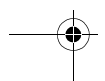
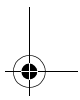
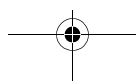
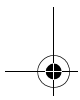
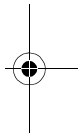
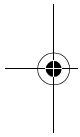
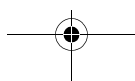
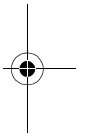
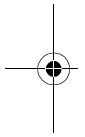
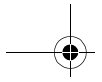


# Manuscript Transcript







ON REFORM AS AFFECTING THE HABITS OF  
PRIVATE LIFE.  
IN A SECOND LETTER TO A FRIEND

A MANUSCRIPT TRANSCRIPT

The manuscript of 'On Reform as Affecting the Habits of Private Life' is held as MS 4079, ff. 37–55 in the National Library of Scotland. The manuscript consists of nine geminate leaves (ff. 37–54) and one final single sheet (f. 55). The pages are white with black ink, and all measure approximately 230 by 186 mm. There are several watermarks, dated 1829, 1830, and 1831. De Quincey writes on both sides of the page, except in three instances: (i) f. 42 r. is blank, except for three separate phrases which form part of the text of f. 41 v., and are inserted into that text by lines running across the page from f. 42 r. to f. 41 v.; (ii) f. 42 v. is blank; (iii) f. 54 v. is blank, except for the sentence 'It was a gray afternoon in December', written upside down from the rest of the text in the manuscript, watermarked 1830, and almost certainly unrelated to the time at which the essay was written (see below). At the top lefthand side of f. 37 r. De Quincey has written and then crossed out, 'This, if approved, will make (with what remains to be sent) about 13 pp. or 14'. At the top righthand side of the same sheet, he has written '*Remainder tomorrow*'.

This article, in the form of a 'Second Letter to a Friend', was evidently intended by De Quincey as a sequel to his 'On the Approaching Revolution in Great Britain, and its Proximate Consequences. In a Letter to a Friend', published in *Blackwood's* for August 1831 (see above, pp. 98–120). Despite De Quincey's reference on f. 54 v. to 'a gray afternoon in December', he seems to have begun this paper immediately after completing 'On the Approaching Revolution' around 18 July 1831, and he had certainly sent a version of it to Blackwood by early August, for on 6 August Blackwood had read it and been unimpressed. 'In my humble opinion you have not done yourself justice in this article', he told De Quincey, 'and...therefore I am very doubtful if I can make use of it' (Symonds, p. 422). The manuscript is published here for the first time.

For the broad political context of this manuscript, see headnote, pp. 98–9.

For details of the 'Conventions for Manuscript Transcription', see above, p. xii.

{37 r.}

1

On Reform as affecting {↑ the habits of} <the National habits> Private Life.  
In a Second Letter to a Friend.





## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

I believe, my dear friend, that, in estimating the costs of a Revolution such as that which now hangs over our heads, most people look no farther than its political results. <Those are assuredly> Assuredly those are bad enough <in all conscience: But> and the evil will reach you and me most <formidably> {↑ pointedly} in that shape. But for {↑ others} <those>, who have longer to live than ourselves, or who from having mistaken the character of this revolution will <xx> suffer {↑ more} <most> heavily {↑ in the pains of} <from> disappointment, I foresee <worse a heavier> {↑ a dark} cloud <of menaces> fraught with <ominous> menaces {↑ to their comfort} in another quarter. Not the state only, not the mere form of <pol> polity, but in connexion with *that* the whole manners of the nation will bend to a democratic influence. The <whole> {↑ <entire> entire} economy of {↑ social} <civil> life, whether public or domestic, will <be> undergo a <thorough> revolution<,> – fitting it for that atmosphere of <{↑ mob}> <civic jealousy> plebeian sentiment and plebeian <x> maxims which will then predominate. A severe and vigilant jealousy will be directed to the conduct {↑ of} every man and his household; suspicions of *incivism*<sup>1</sup> will settle upon {↑ all} <every> modes of elegance as {↑ so many <are>} <an> argument{↑ s} of aristocratic <designs> feeling; <and gradually> the young will eagerly accommodate themselves to the new aspects of the public mind, and {↑ to} the new course in which public honors will travel; the old, without energy or hope, will retire from so dangerous <a contest> an effort as any collision with the ruling spirit of the times; and the most obstinate, who should venture upon such a collision, <x> will do so without profit and at their own serious peril.

This state of things may or may not be aggravated by public insecurity. It is possible, <that the xx will sup> let us suppose, that the government may have surmounted the

[37 v.]

2

tumultuous influences {↑ in} which <gave> it {↑ arose} <birth>, and have acquired some stability. With this degree of strength <some measure of> {↑ let it be conceded that} security and confidence <must> will <x> advance concurrently. Terror<s>, {↑ <xx>we shall imagine,} will not reign; domiciliary visits will not prevail; the scaffold will not be the engine of party warfare. But still, with all these concessions, it cannot be doubted that in a triumphant democracy none but democratic agencies will <gain> give the law, and impress themselves upon the whole machinery of life. Laws, customs, institutions, the spirit of manners, and the tone of public sentiment, will <all> alike proclaim <s> the fierce republican temper in which they have had their origin; and life {↑ <in England>} will be no life for cultivated men, who retain the desires of





## ON REFORM

intellectual and refined society with the recollections of such society as it once existed in England.

These things, I believe, are quite overlooked by multitudes who now yield a languid assent to the changes which are in operation. Let us review them a little in detail.

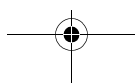
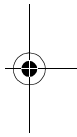
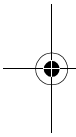
First, with regard to *Education*, there can be no doubt <that> that this *will* be <x> subjected to a <thorough pro> complete process of remodeling both in spirit and in form.<sup>2</sup> <This> {↑ So much} I happen to know with a double assurance. I collect it with certainty from the character of the other changes in progress; and I collect it also from the specific declarations of many leaders in those changes, and their <x> avowed hostility to the modes of education <now> hitherto received amongst us, and to the great establishments which protect them. <The> {↑ Of the} seven universities {↑ in} <of the two <Britannic> islands<sup>3</sup> <do> <were> {↑ some} indeed {↑ are} on other accounts, but too tempting <to a body> <{↑ to a body}> {↑ to a body} of public spoliators. And spoliators I must consider the new men who will <xxx pre>

{38 r.}

3

<side> {↑ effectually preside} in our state affairs, because {↑ it is a fact that,} whatever <may> may be their present {↑ or individual} tempers, they can fulfil their engagements and gratify those {↑ adherents who} <hopes which> constitute their own strength in no other way than by {↑ a} resolute and diversified {↑ <attack> war on property} <spoliation> – let it be colored by what new name it may. <As> {↑ Simply as} objects of spoliation then, from their great wealth and splendid endowments, some of these universities would at any rate be marked out foremost <xx> on the lists of confiscation. But they <have a> are also privileged objects of hatred, were they even stripped naked of their wealth, by the spirit of their institution and the quality of the studies which they promote. The fierce utilitarian instinct can endure no compromise with <the> elegance or the spirit of refinement. Whatsoever in the first instance adorns life, and acts {↑ but} secondarily, <xx> indirectly, or remotely for it's practical benefit, is less than nothing in the eyes of those who value only by weight, and measure only by inches – <I mean> by those, I mean, who admit no rule of appreciation but such as refers to <the> a standard of definite, <and> ponderable, and immediate use for <x> some physical end.<sup>4</sup> Moral uses {↑ are} <can never be> {↑ not often} valued accurately: they are subtle, and escape the eye of the vulgar appraiser, though of all others least to be dispensed with in government or {↑ in} any institution for a being so essentially moral as man.

Oxford and Cambridge <, the go> then, the <two> {↑ twin} <golden> fountains of light for so many ages to the remotest parishes of England, on a





## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

double motive, will be thrown into the crucible and recast by a Parliament which has itself gone through the same process. A reformed House of Commons, we may be assured, will tolerate none but reformed universities.<sup>5</sup> Their rich revenues <in so far as they are of a nature to> will be seculariz

{38 v.}

4

ed, and in a large proportion applied to for other purposes than those contemplated by their founders.

But this part of the reform will be less nationally injurious than <that> {↑ that} which <regulates the> interferes to disturb the course of academic study. Whatsoever in knowledge <xx> inflates <and makes xxxx> with windy conceit, whatsoever (if any does) brutalizes by keeping the mind under the pressure of the material – the tangible – the definite, whatsoever deals with powers not above <man> human agency but subject to {stain} {↑ <his> man's} fingering and manipulation, – all the business of the furnace and the dissecting room, – will be steadily maintained and patronized at the expense of every kind and order of knowledge which exalts or refines human feelings by fixing them upon objects raised above our skill to comprehend <or> and our power to control.<sup>6</sup> Theology, Ethics, intellectual philosophy in all its branches, <por> the Higher Mathematics, – these will be proscribed; and classical studies, with all their collateral aids and dependencies, as ministering only to taste and erudition, will be placed under <an> absolute {↑ ban and} interdict <with something of a>.

Education so {↑ remodeled} <conducted> will tend naturally to support <the> and {↑ forcibly} to react <forcibly> upon the <Reform> Political <Reforms> Reforms to which its' own recast is due. Young senators, fresh from <the> Academic bowers, will <now> enter the House fully prepared to justify whatever has been done in the spirit of irreverence for antiquity, and to push forward {↑ other} <the same class of> measures {↑ in the same temper}. No check now from the great philosophers and masculine thinkers of past ages, <who> whose weighty sense has so often {↑ been called up in Parliament, to} rebuke<d> <a> the rash spirit of change! No memory now of the great poets, those true philosophers, whose <go> golden words {↑ have} <are> so often have <sounded> {↑ <uttered uttered> yielded} oracular





## ON REFORM

[39 r.]

5

truth <xx> {† in} behalf of ancient <inheritances whether of> monuments, and ancient <bequests of> institutions. <All will now be> No room for Cicero! No ear for the profound harmonies of Plato!<sup>7</sup> – All will <xx> now wear the gloss of <novelty> American novelty, and will be supported with American insolence.

In <using that epithet American> this disrespectful allusion to our Transatlantic brethren <x> perhaps you may imagine some illiberality. Understand therefore that I speak advisedly and circumspectly: {† and as <America> the bare name of America <brings up> teems with suggestions connected with our present subject, suffer me to digress for a few moments upon this topic. I am far from thinking} <thinking> myself prepared to enter into all the questions which arise upon American pretensions: as respects some of these questions I am even disposed to think of them as favorably {† for America} as American pride could wish: and above all I am by nature hostile to all levity of speech, <xx> or tongue-license, in pronouncing upon the claims of great nations. Yet, in the midst of these avowals, I must frankly declare to you that in my mind one point is fully established against America, and with a strength that cannot be gainsaid, by <the> some circumstances of the late {† naval} war with this country:<sup>8</sup> – that point is – that gentlemen, as a class, do not exist in the United States; or that, at all events, they <have but no> exercise no influence upon the counsels of their country. <In proof of this, let me remind you of the> By *gentlemen* of course I mean men who are <su> such in spirit and principle, i.e. men under the dominion of honor. And in proof of what I advance let me remind you of the famous trick played off upon {† all} Christendom in matching against English frigates ships of a very much larger and more powerful class, in fact sometimes for weight of metal not less than ships of

[39 v.]

6

the line, under {† the masquerade of frigates – that is under} a <nominal> public and official pretence that they were <frigates> fairly entitled to be {† so} classed {† and rated: *that* in fact *the* contest was not an unequal one.} <as frigates.> Was this honorable?<sup>9</sup> <Wx> Was it in the spirit of ancient chivalry that an enemy, who had fought with the utmost conceivable gallantry, and had sunk at last {† (where he *did* sink)} under overpowering superiority of force, should have his fair merits <eclipsed by> masked and concealed under an insidious falsehood? And I ask you pointedly – Could this have been done in a land of gentlemen\*? Could it have been done in this land? – No <x>, I reply on

\* It is true that Bonaparte<sup>10</sup> uniformly acted in {† the same} <that> base spirit, and carried his depreciation of his enemies to an extremity which reacted most unfortunately upon <his> the





## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

your behalf: <indignantly> fervently I contend that <a> a British House of Commons would have risen as one man to expose and <put> {↑ put} down any artifice of that kind, had it been possible that any officer of ours, or that our Admiralty, could <have> have sought to profit by an artifice so base. The whole British nation would have regarded itself as dishonored by so <kn> knavish an attempt to defraud a gallant enemy of his fair fame. And that such an attempt should repeatedly have been practised in America, that it should have been abetted by the government, <and> {↑ that it should} have

[40 r.]

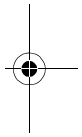
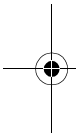
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prospered amongst <all classes of> Americans generally, argues undoubtedly that no extensive body of gentlemen can {↑ <but> be <xx> presumed to} exist where the gentlemanly spirit is so wholly inoperative. Such a defect in the composition of American society might be inferred from this solitary fact of history: and reciprocally <this xxx> from this <defe> single defect might be predicted such facts in abundance.

A character of the same {↑ dishonorable cast} <sort> will be developed in the {↑ new} Parliament of this country. Patriotism will display itself in the same gross partiality, the same scowling jealousy <in all> of all foreign countries, in the same fierce impatience of all examination into the two sides of any question interesting to the national vanity, and the same headlong intemperance <of> of credulity <towards whereas> towards the perpetrators of any fiction or falsehood to serve a {↑ dishonorable} country man at the expense of an honorable foe. In reality a republic, like the United States, sacrifices in such instances rather to a gloomy vanity than to any principle which can properly be called national pride; for pride disdains the assistance of <falsehood> trick and deceit. This temper will take the place of our old British majesty {↑ and *grandezza*}<sup>11</sup> <of pride>, built upon the rock of a noble and upright self confidence. The less there is of *that*, the more we shall hear of bluster and tongue-valiant vaunt. <Ame> American insolence, to repeat the phrase which I have {↑ here illustrated} <now justified>, will color the tone of our debates; and the plebeian character of our national counsels will betray itself in the language of

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pretensions which <this depreciation was> originally {↑ it was} meant to serve. Enemies so poor and worthless there could be no merit in overthrowing: {↑ such was the logical inference.} But in this <feature> practice Bonaparte in part reflected the general features of <xx> French Jacobinism, and in part (as it must be acknowledged) the original features of the French military character, which <xxx> in all ages and in spite of every ostentatious disguise has never reached the true point of <x> chivalric gentlemanliness as realized in the British army. Instances {↑ are} <have been> innumerable in which French officers of a high rank have been <detected> detected with stolen property, silver spoons for example, in their <packets> captured baggage.







## ON REFORM

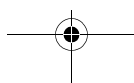
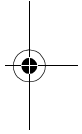
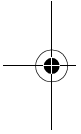
perpetual irritation, and in {↑ continual} <an insult> {↑ <pro> provocations} offered without <consider> reflexion and supported with {↑ out} <no> dignity.

What a picture will such a body of legislators present {↑ in contrast} <as compared> with the old British House of Commons! — As one proof of the commanding interest which attached to the <debate xx> character and acts of that august body, no sooner

{40 v.}

8

had Cave and Dr Johnson begun to report the substance of what passed in the de {↑ bates} <bates> under the disguise of Roman names, than the public journals in Germany eagerly transplanted these memorials of eloquent liberty;<sup>12</sup> <nor was> and over the whole extent of North Germany, they were {↑ read} <read> with {↑ almost} as <a profound> deep interest as at home. Has anything of that sort happened to the American Congress {↑ or indeed to any deliberative body in the world}? No: nor will it happen to our reformed Parliament. <Will there be no exhibition> Do I mean then that there will be no <eloqu> display of eloquence? Certainly there will be none which can support any comparison with that of the old House of Commons. Stripped, <of the> as to the manner, of the dignified self-restraint <which> imposed by the polished habits of gentlemen, and as to the matter <stixx> of all the resources <which are> furnished by a learned and academical education, oratory will degenerate into a miserable strife of bad temper and acrimonious personality amongst a body of factious attorneys. *Rabulae* and *leguleii*,<sup>13</sup> <noisy> brawling factors or men of business, singly anxious to testify their obedience to the daily instructions of their constituents, persons of this character <self> uneducated or self-educated, and surrounded by rivals of the same pretensions, cannot be {↑ expected} <supposed> to bring the accomplishments of an orator into an assembly so constituted; nor in such an assembly, governed by <such a spirit> {↑ an appropriate spirit} of manners, can it be supposed that any accomplishments could find means to display themselves. The present <rules, and> system of rules and courtesies observed in the House of Commons are the product of the present <sys standard> {↑ system} of manners. A lower standard of manners will necessarily produce a <very> much <lo> looser system of rules and court {↑ esies} <eous restraint>. <Finding xxx> Occupying therefore so very inferior a station, no longer the servant of a great and majestic empire, but the



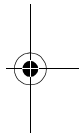
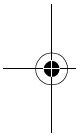


## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

[41 r.]

2

little factious attorney of a borough town, no longer speaking on behalf of large national interests but of petty advantages in trade either possessed or solicited, no longer protected by the rules or practice of the House from angry and irritating interruptions, no longer reaping any indulgence from the personal forbearance <and> or high breeding of <those who surround him> {↑ <their> his immediate opponents in debate}, – how should an orator the most accomplished, supposing a person with adequate endowments and acquisitions to arise <at> {↑ in} such a condition of society, find it possible to {↑ assert or manifest} <exert> his advantages? – Internally he {↑ must} would be depressed by the consciousness of {↑ the} <his> humble and ministerial capacity in which he {↑ would} <must> stand – a trembling delegate responsible at each turn of public affairs {↑ and bound over to good behaviour by} <xx> those who had commissioned him. Externally he would be depressed by the brutal and irritating manners of the mob whom he was addressing. <And All> {↑ In <such> such an assembly all} stores of knowledge and research would become useless to him. <In the xx of> The most elaborate <speeches> {↑ American} speech<es> I ever read <of the celebrated <xx> Ameri> <{↑ then}> was one delivered in the House of Representatives by the celebrated Randolph<,> <in support and sustaining> {↑ in support of} this thesis – that books, and book learning, {↑ are} <were> alike useless to a man of practical talent:<sup>14</sup> a proposition doubtless most <false> favorably received by an assembly of that composition. And <at> if you should be disposed to question it's validity when pushed to that extreme<x> point, certain it is that in tumultuous assemblies, under no restraints of high-bred courtesy, <all> the main field {↑ for the display of such advantage} <of an orator> is foreclosed against him; for those wide excursions from the immediate text of the case before him, which first give him an opportunity for any <enlarged> large <and> compass of thought, are <ab> absolutely interdicted by the impatience of a vulgar and illiberal audience met for despatching

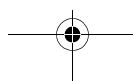


[41 v.]

10

business. He is peremptorily admonished by the cry of “Question! Question!” that he is generally supposed to be quitting it, and far astray from the matter of practical interest. Cicero himself could have made no head against a Senate or a forum, that <insisted in> should have insisted on calling him back from his very finest displays by expressions of displeasure fitted to remind a schoolboy that he was straying from the serious business before him in quest of puerile ornaments.

348





## ON REFORM

By these several causes therefore, by the probable <kno> quality of his previous education, by the place which he will occupy as an abject dependant or abject constituent, and finally by the hurry and discourteous manners prevalent in an assembly of that composition, — no <elevated> {↑ great or commanding} orator, <could possibly arise in a House> {↑ supposing that such a person as to all the national qualifications should arise, could possibly flourish in a} Parliament on the new model. And it may be taken for granted that eloquence of the highest class, Senatorial eloquence, will {↑ henceforward} <henceforward henceforward> be ex{↑ tinct}<tinguished> among us. The British Senate had {↑ once} the honor of <being> supporting the part of Greece and Rome in the midst of <silent Euro> Europe “else mute”.<sup>15</sup> And considering the foundation of that distinction, {↑ considering that} that it rested on the basis of civil liberty, {↑ and that the <En> British Senate was the last depository of eloquence simply because it was the last depository of conscious freedom} the honor was <a> truly {↑ a} great one. But now it will be recorded of that Senate also — after reaching <so> and <to> long sustaining so enviable a distinction — that

—————“Unus scepra potitus  
 ——“Eâdem aliis sopitu’ quiete est.”<sup>16</sup>

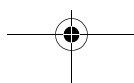
Happy would it be for us all, if the future insignificance of the British Senate in an intellectual sense <would be the> were <the> to be the measure <of its> and exponent of its’ political {↑ power and importance} <importance>. But alas! that cannot be: its’ functions and powers as the representation of a most potent nation would at any <rate> rate forbid *that*. And <at> at present, so far from running <any> {↑ a} risk of suffering any eclipse in

{42 r.]

supposing that such a person as to all the national qualifications should arise, could possibly flourish in a

considering that

and that the <En> British Senate was the last depository of eloquence simply because it was the last depository of conscious freedom





## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

[42 v.] {blank}

[43 r.]

11

the extent or splendor of these {↑ functions} <powers>, we know that for a <time a> season at least, and through the <next> {↑ first} stages of <affairs next> that revolution which will be {↑ accomplished} <effected> by the Reform Bill, <these powers will> Parliament <will> under its new constitution will effectually have {↑ drawn to itself} <monopolized> the whole power of the state. Revolution {↑ s}<ary> <currents>, it is true, do not stop at the point marked out by their projectors: and the <mania> frenzy, which <has> will soon have laid the executive powers of the state at the <fxt> feet of the legislative body, and {↑ even as regards that legislative body itself will have} <which will have melted> {↑ violently} absorbed the two houses into one, <cannot but go further. Th> cannot be bridled exactly {↑ in} <x> that step of its progress. "One deep calleth to another;"<sup>17</sup> violence is the parent of violence; and action ensures reaction. In the course of these changes, that very Parliament which under its' new constitution will have worked us so much woe, <will> {↑ may very probably} itself <perhaps have> fall<en> a victim to <xx> some <one of the multiform> mode of violent power created by itself. But these prospects are in reversion; and for the present, and during the earliest stages in the march of revolution, we are destined to behold a Parliament insignificant or even despicable by its' {↑ intellectual pretensions, but terrific by its'} power.

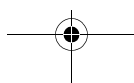
Wielding such energies, in what way will it employ them? <To what w> I need not say that it will <aff> address itself first of all, and in every way which <viol> plebeian violence can suggest or <x> irregular authority can compass, to the unsettling of <everything> ancient landmarks whether of law or usage. But, as we are now specifically <x> considering those changes which will {↑ more immediately} affect the intercourse of social life, I may venture to anticipate <two> three as likely to engage the attention of a jacobin Parliament at an early period. These are – <1. This xxxx institution of marriage> <{↑ laws which regular}>

[43 v.]

12

1. Marriage in relation to Divorce: 2. Simplification of the Law: 3. the Administration of <the> our Colonies, but especially of the East Indies.

The two first heads <I> were brought under consideration in the long Parliament of Charles I; <and for the same reason which will> the first <motions> impulse in such a direction being given by the vagrant spirit of change <and>





## ON REFORM

then floating at large and ready to settle upon any <inviting> object of sufficient interest.<sup>18</sup> <And> But doubtless, whilst the {↑ first} general invitation to <such> changes {↑ in all old institutions <in other directions>} arose in that way, <xx> one {↑ very powerful} <great> encouragement to those who <speculated is pa encouraged> {↑ patronized} such speculations <lay in the fact that> commenced with the extinction of the House of Lords as a deliberative body.<sup>19</sup> No sooner was that House laid aside by a vote of the House of Commons, than it was felt {↑ and keenly computed} how great an obstacle had been removed from the path of innovation. Reformers had now a clear course, and a short one, laid open before them. No {↑ large} body of hereditary prejudice <now> any longer hung as a dead weight upon the freedom of their motions: but in every case, where a change for the better or the worse could win the countenance of the <House> ruling party, one decision was conclusive, and liable to no after reversal.

In those days however religion was a powerful force; and religious principle supplied <that> in many cases that control which in a political sense had been removed with the removal of the Upper House. Hence the proposition for facilitating divorce remained <inert and> floating {↑ inertly} in a state of speculation: and though there can be little doubt that, with further opportunities, such as would have offered had Cromwell<sup>20</sup> granted a <further exist> longer existence to that Parliament, <his> those propositions would have been matured into a more substantial shape, – yet it is very possible that

{44 r.}

13

the religious temper of the age would finally have imposed a check upon <this> any extensive innovation in {↑ that particular direction} <this point>. Now however we can look for no resources in that species of <control> check. We may be assured that, in the midst of a general <license> indulgence to <license of the> licentious thoughts and licentious practice, the {↑ legal} restraints of marriage will be felt and denounced as an insufferable burthen. Comparisons <will be made> with {↑ the laws of} other countries, even {↑ <org>} with those of our} Protestant neighbours, will be urged as arguments in behalf of some relief. For even in North Germany, though otherwise a part of Europe <the least> {↑ as little} tainted with immoral principles {↑ as} <of> any South of the Baltic, divorces are obtained with a {↑ frightful} facility \* which <proves the> more than <any> all other causes {↑ whatsoever} <together> besieges the <pr> sanctity of domestic morals. <Of all> Among all modes of liberty this will

\* Mere incompatibility of temper, alleged by either party, is held a sufficient ground <for> of divorce. And accordingly, after convening the parties <before> face to face before the judges, and after certain solemn admonitions from a clergyman, many marriages are dissolved within the first year.



## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

appear the most enviable to <a> the lower orders of England. <Probably> For you, my friend, I presume, are not {↑ so dazzled} <so blinded> by the <severity> singular austerity <of all> in this respect of the English <upper cla> gentry, {↑ as to overlook} <as to> the singular licentiousness of the <{↑ laboring}> <working class> {↑ English poor} <plebian> From all I can hear or learn, I believe that in no part of Europe is the yoke of marriage borne so {↑ impatiently} <reluctantly> as amongst the <English poor> {↑ plebeian part} of our English population. And as it is they who in the last resort will dictate the great outlines of our future policy, – their inclinations being a law for those whom in {↑ reality} <effect> they will elect, and {↑ it being evident that} all great questions of civil or domestic policy <evidently> will now revolve {↑ e}<ing> <at every> anew at every fresh election into the hands of <domineering> constituents resolute to enforce their demands, – I think we can hardly doubt that sooner or later the ruling tastes of the democracy will evidence themselves in the

[44 v.]

14

relaxation of our legal code so far as it applies to marriage, adultery, and divorce. Distinctions cannot be made, <in> nor special reservation established for particular classes, in matters of legal privilege; all will share alike in the relief conceded, <those> {↑ the good} who strenuously opposed no less than <those who> the dissolute and selfish who {↑ were the original champions of} <first clamored for> the innovation. Hence it <will> {↑ must} happen unavoidably that all alike will be comprehended in the mischief of its demoralizing influence. Men, who would fervently have prayed against the possibility of such a temptation, will yield to it when offered. A large proportion of the marriages solemnized in every class afford even to the wisest, discretest, and least selfish of <persons> men some grounds for repentance. Momentary provocations on one side, concurring with <accidental> momentary heat of temper on the other, {↑ will} give a sudden {↑ life} and {↑ an} exaggerated value to these grounds. Those, who would have taught their rebellious passions to <acknowledge> bend beneath the {↑ mixed} discipline of patience and religious {↑ fortitude} <prudence>, will {↑ now} be {↑ ensnared} <invited> to make the first hasty movements of their own rashness irrevocable. And for the great majority of men, those who are neither amongst the {↑ eminently} <best> good nor the {↑ eminently} dissolute, <they> they will be <{↑ provoked}> <summoned> {↑ invited in a measure,} by the sort of challenge <made to their> addressed to their slumbering {↑ desires} <scruples>, to {↑ tamper with their duties, – and to review with the} <xx review with> the keenness of <discontent is> irritated self interest all the circumstances of a connexion which else would have reconciled itself to their



## ON REFORM

⟨feling⟩ feelings by the double yoke of custom and necessity. — In these anticipations I ⟨am not romancing⟩ indulge no spirit of romantic conjecture: I assure you that no one ⟨fact is⟩ article in ⟨our⟩ {↑ the} long ⟨reversionary⟩ succession of changes which must follow in the train of a reformed Parliament can be better ascertained, upon {↑ the warrant of} more authorities, or {↑ of} authorities ⟨more competent⟩ better {↑ informed as to} ⟨acquainted with⟩ the {↑ secret} ⟨xxxx⟩ purposes of the leaders in our great {↑ approaching} democratic crusade, than ⟨this⟩ this project of a new {↑ and ⟨mo⟩ ⟨licentious (or, if you will, indulgent) code for the regulation} ⟨system is of licentious licence and indulgence to⟩ of marriage and divorce. ⟨And I I cannot for one moment question that you will

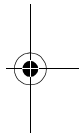
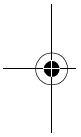
{45 r.]

15

view it in the same light as myself — viz. as the most electrical shock that could be given to private morals and ⟨the⟩ by consequence to the happiness and dignity of domestic life.

As to the other ⟨plans for the⟩ projects, that for the simplification of our laws by ⟨a⟩ means of a Digest or Code, and that for the regulation of ⟨the⟩ {↑ our} Coloni⟨es⟩al possessions — as these will {↑ bear} ⟨act⟩ less immediately upon the habits ⟨or⟩ and {↑ tenor} ⟨constitution⟩ of social intercourse {↑ and the ⟨de⟩ happiness of private life} — I ⟨have⟩ am scarcely entitled to touch upon them in this place. Yet perhaps, with the usual allowance for the laxity of a private letter, you will indulge me in saying a word upon each.

The simplification of the law has always been a favorite project with men of plain understanding who had extraordinary motives for cultivating the popular favor. In reality it requires some experience and some reflexion to perceive that law ⟨is⟩ and the distribution of justice become the complex ⟨aff⟩ affair which they {↑ always} are in ⟨all⟩ highly civilized communities — not from the chicanery and mercenary artifices of those who administer {↑ them} ⟨it⟩, but simply and ⟨we⟩ inevitably from the intricate relations of property, and the elaborate perplexity of ⟨clashing possible⟩ cases ⟨under⟩ {↑ incident to} the ⟨multiform⟩ {↑ vast variety of} combinations {↑ which} ⟨of life⟩ human life ⟨presents under⟩ assumes in states of expanded civilization. ⟨Of nec⟩ {↑ In such states of} necessity you fall into this dilemma — either you provide for ⟨all⟩ the entire compass of these different cases, which are continually extending and multiplying; and ⟨is⟩ then the code of laws becomes vast and unwieldy, which is the very {↑ grievance complained of;} ⟨thing a foundation of the grievance⟩; or, by providing only for the capital differences, and neglecting all the minor varieties of the possible cases, you leave {↑ unavoidably} a large licence to the discretion of the judge. For whatsoever is left undescribed and unprovided for by the law beforehand — must be adjudicated





## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

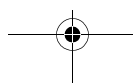
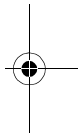
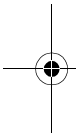
on the spot, and at the moment of its' <first> arising, by the judge's discretion. In proportion therefore as law is simplified, by substituting generic outlines and definitions for {↑ such as are} specific or individual, just in that proportion is a greater burthen thrown upon the personal <great> abilities and the personal responsibility of the judge. Of all possible reforms therefore none is less calculated to conciliate <the> a people <where> or to soothe those murmurs which arise <from> out of the

[45 v.]

16

delays or the apparent uncertainties of the law. Of this fact, either by his own good sense, or perhaps guided by the legal experience of <the> his friend Whitelocke, Cromwell himself became convinced; though originally <he had been an> it had been amongst his darling schemes to {↑ reduce} <simplify> law <in> to that state of simplicity of which he supposed it to be susceptible.<sup>21</sup> Our new reformers will certainly undertake this Herculean enterprize at an era {↑ far less favorable to such an experiment than that of} <when it is far less within the xxxx powers of a Parliament than in> 1650. It were devoutly to be wished that the worst <evils> mischief, <within their which they will effect,> <w> {↑ likely to arise} should be the general disappointment of high-toned expectations. For that mischief {↑ if it} will be violent, <but> {↑ will also be} transitory. Far more durable and more extensive will be the mischiefs from unsettling whatever is established, whatsoever is harmonized internally in its several parts, whatsoever is adapted to the other institutions of the land. <x> These are mischiefs of a kind to be accomplished in <a> {↑ one short} day and felt in their irreparable effects {↑ upon private life} through the {↑ whole of the} succeeding century.

But <far> more immediately <in its' results> fatal in its' consequences to this <public> national strength {↑ and more full of ruin to private life in the middle classes} will be the Colonial Reforms. Of the West Indies I say nothing: {↑ those unhappy <that interest>} <they are in> {↑ colonies are already} sunk in a degree which leaves them little {↑ further} <more> to fear from a spoliator {↑ though he were} more rapacious than Attila.<sup>22</sup> Already <it is> the depreciation of property in that quarter has reached a point which begins to alarm not those merely who have been obliged to mortgage, <it> but even <the> mortgagers themselves. <It may be supposed that prudent men> With or without a reform in our present Parliament, considering the designs which are in agitation against these colonies, and the strong party leagued to <sub> carry them into effect, it is difficult to imagine what scheme of "confusion worse confounded"<sup>23</sup> can {↑ by possibility} arise to make their condition worse for the immediate proprietors. But as yet the ruin has not reached the {↑ nation or the} national finances. <x>Private ruin has <hitherto> thus far {↑ stemmed







## ON REFORM

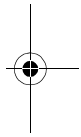
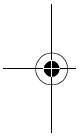
and intercepted} <stemmed> that which <threatens> must finally settle <upon> upon the public. For the steps which have been taken with regard to the slaves are of that sort which allows of neither progress nor regress. To <x> attempt any <intreading a> retreat in that path which {↑ misguided} <mis-taken> zeal has lately trode, to throw

{46 r.]

17

a shade upon the hopes which have been awakened, <x> would be in effect to sound the trumpet of insurrection to nearly a million of irritated slaves. On the other hand, to prosecute the Schemes on foot, pushed on {↑ to extremities} as they are and will be by <furi> frantic partizans who have no vestige of a pecuniary interest at stake <must> cannot but terminate in throwing upon the nation a vast bankrupt estate occupied by a <set of> population of negro 'squatters' {↑ (I borrow term from America to express the corresponding nuisance)} too indolent to produce even their <own> own squalid maintenance unless (as in Haiti) under {↑ <xx> a} military control ten times more austere than that of their present masters.<sup>24</sup> Surplus revenue, at all events, will be out of the question. And these evils, hardly to be evaded <now> under any temperaments or compromises which the very wisest Parliament could <xxxx> *now* devise, will be aggravated a thousand fold amidst the <darkness> tumultuous factions of a <reformed> Parliament stripped by reform of its' enlarged liberality – of its' forbearance – and pretty nearly, we may be sure, of its' whole political sagacity.

Far therefore from being, as once, a vast source of revenue, – the West Indies will prove a millstone about our neck: and much better it were, on financial considerations, that these two famous islands<sup>25</sup> were sunk in the ocean, or sold (according to the wild proposal <once> once made for Ireland in the days of <the> Cromwell) to the Jews<sup>26</sup> on {↑ commercial} speculation, than that they should be given up <to the> as a prize to {↑ moon-struck} <the> {↑ <rash>} speculat{↑ ion}<ors> in philanthropy. Were it possible to add another evil to those which are <already> {↑ already} xx surely in reversion for us in this quarter, that nearly impossible addition – that crest to the mountainous accumulation of dangers which menace us – would be <riveted secured> by a Reform in> {↑ now applied by a reformed} Parliament. For though it is certain that {↑ in one sense} the new Parliament will {↑ not} <not in one sense inherit> allow itself to be the victim of its' political inheritances, – that is to say, it will have far too little honor to account itself a successor to the political engagements of former Parliaments, and will therefore speedily annul as many of their engagements as possible, – unfor-





## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

[46 v.]

18

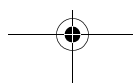
tunately some of {↑ them} <these engagements> are not of a {↑ revocable} nature. Pledges <given> given {↑ loudly or silently –} <formally or con> formally or by construction – to a potent black popularity will be redeemed by the creditor if the debtor should {↑ happen to} linger. And <hence> in this state of things we have a ground laid for future dissensions of the fiercest character in the reformed House of Commons. The danger will be instant, formidable, not to be averted: could it be met or remedied by <the> breach of faith, we may be assured that our new Senate would not hesitate for an hour to break the engagements of ten <gener> generations. But that course will <provide> {↑ yield} no medicine for the evil. Medicine there will be none: at this stage none is practicable. And in {↑ such a} <this> state of awful dilemma conscious on the one hand that they are looked to {↑ by the Blacks} <from abroad> for a debt which they {↑ <fear to> cannot} <cannot> pay, and {↑ by the whites} <at home> for a relief from impending danger which they cannot {↑ devise} <furnish>, – under this <double> two-fold sense of utter impotence to meet the existing hopes, <they will> the new Parliament will be soon entangled in fiercer contentions than <ever> ever raged at Rome under the triple excitement of inextinguishable debt, ambition, and party hatred. Instead, as heretofore, of calming the irritations of the people, – the Senate will now be the focus of public violence, and the crater through which the ferments of national phrenzy will send {↑ up} their wildest explosions. Fuel enough we have, without the West Indies, for future strife. But considering <into> that this question has now reached a condition which would really be unmanageable by <the> all the wisdom of the world, we may venture to predict that something like the passions of civil war will be awakened both in public and private life by the fierce collision of clashing interests, and the coincidence of present ruin with future danger which must accompany any possible conduct of that affair.

As to the East Indies, the mind <of> is aghast at the <suxx wild> wide-spread havock and desolation which will be diffused by a mob Parliament legislating for realms so remote – so vast – so little <known> understood. There is no question <who> that the <trad> commerce with those countries will be thrown open in the most unlimited <sense in> {↑ sense} which <it> has ever been contemplated.

[47 r.]

19

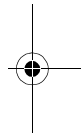
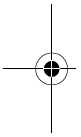
That however will be a trifle in comparison with the effects to be anticipated from the diffusion of revolutionary doctrines amongst the unprepared, and for





## ON REFORM

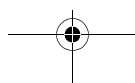
that danger defenceless, population of the three Presidencies. All men of sense were agreed in the {↑ necessity} <measure> of silencing Mr. Buckingham's seditious press at Calcutta: whether in <any> other respects <his> he might not have been dealt with more leniently, may <be> admit of a question.<sup>27</sup> But there can be none at all upon the {↑ imminent} danger {↑ connected with} <attached to his> inflammable politics in <the> that vast Oriental empire which we <maint> rule <by> so much by <opin> the force of opinion. Yet under a reformed Parliament not only will the Indian <be> press be unfettered, but we may not satisfied that within two years at farthest that bye-law <of the Company> will be <annuled> annuled by which strangers are <excluded> {↑ liable to summary banishment} from the Company's territory unless <provided> furnished with official license.<sup>28</sup> <This> The repeal of this regulation {↑ under Parliamentary compulsion,} is as certain as the ruinous consequences which will follow. Intriguers of every class will enter India in hosts. Disaffection will spread both in our camps and in the great towns. <of India> The Sepoys have {↑ real} grievances <already> amongst them <ready> sufficient of themselves to keep them <on the brink of mutiny> in a constant state of irritability, and any other to throw them upon the very brink of <mutiny> mutiny.<sup>29</sup> Extensive insurrections will prevail, <wh> which with concurrent treason working at the very heart of our military strength cannot <f> fail of prospering. The native princes will <watch their opportunity> be keen observers of these new born opportunities; and a train of convulsions will spread through that vast empire which will terminate for us at least in the dissolution of <our> the mighty fabric we have reared. For India perhaps the termination may never come in our <de> time: <for> upon the overthrow of our supremacy, it is probable that the internal wars of India would stretch away into distant generations: So {↑ slight} <little> are the means in existence of {↑ any} absolute <su> and final superiority, <for in any question> or even of momentary preponderance, in any one of the native powers. The effects even upon private life in England, {↑ from} <of the> <closing up> closing up of this great outlet to our supernumerary population, it cannot be necessary to compute. They are obvious enough; to say nothing of the sudden freezing up of that golden current setting in so steadily from the East to this country.<sup>30</sup>



[47 v.]

20

These are results which may seem trivial by the side of a revolution on so prodigious a scale <compar> affecting immediately so large a portion of Southern Asia, and mediately perhaps the whole. But however they may be <comp> estimated {↑ in a} <relative> view, absolutely they will prove {↑ most} formidable mischiefs, and will touch us at more points than may <be> appear on a random view. <x> Of this at least I may hold myself assured – that you

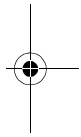
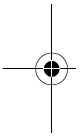




## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

will not dispute the items of my anticipation. You will grant me, as a matter past doubting, that a new 'India Bill' from the mintage of a reformed {↑ House of Commons} <Parliament> will place the <thexx> Company's dominions under the absolute control of Parliament. As little can it be doubted that, almost without a sense of the mighty consequences depending upon that step, every part of India will be laid open to jacobin emissaries from the sovereign mob. These preliminaries accomplished, all the rest follows of necessity. In fact the evil will have struck root, before it will be possible to point the national jealousies in a right direction, or to arm {↑ against it} any feeble relics of sound policy which may yet linger amongst us.

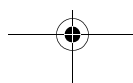
But from these vast and diffusive cases of revolutionary mischief, in which the consequences to private life are <too> somewhat overshadowed by the broad national results, <I> it may be <prudent> {↑ more in the way of my argument} to call off your attention to those forms of the same general contagion in which the poison will <first appear> direct its' chief malignity against the charities of private life or against its' most flagrant prudential interests. – One law for instance I will venture to anticipate as among the very first which will engage the attention of <a> our new democratic Parliament – a law to set aside the privileges of Primogeniture. Within that one change what a host of <re> revolutionary effects will steal in! – The whole composition and structure of British Society will be at one blow violently <un>{↑ re}mounted. Entails will be abolished. Every arrangement, <and> custom, usage, or institution, by which accumulations of property are favored and protected, everything which aids the growth of hereditary influence, or <abiding masses> abiding local authority, will at once give way. Infinite subdivision of landed estates will go in, according to the precedent already introduced, and <fatally> so fatally <making progress>



[48 r.]

21

operating at this time in France.<sup>31</sup> After that, the wounds of the aristocracy, which might else have cicatrized and healed, will never close. The very materials of <an> {↑ an} Aristocracy, <will> such an aristocracy as can yield any political service, will be annihilated. We may have, as in America, a shifting, migratory, fugitive body of *nouveaux riches*, having every characteristic that is odious or insulting in the most haughty nobility, <the> such as the *morgue aristocratique*,<sup>32</sup> the disdain of <xx> their humbler neighbours, the affectation of an exclusive tone of society, the undisguised shrinking from plebeian alliances: all this may still exist, supported by weight of purse. But the whole uses and beneficial operation of an aristocracy will have perished. The <order its> species may even be permanent; but the families composing it will be more transitory than the forest leaves. Having no hereditary ties of <landed property> {↑ con-





## ON REFORM

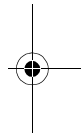
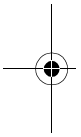
nexion with the land}, they will be without local attachments; <and> {↑ here to-day and gone to-morrow, they} will wander as caprice or fugitive convenience may suggest. <Having> Without <no> property of any kind {↑ except what} <that> is <un> alienable at pleasure, <or> {↑ and} insusceptible of a strict legal cohesion for so much as a second generation, they will <be> as little perform the functions of an old hereditary gentry, as little {↑ will they} be capable of forming centres for the growth of reverential attachments <in the> amongst this rural population, <as they themselves will be generally> such attachments as all of us have witnessed {↑ clinging <obstinately> with obstinate fidelity} to the last degenerate branch of an ancient name in England, – as little, I repeat, {↑ can} <will> they be the objects of such attachments as <they will> on <themselves> *their* part they can <c> by any possibility <cherish the> <cherish the exhibit or any model of patriotism> cherish the corresponding obligations or sentiments towards

[48 v.]

22

those with whom their connexion is so slight, frail, casual, and liable to <extinction> {↑ final disruption} in so many thousand <forms> shapes of accident – from so many thousand temptations of convenience.

Political economists,<sup>\*33</sup> of whatever party, have acknowledged that the subdivision of landed property in France <was> prescribed a most fearful experiment to the rest of Europe. I may say that it is a tremendous experiment, and one from which ancient {↑ not less than} <and> modern wisdom has {↑ hitherto} <yet> shrunk<en> in panic. It is that <xx> real Agrarian revolution,<sup>34</sup> so much agitated in theory by old disturbers of the peace and democratic incendiaries – so vigorously combated by <their> his <opponents> {↑ law givers}. The perfect evils of a democracy can never be realized but in this way; <In fact the French Revolution> and therefore up to this day never have been realized. Harrington has shewn us in what way the true balance of power follows the distribution of the landed property.<sup>35</sup> When therefore by exquisite minuteness of subdivision, indefinite numbers of {↑ small} <plebian> proprietors {↑ are} <are> created, democracy {↑ will} become {↑ even} more democratic: and a perfect ideal <will be exhibi> (<if you will> pardon so tautological an expression!) will be exhibited of that unhappy form of polity – transcending in virulence all that Greece ever witnessed. It is true that its' very perfection of developement will prove its' own ruin. For I believe it is to be thoroughly impossible that, in countries so large as England or France, such an intense democracy, with all its <activity> jealousy and fierce passions in full activity, could exist for three years without kindling civil war; in which case a martial government will soon swallow up all vestiges of





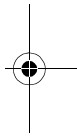
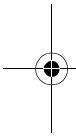
## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

[49 r.]

23

popular <energies> forms, and throw the whole energies of the state into new channels. But this is a consummation <that> hardly to be looked for except <an> {↑ from} the very excess of the evil: and therefore, in degrees short of that <be worst> {↑ absolute} extremity, <the> such a scourge of private happiness may exist <even> even in England or in France, otherwise unfitted as they are for <a pure> pure democracies, through a period of many years.

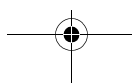
Cooperating with <this> this extinction of an hereditary <gen> class of gentry, <xxxx> by means of {↑ direct} laws <aided by> {↑ <in connexion with> concurring with} the compulsory subdivision of the land, we shall witness the <extin> declension of a {↑ secondary or} professional gentry, who in many situations <supplies> have hitherto <supplied the xxxx accidental defect of the> proved for the most salutary purposes complementary and auxiliary to the other: you will understand that I mean the parish clergy. Inestimable were the uses of this venerable order, even apart from their spiritual function of counsel, admonition, and instruction upon the interests of a higher world than this. By means of this tutelary establishment, and the system of watch and ward which it had organized for the benefit of the humble children of the soil, — such was the final result that not one parish was to be found in England, not the wildest or most desolate, <emb> {↑ whether} embosomed in <moo> the Cambrian or <the> Cumbrian hills,<sup>36</sup> or insulted by <moo> savage moors or wolds, but had the benefit of one resident gentleman's family <as> to dispense useful information <civil> {↑ civil} and domestic culture: — <establishing> {↑ ten thousand families of clergymen planted in the same number of parishes were so many} centres of light, telegraphs as it were for the propagation of truth and the growing civilities of life, and standards of household proprieties. <A> Every hamlet was thus humanized by the presence of a man uniting {↑ in his own person} the



[49 v.]

24

accomplishments of a scholar and a gentleman. Nor would it have been possible for the joint wisdom of a Plato and a Machiavel<sup>37</sup> <better> more happily to have adjusted his rank and position to the functions which he fulfilled. <He> {↑ On the one hand he} was raised above {↑ his simple parishioners} in the degree necessary to insure this respect; <Yet> {↑ yet on the other} not so far above them as to exclude affectionate and affable intercourse. He stood upon <a height> the height, which belonged to his sacred calling, and which supported his usefulness; {↑ but} yet a height not hopeless <of attainment even to> beyond the reach even of the humblest villager; since the road <was>





## ON REFORM

{↑ lay} open to honest ambition in the very lowliest class <to> towards the same or a greater elevation; and {↑ the meanest day-laborer might, and often did, in the person of his son, share in the honors and prizes of the church.} Never yet <did the in anything like the same degree> did the aspiring hopes {↑ proper to} <of> republicanism meet in such perfect concord with the discipline of {↑ social} order and the <de> beneficial restraints of ranks as existing in regular monarchies.

But now farewell to the benefits of that paternal institution! Farewell to the old relations of duty and affection which {↑ hitherto has knit} <bound> together the upper and lower classes in village communities, and <which> {↑ has} built up spiritual influence upon the basis of earthly charities! – These are preparing for departure: the signal is already <sounded> proclaimed for their hasty dispersion. The order, it is true, <of a> Christian pastors will still exist; but in how mutilated – how abject a condition! Church property will be <ab> taken under the immediate and severe revision of Parliament: <its> {↑ <the> its} tenure and <its the> its amount will be equally revolutionized. Stipends, the very lowest at which <the> hirelings can be procured, will be paid to a class of persons with <xx> much inferior educations and accomplishments, who may be held {↑ indeed} by law to the performance of a certain ritual, and to the routine of such duties as can be specified in a <n> Canon, or an Act of Parliament; but who must of necess-

[50 r.]

25

ity fail in those innumerable and priceless services built upon the silent influences of manners, refinement, and a dignified self respect. <At present we> We hear much in these days of the primitive church in the first ages of Christianity and the <primitive bishops> poverty of the primitive bishops as furnishing a model to our own church and its several <ran> orders. <And> {↑ A} short answer {↑ will serve:} <may be given to such alarms: let us> restore us a <a> primitive Christian laity, <capable> rendering homage above all things to learning and piety, careless of wealth, uninfluenced by <ex> outward pomp, <give> – give us, I say, such a laity, and we shall {↑ be entitled to} <soon have> a corresponding clergy. But in a world where mercenary considerations do and must so largely <pre> prevail, where <without> respect and consideration are so powerfully dependent upon the means which each man enjoys, be he layman or {↑ be he} churchman, of dispensing charity, maintaining hospitality, and <is> otherwise of surrounding himself with the decorums of his rank, – folly only or rank villainy could exact, {↑ from our order} an insulated system of self-denying austerity, <ever> to which no one feature in the existing temper of {↑ any other order} <the world on the ruling spirit of manners> is accommodated, <or ready to extend any toleration> and which the ruling spirit of





## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

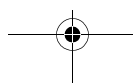
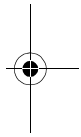
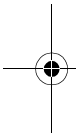
manners <co> would consign to instant and general ridicule. At present we all know that the clergy <differ> of Great Britain differ most advantageously from their continental brethern <{↑ throughout}> <in> <{↑ of the}> Protestant <lands> church in their social consideration, and <in the forms of their stand upon quite another footing> <{↑ the footing upon which}> they hold their acceptance in the best company. A clergyman with us is a gentleman, and is <never> privileged sufficiently by his profession to be sure of a <respectful treatment in any> gentleman's reception in any society whatsoever. On the Continent, as for example in North Germany, a village

[50 v.]

26

<pastor is> pastor, unless eminently distinguished as a literary man, is seldom seen in good company; <and nor is he re> he appears there, if at all, by sufferance; nor is he regarded as on a level with the hereditary gentry. The consequences are important: not only <is> does his presence <in> act amongst us as a <{↑ direct}> restraint upon libertine principles, profane conversation, and all <{↑ open expressions}> <shapes> of immorality <for> or irreverence for what is sacred, – <but an effect> <{↑ an effect}> which on the continent would be as little <claimed> expected by the clergyman as it would be conceded by the company, – but indirectly and in the very highest degree this <different treatment acceptance> footing of equality amongst the gentry, accordingly as it is or is not <conceded> enjoyed, <a> reacts upon the influence which he <ex> can exert over his humblest parishioners. With us, amongst the lowest of the peasantry, a clergyman has a <double> two fold influence – as a gentleman, whom they see associating upon equal terms with other gentlemen, and as a man clothed with a sacred character. Elsewhere his influence <{↑ lies exclusively within the limits}> <is limited to this single land and> of this latter privilege.

Exactly upon this <{↑ continental}> footing will be placed the future church of England. Its present situation, as a church privileged and protected by law, may chance to operate in the end <x> even disadvantageously for its' interests. Assuredly <xx> this situation has already had the effect of exposing it as a more conspicuous mark to the hatred of its' enemies; and probably in no instance has so great a body of malignity gathered about any institution as about the church of England. This indeed is the common <price> <{↑ tax}> paid by the triumphant to the militant, though <the> in the *degree* <{↑ as respects this particular instance}> <and> there is an excess of fury and brutal bigotry which seems unaccountable. – However, waiving all consideration of the causes which may have led to this position of her affairs, and <{↑ of}> the ultimate castastrophe







## ON REFORM

{51 r.}

27

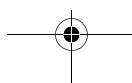
to which they may be hurrying her, – it is beyond <all> dispute that by a reformed Parliament she will be treated {↑ most} harshly; that she will be placed on a reduced establishment; that the salaries, even on this economic footing, will be <paid> derived from sources and paid in a mode the most degrading; <and> that in consequence a new class of men will be attracted to her service; and finally that these persons, by their inferior qualifications, accomplishments, and standing in society, will still further and very rapidly contribute to her <degradation> {↑ utter} humiliation.

Thus degraded from <within by her own ministers, and from> without by her enemies, (a fate which she once before experienced)<sup>38</sup> and <will> from within by her <own> own ministers of the new order (a fate which, at other eras of calamity, she was so happy as to escape) – the church will reach a crisis on which I would not wish to speculate. Meantime the injurious effects upon private life will be the more sensibly felt as they will concur with the same or with corresponding effects from <so> many other sources most of them arising at the same <moment> point of time. Outlets on an expanded scale are {↑ now} imperiously demanded, <by com> and every year even with a perceptible increase of violence, for our rapidly expanding population – expanding, be it remembered, <from> {↑ upon} a basis already disproportionately large by comparison with our resources. You have seen what in the crowded streets of London is called “a lock”: a single <obstacle to the> {↑ misplaced carriage has obstructed} a clear passage <has ocured>: in less time than you can tell the story, by momentary accumulations this {↑ single} bar has grown into a dense array of impervious obstacles stretching as far as your eye can reach. With something of the same <celerity> velocity, will the consequences arise and blend <together> from any even casual interruption to the <outlets> customary outlets for our <sux> surplus population. And <as> most unfortunately with the disturbances of the old channels leading to church preferment will <x> concur

{51 v.}

28

the diminished drafts to the colonies East and West. These, under the <contra-dictory> management of a revolutionary government, tending by every change nearer to a republic on the worst model, never can preserve this internal cohesion and tranquillity, or their subordination to the mother country. No {↑ democratic} republic (Holland in effect never was such) <can> is capable of that unity of will and system which are <essential> indispensable to the <retaining a> management of remote colonies, and the enforcement of their allegiance. Outlet there-fore> will be none, in this direction for our own





## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

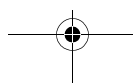
redundant population after a few years of imbecile – and, what is worse, of {† self-}contradictory – administration shall have relaxed the springs of <xx> our present systems. Anarchy at home will propagate anarchy abroad. Above all, it will do so in colonial administrations where a strong government is at all times necessary: where, instead of the lax orders – open <and> counsels – and <disputations> disjointed mechanism of <a> popular boards of control, there is a continued call for the secrecy, the despatch, the <energy> single purpose, the energy, nay even at times the harshness of a despotic monarchy. Be assured, my friend, that – if India should fall to the government of a <plebian> ‘fierce democracy’<sup>39</sup> in England – you and I {† shall} <will> live to see that vast wilderness of semi-civilized kingdoms, with its <xxx> myriads myriadum\* of people, <the> {† a} theatre of tragedies such as Asia has not beheld for two centuries. {† Here let me digress for a moment: –} Do you remember the Pindarry war?<sup>40</sup> Do you remember the nature of the enemy? – A <hor> nation of <horseman robbers, advancing> horseman robbers, advancing and retreating by flying marches of 70 miles a day, crucifying and torturing <the chiefs of the country> – burning and destroying – whenever they alighted for a few hours

[52 r.]

29

upon the devoted country. Do you remember again the policy of the native princes, – Holkar, the Peishua<sup>41</sup> Etc. on that occasion? How they availed themselves of the momentary embarrassment of <our government’s army> {† the <xxx> company’s} armies in hunting down this flying enemy – to surprize our insulated detachment, which accordingly saved themselves only by such astonishing efforts of <courage> courage as none but British troops {† could} have <ever> exhibited? – how in outline, and in seminal principle, [ὥς <εν> ἐν τυπῶ,] (to speak in words which will soon perhaps be <be> uncivic or even treasonable in England), that state of things, which preceded and generated the Pindarry war is always more or less {† prepared} <ready> for explosion in India’s Deserters, robbers, or <unemplo> disbanded troops from all the services of India and Southern Asia congregate to one focus. Gradually by <successful> successful mauraudings they mount their whole body. By their Parthian tactics<sup>42</sup> they lay the very central regions of peaceful empires under contribution. Passing with the speed of deer through the openings of great armies, and <the> threading their way {† noiselessly} through the very columns advancing to attack them, they wheel back on their own traces before their astonished enemy has time to close up his {† dissevered} <divided> sec-

\* *i.e.* Ten thousand times ten thousand, or just 100 millions – in round numbers the computed number of those who <pay tribute> live under our government.





## ON REFORM

tions: and <they are making havock> the smoke of <their> ravages is seen ascending at a distance of many miles a head at the very moment when the British lines are <deploying to attack> forming for the assault. Six or seven years of such outrages are necessary to rouse the government to an adequate effort. A combined attack is then made on the principle of hunters. What the Romans called an *indago*<sup>43</sup> is laid about the <xx> country which these robbers have made their domicile. The <armi> exterminating armies form a ring fence about the devoted lair of the robber nation;

[52 v.]

30

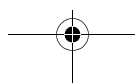
and narrowing the circle at each step in advance, at length they spring with combined force upon the guilty destroyers. Now it is certain, that under several possible contingencies, for example had <not> any error been made in assigning the stations, had anything short of the {↑ utmost energy of} <most intelligent energetic> combination<s> been shown by the troops in taking up <their> these stations, or had the native princes succeeded in surprizing our divisions, (and repeatedly they were <either the> on the brink of the most absolute success,) – one day would have seen us <as> reduced to the extremity of fighting for our very existence in India. The Burmese war, at one point {↑ in its early stages} approached the same critical emergency. And <many more> {↑ in fact} such cases are <certain to arise hereafter> {↑ always} {↑ in *procinctu*}.<sup>44</sup> Now it is <certain> evident that perils of that extreme character can be faced only <by> by Roman energy of counsel, unity of will, and almost irresponsible latitude of discretion.

But to return from this digression <let me remind you> to the combined evils which our many innovations will bring upon <the> private life, especially in the middle classes, – let me remind you that it is upon these classes almost exclusively that the disasters of our church, and the troubles of our colonies, will be accumulated. It is chiefly from them that the church, the higher <stations> {↑ offices} in the colonial administrations, and the {↑ superior stations of the} army <in its> are supplied. Until the gentry shall have adapted themselves to the new condition<s> of things by gradual declensions in their high-minded sentiments and the tone of their characters, – either they will find the doors of {stain} admission closed against them

[53 r.]

31

<or will themselves sh> by the anger and jealousy of those <who who> inferior classes whose voice will now predominate in public affairs, or will themselves





## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

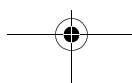
shrink in disgust from services and ministrations so profoundly altered in character, or finally will find the services extinguished or narrowed (as in <xx> many of the colonies) by the <tempestuous innovations> hurricane of revolution let loose upon them from a <xx> senate of <d> reckless demagogues suddenly armed with the powers of a great nation. The coming revolution will doubtless be a great one <in all> under all aspects. It will be great and enduring for public ends, and in a national sense. It will be a great and a mighty revolution for <every> those issues which it comes within the province of History to record. But I believe that it will be far greater for those which History overlooks, and which are left to the casual illustrations of memoirs and private biographies. For extent of private calamity, for the wide-ranging desolation of <private> domestic happiness, which under the <double> twin guardianship of civil liberty and pure religion {↑ had} spread <and flourished prospered> more amply and {↑ had} more conspicuously {↑ been prospered} <was crowned> with the blessing of heaven than in any other country ancient or modern, – for the general wreck <of this household to> in this respect I do firmly believe that the French revolution itself will hereafter be found not to have transcended our own. Properly speaking, even that is far within the truth. The French gentry, upper and lower, were (it is true) in great numbers expatriated and stripped of their <property> property. Both calami-

[53 v.]

32

-ties, I believe, will happen to our own gentry. They will expatriate themselves in disgust<xx>; and {↑ much of} <much of> their property will be substantially confiscated both by the <gras> violent extinctions of portions of the National Debt, and by the <sudden unintentional x many> robbery of the church,<sup>45</sup> and by many depreciations of property unavoidable in such extensive changes though perhaps not directly contemplated by any party whatever. The French gentry suffered also from terror, from anxiety, and from actual proscription enforced by the guillotine – by deportation to pestilent marshes – and by the ever infamous *noyades* along the course of the Loire.<sup>46</sup> But these sufferings were circumscribed both in space and time: and, except for the *mode* of the sufferings, perhaps a few stages of advance upon our new career of revolution will find the British gentry at the point of entering upon the same course of sanguinary trials.

One feature, amongst many which I have purposely omitted, in the picture of revolutionized England, perhaps ought to have been noticed, <This> as it will arise out of changes in private life, and will greatly tend to promote them. The magistracy will <be> undergo a thorough recast: they will of necessity become, what some would long have had them upon policy, a stipendiary body. This will arise in part out of the change in the <xxxx> circumstances of





## ON REFORM

the gentry. <With the> Under the gradual loss or depreciation of their property according to its' several descriptions, <and especially> as for instance of advowsons in church property, of lay impropriations, &c (to say nothing of any more direct interest in church living), but state more <by the loss of> under the diminution of their landed weight <and> through the compulsory subdivision of

{54 r.}

33

of their landed estates, cooperating with the forfeiture of their political influence as freeholders after the elective franchise shall have been so extensively <laid> thrown open, – they will effectually have lost all their present pretensions to the <office and> rank and powers of magistrates: they will indeed so entirely have lost all the consideration and influence which originally recommended them to such offices, and enabled them to discharge their duties with effect, that none of them <with> who happen to <possess> be men of sense and prudence will count or even accept stations so invidious and toilsome. <The plebian people, who in <some> {↑ many} instances will {↑ hope to} rise to consideration upon the ruins of the landed gentry, <xx> will rarely be trustworthy even in the moderate degree demanded find that> <There will however> Whether otherwise {↑ however} <willing> disposed or not <to> to undertake a class of duties, which <xx> losing their main aids will also have lost their {↑ main} rewards, – so few persons will be found with the proper qualifications amongst the rural gentry, after <a few years shall have> the venom of the new reforms shall have operated for a few years upon that class, that {↑ as a} mere {↑ measure of} necessity <will compel the delegation of> these <duties> offices will {↑ soon} devolve to mercenaries. In default of persons enjoying an hereditary influence, it will be found necessary to introduce {↑ others} <peo> <men> who enjoy <the support of the law> the factitious support of <law in fact> professional rank, in fact lawyers: and <these must be sal> they must have salaries. Thus we shall have stipendiary magistrates in every village, and the whole train of evils which such an institution is fitted to support

{54 v.} It was a gray afternoon in December

{55 r.}

34

<But why should> But why should I linger upon these details? Private life, <will> its happiness, its honor, will <x> wither not in this or that direction, but in every possible {↑ mode and} relation <xxx> under the jealousy – the





## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

suspicion – the violence of plebeian rule everywhere exalted on the ruins of our ancient system. Whatever public dignity there may now seem to have been in the <ple> ‘palmy’ state of Rome or Athens, one thing is but too certain – even as respects *them* – that private happiness was universally {↑ martyred} <sacrificed> to republican jealousies. Man, as an individual, <xx as a> man, as a father – son – or brother, was uniformly <made the victim of> sacrificed to his state duties. Yet then at least there was no inversion of the natural order of predominance. Nowhere in fact, more {↑ haughtily} <vigorous> than in Rome, did the Patrician classes <more haughtily> curb the intrusions of the Plebeian. Here on the other hand, <in> under our coming revolution, we shall have the whole evils of a republic <xx> embittered a thousand fold by the <fact that> circumstance that these evils are not administered, as in the ancient republics, by {↑ the mixed influence of} ranks <in xxxx of> maintaining their old social subordination, but by the lowest ranks usurping the <se> station of the higher. There the democratic effects {↑ of <a> the state policy} were checked by an aristocratic structure of society. With us they will be aggravated by the sudden and tumultuous inversion of such a structure.

[55 v.]

35

Other revolutions may displace, or may modify, the present. On that I <give no s> shall hazard no prophecy: though I can guess in what direction such revolutions are likely to move. – Great Britain under any revolutions will for sometime be *propelled* by the impetus of her last greatness and her departing institutions: she may continue to be formidable as a warlike power. But the splendor and purity of her good faith will take wing with the first acts of her reformed Parliament. She will net in future upon her power, and not upon her moral grandeur <and> {↑ or} the authority of her name. And for us at home, who <remain> seek our happiness in private life, – we shall find no resting for the sole of our foot in a land given up to civil convulsions, and in which the jealousies of democratic policies will be reinforced and invigorated by the jealousies of upstart ranks pushed {↑ forward} <up> by revolution <out of their natural place> into an importance which will be <all> alike destructive to themselves and to those whom they have displaced.

[—————]

