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## REVIEWS

*Eliot, Hampden, and Pym; or, a Reply of "the Author of a Book" entitled, "Commentaries on the Life and Reign of Charles the First," to "the Author of a Book" entitled, "Some Memorials of John Hampden, his Party, and his Times."* London, 1832. Colburn & Bentley.

It appears, from the confessions of a venerable contemporary, that the public do not expect him to "enter into the various points at issue between this ingenious writer and his noble antagonist," but will be content to leave the reputation of these great men, whose fame is the best birthright and inheritance of Englishmen, to be scorned and trampled on, so the critic permit them, through an "illustrative extract," to witness a little of the gladiatorial display of the combatants. The readers of the *Athenæum* are not, we trust, of such an amiable indifference.

Under the imposing title of 'Eliot, Hampden, and Pym,' Mr. D'Israeli has thought it necessary to make a reply to the animadversions on his 'Commentaries,' contained in a late work by Lord Nugent; and we shall occupy a short space with a few facts, that may serve, with impartial men, to countervail the dangerous imputations it is calculated to convey, (and from its accessible shape, to convey so extensively) against the characters and motives of the illustrious men whose names are prefixed to its pages. We entertain much respect for Mr. D'Israeli's writings, and for the interesting literary researches to which he has so unremittingly devoted himself;—but, on some particulars, we must take leave to tell him, he suffers the doubts of the historical inquirer to be solved by violent prejudices and passions, and partialities to suborn integrity. The present is one of them. It is unnecessary to say, that we disclaim all partizanship, either for or against Lord Nugent, who seems, indeed, on the whole, to have been deficient in courtesy to the author of the 'Commentaries.' Our only object is to clear away doubts which would make liberty itself distrusted, and to free the characters of some of the great founders of English freedom from imputations which go far to assail the foundations on which freedom itself is built.

What does Mr. D'Israeli mean by saying that, "before he wrote, the name of Sir John Eliot was as a blank in our history," and that all that was recorded of this eminent character was the "vigorous eloquence of his speeches against the minister"? What! did the reputation of Eliot only extend so far? Was he not known, before the appearance of the 'Commentaries,' as one of the greatest

men of his time: as one who could speak against corruption unconnected with a particular minister: as one who had raised among the people high and elevated notions of their liberties,—who, on three several occasions, preferred imprisonment to dishonourable freedom,—and, at last, offered himself up as a sacrifice to arbitrary power, rather than let the privilege of parliament be surrendered in his person? Surely all this was known—and more. Even the abominable story, to which Mr. D'Israeli still adheres with such obstinate pertinacity, was published long before his volume; and we can only smile at his forgetfulness in saying, "I ascertained that Eliot had been the companion in the travels of the minister he impeached"—when we recollect that Echard published this upwards of a hundred years ago. It is true that he may claim the merit of having first published the letters which describe the affecting details of Eliot's heroic fortitude in the last hours of his imprisonment, when his petitions for healthy air were rejected with scorn; but we must remind him, that Dr. Birch discovered, and had arranged those letters, amongst others, for publication; and that May had told us on that subject all it seemed necessary to know, in saying that "Eliot died by the harshness of his imprisonment, which would admit of no relaxation, though for health's sake: he petitioned for it often, and his physician gave testimony for the same purport, but in vain."

Frequent allusion has been made of late years to a painful incident in Sir John Eliot's life. While yet very young, and in a moment of passionate dispute with a Mr. Moyle, he drew his sword and wounded him. Advantage was taken of this rash conduct to fix on the patriot a charge of treacherous murder. This came from Echard, a violent political enemy, and was adopted by D'Israeli. Lord Nugent fortunately is able to discriminate between acts of hasty passion and of deliberate murder. He admits the former, and calls the charge of the latter "a preposterous calumny." But Mr. D'Israeli knows no distinction between these, and, on that admission, tries to convict Lord Nugent of self-contradiction. To what deplorable inconsistencies are men driven who undertake to defend a bad cause! For, look to the contradictions of Mr. D'Israeli. On the re-assertion of this charge in his 'Commentaries,' a paper was handed to him written by Sir John Eliot, which might have served to explain this unfortunate matter. It was an "apology" addressed to Mr. Moyle for the "greate injury" he had done him:—it was the atonement which, with the characteristic impulse of a generous mind, Eliot had hastened to offer for an unpremeditated wrong. What said Mr. D'Israeli to this?—"Oh! this is all very true—this apology was

accepted; but the treacherous blow was struck, nevertheless, in the hour of reconciliation!" and he refers to Echard. But he forgets that even that historian fails in bearing him out, and that the words "greate injury" in the apology, could never have applied to what Echard calls the "slight occasion" of their previous "grudge." "I would not," says the author of this pamphlet, "have implicitly adopted the tale on the telling of Echard. That historian received it from the learned Dean Prideaux, and published it during the lifetime of the Dean—a circumstance which is itself confirmatory of the incident." I do not stop to smile with the reader at the last inconsequential assertion, but we appeal to Echard himself, who does not distinctly bear its author out in resting on the undeniable authority of a reverend dean; for he leaves it doubtful from whom he received it, by saying, that the story was told "to Dr. Prideaux, and other relations, from whom I had this particular account."—Certainly we expected to hear nothing further of these gross insinuations, after the publication of Lord Nugent, who offers testimony to prove that the wound was given in a fit of hasty passion, after some irritating words: yet, in the face of all this, Mr. D'Israeli chooses to persist in dark insinuations—strives to prove that there were no words—hints that the blow must therefore have been treacherous,—and, driven from the ground of direct charge, deals in insidious questions: "Would the father, in his narrative, often repeated, have omitted some notice of the intemperate discussion, the prelude of this terrible explosion of passion? Was there, then, no previous discussion?" &c.:—thus clinging to the slander with a pertinacity nothing can relax, though he had said in his volumes, that he "could not imagine, that, after such a revolting incident, any approximation to a renewal of intercourse would have been possible"—and Lord Nugent offers him proof undeniable, (and which he does not attempt to deny,) that Moyle and Eliot were corresponding in the most friendly way many years afterwards.

The next charge in which Mr. D'Israeli persists in this pamphlet, is that of Eliot's being a complimentary admirer of the Duke of Buckingham, in 1623, and of attacking him bitterly from his place in the House of Commons in 1625—accounting, therefore, for his public patriotism, by suggesting private and interested motives. Let the reader pause before he allows such suggestions to influence his judgment. They rest on no better authority than the last. The facts on which they are founded are easily accounted for, without "dimming the glory" of a great patriot—an offence of which Mr. D'Israeli seems proud. During his travels on the Continent, in early youth, Eliot met Buck-