Towards the end of this year an incident occurred which I considered as a lightening in my circumstances: Mr Robinson, the bookseller, called on me, in company with my tutor at Hoxton, Dr Kippis, to inform me, that Dr Gilbert Stuart, who had undertaken to write the historical part of the New Annual Register for 1783, had thrown up his task, before it was brought to a conclusion, & to request me to write two or three short chapters to wind up the year - for this undertaking I received the compensation of ten guineas; & what I did being approved, I was installed in due form writer of the historical part of the New Annual Register at the stipend of 60 guineas & the contract was sealed by a dinner in trio between Mr Robinson, Dr Kippis, & myself at the Crown & Anchor in the Strand."

In the anecdote here mentioned of his declining a regular stipend from the heads of the Whig party - we may see how sometimes disinterestedness defeats itself - “After the summer of this year” he remarks - “I heard no more of Mr Sheridan” - In public & private life it requires
something extraneous to keep an object alive in the memory. Declining the offer, & connected with no other leader, it required a voluntary act of remembrance recollection to recall Godwin to the busy & engrossed mind of Sheridan. Had he accepted the offer he had at once been linked - the givers of the annuity would have wanted their money’s worth. I of course do not use this expression in a sordid sense - but the desire to find their effort fructify would ^such is human nature^ have given them an interest in their author protegé - perceiving ^becoming familiar with^ his temper & tone of mind, they would probably [have] pushed him higher up the ladder - & his genius ^genuine political predilections^ would have enabled him to render them considerable services without injury to his integrity - for Godwin was to the end of his life a party man & a staunch Whig. The name of Fox was always spoken by him with veneration enthusiasm that of Grey with deep respect - he was passionately solicitous for their ^the elevation of the Whigs^ to the administration. He never practically sided with the Radical Reformers he desired that change should be gradual - he was convinced of the integrity of the Foxite leaders & esteemed [blank]

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1788 At the parties of Mr Brand Hollis, whom I first saw at Mr Timothy Hollis’s of Ormond St,ix I became acquainted with Mr John Adams, American Ambassador[,] Mr Romilly, Mr Richard Sharpe, Mr Capel Lofft, Mr Woodfall, Mr Grose, Thomas Taylor the Platonist, Dr Geddes, Mr Gilbert Wakefield, Mr George Walker of Nottingham, Mr Paradise, &c, &c. - In the summer of this year I took lodgings for two months at Guilford in Surry, & received as an inmate my kinsman Mr Thomas Cooper, then twelve years of age, who had just lost his father in the East Indies, by whose premature death, his family were left unprovided[.] I pass over some insignificant matters of literature in which I was engaged in these years - but, about the period at which I am now arrived, I found my disbursements clearly exceeding my receipts, & had foolishly anticipated in future receipts, & being under the necessity of retrenching I took a cheaper lodging than I had lately been accustomed to, in Great Marybone St. It was at this time that I became extremely intimate with Mr Holcroft.xi

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c.606/1

1789 In the journal we have before quoted the memoranda of this year are equally brief.xii The
dinars at Mr Hollis & Robinson continue & a few public events are mentioned in red ink - a few of the notes of this year mark the course of time & are therefore inserted


5th Fr. Grenville secretary of State. Duke of Clarence’s Establishment.

17 W. National Assembly

24 W. Necker is restored.

27 Sa. Revolution in France

July 2. Dine in Billingsgate with Robinson [,] T. White, Young [,] Payne & Stirling - (a dinner in Billingsgate in those days was what a dinner at Blackwall is now.)

July 29th. W. Tea Mrs Barbauld’s.


Nov. 8 Su Dine at Holcroft’s. Elopement de son fils.

9 M. to Gravesend


16 M. Mort de son fils.

Dec. 1 Tu. Dine with Robinson seul - Undertake Rousseau’s Confessions.

What he undertook with regard to the confessions

11 F. Tea Miss Williams’s with Misses Bailey, Marriot & More, Mrs Nichols & Dr Moore.

In addition to this journal there are several notes dated this year - drawn up evidently at
the instant, which record anecdotes of public persons detailed in conversations which he thought worthy of record. As doubtless he believed these to be authentic the following is a specimen: of these

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c.606/2

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One of the records of this year is the unfortunate death of Holcroft’s son. The details of this disaster are to be found in Hazlitt’s Memoirs of Holcroft. Godwin’s journal shows that he was the friend who accompanied the father to Deal Gravesend first & afterwards to Gravesend Deal to seek the fugitive.

The youth was of an unfortunate disposition & his conduct was very reprehensible - at the same time it is certain that Holcroft carried further than Godwin a certain unmitigated severity; an exposition of duty & truth & of the defalcation from these in the offender conceived in language to humiliate & wound [.] a want of sympathy in the buoyant spirits of youth when inspired to heedlessness & perhaps it may be added ‘reprehensible’ dissipation; all of which tended to set still wider apart the distance too usually observed between father & child. Something of this Godwin detected in himself in his conduct towards Cooper. I mention this circumstance the more particularly as it ‘several years afterwards’ caused the breach between Holcroft & Godwin which was never healed until the deathbed of the former.

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c.606/1

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1790) At this time, while on the eve of his great work, but the idea yet unborn, Godwin revolved a multitude of plans of literary labor - Something was to be done as well as for his support to satisfy his ambition - a subject chosen worthy of the powers which as yet were latent within him - Nearly on the last day of the preceding year there is a note that he “proposed Livy to Robinson” - but this idea yielded to the grander scheme of writing a tragedy at January [?31] - we find this note “Dine at Holcroft’s. Dunstan “

This year he began to take lessons from Curran in Italian.

The concise style of his journal renders the following note enigmatical - but as it was during this year that he became an entire convert to republican principles we may suppose that the words recorded were addressed to himself (by one of the persons whom it would seem met to
commemorate the anniversary of the day when the King of France submitted to the National Assembly)

July 14. W. French Revolution: Stanhope, Sheridan, Tooke. - O’Brien, B. Hollis, Geddes, Lindsey, Price, Paradise. Sup with Fawcet, “We are particularly fortunate in having you among us; it is having the best cause countenanced by the man, by whom we most wished to see it supported.”

Another more decided testimonial made to his talents which he seems to have recorded with pride occurs

Aug 5. Th. Dine at Robinson’s: Monkhouse. “I do not think Holcroft too great for the drudgery of translation. There is no comparison between you & him.”

I insert some extracts from the journal of 1791

Jan 3. M. Remove to Titchfield St.

Feb. 17th. Burke swears himself 60, to disqualify for election committees.

22 Tu. Paine’s Pamphlet appears.

27 Su. Call on Paine

March 16 W. Robinson calls: proposes a Naval History

19. Sa. Write to Robinson: propose £1050, i.e. £525 per volume

25 F. Demêlé avec Robinson.


14 Sa. Dine at B. Hollis’s. Scott, a believer in spiritual intercourses, lends Paine £40, to aid the publication of his pamphlet, suspended for want of money (Lewis). H. Tooke states to the Lond Soc. Paine’s offer of £300. (B. Hollis)
June 30th. Dine with Robinson - Propose Political Principles.

Sep. 5th Walk to Hampton Court with Dyson

25th. Fawcett dines; talk of genius & virtue of Christianity

Oct. 3d Cut off my hair. (To searchers after minutiae this note is curious. Until now men wore their hair in flowing ringlets; & the shaven & shorn appearance of the present day would have been scouted - but the fashion changed & in 1791 men cut off their hair.)


Nov. 2. W. Locke: Voltaire. Dine at Holcrofts with Pethion. Burke’s speech 1774. Talk of constituents, oaths & property

Nov. 13 Su Correct. Dyson & Dibdin call; talk of virtue & disinterestedness. Dine at Johnsons with Paine Shovel & Wollstonecraft - talk of Monarchy, Tooke Johnson Voltaire, pursuits & religion Sup at Holcrofts.

Of this dinner Mr Godwin observes in another place

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14)  


The journal is augmented this year as may have been observed, by a mention being made of the topics of conversation. In an other place Godwin mentions the excitement given to conversation, by the introduction of politic[s] & metaphysics, introduced by the agitation caused
by the French Revolution. As he proceeded also in Political Justice he was anxious to consider all the topics introduced into that book in every possible light, & eagerly advanced arguments & heard those on the other side - being desirous of attaining the truth with a sincerity & directness of purpose seldom met with. Yet this did not prevent mistakes which he afterwards detected & acknowledged - so great a deceiver is preconceived opinion & habits of thought, bent by the stream of society in which they lay - all one way.

It was at the dinner recorded on November 13th that Godwin met Mary Wollstonecraft - but the meeting produced no desire on either side to follow up the acquaintance.

The Political Principles proposed to Robinson on Mr Marshall [illeg.] idea of Political Justice

1792

“During this year I was in the singular situation of an author possessing some degree of fame for a work unfinished and unseen. I was introduced on this ground to Mr Macintosh, David Williams, Joel Barlow & others, & with these gentlemen together with Mr Nicholson & Mr Holcroft, had occasional meetings in which the principles of my work were discussed - towards the close of the year I had become acquainted with Mr Horne Tooke, to whose etymological conversations & various talents I am proud to acknowledge myself greatly indebted; though these came too late to be of any use to me in the concoction of my own work, which was nearly printed off before I had first the pleasure of meeting this extraordinary & admirable man. I resided this year in Devonshire Street - Portland Place. ["]

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public letters

c.606/1

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“(1791) On the 29th of April of this year Mr Holcroft and I wrote two anonymous letters, he to Mr Fox & I to Mr Sheridan. Mr Fox in a debate on the bill for giving a new constitution to Canada, had said, that he would not be the man to propose the abolition of a house of Lords in a country where such a power was already established, but as little would he be the man to recommend the introduction of such a power where it was not - this was by no means the only public indication he had shewn how deeply he had drank of the spirit of the French revolution -
the object of the above mentioned letters was to exite [sic] these two illustrious men to persevere gravely & inflexibly in the career on which they had entered - I was strongly impressed with the sentiment, that in the then existing circumstances of England & of Europe, great & happy improvements might be achieved without anarchy & confusion - I believed that important changes must arise, & I was inexpressibly anxious that such changes should be effected under the conduct of the best & most important leaders. 

[...]

I have before me a copy in my father’s Mr Godwin’s handwriting of the ^abovementioned^ letter he sent in April 1791 to Mr Sheridan, as from “a well known literary character”. It begins by saying: “There are few men capable of the glorious task of eradicating the vices of political government, & rendering liberty & justice as extensive & complete as they ought to be. Perhaps every such man is able to place himself precisely in the situation in which his efforts shall be most successful. But it is peculiarly fortunate when the man & the situation are already united. You are that man.” The letter goes on to deprecate the aversion of the Whig leaders to the discipline of general principles of government - and remarks “You would willingly promote the true interests & happiness of the human race. You would willingly enrol your name with the benefactors of mankind; or, which is still better, would rejoice in the extension of justice, though your efforts in promoting that extension should never be acknowledged. An[d] can you really think that the ‘New Constitution of France is the most glorious fabric ever raised by human integrity since the creation of man’ & yet believe that what is good there, would be bad here? does truth alter its nature by crossing the straits & become falsehood? Are men entitled to perfect equality in France, & is it just to deprive them of it in England? Did the French do well in extinguishing hereditary honors nobility, & is it right that we should preserve hereditary honors? Or are these questions so very trifling in their nature, as uninteresting to the general weal, that it is no matter which side of them we embrace? - If you speak out, you must be contented to undergo a temporary proscription. That proscription you

at present suffer, & the period of obloquy which the true friends of mankind must endure, will be very short. Had you rather be indebted to [sic] your eminence to the caprice of monarchs, than to the voice of a whole nation, accumulating its gratitude on the head of the general benefactor?
Had you rather have the nominal profession of power, with your hands free for the purposes of corruption, but chained up from the exertion of every virtuous effort; than have the real profession of power; able to make every act of your administration a blessing to Britain, to Europe & to mankind

- The letter then goes on to expose the defects that at that time deformed the English constitution - the venality of elections [-] & exclaims “Is this liberty? Liberty teaches men to distinguish between what is intrinsically valuable, & what only seems to be so. Even Montesquieu knew that the principle of a free state was virtue. Liberty strips hereditary honours of their imaginary splendour - shews the noble & the king for what they are common mortals, kept in ignorance of what other mortals know, flattered & encouraged in folly & vice, & deprived of those stimulatives which perpetually goad the hero & the philosopher to the acquisition of excellence. Liberty leaves nothing to be admired but talents & virtue; the very things which it is the interest of men like you, should be preferred to all the rest. Pursue this subject to its proper extent & you will find, that - give to a state but liberty enough, it is impossible that vice should exist in it.”

This sweeping & somewhat astounding assertion proves the excess of Godwin’s enthusiasm on the subject

5) of political liberty, ^and^ who from his heart could believe that no vice could coexist with perfect freedom & not fervently desire the emancipation of mankind from all arbitrary authority. That any one should in the sincerity of his heart entertain this belief seems strange - but my father did - it was the basis of his system, the very keystone of the arch of justice, by which he desired to knit together the whole human family. It must be remembered however that no man was a more strenuous advocate for the slow differentiation operation of change - no one more entirely impressed with the feeling that opinions should be in advance of actions - perhaps even to a faulty degree in the minds of many, he desired nothing to be done but by the majority - while he ardently sought by every means to cause the majority to espouse the better side.

....

6) The very cyphers of these years ^are to the political enthusiast^ full of thrilling associations - In 1791 Burke published his Reflections on the French Revolutionxliv - which was the igniting spark to inflame Tory zeal - & before which even the partizans of Liberty quailedxliv -
The Birmingham riots followed, XLVI, animated by a fury that cast an eternal stigma on the cause they espoused. Such is Man. In France, the Jacobins, advancing in proud triumph - their hands dyed in blood, they cast hecatombs at the feet of Liberty who paled & died expired as if destroyed by the sanguinary stream. In this country Toryism was at its strongest, & its advocates proceeded to assert their power by no dissimilar acts. The passions of Mankind were in a flame, & party differences became the watchword of persecution & attempted Death.

Many authors of eminence wrote answers to Burke’s eloquent & impressive appeal to the prejudices & softer feelings of Men. None were supposed to succeed so well as Paine’s Rights of Man, whose sober reasoning & attempt to reduce the theory of government to simple & plain principles, was particularly adapted to excite the admiration of Men whose philosophy it was, that each Man was king in himself complete

7)

the inherent legitimate judge of his own actions as well as opinions to be enlightened by the reason of their own fellow creatures but not coerced by their authority.

Godwin, who was eminently classical in his literary tastes - who to the end of his life almost adored the name of Burke, & eagerly refuted any notion of his political change being served from indignantly repelled the notion that his political change had been actuated by unworthy motives - yet Godwin as an advocate for the dissemination of knowledge & the enlightenment of the many, warmly admired Paine. In the enthusiasm of the moment he praised him more than he would subsequently have done & he wrote hastily to some friend in eager encomium on his work.

8)

Though I have as yet given only of a cursory perusal to the pamphlet with a sight of which you have favoured me, I will nevertheless take the liberty to express to you the feelings excited by that perusal. I shall trespass upon your goodness by begging leave to detain it, while I give it a more careful examination. Few things indeed ever mortified me more than the recollecting, that shortly I must cease to have a copy in my possession, and that, even for the mangled remnant that is to be left, I must depend trust to the accidents that may attend its future publication.
The pamphlet has exceeded my expectations, & appears to be nearly the best possible performance that can be written upon the subject. It does not confine itself, as an injudicious answerer would have done, to a cold refutation of Mr Burke’s errors, but with equal discernment & philanthropy, embraces every opportunity of impressing the purest principles of liberty upon the hearts of mankind. It is perhaps impossible to rise from perusing it, without feeling oneself both wiser & better. It contains the seeds of revolution it contains are so vigorous in their stamina, that nothing can overpower them. It only All that remained for the illustrious author, after having enlightened the whole western world by the publication of Common Sense, was to do a similar service to Europe, by a production equally energetic as that was, & adapted with equal skill to rouse & interest the mind. The effects, it may be, of this work will not be disseminated so rapid; but, if properly disseminated (& persecution cannot injure it), will be as sure

These feelings naturally led him to his warm admiration to desire the acquaintance of Tom Paine. He sought to be acquainted with him, & on having his wish gratified, wrote the following letter:

“Sir,

“I was yesterday at my own request introduced to you by Mr B. Hollis; but in the hurry & confusion of a numerous meeting, I had not an opportunity of saying some things, which I have long wished to say to you in person. I have wished for an occasion of expressing to you my feeling of the high obligation you have conferred upon Britain & mankind by your late publication of the Rights of Man. I believe few men have a more ardent sense of that obligation than myself; & I am sure that it is a duty incumbent upon persons so feeling to come forward with the most direct applause of your efforts. I regard you, Sir, as having been the unalterable champion of Liberty in America, in England, & in France, from the purest view to the happiness & virtue of mankind. I have devoted my life to these glorious purposes

and am at this moment employed in a composition, embracing the whole doctrine of politics, & in which I shall endeavour to convince my countrymen of the mischiefs of monarchical government & of certain other abuses not less injurious to society. I believe that a cordial
unreserved intercourse between men employed in the same great purposes, is of the utmost service to their own minds & to their cause. I have therefore thought proper to break through all ceremony in thus soliciting the advantage of a personal acquaintance & if you entertain the same opinion, you will, I am confident, favour me with an interview either at my apartments or at any other place you will please to appoint.

“\nI am, Sir, already the ardent friend of your views, your principles & your mind
William Godwin
\n\nNotwithstanding this letter no familiar intercourse ensued between Mr Godwin & Paine. They met at dinner at various houses but the intimacy proceeded no further. The following are notes of anecdotes gathered from Paine’s conversation but they are few - “Paine & Burke talking together observe what a government of pensions & corruption ours is - ‘And distributed by such a fool’, said Paine - ‘I wish however’, said Burke, ‘this fool would give me one of his places’ - Paine communicated intelligence to Burke negotiating with Pitt respecting Nootka Sound. ‘You must carry this’, said Burke, ‘to Grey; I cannot bring it into Parliament; I am at this moment negotiating with Pitt respecting the impeachment of Hastings.’

Duke reel 13\n
\nHolcroft -as was natural wrote with much greater enthusiasm
\n
“I have got it - If this do not cure my cough it is a damned perverse mule of a cough - The pamphlet - From the row - but mum - We don’t sell it - Oh no - Ears & Eggs - verbatim except the addition of a short preface which as you have not seen I send you my copy - Not a single castration God ^Laud be unto God and [illeg.]\n" can I discover - Hey for the New Jerusalem!

The Milenium ! And peace and eternal beatitude be unto the soul of Thomas Paine

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[11v]

Early in this year this author published his ^pamphlet^ answer to Burke’s Reflections on the French Revolution. Of this work Godwin gives as his opinion:

“The pamphlet has excelled my expectations, & appears to be nearly the best possible performance that can be written on the subject. It does not confine itself, as an injudicious answer would have done, to a cold refutation of Mr Burke’s errors, but with equal discernment & philanthropy embraces every opportunity of impressing the purest principles of Liberty upon the
hearts of mankind. It is perhaps impossible to rise from perusing it, without feeling oneself both wiser & better. The seeds of revolution it contains are so vigorous in their stamina, that nothing can overpower them. All that remained for the illustrious author, after having enlightened the whole Western World by the publication of Common Sense, was to do a similar service to Europe, by a production energetic as that was, and adapted with equal skill to rouze & interest the mind. The effects, it may be, of this work will not be so rapid; but, if properly disseminated (& persecution cannot injure it), will be as sure”

Coincidence in political opinions led Godwin to wish

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[fold 1]
[across top in MWS hand]

Sir

There are few men capable of the glorious task of eradicating the vices of political government, & rendering liberty & justice as extensive & complete as they ought to be. Perhaps every such man is capable of placing himself precisely in the situation in which his effort shall be most successful. You are that peculiarly fortunate when the man & the situation are already found united. You are that man.

Any attempt, like the present, that can be made to stimulate you, could promise but little success, if you had not already felt your situation, & begun to do well. You declared early in favour of the French Revolution; you are reported to have felt some inclination to answer Mr Burke. Mr Fox discovered, particularly in the course of the present month, unequivocal symptoms of the same mind opinions.

What is it that has recently alarmed you? Why do you deprecate the discussion of general principles of government? Why does Mr Fox complain of being misunderstood? Why appear anxious to declare that he is not so much a friend to the universal diffusion of equal liberty, as he was apprehended to be? Was that apprehension injurious to him? Yet such are the sentiments of each of you are represented as having expressed.

If I thought personal ambition was the motive that had most influence in your mind, I would observe to you, that this is a period of revolutions. Man has grown alive to the perception of his rights. Truth has gone so far, that it must go farther. It can not stop. The true principles of government are studied, reasoned upon, &
understood. France, that has so long set an example the fashion to the world in trifles, cannot secure to herself all that is most worthy of man to possess, without being imitated. Men will not long say, as Mr Fox does, that "to give existence to" hereditary honours & hereditary powers, in countries where they did not exist before, is exceedingly unwise, without going farther; & thinking that their absence, in countries where they do exist, is exceedingly desirable.

What is the consequence of all this? Why that a man, who wishes for the speedy possession of power, must take care not to be "beware of being" thought too much the friend of the French Revolution. He must take things as they are, & be the contented instrument of all the corruptions & vices that at present exist (are to be found)ix. He must endeavour to secure as much emolu-

ment for himself & his friends as he can; & in a little while be swept away with the rest of the insects of the day, to make room for a better order of things, the progress of which not all the efforts of all the enemies of human nature can avert, but which though by attempting to counteract them "it", he may make himself execrable & contemptible.

But, sir, you have a better object than personal ambition. You would willingly promote the true interests & happiness of the human race. You would willingly enrol your name with the benefactors of mankind; or, which is still better, would rejoice in the extension of justice, though it your efforts in promoting that extension should never be acknowledged. And can you really think that the French Revolution new Constitution of France is the most glorious fabric ever raised by human ingenuity ability integrity since the creation of man, & yet believe that what is good there would be bad here? Does truth alter its nature by crossing the straits to become falsehood? Are men entitled to perfect equality in France, & is it just to deprive them of it in England? Did the French do well in extinguishing nobility, there, & is it is right that we should preserve hereditary honours? here? Or are these questions so very trifling in their nature, so altogether

uninteresting to the general weal, that it is no matter which side of them we hold? embrace?

But perhaps, though we should rejoice in the establishment of liberty, & truth, & right general principles of government, when th it comes, yet we ought to hear with regret the premature discussion of them. And how are they is it to come at all? How have they made the progress which has already produced such memorable effects? Because Rousseau, & Raynal & Mirabaud "the writer of the Systême de la Nature"is & Helvetius, far from hearing the discussion with regret, were eager to provoke it. You can not mean to say, let other men stand in the breach, let them be made the sacrifice, & we will enjoy the fruit of their labours. Other men, one man especially "Mr Paine" has stood in the breach, but the period of sacrifice is past. He is in no danger, & he has secured to himself the gratitude of ages. You live among men of rank & members of the legislature, men, who some way or other profit by the present order of things, & you are not aware of the progre impression the French revolution has already produced. Perhaps at last, if you be not upon your guard, it will take you by surprise.^

If you speak out, you must be contented to undergo a temporary proscription. That proscription you at present suffer, & the period of the obloquy which the true friend to mankind must endure, will
be very short. Had you rather be indebted for your eminence to the caprice of a monarch, or than to the voice of a whole nation, accumulating its gratitude upon the head of the general benefactor? Had you rather have the nominal possession of power, with your hands free for the purposes of corruption, but chained up from the exertion of every virtuous effort; or have the real possession of power, able to make every act of your administration a blessing to Britain, to Europe & to mankind?

What would Aristides & Cato & Tulli & sir Thomas More have given to have been placed in your situation - at liberty to purpose the boldest visions of universal advantage, & sure of success in the pursuit? Twelve years only elapsed before the emancipation of America brought forth the Revolution in France, though America was so distant in situation, and had so few means of rendering her example imposing & brilliant. Will France, the most refined & considerable nation in the world remain six years without an imitator? You live among men of rank & members of the legislature, men, who some way or other profit by the present order of things, & you are not aware of the impression the French revolution has already produced. Perhaps at last, if you be not upon your guard, it will take you by surprise.

There are two very different objects that offer themselves to your ambition. You may seek to profit by the vices of mankind: that profit is at best ambiguous, can be but temporary & must degrade its votary: or you may assist them in their progress towards the goal of liberty & virtue. In this country we have the shadow of liberty without any of its substance & any of its effects.

Are the lower classes animated with that independence, that fearless inflexibility, that conscious equality, which true liberty must infallibly inspire? No. On the contrary, their most intimate persuasion is, or has been, that it would be folly in them to trouble themselves about political government & political truth, that government is not influenced by the sentiments of them, or such as they, but is wholly at the disposal of the higher ranks of the community. Where the people are degraded & corrupt, their superiors never fail to be contemptible. Is there any spectacle more painful to an honest mind than a British house of commons; where men obtain their admission by bribery, by riot & vice, & when hundreds, brought in by some titled patron, dare not vote & dare not think but as he directs, them. Is this liberty? Liberty teaches men to distinguish between what is intrinsically valuable, & what only seems to be so. Even Montesquieu knew that the principle of a free state was virtue. Liberty strips hereditary honours of their imaginary splendour - shows the noble & the king for what they are, common mortals, kept in ignorance of what other mortals know, flattered & encouraged in folly & vice, & deprived of those stimulations, which perpetually goad the hero & the philosopher to the acquisition of excellence. Liberty leaves nothing to be admired but talents & virtue; the very things, which it is
the interest of men like you, should be preferred to all the rest. Pursue this subject to its proper extent, you will find, that - Give to a state but liberty enough, & it is impossible that vice should exist in it that state.

How bold & paradoxical an opinion would it have been thought a few years ago to assert that all distinctions of rank & hereditary greatness should be abolished? And yet Mr Fox must himself have been of that opinion, whether he knew it or no, when he asserted the new constitution of France to be the noblest of all the efforts of the human mind. [illeg.] I will never believe that Mr Fox has gone so far in the subject of the French Revolution as to have left you behind. Enquire into the nature of royalty & you will find it liable to precisely the same objections. It is not conspicu-

-ously unfortunate to ‘ridiculous in’ the wretched mortal who is raised to this unnatural situation. In a despotic government, he must pretend to know every thing & do every thing, when in reality he neither sees with his own eyes nor acts with his own hands. Deceived by his servants, & by the servants of his servants, the people are the slaves of whores & lacqueys & pimps & confessors, while they appear to be only the slaves of a tyrant. In a limited government, the king ought to do nothing, his ministers, who are responsible for his measures, ought to be the authors of them; he ought to be a pageant or a statue. (Happy would ‘it’ be for the people if this were the fact, & if to degrade their understandings & cheat their virtues by a solemn farce comprehended the whole of the mischief.)

But he may choose his own ministers. That is, if he have bad ones he may keep, & if good dismiss them. This will always be his choice, except so far as he is controlled by the public voice. He to choose? How came he by the penetration, that should see the human heart through all the vests of hypocrisy? What are the scenes he has visited, that should enable him to contrast the courtier dressed in all the hypocrisy of a levée, with that courtier, unmasked at his ease? But, possessing the power of choosing men, he will infallibly choose measures too. How many ministers are there

[fold 3]

who will sacrifice their places to their virtue? The king wants at first but little. Only a bishopric for a pimp, or a judge’s gown for the venal instrument of corruption. Only impunity for this villain & proscription for that man of illustrious talents or uncomplying virtue. And the minister that gives them these will hardly scruple in the sequel an unjust war or the coercion of men animated with the love of freedom. Where true liberty exists, rewards will be given only to virtue. Where there is no king, men can obtain honour only by recommending themselves to the favour of the people at large. But in courts every thing is cabal, faction & intrigue. The sycophant, the flatterer, the time serving knave will be sure of promotion; the man of generous virtue sure of discouragement. What sort of character will this circumstance diffuse through every recess & corner of the land?

Glance your eye over the rest of our happy establishment. The criminal law, which by awarding the same punishment to all offences, destroys those it should reform, & encourages all by the prospect of impunity. The church establishment - of [?which] Mr Fox has given his opinion - respecting the unequal distribution of income
there cannot be a dispute - What do you think of the 39 articles, by which every clergyman subscribes ex animo to a creed (the predestinarian)\textsuperscript{lxvii}

which not one clergyman of any eminence in the island believes to be true? What of the oaths of tradesmen, custom-house-officers, church-wardens, &c, so constructed that obedience is impossible; & thus the laity are taught by law & the constitution to despise veracity & justice, as effectively as the clergy are taught it by the thirty-nine articles. This last evil can never be completely removed, till we abolish all taxes upon trade, & substitute one only tax upon the produce of the land, which upon every system must pay the tax at last.

What a scene does this island governed as it is exhibit? A clergy, obliged to forswear themselves before they can be admitted into their profession, obliged to oppress & tyrannize upon the very people they are appointed to teach. False oaths imposed by law upon one half of the nation. The gallows converted into the prolific parent of crimes. (A nobility trampling upon the minds & exterminating the virtues of mankind. A king.)\textsuperscript{lxviii} - Is this liberty? The muse of heroism, the patron of genius, the support of truth, the mother of virtue?

But this fabric, this government, this constitution is tumbling into ruins. Do not let us have the mortification to see men like you, born for the redemption of mankind, employed "enlisted" for the preservation of their worst calamities. Above all do not be afraid of discussion. Do not temporise. Do not catch at a phantom, to let slip the substance. Fix your attention upon the great principles of government, & follow them undauntedly into all their consequences. Serve the great cause of justice of & human nature, & cast yourself upon the gratitude of mankind. As sure as the world exists, you will be rewarded - rewarded by the approbation of your own mind - by the applause of everlasting ages - by the success of your endeavours, & the inestimable value of the benefits of which you will be the author

The name of Major Jardine\textsuperscript{xix} frequently occurs in Mr. Godwin’s journal - They were certainly intimate

The occasion of the present letters ^both of which are fragments^ I cannot discover; but to a certain degree they speak for themselves. The first is to Major Jardine. It is a specimen & a mitigated one of the tone which the annunciation of the strict principle adherence to truth caused Godwin & many of his friends to adopt. This gives a very disputative air to much of his
correspondance. As according to the old adage, “Silence gives consent” - so silence usually announced approval - or oral communication sufficed for the purposes of applause. But even these ^fearless^ philosophers found it difficult to censure a friend, and when they thought it right to express disapprobation they

"", 87)

found it convenient to have recourse to writing. Then the pride fervour impetus of composition added to the fervor of a love of truth, & the eye & voice of the friend not being there to check or soften, the rounded sentences ^often^ gathered asperity as they rolled along. A different An opposite system were certainly best - it would better further the charities of social intercourse, that we wrote from our praise (I do not think we are ever too lavish of it) so that it may make a lasting impression; & spoke our blame, that manner might soften rebuke - & the airy words flying away quickly, might impress without deeply wounding the sensitive self-love of the listener. As I have said, Godwin & his friends, from the purest motives, & in hatred of hypocrisy, chose the contrary method - of this there are many proofs in the correspondance - & if we do not advert to their peculiar system, we should call those quarrelsome, who after all meant only to use the frank language of friendship, & to do the best office of that tie, by contributing to the amendment & virtue of another excellence of the person they loved.

In the foregoing autobiographical sketches Godwin has mentioned, how soon he began to disapprove of the violences of the French Revolution & above all of mob commotions - & yet here we find him vindicating Robespierre. This is easily explained. The theories of the philosopher were in favour of slow changes & benign government, but when change was operating in a neighbour country - a change tending not only to confer the blessings liberate that country from the intolerable evils of a worn out despotism but to shew to light other lands in the same path, he was willing to afford every excuse to the popular leaders, & to regard as long as he could the enormities committed in the name of freedom, as necessary to the extermination of slavery. lxx

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b.227/2(b)

"", lxxi

You are one of the men, my dear major, with whom I know not how to settle accounts. You have certainly some good qualities; & as certainly some that by no means produce approbation or pleasure. The shortest way to
settle adjust the contention is to love you for the one, & hate you for the other, & leave them to fight it out as well as they can.

Are you the friend of liberty or the enemy? This is a problem beyond my ability to solve. You are the “friend of peace.” Aye, I grant you: so much so I fear, \( ut \ mavis \ quietum \ servitium \ quam \ tumultuosam \ libertatem. \) \textsuperscript{lxxii}

You think little of independence, of energy, of manly confidence & manly spirit, & only wish that mankind were well asleep. Do not exclaim so bitterly upon Robespierre! I, like you, will weep over his errors; but I must still continue to regard him as an eminent benefactor of mankind. The French, you say, must again remain the prey of despotism. I answer in the words of Agamemnon “Prophet of plagues, forever boding ill!” You say, you cannot long serve God & Mammon. Alas! your equivocal language is precisely calculated to hold the balance between them. - So much for liberty; now for myself.

Are you my friend or my enemy? I cannot tell. In the first place, if I would take your advice you would have me go to France, & put myself into the mouth of “that dangerous beast of prey, Robespierre”

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89) for the purpose of making myself the master, not of truth as you imagine, but of falsehood; for, disguise it as you will, there are few people whose general notions of politics differ more than yours & mine. Next, you treat me personally like the bear in the fable, who struck off his master’s nose in attempting to kill a fly that had settled upon it. You have written it seems, to C. F. that I will call upon him. No, sir, if I want to be of any use I must not make myself cheap & intrusive. Do not you see, that you are not now attempting to do by letter, what you had not confidence enough to do, when you might have done it with much more propriety, in person? Do not you see, that by the profusion of your recommendations of men to the notice of each other you necessarily render them of no account? I have heard nothing of your Morichells, or even of your Durango. Do not you know, that with C. F.’s \textsuperscript{lxxiii} habits of life he necessarily considers every stranger that intrudes himself, as a suitor? I want nothing of such men, & it would be extremely injudicious in me to subject myself to these misconstructions."

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90)\textsuperscript{lxxv}

To the R. H. Charles Fox

“Sir

“Major Jardine has thought proper to send the enclosed to my house for the purpose of being transmitted to you. It is a mark of your extreme good nature if you pay the smallest attention to such incoherent, & probably well intended\(^{\text{e}}\) effusions.

“The major having thought proper to mention my name in his letter, I feel myself strongly impelled to embrace the occasion of inclosing a few lines from myself. I can do this \textit{at present} with the less risque of being
mistaken, as I have after having given my sentiments so fully to the public, as to prevent the possibility of a mind of true penetration imputing to me party & interested views. My habits of thinking are too much at war with the present system of things for me to make it possible I should ever consent to take an active part in it.

“I have therefore only to communicate my esteem for your character & my anxiety for your future rectitude & usefulness. I have long studied you, though without the advantage of personal intercourse, & there are in my opinion few men indeed to whose exertions their species may look with rational hope. I am anxious you should know how much unprejudiced & contemplative spectators sympathise in your feelings & success. I am especially anxious that you should make no fatal mistake at a period so critical to human nature. This is no time for temporising views & partial undertakings. It would be of the worst consequence if by a too laborious attention to the affair of the day you should lose sight of the true situation of mankind & the duty it is incumbent on you to discharge. It would be inexpressibly to be lamented, if a man fitted to lead the efforts of nations should by any mistake be left behind in the career the advocate of errors that have been generated.

[written in left margin]
The best rule perhaps that can be prescribed to your conduct is that of trusting to your own understanding. There is no danger to which you are exposed so great as that which arises from the easiness of your temper, subjecting you to the being guided by men eminently inferior both in penetration & virtue.

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91)

“The period in which I am now writing is a period from which the liberty & melioration of the world will take their date. Nothing can stop the dissemination of principle. No power on earth can shut the scene which has been opened. The laws of nature & of man conspire to forward it, & it has the ardent wishes of every enlightened friend of man. Would to heaven that no man of ability & virtue might lend his hand to prop the fall of oppression! How mal-a-propos & contemptible do party arrangements & interests appear at such a time! Moderate the fervour of mankind; calm their precipitation; teach them a sober & magnanimous proceeding; for this is the part of philanthropy. But be the unalterable & unlimited friend of all their just demands. Lift your voice in the cause of eternal justice; familiarise to our ears those truths that to convince need only to be spoken; satisfy your fellow beings that you are unequivocally the friend of their cause: & you may then fill the important office of mediator between the political monopolists that must gradually withdraw their pretensions, & the political justice that either by tranquil or violent means must succeed.

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b.227/2(b)

LXXVI

36) Letter
to the Hon. Thomas Erskine
Sir

At a moment when you are intoxicated with the voice of flattery, a person who approaches you with the mere intention of communicating sober truth, will no doubt be regarded as an intruder. I was present when you made your celebrated speech in the trial of Paine. You are not without some share in my esteem; & my esteem, when given, is liberally given, though it must be severely purchased. But that day did not on the whole make any addition to my esteem. It is the intention of this letter to discuss with you some of the principles which you then delivered, & which upon that occasion modified your conduct. I address you through the medium of the press, for I have nothing to say but what all the world may hear, &, if it be such admonition as you ought to receive, it will probably not be useless to others.

You mentioned upon that occasion the incredible infamy of the present administration, which ought no doubt to be published to every corner of the earth, in having left no means unemployed to induce you to desert the cause of your client. You stated it as one of the great privileges of the English constitution, that every man arraigned of any crime was enabled to secure himself an advocate to plead his cause. You claimed considerable credit upon that occasion for having persevered through every obstacle in the assertion of this privilege. It is my particular intention to controvert the reasonings of this part of your speech. You will perhaps be surprised to hear it affirmed, that you had a considerable share in procuring the verdict of guilty against your client. I was from circumstances particularly alive to that impression from the transactions of this day. It had never been my fortune in any preceding instance to hear the law pleadings of so famous an advocate. I came full of the expectations which your reputation excited, & I was not unstored with ideas of the sort of speech that a friend of the constitution ought to have made upon that celebrated occasion. Sir, it was my opinion that Mr Paine ought to have been acquitted, not upon the question of the truth or falsehood of the allegations of his writings, but because such writings ought to be permitted in a free country.

There are two circumstances that powerfully detract from the lustre which your admirers ascribe to your exertions on that day: first, that it was your opinion that your client ought to be convicted; & secondly, that you were anxious it should be understood by your hearers that such was your opinion.

What sort of impression must be made upon the court when the advocate of the accused party broadly hints that the verdict ought to be such as the indictment requires it to be? What sort of privilege is this, which you so emphatically applauded, that I shall be able to secure myself an advocate, who, whether from timidity, from party views or from conscience, thinks himself obliged to betray his client? What jury can resist the prejudice that is excited, when they are led to suppose that the accused could not find one man to tell them he should depart unpunished? Let me condemned in silence if such be the alternative, but let me not be insulted with such a mockery of defense.

Some persons have told me, that it is true such a defense could be of no use to the client, but it might nevertheless afford a happy occasion to display the ability of the advocate. You were probably under the influence
of some such argument as this. Your own good sense must have prevented you from supposing you should do any service to Mr Paine. But you supposed that you should make some addition to the public estimation, of which you are much too avaricious for a man of rigid virtue. You were mistaken.

What sort of exhibition of himself does an orator make who employs himself for four hours as you did, in a pretended attempt to persuade an audience into the truth of a proposition, which in his personal opinion is confessedly false? What must mankind think of this purchased fatigue of the lungs, & eloquence that is dealt out to every purchaser at so much an hour?

First, as I have observed, it was your private opinion that your client ought to have been convicted.

Sir, you have much too high an opinion of your talents, if you imagine that you can make a deep impression upon an audience while you are pleading against the judgment of your own understanding. Ability is the offspring of judgment. There is no eloquence that will stand the test of examination, but the eloquence which is preceded by zeal. He that talks

40) to make a vulgar distinction, from the inspiration of the head only, will in all cases be entitled to our pity rather than our admiration.

I should be loth to judge of your abilities from the exhibition of that day. I had heard of your defence of Lord Keppel, Lord George Gordon & others, & the accounts that were given carried with them strong internal evidence that the applause they acquired had been justly earned. In those pleadings your mind was ardent, your generous anxiety was visible, the sentiments you uttered carried with them the stamp of your own approbation. You have now tried in a memorable cause the opposite experiment, & have dwindled into the declamation of a schoolboy. You strung together I confess a number of brilliant classical passages; but what are such passages, unless they derive vigour from the circumstances of their tending to promote a clear & interesting purpose? You flattered yourself that you were pleading for the liberty of the press. How must such a plea be unnerved by being thus associated with a cause in which you believed the liberty of the press had been overstepped? Take warning. Learn a great moral lesson from the miscarriage of that day. When you commenced your legal career, the observation that was universally made was, others lawyers speak from artifice & system; this man speaks because he feels. Trace back your wanderings. If you lose this first ingredient in your reputation you will speedily have no reputation to lose.

I will make the idea I wish to convey more palpable by an instance. One of the passages of Mr. Paine’s pamphlet arraigned by the attorney general was as follows. “All hereditary government is in its nature tyranny. An heritable crown, or an heritable throne, or by what other fanciful name such things may be called, have no other significant explanation than that mankind are heritable property. To inherit a government, is to inherit the people, as if they were flocks & herds!”

In defending this passage you reminded the court of the revolution in 1688, from whence you inferred that the crown of England was not in an absolute sense hereditary. You added, that the passage in question was indeed a libel upon
the king of Prussia & the emperor of Germany; but the who succeeded by simple inheritance; but that nothing could be more clear than that Mr Paine intended it as a compliment to the house of Brunswick.

Can there be a more flagrant insult upon the common sense of mankind than is contained in this assertion? Do you think you can insult the common sense of mankind, in a grave court of judicature, upon a trial interesting to the liberties of your country, without at the same time insulting yourself & degrading your character? My feelings are prompt to express themselves in stronger terms but I suppress them. - This is but a specimen, perhaps indeed the most striking specimen, of the whole tenour of your speech.

Ministry could not - but they frighten you brilliant passages [good & bad]

The journal of this year is as concise as ever - but there is a supplement to it that adds to its interest. I insert extracts

Feb. 10 1793 Dine at Burney’s with Jardine & Charles. Call at Wedgwood’s with Jardine. Tom Paradises with Jardine, Planter, Lord Sandys

Feb. 11 - Call on Barry - he had sought me to enquire after my book

Feb. 14 The Publication

Feb. 19 Go to the Comedy of Anna with Mrs Inchbald.

March 23. Dr Priestley says my book contains a vast extent of ability. Monarchy & aristocracy to be sure were never so painted before - he agrees with me respecting gratitude & contracts absolutely considered - but thinks the principles too refined for practise - he felt uncommon approbation of my investigation of the first principles of government, which were never so well explained before - he admits fully my first principle of the omnipotence of instruction & that all vice is an error - he admits all my principles but cannot follow them into all...
my conclusions - he agrees with me respecting self love, and is particularly delighted with the last paragraph, B IV, Ph. VIII & the last sentence of a paragraph p.359.

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1793 The j

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Feb. 10  Dine at Burney’s with Jardine & Charles. Call at Wedgwoods with Jardine. Tom Paradise’s - Jardine[,] Planter, Lord Sandys,

Feb. 11  -  Call on Barry - he had sought me to enquire after my book

14 Th Publication

29 Go to the Comedy of Anna with Mrs Inchbald

May 25 - Prosecution of Political Justice debated this week

Sep. 21 Sa.  Tea at Reveley’s with Jardine, Sinclair & Mrs Jennings.

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c.606/3

The principles of no book were ever canvassed with so much eagerness & pertinacity as those of Political Justice. And this cannot excite our surprize, as the very tone of it arrests the attention & its singular doctrines demanded consideration The ability also displayed excited admiration to a great extent. The book became popular & unpopular, ^praised & censured^ to an unprecedented extent, & the very enemies it raised provoked discussion & notice. Reviews in those days were not conducted as they are now - but The Monthly xc devoted three successive articles to analyzing the work giving copious extracts & speaking favourably of its doctrines. Mr. Godwins correspondents could talk of nothing else - an introduction to him was solicited by those to whom he was heretofore unknown - & his mild benevolent earnest & singularly gentlemanly manners & demeanour excited ^universal^ esteem & liking.
The following letters to & from his old schoolmaster

[64v]

Newton & from Mr. Frederic Norman of Stowmarket are full of interest. The first is from Mr. Godwin to Mr. Newton

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Duke reel 5

65) To Mr Newton The Rev'd Saml Newton

Sir

I have been informed that you have delivered as your judgment of the work I have published on Political Justice, that when attempting the perusal you found in it much so peculiarly censurable that you could not bear to read it farther.

I confess I am strongly inclined to believe that there has been some mistake on the part of my informant, & that the story I have heard is untrue. If so, you will thank me for giving you an opportunity to contradict it.

Having written this much, I will trouble you with the reasons that persuade me you never delivered the opinion ascribed to you.

When I knew you, you were an ardent champion for political liberty. I cannot easily suppose that you have changed your sentiments on that head.

It is impossible that you should ^not^ have perceived that the book in question is intended to promote that glorious cause. Granting that I have the misfortune to differ from you in your theological creed, I am well assured that at the period to which I allude you had the candour & discernment to do justice to the political writings of people of all persuasions in religion & philosophy. The indulgence in this respect that you would grant to all other men, I cannot suppose you would deny to me. The subject of this book is not religion, but politics: if it be calculated to produce any effect, it is infinitely more probable that that effect will relate to its express object, than its incidental allusion; by to the politics which I imagine you will allow to be generally right, than by to the theology which you perhaps suspect to be wrong.
There is a view which I am strongly inclined to entertain upon this subject, that I will take the liberty to mention. We have all of us our duties. Every action of our lives & every word that we utter will either conduce to or detract from the discharge of our duty. We cannot any of us do all the things of which mankind stand in need, we must have fellow labourers. Hence it seems to follow that one of our most important duties [is] to do justice to the good qualities of every man & every book that falls under our observation, that thus we may enlarge the opportunity of others for discharging those parts of public service which we cannot perform ourselves. It is unworthy of any real friend of mankind to depreciate any well meant conceived endeavour, from ‘a’ too painful feeling of the incidental effects that may accompany it.

I make no apology for want of ceremony. We are both of us I conceive enemies to that servility under which the species have so long laboured.

The Rev Saml Newton

To Mr Godwin from the Revd Saml Newton

Dear Sir

I naturally contract a friendship, feel an attachment, and interest myself in the welfare of those who have for any time lived with me, though their sentiments and habits may be different from mine. Sincerely can I say that I have been very solicitous for your reputation and welfare, and when I saw your publication advertised, I told several gentlemen of my acquaintance of different persuasions, that from what I knew of your abilities and application, I presumed it was a production that merited attention. When I was lately at my son’s at [illeg.], I was determined, as he had procured it for a book-club there, I believe, on my recommendation, to read it attentively through, though it was in a library at Norwich sometime before to which I belonged but I had not time then to investigate its contents. In the perusal, I was charmed with your language, with many of your sentiments, and with your general ideas of political Justice and liberty. I said, that there were some descriptions, reasonings and ideas, that, for simplicity, elegance, force and utility, seemed to me to surpass all I had ever read in Tacitus, Polybius, Montesquieu, Barbeyrac, Grotius, Robertson, Price or Priestley.

But I will ingeniously confess to you (and I have you know a right to think for myself) that there...
were several things you advanced concerning moral obligation, gratitude - any public test of marriage, christianity and one or two more subjects, that very much disgusted me. My imagination was raised, not so much that you differed from me, but because I conceived it would damn the book, which contained "in it" so many useful and most interesting sentiments. Towards the close (or about the middle) of the second volume, I found something of that kind and I did throw by the book, with some such sentence "as" you have heard, but it was from an impulse, I can assure you, arising from the preceding views. Truth I revere though it condemns my own conduct.

I believe christianity, you may not; but as I am convinced that it is the most friendly system to the equality and liberty of mankind that ever was published, I think justice required me to resent any one's a person's suggesting, that I am not as strongly attached to the rights of man, as any one who does not believe it.

In short, Sir, permit me to intimate, that when you publish another edition, I think you can better the arrangement and make the general method more perspicuous; and if you should think proper to change your expressions and leave out certain sentences on some subjects, your performance will be more extensively perused, and it will wonderfully add, I doubt not, to that torrent of political light which is pouring in upon an oppressed world.

Thus much I thought it my duty to suggest to you, but whether you think it worthy your attention or not, I shall think I am bound by immutable Justice to wish you well and really to esteem you, without giving way to the least degree of base servility

S. Newton

Thorpe next to Norwich
Decr. 4th 1793.

He thinks there is somewhere in the book a passage which agrees with him respecting my refinements & prognostics, & if admitted, would overthrow them - he thinks mind will never so far get the better of matter as I suppose - he is of opinion that the book contains a great quantity of original material & will be uncommonly useful. Reporter John Hollis

March 24 - Conversation with Dyson on the road to Wimbledon. Rousseau on les spectacles. Do theatrical productions, such as we find them, do most good or harm? Which is most
powerful, the moral inference fairly deducible from an interesting story, or its tendency to rouze?
- instance in Othello - A question similar to that of Rousseau may be put relative to Petronius, Horace, Voltaire, Hume, Sterne. How far is mind generated, not only in persons suitably prepared, but even in the vulgar, by energy of intellectual exhibitions? Was Geneva better than Paris? Was even Sparta better than Athens? You have two things to learn, 1st That these gay & sublime sensations were, personally considered, eminently virtuous. 2. That the tendency & effect of these writings are upon the whole eminently beneficial. Epicurus, Petronius[,] 

103) Horace teach 1. That temperance, which maintains us constantly in a state adapted to the sublimest exertions. 2. That temperance, which exempts us from being at the mercy of another, of his tyranny or of his temptations.

Wimbledon. Horne Tooke tells me that my book is a bad book, & will do a great deal of harm - Holcroft & Jardine had previously informed me, the first, that my book was written with very good intentions, but to be sure nothing could be so foolish; the second, that Holcroft & I had our heads full of plays & novels, & then thought ourselves philosophers.

Singular character of Captain Gawler, as a blackleg & a sensualist - won $500 of an evening of Count Zenobio - Curious scene of baiting Zenobio for having broken off his match with Miss Hawke, by Tooke & Gawler.xcix

Pitt kept a Faro table at a gaming house immediately previous to his moving into office.

May 25 Prosecution of Political Justice debated this week

Sep. 21 Tea at Reveley’s with Jardine, Sheridan & Mrs Jennings.

Sep. 29. Write to Fox; Smith calls - talk of religion. Dine at Shields with Holcroft, Perry, Gray & Gordon.

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c.532/8ci

43) The publication of Political Justice was an important era in my father’s Mr.Godwin’s life
- and one also, it may be said, in the history of the world. We are children of a calmer day - this is the age of facts & practicalities - that was the period of theory & enthusiasm - probably if the mind all freespirited men enquired what was best, while the more eager endeavoured to attain that best - Metaphysics became the basis of schemes of government - & armies were despised when put in the balance with the spirit of Liberty  Man had been reigned over long by fear & law - he was now to be governed by truth & justice - the only question was how to bring these into operation, & how to secure their entire ascendancy.

Man’s The mind of man is of various texture & ages as well as individuals differ in the height to which intellect & virtue are carried. That by a proper system of government, every man might be raised to the height of the individual excellence of the greatest hero on record, became the conviction of those who looked upon all evil as error & therefore to be discarded when we should be wise. More than this - if each human being could be trained to such excellence as has been known to exist, & therefore may exist again - was there any obstacle inherent in humanity to prevent every a still further progress - and was not perfectibility one of the indefeasible attributes of mankind? From the moment that this was granted - & that it became an axiom that truth adequately illustrated must prevail - it became the theories of Political Justice became as self evident as the laws of fluxions - one conclusion flowed from another the preceding one & all was flawless & compact.

The lovelier virtues of our nature, gratitude & personal attachment were like morning stars to be veiled at once by the mightier radiance of the sun of truth which shewed mutual kindness to be but immutable justice, and love for the individual, a nothing compared on that demanded by the whole family of our fellow creatures.

The state of political excitement, of energetic endeavour to reject evil from the whole world, & into it truth & justice only equality happ an equal distribution of happiness, which sprung from the French Revolution, can only account for the enthusiasm in which these tenets were held by those who adopted them. They did not spurn - but they raised far above the mere common charities of life, into general utility & universal benevolence. Reason was at once their polar star & their compass - the needle & the north in one - they were never weary of hunting after truth & truth once discovered & announced must secure universal obedience. To desire to act well is a primal law of our nature; & when once propositions were developed, which shewed the possibility of acting well to
an extent that no religious enthusiast had ever dreamed & of grasping all mankind in the
endeavour to confer benefit, it is no wonder that many proselytes hailed the philosophy with
rapture. Godwin as an author was peculiarly fitted to announce a doctrine. He was enthusiastic
ardent - full of an intellectual fire which gave a promethean spark to the dead letter of mere
phyllosophy. No one could read Political Justice without being carried away by the noble views it
developes - the height to which it elevates human nature & the facility with which all
impediments are cast away, & the broad path to perfection thrown open & smoothed.

Most men “are a little lower than angels” & therefore incapable of divesting themselves
of passion - or of receiving truth impartially in their own case. Experience I beleive fully
demonstrates - but Godwin disdained the humble humiliating & poltroon idea that if we exerted our

selves sufficiently we could not get rid of those errors & weaknesses - What was that mind who
seeing the truth did not follow it? other reasoning might call it perverted - but it It was an
axiom of the new phyllosophy that no mind could refuse truth, if adequately demonstrated. This
infused peculiar ardour into their endeavours to announce their doctrines - it made them ready on
all occasions to meet objections - reasonings it made rendered them eager to make proselytes
ready to become martyrs - it filled them with hope energy & confidence.

No one person inclined to adopt free principles but read Political Justice with enthusiasm.
The language pure & lofty; - giving no rest at all adopting no flowing ornaments; yet vigo yet
^harmonious in its concision^ & dignified in its vigour - a style at once to deli noble & simple; it
gave grace to the most crabbed arguments. But the great charm of this work undoubtedly arose
from the sincerity of the writer - Every one felt that his heart beat in the Author’s heart burned
along each line - & that not a word proposition was written brought forward that had not only
received the conviction of his understanding as to their its truth, but the desire of his soul to

act up to them it. (Turn over)

In after times ^Mr^ Godwin shrunk from some of his conclusions & there are several
papers written not long after the publication which shewed that when the mere ardour of
composition had evaporated, he could perceive some flaws in his system. As to disseminate truth
was his object, he did not hesitate at once to acknowledge his errors. The second edition of his
work contained emendations - & there are several pape notes among his papers concerning
relative to the change of his views on particular points. I select some of these which will at once
shew his readiness to admit his errors, & the fervour with which he regarded that portion of his doctrines which he considered "to be" founded on immutable truth. (note 1 Turn over)

""

(Insert)

I find written

He had the loftiest conception of the powers of mind, & the most ardent admiration and the most ardent desire to shew that it classed a precedence among the many. Among his papers are these words - they paint the spirit that animated every line he ever wrote

"In aeternitatem pingo - I read that phrase of Guido in one of my vacations at Guestwick between 1774 & 1776, & drank in the whole force of it into my own soul. ["]"

(note 1)

In addition to the fragmentary notes here inserted I find a essay of some length on the alterations he desired to make in Political Justice. From its length it is ["sic"] adapted for this place - & together with several other essays & dissertations worthy of their Author must be reserved for another publication."

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(note 2) The doctrines of Political Justice are developed with much perspicacity in Hazlitt’s life of Holcroft Vol. II Page 122 - I make a few extracts -

"The whole of modern philosophy as far as relates to moral conduct is nothing more than a literal, rigid, unaccommodating & systematic interpretation of the text “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”; without making allowances for the weaknesses of Mankind or"

""

48)

(Note continued)

the degree to which this rule is practicable; & the answer to the question “who is our neighbour” is the same both in the sacred records & in the modern prescription “he who most wants our assistance”. I have mentioned this coincidence (I hope without offence) to shew that the shock occasioned by the extreme & naked manner of representing the doctrine of universal benevolence, did not, & could not, arise from the principle itself, but from the supposition, that this comprehensive & sublime principle was of itself sufficient to regulate the actions of men, without the aid of those common affections & mixed motives, which our habits, passions & vices has taught us to regard as the highest practicable point of virtue. If, however, it be granted, not
only that it is in itself right and best, but that a point might come, in which it would be possible for men to be actuated by the sole principles of truth & justice, then it would seem to follow that the subordinate rules of action might be dispensed with, being superseded by the sense of higher & more important duties.

“In such a state of things, modern philosophy teaches that wars, bloodshed & national animosities would cease; peace & good will would reign among men; and that the feeling of patriotism, necessary as it now is to preserve the independance of states, & to repel the ravages of unprincipled & ambitious invaders, would die away of itself with national jealousies & antipathies, with ambition, war, & foreign conquest. Family attachments would also be weakened & lost in the general principle of benevolence in which when every man would be a brother. Exclusive friendships could no longer be formed, because they would interfere with the claims of justice & humanity, & because it would no longer be necessary to keep alive the stream of the affections, by confining them to a particular channel, when they would be continuously refreshed, invigorated, & would overflow with the diffusive soul of mutual philanthropy, & generous undivided sympathy with all men. Another feeling no less necessary at present would then be forgotten - namely, gratitude to benefactors; but not from a selfish, hateful spirit, or hardened sensibility to kind offices; but because all men would in fact be equally ready to promote one another’s welfare, that is, equally benefactors & friends to each other, without the motives either of gratitude & self interest - Promises, in like manner, would no longer be binding or necessary; not in order that men might take advantage of this liberty to consult their own whims or convenience, & trick one another, but that by being free from every inferior obligation they might be enabled more steadily & directly to pursue the simple dictates of reason & conscience. False honor, false shame, vanity, emulation &c would upon the same principle give way to other & better motives. It is evident that laws & punishment would cease with the cause that produces them, the commission of crimes. Neither would the distinctions of property subsist in a society, where the interests & feelings of all would be more intimately blended than they are at present among members of the same family, or among the dearest friends. Neither the allurements of ease, or wealth, nor the dread of punishment, would be required to excite to industry, or to prevent fraud & violence, in a state in which all would cheerfully labour for the good of all; & where the most refined reason, & inflexible justice acting on a whole community, would scarcely fail to ensure the same effects, which at present result
from the motives of honesty & honor. The labour, therefore, requisite to produce the necessaries of life, would be equally divided among the members of such a community, & the remainder of their time would be spent in the pursuit of science, in the cultivation of the noblest arts - & in “the most refined social & intellectual enjoyments”.cvi

To finish the picture poured in Political Justice must be added the belief entertained of the mastery of mind over matter, which in a state of society approaching perfection would be so entire as to vanquish pain - conquer Death, & bring a millennium on earth when our species would be equally free from moral & physical evil.

Caleb Williams was published in May - it raised the reputation of the author to the highest pitch - those who had no taste for ‘political disquisition‘, or who did not agree in the tenets of Political Justice, were carried away by the engrossing interest, the elevated feeling and dignified yet purely English style of the novel. Its reputation became European. In this country its influence extended into every grade of society. Those in the lower grades classes saw their cause espoused, & their oppressions forcibly & eloquently delineated - while the higher rank acknowledged & felt the nobleness, sensibility & errors of Falkland with the deepest sympathy. I well remember my father being told from good authority that George the IV, during one of the latter years of his life asked a gentleman in attendance on him None No one who ever read it can forget the first impression they received & this must have been far greater when it first appeared, and was at once a new era in the art of novel writing and an appeal to the noblest sentiments of his heart. Many years after [?Northerly] told my father that Sir William Knighton related that during on one occasion in the latter years of his life, George the IV asked him to recommend a book to amuse him. Caleb Williams was mentioned suggested. “Yes”, said the King, “I well remember how much I was interested in it when I first read it - many years ago”.

In the tour which Godwin took in Junecvii to his native county he was every (turn over)

where received as a celebrated man. It is true that one of his correspondantscviii told him that his mother & Mrs. Southren considered Caleb Williams inferior to the “Italian Letters” - but a perso an Author accustomed to metropolitan fame was not likely to be disconcerted by such an opinion.
On leaving London, he first stopt at Stowmarket to see his friend Norman with whom he “talked of God, industry[,] drinking & meaning" - Thence he proceeded to Norwich. One of his warmest welcomers there was Doctor Alderson, who with his young & lively & pretty ^charming^ daughter, afterwards Mrs Opie, shewed him every mark of kindness & hospitality. Mr John Taylor of Norwich was among his chief & most valued friends. The name of Mr. & Mrs. Taylor of Norwich is recorded in the Memoirs of Sir James Macintosh with that respect that was deeply felt by all who knew them. Of Mrs. Taylor Macintosh says: “

[blank]

Duke reel 13

but his chief delight was in the society of Mrs John Taylor, a most intelligent, excellent woman. She was the wife of a shopkeeper in that city. Mild & unassuming, quiet & meek, sitting amidst her large family, useful with her needle & domestic occupations, but always assisting, by her great knowledge, the advancement of kind & dignified sentiment & conduct. Manly virtue & feminine gentleness were in her united with such attractive manners, that she was universally loved & respected. ‘In high thoughts & gentle deeds’ she greatly resembled the admirable Lucy Hutchinson, and in troubled times would have been equally distinguished for firmness in what she thought right.

Her husband deserved praise as high & enthusiastic. An Unitarian in religious creed he was liberal in his opinions & generous to a very remarkable extent. This admirable pair shed lustre over their sect in their native town & were ^warmly^ loved & deeply respected by all who knew them.

[blank]

political reaction

c.532/8

Her husband deserved praise as high & enthusiastic - an Unitarian in creed he was liberal in his opinions, & generous to a very singular extent.
Merry was perhaps the favourite friend of Godwin in this excursion. Like all naturally reserved people, he was delighted to meet with unreserve, & that genial flow of spirits, which raises every one around to its own level - After about a fortnight spent among these kind & valued friends Godwin returned to London -

Not long after his return he received the following letter from Dr Parr entreating a visit soliciting him. It is probable that his acquaintance with Parr began on the score of Gerrald, whom they both loved - but it was the doctor, who solicited for an introduction, & was eager to cultivate an intimacy with the Author of Political Justice.

......

c.606/5

119)

their talents. His pen would have been ready for them - nay his voice. Sheridan had once said to him “You ought to be in Parliament” - the observation made a deep impression - probably it seized for a time his ambition. But Godwin wanted the arts of political pursuit and some years afterwards, he seemed still to reflect upon them, as I find the following note among his papers.

“I ought to be in Parliament.

“My principles of gradual improvement are particularly congenial to such a situation.

“It is probable that in the next six years, circumstances may occur, in which my talents, such as they are, might be of use.

“I am now forty years of age: the next six years will be six of the most vigorous years of my life.

“I would be an infrequent speaker.

“I would adhere to no party.

“I would vote for no proposition that I did not wish to see carried.

“I would be the Author of motions; thus endeavouring to call public attention to salutary ideas.

“I ought to be brought in without expense.

......

120)

“The present moment is a crisis, greatly tending to determine whether my destination shall be for active or contemplative life.

“This is a situation that would exite envy and satire; it would be incumbent by splendour & activity of talent to disperse the cloud.
“If I were elected into parliament, this would be at first the source of humiliation. I should be the last of gentlemen, who am now one of the first of plebeians; it must be the task of great energies to enable me to look erect in this situation.

“It is better, in a personal view, that the man should appear always greater than his situation rather than the situation should appear greater than the man.”

There is something in this paper that looks rather like consoling himself for not being in parliament than in exciting himself to undertake the responsibility. In these days certainly Godwin’s birth would not place him last on the benches of the Commons - & even when we recollect that Sheridan was the son of a Teacher of Elocution, this mark of modesty appears somewhat overcharged. The doubt as to his fitness existing in his own mind perhaps is a proof of unfitness - a person fitter for active life cannot subside into the contemplative.

........

c.606/4

[41v]

(Johnstone)

Dr Parr’s Life & Correspondance Hicks Holcroft’s Life

....

[unnumbered]

Dr Parr

Godwin wrote a letter of exaltation to Dr Parr on the acquittal of Hardy, dated “this ever-memorable & ever-honoured fifth day of Nov. 1794 [“]

The Spital sermon brought forth a reply from Mr Godwin. He had visited Hatton in Oct 1794 & professed that he recollected with singular satisfaction the happiness he enjoyed in Dr Parr’s conversation & company, & that he never spent a week with higher personal pleasure. He afterwards spent several days at Hatton in 1795 with as much satisfaction. They corresponded & it does not appear that the correspondence was broken off till Dec. 1799. In that month a letter supposed by Mr Godwin to be important remained unanswered - & there is no other letter till April 24.1800.

John Johnstone M.D.

Life of Parr Vol I Chap XII

........
It is much to be regretted that, instead of a moral & religious disquisition, on the subject of which it professes to teach, the preacher should have allowed his discourse to assume the form of a personal attack, as already noticed, on a very distinguished writer & friend; & still more to be regretted is the want of fairness & candour, so evident, in claiming vehemently & acrimoniously, against the errors of a system, even after those words had been publicly acknowledged & abjured. It is true, that ingenuous confession, which did so much honour to the author of “Political Justice”, is inserted, by Dr Parr, among “the notes”, accompanied with its due commendation, in the following words: - “I will not insult the foregoing observations with the name concessions. I am more disposed to consider them as modifications, suggested by maturer reflection, & expressed with some degree of contrition, that they had neither occurred to the writer, nor had been conveyed to the reader, before.”

But even these commendatory expressions, almost concealed & lost as they are amidst a vast body of notes, could hardly be considered as a sufficient reparation for the injury done by the bitter invectives scattered through a discourse, which was delivered to a crouded audience from the pulpit, & afterwards to the world from the press. Such a procedure, it must be owned, wears too much the air of a private apology for a public affront. If acknowledged error must be proclaimed aloud, & censured with unsparing severity, justice surely demands that the rare merit of the frank & explicit acknowledgement should be, at least, as openly announced & applauded.

Dear Sir

I was very desirous to see you. I have called twice for that purpose. Saturday, unfortunately, you were on the point of going out, today you slept in the country.

If I had seen you, I designed to ask you whether you had received a letter from me, written in December last? I meant to have listened to know, whether intention or simple forgetfulness had caused it to remain unanswered. It did not appear to me an ordinary letter, but one the author of which was entitled to a reply.

This subject dismissed, I should then have mentioned your sermon of Easter Tuesday. I spoke in the letter above referred to of Mackintosh’s lectures, in which that gentleman, without the manliness of mentioning me, takes occasion three times a week to represent me to an audience of an hundred persons, as a wretch unworthy to live. Your sermon, I learn from all hands, was on the same subject, handled, I take it for granted from what I know of your character, in a very different spirit. I am sorry for this. Since Mackintosh’s lectures it has become a sort of fashion with a large party, to join in the cry against me. It is the part, I conceive, of original genius, to give the tone to others rather than to join a pack after it has already become loud & numerous.
These subjects were better adapted for a conversation than a letter; & I much wish they had been so treated. Every difference of judgment is not the proper subject topic for a grand complaint.

If however both my letter & my visits have passed unnoticed, I am entitled to conclude that you have altered your mind respecting me. In that case, I should be glad if you would answer to your own satisfaction, what crime I am chargeable with, now in 1800, of which I had not been guilty in 1794, when with so much kindness & zeal you sought my acquaintance.

I am, Dear Sir,
yours with the warmest regard,

W. Godwin

29,
Polygon, Somers Town
near London, April 24 1800
(not near Islington)

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end chapter 2: politics
My Lord,

The editor of the P HER and R, cxxx who has the honour to address you, is desirous of adorning his publication with a narrative of your Lordship’s administration in the East Indies. You, my Lord, are perfectly sensible how difficult it must be to procure perfect & complete materials for the history of so distant & so recent transactions.

[...] I am far from being willing to expose myself to the reputation of a sycophant or a flatterer; but when from the leading features of the conduct of a public character I have been led to form an honourable opinion of him, I am not afraid of being induced to alter that opinion in consequence of an examination of the minuter parts of his story.

If it suited your Lordship’s convenience to furnish me with any kind of materials which have not yet come before the public eye it would confer upon me a lasting obligation

........
Sir

[...] your not advancing the money [...] at the time of Christmas [...] just the most unpleasant period in the world to make me feel my disappointment -

Mr John Robinson did me the favour of mentioning to me that the Annual Register was somewhat behindhand. This, sir, is more in appearance than in reality. The preparations I have made are great. A pupil, whom I constantly attend for the greater part of the year left town last week; so that the ensuing two months will be almost solely employed in your service. [...] The Political Herald avaraging [sic] it upon the six months ... This together with the Annual Register [...] the Peerage which I believed would have been in great forwardness by this time [...]
Sir,

I was yesterday at my own request introduced to you by Mr B. Hollis; though but, in the hurry & confusion of a numerous meeting, I had not the opportunity of unburthening my mind of saying something which I have long wished to say to you in person. I have long wished for an occasion of expressing to you my feeling of the high obligation you have conferred upon Britain and mankind by your late publication of the Rights of Man. I believe few persons men have a more ardent sense of that obligation than myself; & I conceive that it is a duty incumbent upon persons so feeling especially to contribute their part, in applauding such come forward with the most direct applause of your efforts.

I regard you, sir, as having been the apostle unalterable champion of liberty in America, in England & in France, from the purest views of promoting the to the happiness and the virtue & happiness of mankind. I have devoted my life to these glorious purposes, & am in at this moment employed upon a composition embracing the whole doctrine of politics, in which I shall endeavour to convince my countrymen of the mischiefs of monarchical government, & to detect of certain other abuses of equal magnitude not less injurious to society. I believe that a cordial & unreserved intercourse between men employed in the same great purposes, is of the utmost service to their own minds, & to their cause. I have therefore thought proper to break through all ceremonies in thus soliciting the advantage of a personal acquaintance; & if you entertain the same opinion, you will, I am confident, favour me with an interview either at my apartments or at any other place you will please to appoint.

I am, sir, already the ardent friend of your views, your principles & your mind

W.G.

P.S. I should be happy in the favour of your company to dinner with two or three friends on ___ if agreeable. I need not desire a man of Paine’s energy of mind to accept or slight this invitation as he pleases. You shall feel inclined. I am fully certain that, while you are engaged in the great cause which I so ardently love, it will be impossible for any mistake that you may fall into respecting me to effect an alteration in my esteem & veneration for you. I disdained the petty ceremonies of society in soliciting your acquaintance because I knew your merit. It was impossible you should know me so well, & I am contented to wait with patience, confident certain that the time will come when you will acknowledge the kindred I claim.
I am, D. S., your affec. friend

(Paine,) Holcroft, Nicholson, (Canning, Webb,)
Fawcet, Barry, Crostil, Lister (Jacob,)
Fawcet, Romilly, Lister

....
....
[v]
Holcroft
Nicholson
Godwin
Mackintosh
J. Hunter
H. Tooke
Williams
Paine
Priestley
Cooper
Sharpe
Crawford
Barlow
Sharpe ^Jacob^
Canning

........
Dr Priestley says my book contains a vast extent of ability - monarchy & aristocracy to be sure were never so painted before - he agrees with me respecting gratitude & contracts absolutely considered, but thinks the principles too refined for practice - he felt uncommon approbation of my investigation of the first principles of government, which were never so well explained before - he admits fully my first principle of the omnipotence of instruction, & that all vice is error - he admits all my principles, but cannot follow them into all my conclusions - he agrees with me respecting self-love, & is particularly delighted with the last paragraph, B IV. Ch. VIII; & the last sentence of a paragraph, p. 359 - he thinks there is somewhere in the book a passage which agrees with him respecting my refinements & prognostics, &, if admitted, would overthrow them - he thinks mind will never so far get the better of matter as I suppose - he is of opinion that the book contains a great quantity of original thinking, & will be uncommonly useful reporter, John Hollis

[...]

........
That Goliath of critical and moral censure, Johnson, would perhaps have thought me a most seditious and dangerous sectary for rejecting all establishments of religion and for seriously ridiculing every order of priests constituted by the reigning powers. Hume would have deemed me a servile, implicit, narrow soul for believing a religion which was embraced by "my" parents, though, I think, I have as fairly examined it as any man in the Island. but I laugh at his conceit and pity his prejudices, guessing from what I know of his life how his associations of ideas were formed; for as a philosopher pretending to the most accurate and deep investigation, he should have accounted for this Phaenomenon, how the books containing the Hebrew and Christian systems came to be published? If they were forgeries, who were their authors and what their motives and ends in publishing such singular schemes, so different from all the fine conceptions and sublime notions of all politicians and philosophers that ever existed? I can resolve questions of this sort with respect to the Koran and every other pretended revelation from God, but I never saw this done with respect to the Bible.

Our associations of thought and habits of mind are so totally different, that it is no wonder we should determine very oppositely one to the other on many subjects; and therefore you will not be surprised, if I should affirm, as I do with the greatest sincerity. The evidence for the being of a God from analogy or arguing from the effect to the cause, and of a future state from our desires and the supposed justice of the divine government, does not strike my mind so forcibly, nor afford it so much satisfaction as that which it is impressed with for the undoubted truth of the hebrew and christian religions.

.......
It is my will that, in any future editions of the Enquiry concerning Political Justice, my pamphlet in answer to Dr Parr, &c, be annexed to the work, in place immediately following the prefaces to the different editions; not so much to perpetuate the fugitive & obscure controversies that have been excited on the subject, as because it contains certain essential explanations & elucidations with respect to the work itself. Let the title then stand “Defence of the Enquiry concerning Political Justice.” - The index, in consequence of this arrangement, should be removed from the place it at present occupies, & thrown to the end of the work.

June 8, 1801

........
“If I committed any fault which approaches to immorality, I think it was towards Mr Godwin. I condemn myself for contributing to any clamour against philosophical speculations; & I allow that, both from his talents & character, he was entitled to be treated with respect. Better men than I am, have still more wronged their antagonists in controversy, on subjects, & at times in which they might easily have been dispassionate, & without the temptation & excuse of popular harangues. But I do not seek shelter from their example. I acknowledge my fault; & if I had not been withheld by blind usage, from listening to the voice of my own reason, I should long ago have made the acknowledgment to Mr Godwin from whom I have no wish that it should now be concealed.

Bombay. December 9th 1804

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For full citations see Bibliography.

c.606/1: [112v] is MWS transcription of a set of chapter headings for a sixth chapter based on Godwin’s ‘Autobiographical fragments’ (MP 41-51), for the years 1785 to 1788. Another such set in Duke reel 2: 13), contains headings of a ‘Chapter II’. See 1: literature. Summary of 1789 is cancelled, and this reflects the fact that the ‘brief annals’ or ‘summaries’ in Godwin’s hand in b.226/2 do not include a fragment for 1789. MWS transcription ‘Summary of 1788’ (MP 47-8) is c.606/2: 122). It may be an accident that ‘Autobiographical fragments’ for the years of high political tension 1789, 1793, and 1794, are those missing from the Bodleian folders.

In b.229/8, Godwin’s memorandum on his plans to stand for Parliament, is dated 1796 by St Clair (C139-40). See below, MWS script c.606/5: 119): ‘I ought to be in Parliament’.

The end of the year 1784, when Godwin commenced as author of the British and Foreign History section of New Annual Register for 1783. Philp (MP 45), dates this paragraph 1783/4 in Godwin’s ‘Autobiographical fragments’, because the following entry in b.226/2 is for 1785, and notes: ‘The New Annual Register (1781-1824), Whig periodical founded by Andrew Kippis, published by G. G. and J. Robinson’ (MP 45-6).

In ‘Autobiographical fragments’ for 1785, Godwin writes: ‘--in this year also the party of Mr Fox ... conceived the plan of a periodical work, which appeared first in the middle of this year, entitled the Political Herald, of which Dr Gilbert Stuart was the editor, and Dr William Thomson, myself, and Mr John Logan, the poet, were the regular contributors’ (MP 46). In ‘Autobiographical fragments’ for 1786, Godwin writes: ‘--it was about this time that Dr Gilbert Stuart died; and on that occasion I addressed a letter to Mr Sheridan, who had hitherto been the mediator between the party of Mr Fox and the publishers of the Political Herald, requesting that I might be chosen to succeed Dr Stuart in the capacity of editor’. The entry for 1786 ends, ‘The Political Herald expired at the end of this year’ (MP 46).

Hazlitt’s Memoirs of Holcroft (Howe, 142), records that in 1793-4, The Crown & Anchor in the Strand was the venue at which both the Society for Constitutional Information, of which Holcroft was a leading member, met downstairs, and the John Reeves Association for Preserving Liberty and Property against Levellers and Republicans, met upstairs. Godwin’s letter directed to John Reeves signed ‘Mucius’, published in Morning Chronicle, 8 February
1793, in Mark Philp ed. (Mph 1993, 16-19).

vi. c.606/1: 98), second paragraph is omitted here. See this page in full, in 1: literature.

viii. The anecdote ... mentioned’ in ‘Autobiographical fragments’ for 1787, where Godwin writes: ‘In the beginning of this year I had repeated interviews with Mr Sheridan on the subject of reviving the Political Herald--he proposed that I should receive a regular stipend from the funds set apart by the noblemen and others, adherents to the party of Mr Fox, for political purposes; but this I declined, resolving to limit my pecuniary advantages to the fair profits of the pamphlet. Mr Sheridan also proposed introducing me to the Duke of Portland, but this never took place’ (MP 46-7). Godwin continues, that in 1787 Sheridan introduced him to ‘Mr Grey (now earl Grey)’, and ‘Mr Canning’, ‘--I had always been a most ardent admirer of the talents and system of life of Mr Burke, and I certainly considered the connection I had formed as opening to me something of a similar prospect--but all came to nothing, and after the summer of this year I heard no more of Mr Sheridan’ (MP 47). Godwin’s references to ‘the party of Mr Fox’ distance him from any personal acquaintance with Charles James Fox. In her commentary MWS elaborates on Godwin’s personal reaction to Sheridan’s neglect of him, in spite of cancelling the word ‘personal’ in her chapter summary of this section. Elsewhere in MWS script, Godwin’s autobiographical declaration ‘I had always been a most ardent admirer of the talents and system of life of Mr Burke’, is cited with emphasis.


ix. In his ‘Autobiographical fragment’ for 1783, Godwin writes, ‘a further advantage I possessed at this time, but which I did not abuse, was the acquaintance of Mr Timothy Hollis of Great Ormond Street, who gave a public dinner twice a week, and at whose house I met several respectable people, but above all Mr Barry, the painter, whose conversation afforded me extreme delight, and with whom I became exceedingly intimate: for the acquaintance of Mr Timothy Hollis I was indebted to Mr John Hollis, who was one of my hearers in my congregation at Beaconsfield’ (MP 45). MWS comments on Godwin’s friendship with James Barry, in c.606/1. See 1: literature. MWS comments on Godwin’s acquaintance with Timothy, John, and Thomas Brand Hollis, in c.532/8. See 5: women.

xi Cf. (above) c.606/1 [112v], where ‘Literary parties - Thomas Holcroft’ is one of MWS headings for ‘Chapter VI’. These headings are selected from Godwin’s ‘Autobiographical fragment’ for 1786, where Godwin writes, ‘--in this year I also became a regular member of the literary parties of Mr Robinson of Paternoster Row, and by this means made the acquaintance of Mr Archibald Hamilton, Murphy, Dr Joseph White of Oxford, Thomas Warton, Holcroft, Shield the musical composer, Nicholson the natural philosopher, Perry and William Woodfall, newspaper editors, Heath the engraver, etc., etc.’ (MP 46, and note e).

xii MWS turns for material to the journal of 1789, in the absence of a ‘summary’ for 1789 among the ‘brief annals’. See above, my note to c.606/1 [112v].


xiv The sentence in parenthesis is MWS comment on what she is transcribing from Godwin’s journal.

xv Godwin’s fellow Revolution Society members dining on Guy Fawkes Day 1789.

xvi Samuel Rogers, poet and prominent liberal, was a regular correspondent of Mary Shelley after her return from Italy in 1823.

xvii John Horne Tooke, author, philologist and political activist, founder of the Society for Constitutional Information. See 3: law.

xviii Godwin’s journal entries for 8 to 16 November 1789 refer to the quarrel between Holcroft and his son William, ending with the young man’s suicide at Deal, on board the Fame, bound for the West-Indies. See Tragical consequences; or, a disaster at Deal: being an unpublished letter of William Godwin ... Wed. 18 Nov. 1789, ed. Edmund Blunden (London, 1931).

xix Among the company at Helen Maria Williams’s on 11 Dec. 1789, Godwin records Williams’s friend and fellow author, Dr John Moore, author of Journal of a Residence in France ... 1792 (Dublin: J. Moore, 1793). Cf. ‘Autobiographical fragment’ for 1787 (MP 47, note e), where Godwin writes, ‘--towards the end of the year I was introduced by the desire of Helen Maria Williams to the coterie of that lady, where I met occasionally Dr Moore ...’.

xx Hazlitt writes that William, Holcroft’s ‘only son, and favourite child’, shot himself rather than face his father, from whom he had stolen £40 (Howe 124-126).

xxi The estrangement between Holcroft and Godwin in autumn 1804 and spring 1805, lasting until Holcroft’s final illness in 1809, is linked by MWS to Holcroft’s ‘unmitigated severity’ with his son. Holcroft’s belief that he was taken as a model for the character of a harsh father, Mr Scarborough, in Godwin’s novel of 1805, Fleetwood; or the
New Man of Feeling, has been canvassed as a cause of their estrangement. The coincidence of the surname Scarborough, with the English channel ports Gravesend and Deal, might have been an added irritant to Holcroft’s sensitivities.

xxiiIn c.606/1 [unnumbered], MWS is working from Godwin’s journal, and his ‘Autobiographical fragment’ of 1790 (MP 48), transcribed by MWS in c.606/1: 150). See 1: literature.

xxiiiCharles, Third Earl Stanhope, founder of the Revolution Society in 1788, delivered this testimonial to Godwin at the Bastille Day anniversary dinner 14 July 1790 (C44-5). MWS converts the Paris ‘Festival of Federation’, on 14 July 1790, celebrated in Helen Maria Williams’s December 1790 first edition of Letters from France, to ‘the day when the King of France submitted to the National Assembly’, and thus elides notice of the celebrations of the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille.

xxivH(olcroft) is MWS parenthesis added to Godwin’s journal entry ‘H’. I have not identified the speaker of this testimonial to Godwin.

xxvSt Clair traces nine London lodgings for Godwin between 1783 and 1788, when Tom Cooper came to live with him, and his move after Tom Cooper’s departure to Chalton Street ‘to devote himself unremittingly to his philosophical work’ (C59). I have not located ‘Titchfield Street’ in St Clair, but Joseph Gerrald’s letter to Godwin from Newgate Prison (b.214/8) makes a joke about the ‘Lalage of Titchfield’. See 3: law.

xxviGodwin’s journal for 22 Feb 1791 noting the “appear[ance]” of ‘a few printed copies’ of Tom Paine’s The Rights of Man, being an Answer to Mr Burke’s Attack on the French Revolution, Pt. i, from Joseph Johnson’s press (C48). Johnson halted distribution, and The Rights of Man, Pt. i, was published by Jordan, unexpurgated, and ‘went on sale on 13 March [1791]’(C49). The journal for Sunday 27 Feb. notes that Godwin called at Paine’s house. But Paine was from home on this occasion (C48).

xxviiOpen letter from Godwin to Richard Brinsley Sheridan, MP, on Friday 29 Apr. 1791. (MWS partial transcription in c.606/1, below).

xxviiiSee below, my note to Fox’s and Burke’s debates on the Quebec Bill.

xxixThis journal reference to ‘a believer in spiritual intercourses’ may have prompted the apocryphal anecdote that William Blake once lent Godwin £40.

xxxIn round brackets, Godwin jots down the names of his informants.

xxxiGeorge Dyson, whom Godwin named as one of his ‘four principal oral instructors’. See 1: literature.

xxxiiIn transcribing, Mary Shelley has regularised the spelling of her mother’s family name. Godwin’s journal entry
gives it as ‘Wolstencraft’.

xxxiiiIn Chapter 6, *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798), Godwin gives a detailed account of this 13 November 1791 first meeting with Mary Wollstonecraft. See 5: women.

xxxivTom Cooper, who had left Godwin’s house earlier this year to commence his career on the stage. See 4: pedagogy.

xxxvJournal entry of Saturday 17 December 1791 notes that Godwin is reading volume 5 of Holcroft’s *Anna St Ives* (7 vols.; London, Shepperson and Reynolds, 1792), in MS or prepublication copy. See 1: literature

xxxviGodwin revised *An Enquiry concerning Political Justice* (London, Robinson, 1793), in 1795, again in 1797, and further revised it in manuscript as late as 1832. He also wrote prefaces and authorial notes to other publications, announcing his revised and retracted opinions since 1793.

xxxvii‘Political Principles’ (elsewhere ‘P. P.’), the working title of *An Enquiry concerning Political Justice*.

xxxviiiMWS transcriptions in c.606/1 on 1835 watermark paper from Godwin’s ‘Autobiographical fragments’, 1790, 1791, 1792, is the sole extant script (MP 48-49).

xxxixWilliam Nicholson, scientist, who was conducting electrical experiments with Holcroft in the 1790s. See 5: women.

x0John Horne Tooke was charged with high treason with Thomas Hardy, Thomas Holcroft and others, and acquitted on 22 Nov. 1794. He published selections of *Winged Words [Epea-Pteroeno]; or, The Diversions of Purley*, between 1786 and 1805. Godwin’s assertion that Tooke’s ‘etymological conversations ... came too late’ to influence him confines that influence to their first face-to-face meeting at the end of 1792 when *Political Justice* was about to go to press.

xiMWS began writing her biography of Godwin on 1835 watermark paper with this transcription from his ‘Autobiographical fragments’ for 1791 (MP 48-9). See 1: literature.

xiiC.606/1: 1), second paragraph is omitted here. See in full in 1: literature.

xiiiPhilp (Mph 1993, 3) notes a ‘partial version’ of a letter ‘to a leader of the opposition’ and publishes the ‘full version’ from c.526. MWS partial transcription in c.606/2 corresponds to separate sections of the full version in Philp (MPh 1993, 7, 8, 9-10).

xivEdmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France and on the proceedings in certain societies in London relative to that event*, published in Nov. 1790. Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (Dec. 1790), and Tom Paine’s *The Rights of Man*, Pts. i and ii (1791-92), were among published replies.
MWS makes ‘Toryism’ synonymous with reaction, and the Tory party synonymous with party as such. A loose coalition among ‘partizans of Liberty’ is a fairly accurate label for 1790s opposition politics.

In 1791 Joseph Priestley’s house and laboratory in Birmingham were attacked and destroyed by a church-and-king mob. In b.227/2(b), draft letter from Godwin [to Priestley], laid paper, n.d., lacks signature. Godwin begins, ‘Revd. Sir/the person who now does himself the honour to address you is the author of the article in the English Review relative to your vindication of H. C.’ He concludes, ‘I have only to add, that though I have been contented to appear openly to Dr Priestley, it is my earnest desire to remain concealed from the rest of mankind. I have the honour to be, Revd. Sir, your sincere admirer, & (as a Socinian) your obliged humble servt.’ St Clair (C35, and note 3) dates this letter February 1785, after Godwin’s anonymous review of Priestley’s History of the Corruptions of Christianity had appeared in the liberal journal, English Review, and before Priestley had been forced to leave Birmingham and move to London, where he and Godwin moved in the same circles until Priestley emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1794.

In 1791, Dodsley, the publisher of Burke’s Reflections on the Revolution in France, and The Annual Register, brought out five editions of Burke’s Letter from Mr Burke, to a Member of the National Assembly, in answer to some objections to his book on French affairs. This too provoked ‘Strictures’ (Charles Piggott, 1791), ‘Remarks’ (Capel loftt, 1791), and a ‘Letter’ (Lally Tollendal, 1792).

Burke’s Reflections on the Revolution in France was attacked by Wollstonecraft in Vindication of the Rights of Men, for its ‘prejudices’, and praised by Coleridge in 1832 for its ‘softer feelings’. MWS conflates these adverse opinions, to make Godwin both an admirer of Paine and a defender of Burke.

MWS presumably refers to Rights of Man, Part i. When Part ii came out, Paine was arraigned in absentia for libel upon the Crown, Government, and Bill of Rights, on 18 Dec. 1792 (Chadwyck-Healey British Trials, i, Trial 112).

Burke retorted against the allegation that he corruptly took a pension, in A Letter from the Rt. Hon. Edmund Burke to a Noble Lord, on the attacks made upon him and his pension, in the House of Lords, by the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Lauderdale (1796). The Earl of Lauderdale was inviting Godwin and Wollstonecraft to his ‘most select parties’ in 1796, as Godwin records in his autobiographical fragments (MP 51).

In b.227/6(b): 8) and 9), drafts in Godwin hand, single torn quarto sheet, laid paper, written r and v, undated, show MWS numbering in sequence with MWS script c.606/2, that has joined parts of two letters, probably those designated ‘first’ and ‘second’ by St Clair, who sources both to Dep. b.227/6. MWS page 8) is the first letter, described by St Clair as ‘probably’ written on the occasion when Godwin noted in his journal “borrowed Paine”,
that is, on 2 March 1791, and addressed ‘probably to Paine but possibly to Holcroft or Fenwick’ (C48 and n8). But MWS c.606/2: 7) (above) rules out Paine as addressee, ‘he wrote hastily to some friend in eager encomium on his [Paine’s] work’. MWS numbered page 9) begins ‘The pamphlet has exceeded my expectations’, and is from a second letter from Godwin to Paine, according to St Clair, who writes (C49 and n10): ‘Godwin’s own view is given in a second letter to Paine, probably soon after the Jordan version [of Rights of Man Pt. i, following Johnson’s decision not to sell the 1st ed.] first went on sale on 13 March [1791]’.

Page 10), presumably a third page of Godwin’s letter, is lacking in the MWS numbered sequence 1) to 12). Parts of c.606/2: 5) and b.227/2(b): 9) are repeated in MWS hand on c.606/2: 11) and [11v]. Another version of MWS comments in c.532/8, pages 43) through 50) (below).

MWS filters Godwin’s political ideas through Hazlitt’s Memoirs of Holcroft. Hazlitt had written of Holcroft in 1792 that ‘he believed that truth had a natural superiority over error, if it could only be heard; that if once discovered, it must, being left to itself, soon spread and triumph; ... [I]t seemed as if the present was the era of moral and political improvement, and that as bold discoveries and as large advances towards perfection would shortly be made in these, as had already been made in other subjects’ (Howe 132-3). Cf. MWS script c.532/8 (below): ‘The doctrines of Political Justice are developed with much perspicacity in Hazlitt’s life of Holcroft’.

This is confirmed by Paul (CKP i 69): ‘Thomas Paine, whose acquaintance Godwin had made at the house of Mr Brand Hollis’. Full draft of Godwin’s letter to Paine in b.227/6(b). *document Paine a. In b.227/2(b), draft headed ‘P. S.’, Godwin hand, unnumbered, may be a postscript to this letter in b.227/6(b), now separated from it. *document Paine b.

Duke reel 13, transcription in MWS hand of unsigned undated note [from Thomas Holcroft to Godwin]. Double quotation marks placed at beginning only. St Clair (C48-9 and n9) quotes the original MS note and locates it in b.215/6.


b.227/2 (a), draft of unsigned letter from Godwin [to Richard Brinsley Sheridan, MP], no page numbers, three quarto folds, laid paper, decorative undated watermark. Full version (in c.526) published for the first time in Mark Philp ed., William Godwin, Political and Philosophical Writings, ii (Mph 1993, 7-11).

In March 1791 Charles James Fox’s speeches in Opposition in the House of Commons opposed the Pitt administration’s policy against Catherine the Great in the Russo-Turkish war. And in April 1791 Fox again led the
opposition when the government introduced the Quebec Bill, which proposed a hereditary nobility and episcopal representation in an upper house legislature for Canada. Fox’s support for the American and French revolutions led to an estrangement between himself and Edmund Burke, beginning in April 1791 and culminating on 6 May 1792. (My dates from DNB (1922) iii, 359, ‘Burke, Edmund’; viii, 545-7, ‘Fox, Charles James’; both signed W[illiam] H[unt]). At the time when Godwin (and Holcroft) wrote to Sheridan (and Fox), rifts between leading members of the loose Whig coalition of oppositionists were being canvassed by the writers of Burke’s Annual Register for 1791. Cf. Godwin’s journal entry for Friday 29 April 1791 (above, c.606/1: 13). Godwin’s letter tests the limits of Sheridan and Fox’s support of the French Revolution and where they differ in their willingness to oppose Burke as well as Pitt. It is not clear how this letter to Sheridan could also have been sent to Fox, as Philp maintains (Mph 1993, 3), unless in amended form.

Round brackets in pencil on script.

St Clair writes that in 1779, when Godwin first read a clandestine copy of the philosophe Baron d’Holbach’s Le Système de la Nature, the author was supposed to be a certain ‘M. Mirabaud’ (C14). In this b.227/2(a) copy of the April 1791 letter, the name ‘Mirabaud’ is cancelled and ‘the writer’ substituted, possibly at a later date, with the heading ‘from a well known literary character’. The cancelled word ‘Mirabaud’ does not appear in Philp’s edition of the 1791 letter from c.526 (Mph 1993, 8).

‘Tulli’ was standard anglicised form of the name Marcus Tullius Cicero, one of four ‘just’ statesmen and lawgivers in this typical Godwin list.

Godwin alters ‘twelve’ years to ‘six’, calculating the period from the Treaty of Paris 1783 to the Fall of the Bastille 1789.

Godwin pays a backhanded compliment to Montesquieu’s treatise Esprit des Lois (1748), which English readers associated with French absolutist principles of governance. Cf. Godwin’s statement (c.606/1: 2) of dissatisfaction with Montesquieu, and ‘desire of supplying a less faulty work’ by writing Political Justice. See I: literature.

Sentence: ‘Happy would it be ... whole of the mischief’, enclosed in square brackets in pencil on MS.

Sentence: ‘Where there is no king ... people at large’, enclosed in square brackets in pencil on MS.

Philp (MPh 1993, 11) gives: ‘- of tithes Mr Fox has given his opinion -’.

Philp writes that Article 17 of the Thirty-Nine Articles in the Church of England’s Book of Common Prayer contained an ambiguous discussion of predestination, the Calvinist belief that certain persons are infallibly guided to eternal salvation’ (MPh 1993, 11, note a). Godwin’s early Calvinist training in the dogmas of election and

Brackets in pencil on script.

Alexander Jardine, author of *Letters from Barbary, France, Spain, Portugal etc. By an English Officer*, published 1788. Godwin met Jardine at meetings of the Philomathian Society in 1793. St Clair comments on the ‘thorough and combative style of discourse’ of Godwin at these meetings (C93).

Cf. c.607/4, rectangular card of laid paper, no watermark, an extract from the newspaper *World*: “Sunday Apr. 28/ Sitting of [blank]/ M. Chauvelin, formerly ambassador in England, has sent to the Convention Political Remarks on the Constitution of a Free People, that were given him at London by William Godwin,/ *World*, Tuesday, May 14. 1793”. Prime Minister Pitt had ordered Chauvelin to leave Britain after news of the guillotining of Louis XVI in January 1793 reached Westminster.

b.227/2(b), fragments of letter from Godwin [to Major Jardine], Godwin hand, MWS numbers 88) 89), single trimmed quarto sheet, decorative undated watermark. The number 88) has been inked over the number 87). Trimmed paper matches b.227/2(b) letter from Godwin [to *Morning Chronicle*] signed ‘Valerius’, numbered by MWS 97) through 100). See 3: law. St Clair writes that Godwin’s letter to Jardine was prompted by Jardine’s letter in Sept. 1793 ‘to Charles James Fox ... propos[ing] that William Godwin should be sent personally to France’ (C104-5, n5).

Latin tag underlined in script. “In order rather to have a peaceful slavery than a tumultuous freedom”.

C F’ for Charles James Fox. The sentiment of Godwin’s remark, ‘I want nothing of such men’, is reiterated in b.227/8(a), letterpress copy of letter from Godwin to an unidentified correspondent, dated Jan. 24 1796, signed ‘WGodwin’, where Godwin writes, ‘It is my determined purpose to be no man’s partisan. I will not adhere to Charles James Fox, or any political connection of men. I will retain my little portion of usefulness undiminished. Would I not be both fool & knave if I did otherwise’. This reply to an impertinent enquirer, should be read in the light of Godwin’s memorandum a few weeks later, ‘I ought to be in Parliament’ (b.229/8).

The period full stop, set of closing quotation marks, and row of asterisks are in heavy black over-inking.


b.227/2(b), draft of letter from Godwin to Thomas Erskine, MWS numbers 36) 37) 38) 39) 40), three quarto sheets, written r and v, lacks signature. Reference in the letter to Erskine’s unsuccessful defense of Paine in the 18
December 1792 trial dates it. The numbered sequence of pages 36) to 40) would fit into a gap in numbered pages in c.606/4, MWS script on Joynson 1839 watermark paper, to which MWS evidently pinned letters of 1793 to and from Godwin. See 3: law. With the exception of this numbered letter, Thomas Erskine’s name does not appear in MSWS script.

Paine was convicted in absentia of treasonous libel for The Rights of Man, Pt. ii, in December 1792. Urged by his friends, Paine had fled the country before the trial. During 1793 several prosecutions for publishing and circulating The Rights of Man succeeded. Richard Phillips, who later became Godwin’s publisher when George Robinson died in 1801, was gaoled for publishing Rights of Man (C266).

No evidence that this letter was ever published.

Thomas Erskine was a junior in the defense team when Admiral Augustus Viscount Keppel was court-martialed in 1779, and acquitted; Keppel later served as First Lord of the Admiralty, in the Rockingham Whig ministry. Lord George Gordon, President of the Protestant Association, was imprisoned in the Tower and tried for high treason after the anti-Catholic ‘Gordon riots’ of May-June 1780; Erskine was the defense counsel, and secured an acquittal. Godwin attributes Erskine’s success in these earlier trials to his patent sincerity and belief in the cause he defended. In June 1797 Erskine was briefed by the Society for the Suppression of Vice to prosecute Paine’s The Age of Reason, Pt. ii, and secured a conviction, again in absentia.

Cf. 3: law, Godwin’s letter to Joseph Gerrald in Newgate urging Gerrald not to engage a professional advocate, but to speak in his own defense, guided by Godwin as mentor and speechwriter.

Archibald Macdonald was the prosecuting attorney general at Paine’s December 1792 trial. In the section ‘Letters on Political Subjects’, Philp (Mph 1993, 20-23), prints a letter published in the Morning Chronicle on 26 March 1793, addressed to Sir Archibald Macdonald, and signed ‘Mucius’. There is also an MS draft in c.526 (Mph 1993, 5). Philp prints the published version which makes no specific reference to the trial of Paine, but ‘in the style of amicable expostulation’ protests against censorship and surveillance.

Richard Price’s Old Jewry sermon ‘A Discourse on the Love of Our Country’ (November 1790), and Edmund Burke’s attack on it in Reflections on the Revolution in France (November 1790), debate the question whether the dynastic crisis of 1688 marked a radical constitutional shift by invoking an abstract ‘consent of the people’ to the Hanoverian succession.

Ministry could not - but they frighten you’, ‘brilliant passages [?good & bad]’ inserted in pencil, probably in Godwin hand. An anecdote of Sheridan saying to Thomas Erskine, ‘You are afraid of Pitt: it is the flabby part of

lxxiv The year 1793.

lxxv ‘See below, Duke reel 8, ‘Supplement to Journal 1793, Mar. 23, Mar. 24’.

lxxvi Tom Wedgwood may not have been in London on 10 Feb. 1793 when Godwin called on his elder brother Josiah Wedgwood, the second of that name, and head of the family business founded by the first Josiah Wedgwood. According to St Clair, Godwin first met Tom Wedgwood in May, 1793 (C99).


lxxviii Godwin accompanied Elizabeth Inchbald to the stage adaptation of Holcroft’s novel Anna St Ives, on 19 Feb. 1793, five days after his Political Justice was published. See 1: literature, publication of Anna St Ives (1792).

lxxix See *document Dr Priestley.

lxx The journal Monthly Review was founded by a Welsh Whig supporter, Ralph Griffiths. In Memoirs of Thomas Holcroft, Hazlitt writes, ‘It was Mr Holcroft who reviewed Mr Godwin’s celebrated work on Political Justice, in the Monthly Review, 1793. It may be supposed that the Review was a favourable one. ... But it seems that [Griffiths, the proprietor,] was considerably alarmed at the boldness of some of Mr Godwin’s principles ... . Griffiths ... found ... that the common place character of the Review had been endangered; and the first opportunity was seized to retrieve the mistake, by retracting their opinion hautement in the Review of Mr Malthus’s publication’ (Howe, 163-4). Throughout the Holcroft Memoirs, and in The Spirit of the Age (1825), Hazlitt defends Godwin’s Political Justice from Thomas Malthus’s attack on it in his Essay on Population (1798), but this linkage is never cited in MWS script. Favourable reviews of the 1st edition Enquiry concerning Political Justice are cited by Mary Shelley in three numbers of The Critical Review: vii (Jan.-Apr. 1793) 361-72; viii (May-Aug. 1793) 290-96; ix (Sept.-Dec. 1793) 149-54 (London: R Hamilton, 1793); and in two numbers of The Analytical Review, or History of Literature, Domestic and Foreign: xvi (May-Aug. 1793), 121-30, 388-404 (London: J. Johnson [n. d.]). An edited compilation of contemporary reviews of Godwin’s work is Kenneth W. Graham’s William Godwin Reviewed: A Reception History, 1783-1834 (New York, 2001).

lxxi Godwin moved to Stowmarket after he left Hoxton College, and Frederick Norman introduced him to Enlightenment philosophy (C15). The letter from Norman to Godwin referred to in MWS script is probably that
listed as from ‘Frederic Norman’ in the Bodleian folder b.214/3, but I have not as yet sighted it. The Godwinian spelling ‘Frederic’ (for Frederick) is picked up by MWS script c.606/3: [64v], and duly appears in the Bodleian folder list. Presumably, Godwin had headed the letter with the name of the writer, spelled as he liked it.


 xciii Newton was a dissenting clergyman at Norwich, and Godwin became a ‘solitary’ pupil in his household ‘in September 1767’. Godwin’s Autobiography recalls that ‘Newton was the most wretched of pedants’, and ‘His wife ... may be compared to an animated statue of ice’ (MP 29-32). Godwin’s childhood resentment of Newton’s sadism inspired his own humane pedagogy.

 xciv ‘Wilkes and Liberty had been the doctrine of Newton my instructor at Norwich’ (c.606/1: 92). See 1: literature.

 xcv The two men met again in Norwich in summer 1794 (C126). Cf. Godwin’s Autobiography ‘[Newton] was rather like a butcher, that has left off trade, but would travel ... fifty miles for the pleasure of felling an ox’ (MP 32). In the same passage of his Autobiography, Godwin compares Newton to Caligula and Nero.

 xcv Newton’s claim to leave his students free to hold independent opinions is implicitly contradicted by the rest of his letter. The teacher’s denial of his own desire for power made a lasting unfavourable impression on Godwin.

 xcviii ‘He’ is Dr Joseph Priestley. See Duke reel 8, ‘Supplement to Journal 1793, Mar. 23, Mar. 24’. * document Dr Priestley

 xcvix Cf. Duke reel 8, where this passage reads in full, ‘Supplement to Journal, 1793, Mar. 24: Singular character of Captain Gawler, as a blackleg & a sensualist - won £500 of an evening of Count Zenobio - says there is more pleasure in f-g one’s self, considered merely in a sensual view; & that the superior pleasure in the other case consists in outwitting a woman, taking from her what she does not like to part with’. Cf Duke reel 13, letter from Mary (‘Perdita’) Robinson to Godwin, 2 Sept. 1800, ‘The same sentiment prevails in my mind respecting Mr Gawler. Indeed there are also other reasons why I do not think that it would be the sort of acquaintance for my dear girl’.

 For Godwin’s friendship with Mary Robinson and her daughter Maria Elizabeth, see 5: women.

 xc Apostrophe omitted from ‘Shield’s’; Godwin’s dinner host was William Shield.

 ci Dep. c.532/8, sequence of script 43) through 50), MWS holograph, pages numbered in MWS style, no watermarks, wove paper of bluish tint similar to paper in c.606/3.
MWS had probably read the 7 January 1793 Preface to the First Edition, *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, where Godwin writes: ‘... it is the fortune of the present work to appear before a public that is panic struck, and impressed with the most dreadful apprehensions respecting such doctrines as are here delivered. ... But it is the property of truth to be fearless, and to prove victorious over every adversary. It requires no great degree of fortitude to look with indifference upon the false fire of the moment, and to foresee the calm period of reason which will succeed’. The image of ‘false fire’ may relate to the hypothetical case of rescuing Archbishop Fénélon.

MWS omits ‘not’, ‘it is not adapted’.

After *Political Justice*’s 3rd edition, 1798, Godwin went on drafting manuscript revisions of *Political Justice* as late as 1832. See *Enquiry concerning Political Justice: Variants*, ed. Mark Philp [Mph 1993: v]. The ‘other essays’ are not specified, and no evidence that ‘another publication’ of Godwin’s manuscripts was planned by MWS.

MWS note 2 excerpts from vol. ii Hazlitt’s *Memoirs of Holcroft* (1816). (Cf. Howe, 132-5). MWS appropriates remarks that Hazlitt specifies are made ‘with respect to Mr Holcroft’s principles as they are delivered in Anna St Ives,’ to the defense of ‘the doctrines of [Godwin’s] *Political Justice*’ despite her transcription (in c.606/2: 24), of Godwin’s hostile critique of the ‘principles’ of *Anna St Ives*. See 1: literature.

The double quote marks close the extract from Hazlitt’s redaction of Holcroft’s principles. In the next sentence MWS finishes her ‘picture of Political Justice’.

Godwin’s tour of Norfolk in May-June 1794. See 3: law.

The correspondent was Amelia Alderson, who visited Godwin’s father’s cousin Mrs Sothren, née Godwin, in Dalling, Norfolk in August 1795, and on 28 August wrote a letter to Godwin from Norwich recounting her visit to ‘Mrs Southerne’. Amelia Alderson’s letters in b.210/6 were annotated and numbered for the *Life of William Godwin* by Mary Jane Godwin. Alderson’s 28 August 1795 letter is No. 1. Alderson writes: ‘[“] now pray let not thy noble courage be cast down” when I inform you, that both Mrs S: & her daughter think you talk much too favourably of wicked men, & that “Italian Letters” (yr first novel) are vastly prettier than Caleb Williams.’ Alderson’s reference to ‘Mrs S: & her daughter’ is amended by MWS to ‘his mother & Mrs Southren’. Alderson may have thought that Ann Godwin’s daughter-in-law Mrs Hull Godwin, who lived nearby, was the childless Mrs Sothren’s daughter or daughter-in-law, as the ‘in-law’ distinction was often not observed. See 4: pedagogy.

Godwin visited Stowmarket and called on Frederick Norman in June 1794. Godwin’s journal records that they discussed ‘God, industry, drinking and swearing’ (cited C126). The topic of ‘swearing’ ie, the taking of oaths, was a
staple topic of dissenter politics.


cxi‘This excursion’ to Norfolk took place in June 1794 after the publication of *Caleb Williams*. In July 1796 Godwin again visited Norfolk to drum up assistance for the poet and playwright Robert ‘Revolution’ Merry, who was then in debtor’s prison. Godwin notes in his journal entry of 10 July [1796], ‘Propose to Alderson’ (C164, and n11). In response, Dr James Alderson advanced money to enable Merry to travel to the U.S.A. In b.227/2(b), draft of an undated letter from Godwin to Merry in the United States confirms MWS comment that Merry was a ‘favourite friend’, but emphasises Godwin’s aversion from America itself. Amelia Alderson reported Merry’s departure for New York with his wife, the celebrated actor Anne Brunton (Mrs Merry), in a letter to Godwin from Norwich dated Thursday 13 Oct. 1796, in b.210/6. See 4: pedagogy,

cxiiPaul (CKP i 118), quotes Godwin: ‘In October [1794] I went into Warwickshire on a visit to Dr Parr, who had earnestly sought the acquaintance and intimacy of the author of “Political Justice”. My position on these occasions was a singular one: there was not a person almost in town or village ... who had not heard of the “Enquiry concerning Political Justice”... I was happy to feel that this circumstance did not in the slightest degree interrupt the sobriety of my mind.’ St Clair dates this visit to Parr 5 Oct. 1794 (C128).

cxiiiParr’s former student Joseph Gerrald, transported to Botany Bay for sedition in 1795. See 3: law.

cxivSt Clair identifies in c.512 a letter from Parr to Godwin, received 25 Nov. 1795, and Godwin’s reply, 4 Dec. 1795, concerning the 1795 revised edition of *Political Justice* (C138, 534).

cxvW.606/5: 119) is MWS transcription of a Godwin memorandum. Original in b.229/8, Godwin hand, a small fold of laid paper, n.d., lacks signature. St Clair (C140, n19), dates the note at about the time of Godwin’s 40th birthday on 3 March 1796, and comments that Godwin’s plans depended on ‘rich and powerful friends’, including Thomas Wedgwood, to be willing to ‘finance him into parliament if he so wished’.

cxviCf. b.229/8 ‘I am not forty years of age’. Godwin is writing on the eve of his fortieth birthday.

cxviiCf. b.229/8 ‘I would be no infrequent speaker’. MWS mistranscription of Godwin’s double negative ‘no
infrequent’ may have been prompted by her opinion that Godwin’s talents were literary, and not apt for public speaking or extempore debate.

cxxix Cf. b.229/8 ‘I would be an author of motions’.

cxxCf. b.229/8 ‘excite’.

cxxiiMWS refers to John Johnstone, Works of Samuel Parr, with Memoirs of his life, writings, ... and correspondence (8 vols.; London, 1828).

cxxiiNot, as it might seem at first reading, a ‘Holcroft’s Life’, authored by ‘Hicks’. MWS had read Hazlitt’s account in Memoirs of Holcroft (Howe 144-151), citing the hostile report of the Burke-Dodsley Annual Register of 1794, that, being accused of high treason, Holcroft voluntarily surrendered himself to the sheriffs at Hicks Hall, and was committed from there to Newgate Prison. ‘The effrontery of surrendering himself was by [Holcroft’s] prosecutors and their partisans thought intolerable’ (Ed. note, Howe 148).

cxxivGuy Fawkes’ Day and the anniversary of William of Orange’s landing in Torbay were both celebrated on 5 November (C44).

cxxvSamuel Parr, Spital Sermon preached Easter Tuesday, April 15, 1800 (London, 1801). The text was Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians, vi, 10, ‘... he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whoever he be’.

cxxviC.607/6, passages copied from John Johnstone, Life and Works of Samuel Parr, (1828), hand unidentified, unnumbered, wove paper, no watermark.

cxxviiDuke reel 5, letter from Godwin to Samuel Parr, Godwin hand, dated from Somers Town, April 24, 1800. A letterpress copy in b.227/8(a), is fragile.

cxxviiiSee above, ‘Spital sermon’.

*documents endnotes

cxxix C.607/2, draft of letter [from Godwin], probably Marshall hand, laid paper, lacks signature, undated watermark. The addressee of this letter is unidentified but was probably one of the Whig magnates who financed Opposition journals until 1791, when Sheridan’s cavalier management style cost him their support. Cf. Jon Mee, Romantic Sociability: Social networks and literary culture in Britain, 1770-1840, ed. Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite (Cambridge, 2002), 104-122 [111].

cxxxPolitical Herald and Review. In 1785, Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Charles James Fox were co-founders

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of the Whig oppositionist paper, *Political Herald and Review*. Philp ‘Bibliography of works by William Godwin’ (MP 52), lists Godwin’s anonymous and pseudonymous contributions to the *Political Herald* in 1785 and 1786, but none in 1787.

**cxxxii**b.227/2(b), draft of letter from Godwin [to George Robinson], laid paper, undated watermark ‘Pro Patria’, numerous cancellations and interpolations. References to *The Political Herald* and (New) *Annual Register* date it later than Christmas 1784, and to Godwin’s *The English Peerage* (published by Robinson, 1790), date it circa Christmas 1789. My dates of Godwin’s publications from Philp, ‘Bibliography of works by William Godwin’ (MP 51-57). The pupil of Godwin may be Willis Webb (1785-1787) or more probably Tom Cooper (1788-1791). See 4: pedagogy.

cxxxiiGeorge Robinson’s brother, a partner in the firm of G. G. and J. Robinson.

cxxxii*i.e. New Annual Register*, published by Robinson, in opposition to Edmund Burke’s *Annual Register*, published by Dodsley. See 1: literature.

cxxxivb.227/6(b), draft of letter from Godwin [to Tom Paine], signed ‘W.G.’, single trimmed quarto sheet, written r and v, undated decorative watermark. MWS partial transcription of this letter in c.606/2: 11 (above). Another draft of this letter in b.227/2(b).

cxxxvb.227/2(b) Godwin hand, draft with cancellations and carets, small single sheet, laid paper, decorative watermark GR. In the folder the recto sheet has been folded back to show the vertical list of names on the verso. The recto is probably a postscript (headed P.S.) to Godwin’s letter to Paine after being introduced to him by Brand Hollis (*document Paine a*). The lists of names on recto and verso are presumably those of guests, with Godwin as their host, at a proposed dinner party.

cxxxviBy ‘soliciting your acquaintance’ Godwin possibly refers to his calling on Paine on 27 February [1791] without the ‘petty ceremonies’ of an invitation (C48). But it is more likely that the ‘P.S.’. was annexed to Godwin’s letter of 7 November 1791, after Godwin was introduced to Paine by Brand Hollis on 4 November, and a week before he was to meet Paine again at Johnson’s dinner table. St Clair (C63-4) quotes the draft in b.227/6 and refers to this note as ‘may be a postscript’, so the b.227/6(b) draft probably lacks the heading ‘P.S.’ MWS transcriptions (c.606/1) of Godwin’s journal 1791, omit Godwin’s entry for 7 November 1791 which is covered by her partial transcription (c.606/2: 11) of Godwin’s letter to Paine of that date (Cf. C63, n18).

cxxxviiDuke reel 8, Godwin hand, supplemental journal entry. Followed on reel by supplemental entries dated Mar. 24, Apr. 5 [1793]; Jan. 10 [1795].
Duke reel 5, one page of a 3pp. letter from Revd. Samuel Newton to Godwin, dated 14 Dec. 1793, ten days after Newton’s letter on 4 Dec. (above), also in Duke reel 5. No annotations or numbering by MWS on this page.

b.227/2(a), a memorandum or codicil, Godwin hand, lacks signature, laid paper, watermark 1799.

Godwin refers to his pamphlet, *Thoughts occasioned by the Perusal of Dr Parr’s Spital Sermon* (London, G. G. and J. Robinson, 1801). Cf. Biographical Sketch of Godwin *Monthly Mirror* (Feb. 1805), 92: ‘In 1801, our author published a Reply to the attacks of Dr Parr, Mr Mackintosh, and others. He had before shown how well he could wield the weapon of argument against an antagonist, whom however he despised. He had now to defend himself against men whom he had affectionately loved and profoundly esteemed.’

Copy of extract of letter or memorandum, hand unidentified, dated from Bombay, the original author almost certainly Sir James Mackintosh, who emigrated to India and died there. His *Plan of a Comparative Vocabulary of Indian Languages* was published at Bombay, 1806. Duke reel 2, Godwin’s journals and notebooks, contains a note in Godwin hand to ‘Mackintosh, Bombay, 1804’.