ed into his political amusements ; exerting himself, with some success, in various elections, as a partisan of his friend Wilkes, and taking up the cause of a Mrs Bigby, in the pursuit of an appeal of blood, against the murderers of her husband, who were supposed to have obtained a pardon through corrupt interest with the court; though the widow at last disappointed him by accepting a pecuniary compen­sation for her right of appeal. He was however successful, on his own behalf, in repelling a prosecution for a libel on Mr Onslow ; and he gained some credit with a party in the city by suggesting to Beckford, then lord mayor of London, the reply which he made to the king’s answer to their remonstrance, and which may still be seen engraved on the pedestal of Beckford’s statue in Guildhall. He was soon after very active in establishing the society for sup­porting the bill of rights, and in obtaining the liberation of Bingley, the printer, who had been somewhat hastily com­mitted to prison by Lord Mansfield.

In the year 1770, he had reason to be dissatisfied with the conduct of Wilkes, in some pecuniary transactions re­lating to the society for the bill of rights. Both parties appeared to the public in a light somewhat ridiculous on the occasion, and neither of them gained in respectability, though the society did not appear to value Wilkes the less for the exposures that took place. It was, however, short­ly after dissolved, and most of its members, except the par­ticular friends of Wilkes, were incorporated into the con­stitutional society. The next year, Mr Tooke completed his academical course at Cambridge, by taking the degree of A. M., though not without some opposition. About this time he exerted himself greatly in procuring the publication of the debates of the House of Commons in the daily papers, not­withstanding the well-known standing orders of the house; and so far as he was instrumental in carrying this point, he appears to have rendered at least one very essential service to his country; but Wilkes, and especially Almon, the bookseller, are said to have a still stronger claim to the merit of this transaction, whatever may have been its cha­racter. He had also a sharp contest with the anonymous Junius, against whose hasty attack he defended himself with great spirit and energy, and with unexampled success. In 1773 he made a formal resignation of his living, and meant at the same time completely to lay aside his clerical character, though no person seems to have felt himself authorized to accept this part of his resignation ; and he began to study the law very diligently, intending to make it the occupation of his life. He adopted soon after a sin­gular method of forcing himself upon the notice of the public, and of the House of Commons in particular : an en­closure bill being about to be hurried, as was reported, a little too rapidly through the house, he wrote some para­graphs in a newspaper, which reflected very severely on the conduct of the Speaker, on purpose that he might be summoned to appear before the house ; and being placed at the bar, he gave such reasons for his conduct as produ­ced some animated discussions, and in the end was sup­posed, though probably without foundation, to have caused the bill to be modified in some oppressive clauses. By these means he obtained the favour of Mr Tooke of Purley, who thought himself aggrieved by the bill in its ori­ginal state, and received from him such assurances of tes­tamentary favours as induced his nephew, Colonel Har­wood, to agree upon a partition of their joint interest in the reversion of his estate ; though Mr Horne never re­ceived, first and last, more than L.8000 from the property, notwithstanding the subsequent change of his name about the year 1782, in acknowledgment of his patron’s kindness, and his long-continued intimacy and frequent residence at Purley ; the principal legatee, after all, being a Mr Beaseley.

Mr Home Tooke was, of course, a strenuous opposer of

the American war ; and in 1777, he published a very of­fensive advertisement, in which the sufferers in the battle of Lexington were described as having been murdered by the king’s troops. For this attack on the government, he was tried at Guildhall in July 1777. He conducted his own defence, but was found guilty of the libel, and scn- tenced to one year’s imprisonment in the King’s Bench, and a fine of L.200. It was on this occasion that he first appear­ed before the public as a grammarian, in the criticisms which constitute his celebrated “ Letter to Mr Dunning.” The next year he suffered a still severer punishment, in the refusal of the society of the Inner Temple to admit him to the bar, on account of his having taken orders; so that his prospects of professional advancement were utterly an­nihilated. This occurrence made him still more bitter against the existing government, and in 1780 he printed some severe remarks upon the measures of Lord North. He attempted to establish himself as a practical farmer in Huntingdonshire ; but he caught an ague, and soon becoming disgusted with an agricultural life, he returned to London, and occupied for some years a house near Soho Square. His ideas of parliamentary reform, contain­ed in a second letter addressed to Mr Dunning, were by no means extravagant, and he continued to adhere, in this respect, rather to the party of Mr Pitt than to that of Mr Fox.

The publication of his grammatical dissertations, under the title of the Diversions of Purley, afforded but a slight and imperfect intermission of his political pursuits, for his etymological works are as replete with the politics of the day as his speeches and his pamphlets. Another of his pamphlets appeared in 1788, under the title of Two Pair of Portraits, being intended to serve the cause of Pitt’s party in their elections. But in 1790 be himself became a candidate for the representation of Westminster, in oppo­sition to Mr Fox and to Lord Hood; and he distinguished himself sufficiently as a public orator, though he was not succcessful in the contest.

In 1794, he was tried for high treason, together with se­veral other members of the corresponding societies, who had been active in attempting to introduce some imitations of the French Revolution in the plans of reform which they brought forward. He exhibited on the trial some­what more of firmness than of good taste. One of his as­sociates had before been acquitted, and the jury speedily returned a similar verdict with respect to himself. He af­terwards dedicated the second volume of his Diversions of Purley to his counsel, Gibbs and Erskine, and to the jury who tried him.

In 1796 he again became a candidate for the represen­tation of Westminster, but again without success ; and, notwithstanding his strong opinions respecting a reform in parliament, he afterwards condescended to accept from Lord Camelford, in 1801, a seat for the nominal borough of Old Sarum. It was then to be determined if a clergy­man could sit in the House of Commons ; but the ministry, instead of contesting the point with respect to his particu­lar case, brought in a bill to decide the question in the ne­gative for the future, and he remained in the house till the dissolution of the parliament in the next year, but without f>articularly distinguishing himself in its proceedings. His ast public effort as a party man was made in espousing for a short time the cause of Mr Paull, as candidate for Westminster ; but he abandoned this gentleman in a sub­sequent contest. The later years of his life were chiefly passed in the society of a select circle of friends, who fre­quently partook of his hospitality at Wimbledon. He died in March 1812, leaving his property to some natural daugh­ters ; for he had never been married. He was buried in Ealing church, and not in his garden, as he had directed ; his executors thinking themselves the less bound by these