

reigns of the first Norman Princes, this power seems to have resided in the Clergy and in the Barons by turns. But it was lodged very improperly. The Clergy zealous only for the dignity and pre-eminence of the church, neglected and despised the people, whom, with the soil they tilled, they would willingly have considered as the patrimony of St. Peter. Attached to a foreign jurisdiction, and aspiring at an entire independance of the civil powers, they looked upon the prerogatives of the Crown as so many obstacles in the way of their favourite scheme of supreme ecclesiastical dominion; and therefore seized, with eagerness, every occasion of sacrificing the interests of their sovereign to those of the Pope. Enemies alike to their King and to their country, their sole and unvaried aim was to reduce both to the most abject state of submission and slavery. The means employed by them to accomplish their pernicious purposes were, sometimes, to work upon the superstition of the people, and direct it against the power of the Prince; and, at other times, to work upon the superstition of the Prince, and direct it against the liberties of the people.

THE power of preserving the limitations of monarchy for the purposes of liberty was not more properly placed in the Barons. Domineering and turbulent, they oppressed their vassals, and treated them as slaves; they opposed their Prince, and were impatient of every legal restraint. Capricious and inconstant, they sometimes abetted the King in his projects of tyranny; and, at other times, excited the people to insurrections and tumults. For these reasons, the Constitution was ever fluctuating from one extreme to another; Now despotism—now anarchy prevailed.

BUT after the representatives of the Commons began to sit in a separate House, to be considered as a distinct branch of the legislature; and as such, to be invested with separate and independant powers and privileges; then the constitution assumed a very different appearance. Having no interest contrary to that of the people, from among whom they were chosen, and with whom, after the session, they were again