the degree of sympathy which exists between us in our views, principles, fears, and hopes.

We are in a state for which, our history, or indeed that of any country, can furnish no parallel. The lightest mind must be sobered into seriousness by its contemplation. It cannot continue. Heaven and Hell alike forbid that, and urge on the decision of a conflict, which shall give Liberty or Death. We must become better or worse. The light of freedom must either brighten up into a glorious blaze, or be trodden out and quenched in everlasting darkness.

Taxation, enormous and overwhelming taxation, is the great millstone about the neck of the country, so long as the country chooses to be identified with the present system. We have a debt, called national, of near a thousand millions. And for what purpose was it incurred? To put down the spirit of freedom wherever it appeared. To enforce taxation without representation on the American colonists. But they had British blood in them. Its stream flowed pure in their veins, while it had become adulterated, corrupt, and stagnant at the parent fountain. They remonstrated, they resisted; as soon as they felt the weight of the yoke, they tried their strength upon it and burst it asunder: they formed a republic on the basis of equality and justice, and have distanced all the nations of the earth. This, however, was but the beginning of our financial evils. The French revolution did the work. That Frenchmen should pretend to emancipate themselves was not to be endured. It was a trespass on forbidden ground, so we instituted a suit, British Gold *versus* French freedom; it was as long trying as a cause in chancery, and what is the result? A verdict against us, with all costs to pay. We intrigued, and cajoled, and compelled; we bribed one despot after another, and patched up successive coalitions; we "killed off" our own countrymen by wholesale; we got the honour of being goalers to that fine fellow Napoleon, and twice crammed the Bourbons down the throat of a loathing people: and after all, what is the result? Why, that France