

(From Colletts' Register.)

"PROCEEDINGS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS."
 "Bolt-Court, 30 Jan. 1833.

In another part of the Register, I have inserted, from the Morning Chronicle newspaper, an account of the first debate in the reformed House of Commons, * * * As to the subject of the debate, it became matter of great importance, in a pecuniary point of view especially when connected with the previous enormous grants to the speaker and his son. The question of fitness or unfitness for the office, though of some consequence, certainly, became matter of no consequence at all, when compared with the effect which must naturally be produced upon the people, by the choosing of a pensioner, with a son a securist, to be put at the head of this reformed House of Commons. There was something, to be sure, extremely strange, in the servants of the King making application to a known and decided enemy of parliamentary reform to become the Speaker of the new House of Commons; something that could not fail to excite the suspicion, that they wished to have the Tories at their back, to assist them in preventing any real change in the system. It is impossible not to believe that there must have been some motive of this sort at the bottom of this negotiation; and, therefore, this was a good objection on the part of Mr. O'Connell: the argument of unfitness in Mr. Sutton, merely because he held opinions different from those entertained by a supposed majority of the House, does not appear to have had much weight in it; and the real and solid argument against his elevation was this: that he is an enormous pensioner; that he has been living upon the public money ever since he was very young; that he belongs to a family aggrandized from the proceeds of the public purse; and that, therefore, to put him at the head of this reformed House of Commons, to select him as an epitome of the whole House, was to declare to the people, that the reform should produce them no alleviation of their burdens. It is a pity that this was not made the ground-work of the opposition to his appointment. But this, which I am sure my readers will deem the great and substantial objection, was not even alluded to by Mr. Hume, who brought forward the motion for appointing Mr. Littleton in preference to Mr. Sutton. His was an argument confined solely to comparative fitness and compatibility; and as there was to set against that, 'the saving of four thousand pounds a year,' many men voted for the saving.' If it had been a question of pensioner, or no pensioner, the result would have been different. There would have been many more to vote for no pensioner. I am not pretending to believe, that there would have been anything like an equal division, even then: for this was not a ques-

tion on which any of the Members were pledged; it was not a question of taking off taxes; or of laying on taxes; if put in its proper shape, it still would have been only a question relating to the character of the House, only a mere symptom of its future intentions; and though that was a great deal to decide, it was a matter that would make a deep impression only on thinking persons. Therefore, probably half the members present looked upon themselves as giving a vote for the saving of public money. With regard to the Act of Parliament granting the pension in fee, and in reversion, I think that Sir John Campbell will find it very difficult to reconcile his construction of it to law or reason. He said, that the act provided for the pension's beginning from the hour that Mr. Sutton ceased to be Speaker: and that he did not cease to be Speaker, until another Speaker was chosen; and that, therefore, by being again chosen Speaker, he was in fact continued in his office, and that, of course, the pension would not begin to become due, until the time when he should cease to be Speaker hereafter. If this be the true construction of the Act why choose him again? If he were the Speaker at the very moment when the debate was going on, why propose him again; why debate about the matter; why propose him; why not let him take the chair as usual, and sit there till voted out of it? It was said, that if, the King had died, between the dissolution and the return of the new Parliament, the old Parliament must have been called together again, with their Speaker at their head; and that, therefore, he still was Speaker until the very hour the House was debating about him. There appears to be not the shadow of ground for considering him to be still Speaker, any more than for considering the members of the late Parliament to be the members of this. The construction of the Act is wholly untenable; and, it is clear as daylight that Mr Sutton might, the moment that the pension act was passed, have sold the pension for his life, and have put the money in his pocket, and that the purchaser, would, under that act of Parliament, have had a clear right to come and demand his money at the Treasury, and to sue the officers of the Treasury, if they did not pay him the annuity or rent. His being re-chosen Speaker does not nullify the act in the smallest degree; he can sell the pension now; and if he do not sell it and put the money safely in his pocket, it will not be owing to any impediment that he can find in that Act. If he do not receive the pension and the salary at the same time, it must be owing to his own forbearance, and not to any protection that the public purse will receive from the law. So much for this first act of the reformed House of Commons. It was always clear, that the

people must not slacken in their exertions; that, whatever they want done, they must petition for; that they must be much more vigilant than ever they were in obtaining of the Reform Bill; that they must not delay; not neglect their important duties; for that if they be silent, they may be well assured, that nothing will be done for their relief. They ought to meet in counties, in cities, in boroughs, in towns, in villages: the right of petition is that right, the vigilant and resolute exercise of which, English tyrants have always found to be, at last, too strong for them. The people should consider, that even the members on whom they most justly rely, stand in need of their support. Silence is proverbially taken to give consent; and, if the people be silent, let them be well assured, that no man, however great his zeal, his industry, and his talent, can be of any service to them. It was the people themselves who caused the Reform Bill to be brought in; it was the people themselves that caused the second House of Commons to pass the Reform Bill; it was the people themselves that finally caused the success of the Bill; and it is the people themselves, who must now cause that bill to produce any of the effects which they have expected from it. The means which the people have to use, are, first, petitioning; next, remonstrating; next, resisting. These are the means which they have used in former times. Let us hope that it never will be necessary for them again to resort to either of the two latter. That the right of resisting acts of undoubted tyranny, exists in every people on earth; and if it did not, men would be worse off than the beasts that perish. The right, this last and terrible right, was resorted to at that epoch, which was called the Revolution; and it is now, on the same principle, resorted to in the State of South Carolina; where, in my opinion, it is rightfully exercised; because it is exercised in resistance of heavy, unequal, and unjust taxation. We, however, though heavily oppressed; though we have suffered long, and very severely, have, I am satisfied, no need to resort to desperate means of any kind. Our arms are Petitions, in the usual style and manner employed by our ancestors. By the means of petitions, we hold direct communication with those who make, and who administer the laws; we tell them freely what we think of their acts; we express our wishes to them with regard to what they ought to do, and what they ought not to do: we complain of those of their acts which we deem injurious to us; and, though the form of our demand is that of a prayer, and though that is a form, which is required by the great respect which every one owes to the laws, as well as to the office of those who make and execute the laws, this prayer is, in effect, as