

almost every body was struck, when he announced himself a convert to the principle of that very Reform Bill which he had so strongly opposed—principles, the very reverse of those which he had maintained throughout a very long life, and by which his political conduct had ever been directed. No person could be more astonished at the change than the author of these pages, who had always entertained the highest respect for him, and esteemed him as a man of sterling worth and honour, although differing from him altogether in politics. The motives which, I do now firmly believe, induced him to adopt such conduct, was then a secret to me—motives which, though denied by his agents, I believe and sincerely hope are true, as they save his honour in some degree, by proving some consistency, in adhering to his party through good report and bad report. I am sorry to acknowledge that my opinion of him as a public man is sadly diminished, by such blind adhesion to a faction, and following their evil example, in professing principles which it is scarcely possible to believe are sincerely approved of by him. Men of very high rank may risk their character, as they often do, by political tergiversations, without falling into utter contempt; but the hazard is too much for men in the middling classes of society, whose friends and neighbours are uninitiated in the refined manners of courts. That which in courtiers passes for elegant finesse, and is considered one of the highest accomplishments of lords and ladies, when mimicked by people of lower degree, gets appellations too coarse for me to stain my pages with. There is also a relaxation of morals which custom has countenanced in great men, particularly in the *corps diplomatique*, by which they consider themselves bound, by their word or writing, only as far as they find convenient for their immediate purpose, and from which *they* may depart without any stigma upon their honour; but this privilege is very properly confined to transactions with foreign courts, and is considered dishonourable between courtiers, and, between ordinary individuals, dishonest and disgraceful. I was therefore extremely sorry to hear it