

There is no spirit which requires more to be kept in check, than that of the mere wantonness of legislation ; and so far from being annoyed by that indisposition to change, which is rather the characteristic of all established authorities, we should regard it in the light of a wholesome counteractive, by which to stay the excesses of wild and wayward innovators. There is a great purpose served in society by that law of nature, in virtue of which it is that great bodies move slowly. It would not answer, if a government were to veer and to vacillate with every breath of speculation—if easily liable to be diverted from the steadfastness of their course, by every lure or by every likelihood which sanguine adventurers held out to them. It is well, that in the ruling corporation there should be a certain strength of resistance, against which all splendid imaginations, and all unsound and hollow plausibilities, might spend their force and be dissipated ; and, so far from complaining of it as an impracticable engine which is so hard and difficult of impulse, we should look upon its very unwieldiness in the light of a safeguard, without which we should be driven to and fro by every wind of doctrine on a troubled sea that never rests. On these accounts we feel inclined, that, in the vessel of the body politic, there should be a preponderance of ballast over sail ; and that it really is so, we might put to the account of that optimism, which, with certain reservations, obtains to a very great degree