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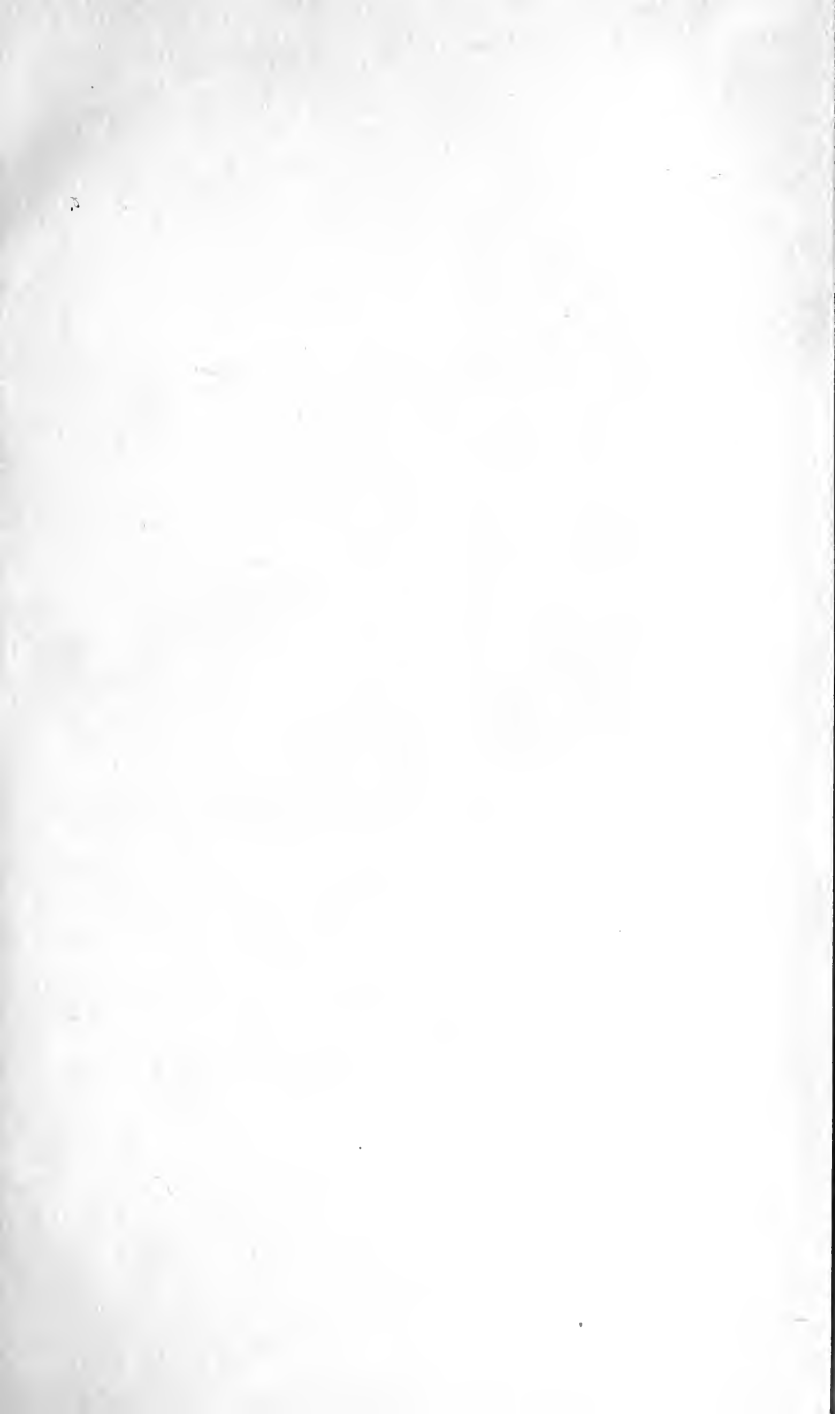
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CONTENTS

- On democracy, by J.S.Blackie
- Speeches on Parliamentary Reform, by John Bright.
- Reform Bill, 1866:- Epitome of Reform Debate, March 1866
- Sherbrooke, Robert Lowe, Viscount:- Mr.Lowe's speech on Reform, April 26th, 1866.
- W.E.Gladstone's speech on the Bill for the Extension of the Suffrage, May 11, 1864.
- Sherbrooke, R.E., Viscount:- Speech on the Irish Tenant-Right Bill; and a letter from Lord Oranmore to the "Times".
- Vaughan, R.W.B. - What does it profit a man?
- The temporal power of the Pope, by Cardinal Manning.
- The Pope and the Revolution, by Cardinal Newman.
- The Reunion of Christendom, by Cardinal Manning.
- The Present state of parties in America, by Laurence Oliphant.
- Message du Président Davis, le 7 Décembre, 1863.
- Dupanloup, F.A.P., Bp.- Lettre pastorale.
- Dupanloup, F.A.P., Bp.- L'Athéisme et le péril social.



DEMOCRACY.

A LECTURE

DELIVERED TO THE

Working Men's Institute
Edinburgh

ON THE 3^D JANUARY 1867.

BY

JOHN STUART BLACKIE

PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

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1867.

*' Pure democracy is the absurdest of all forms of Government,
because in it the directing and the restraining powers are one,
which is impossible.'*

SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH.

ON DEMOCRACY.

'THE best of all animals, when governed by law and justice, is man; when without them, the most terrible.'¹ This is the sentence of Aristotle, the most sagacious and the most far-sighted of political writers, and, of all speculative men, certainly the most practical. And to this undeniable dictum we may, without fear of question, add, that of all animals man is the most difficult to govern, and of all arts, the art of government is that one which at once demands the greatest talents for success, and entails the most terrible penalties by failure.² Nevertheless, and in spite of the terrible lessons of history written everywhere in characters of blood, there has always been a class of persons of hasty wit and superficial conclusions, who have been of opinion that the government of human beings is one of the simplest of all arts—as simple, in fact, as any sum in addition,—and that the one infallible way to find the wisdom by which a community of reasonable beings shall be governed, is to gather them into indiscriminate masses, portion them off like sheep into separate pens, take the votes of the several pens by the poll, add the votes together, and the sum will give a verdict which, by a cunning machinery of social wire-pulling (well understood in America), will give good government. The maintainers of this opinion are known in history as democrats, and universal suffrage is the watchword of their doctrine. The social system of which they are the advocates is so flattering to human pride, and opens up so patent a road to the ignorant and the conceited, the presumptuous and the

¹ Aristotle's *Pol.* I. 2—Bekker.

² 'When one measures the whole circle of the Social Sciences, one is frightened at all that they require,—study, talent, genius, and elevation of character.'—Sismondi, *Essays*, London, 1847, p. 289.

unscrupulous, that, notwithstanding its essential unreasonableness, it has always commanded a large amount of popular sympathy. Even in Great Britain, a country the most naturally averse to the practical assertion of one-sided political ideas, it has occasionally showed face; and at the present moment the country is being perambulated and agitated by popular orators, who, though in words they sometimes express a certain vague admiration for the mixed constitution under which this country has grown and prospered, do in fact maintain the most unqualified principles of democracy, and appeal to the verdict of the masses as the only standard of political rectitude. That any large influential class of this practical-minded community should have faith in a delusive conceit which every memorable fact of history contradicts, I cannot believe; but that there are thousands and tens of thousands in this island, especially among those who are called 'the working classes,' ignorant enough to allow themselves to be juggled out of reason and common sense by general assertions about the transcendental virtues of democracy, that is, about the transcendental wisdom of themselves, made by men of talent and eloquence, only an amiable and voluntary blindness could deny. Besides, in politics there are always half a dozen reasonably sensible men—men who, from their education, ought to know better,—who will allow themselves to be borne along by a popular current of unreason, and even indulge in a little flirtation with principles, from the serious assertion of which they would be the first to recoil.

It has occurred to me, therefore, that I may be doing a little public service at the present juncture, by stating, not in the style of a political declamation from the hustings, but of a large philosophical survey, the fundamental fallacies which lie at the bottom of this idol-worship of the multitude which is now attempted to be imposed upon us; and, in doing so, I shall certainly not follow the example of great popular orators, by indulging in extravagant laudations of one party and equally extravagant denunciations of the other; but I will endeavour to state the case as fairly as possible for both parties, and to paint out the fair democratic delusion in the first place with colours as roseate as the

TO THE
DIRECTORS AND MEMBERS
OF THE
WORKING MEN'S INSTITUTE, EDINBURGH.

Dear Friends,

I dedicate this Lecture to you, as those principally concerned in its appearance. The notoriety given to its delivery, a matter quite contrary to my original intention, has rendered it necessary that I should state my views on the important subject of Democracy with a greater breadth of detail and a fuller array of authority than I should otherwise have thought necessary. On the imperfections of the work, I pray you to look with a kindly eye, and to bear in mind that it was composed by hasty snatches, under the pressure of a more than usual amount of Academic business. With the earnest prayer that you may be enabled to give to the difficult problems of practical politics the large study and the wise caution which they deserve, I bid you farewell for the present, to occupy myself with studies, if not more useful to the Commonwealth, at least more congenial to my disposition. I shall esteem myself happy

if from the perusal of these pages you rise with the strengthened conviction that in politics all one-sided movements are wrong, and that a party is never in greater danger than when it rides upon the top wave of triumph.

Believe me always,

Your sincere Well-wisher,

JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

COLLEGE, EDINBURGH,

3 Jan'y. 1867.

most fervid apostle might desire. And I will do this with the greater confidence of being able to sketch a faithful portraiture, because I am by birth and habit a man of the people, in nowise connected with what is popularly called the Aristocracy, and earnestly desirous that all classes of the people should possess that weight in the government of this country which a fair consideration of their relative positions, and a just estimate of the quality and the quantity of their social contributions, might recommend. I start, therefore, with stating the case for democracy thus:—

I. All men are naturally free. God has given to His creatures certain functions and capacities, which require room and scope for their exercise ; and the more room the better. No limits or bounds to free activity ought to be allowed in society beyond what God has constituted. Especially, no laws ought to be made by one class of men to give enlargement to their own sphere of action by the process of compulsory circumscription of the natural sphere of their neighbours. As the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the measure of legislative wisdom, so the greatest liberty of the greatest number is the measure of national greatness. To be free is to be strong ; not to be free is to be weak. To be free is to exercise lordship ; not to be free is to endure slavery. To be free is to be a man ; to be a slave is to be a chattel. The watchword of humanity, the war-cry of heroism, the stamp of moral dignity, is FREEDOM.

II. All men are naturally equal. By this is not meant, of course, that all men are equal in talents, in character, in excellence of any kind, any more than they are in physical conformation or in stature. Inequality is one of the most prominent facts of nature and of life, though we must never forget how large a share convention, and institution, and usurped force may have had in producing inequality where God meant equality. But what the enlightened advocates of democracy mean, when they assert the natural equality of all men, is that in reference to matters of social organism one man is as good as another. Every man has life and rights, and in fact stakes his all in the society to which he belongs ;

the poorest man as much, and generally perhaps much more, than the richest. Therefore socially each man is on a level. Absolute equality is the law of all free institutions. If it were not so, a few might combine by force and fraud to deprive the many of the common birthright of humanity, as, indeed, the few powerful have in all ages combined to override, oppress, and keep in thrall'd servitude the feeble many. The only remedy for this is political equality.

III. As in the individual, so in the body social, self-government is the word which expresses the healthy state of perfect manhood. Nations, like individuals, go through their successive stages of infancy, boyhood, and pupilage; but a full-grown man requires no tutors or curators, and a full-grown nation no governors. The people by natural right is its own sovereign; and any persons holding situations of command in a well-constituted republic are merely put forth for the sake of convenience as the obedient organs of the public will. The real king is always the people, asserting itself fully and without restraint in free congregations of equal units.

IV. The preceding proposition expresses the true principle on which representative government proceeds. A House of Representatives represents the interests, the wishes, and the wisdom of the free, equal, and independent people; and such a body becomes necessary in large communities only from the practical difficulty of the whole people occupying themselves at one time and place, for considerable spaces of time, with the discussion and conduct of public business. Representative bodies, therefore, are not, properly speaking, deliberative bodies; for, if they were entitled to deliberate and decide on independent grounds, they would be assuming to a few the prerogative which, according to the principle of a consistent democracy, can belong only to the whole. A people who should elect representatives with the right of free deliberation, might readily find their own dearest interests disowned by the very men whom they had elected to be their champions. A House of Representatives, therefore, is only a committee of the people, and exists only for the sake of carrying their decisions into execution.

V. The legitimate method by which the people declare their will, and pronounce their decisions, is by the vote of the majority. Any other method denies the natural equality of mankind, and establishes an oligarchy more or less insidious and oppressive. That the majority is always right in all cases no man will assert. In scientific questions, and in matters remote from public view, the decision of a skilled minority will of course justly prevail. But in the affairs of daily life, in matters of common interest and concern, a common man will generally have a shrewd guess what ought to be done, though he cannot always marshal his reasons scientifically. 'It is the greatest of all delusions to suppose that profound study is necessary for the understanding of political science.' Every man knows his own interest, and the people know what is practically for their benefit in matters before their nose better than the most subtle speculator. A sensible tradesman who reads the newspapers, will, in nine cases out of ten, give a more just decision in political matters than a learned professor who quotes Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Aristotle. The general agreement of the mass of the people in practical matters, is, in fact, the only safeguard to society against the cunning devices of oligarchs, the crotchets of ideal speculators, and the bookish pedantry of the learned.

These, so far as I have been able to make the analysis, are the leading propositions which express the principles and the purposes of the democratic party. I have stated them as fairly, and with as much decision, as I could; and, did space allow, I should be quite willing further to exhibit a large array of facts from history, which would seem to lend them the most ample justification. The glories of Salamis and Marathon; the intellectual triumphs of ancient Athens, and the political ascendancy of ancient Rome; the patriotic achievements of the Swiss and the Belgians; the triumph of Luther over Pope Leo, and of the Covenanters over Charles II.; the downfall of feudalism in France by the Revolution of 1789; the creation of a Prussian people by the Baron Stein in 1808; the overthrow of Napoleon by the great national uprising in 1813;—these are but a few of

the greatest and most glorious events of history, from which a popular orator could lightly garnish forth the great epos of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. But I will leave panoramic pictures of this kind to those to whom it more properly belongs. For my argument they are not necessary, as I fully admit everything they contain, and yield to no man in the fervour with which I read the records of those struggles by which the liberty and independence of the great nations of the world have been established. But in moral questions neither panoramic pictures nor closely-marshalled propositions are of any practical value, so long as they are one-sided. Every moral proposition has its counter proposition, without which the truth can no more be eliminated than an equation can be worked without the values on both sides. I shall therefore proceed to analyse the above five propositions, and by meeting each assertion with its contrary, prepare the way for that full statement of political truth, with which no extreme doctrine, whether of democracy or of aristocracy, can ever be made to harmonize.

First, as to FREEDOM. It is certainly true that birds were not made for cages, and that to be a natural, normal, proper bird, a winged creature ought to be allowed to fly. So man, in order to be man, and no chattel, must be free. A civil society of slaves is nonsense in the statement. Only free-men, as Aristotle teaches, can constitute a State. But freedom does not mean absolute freedom; on the contrary, it rather means only the equal acknowledgment of just and fair restraints. Mere liberty, though a very great thing to a bird, is the first and lowest and smallest condition of human society. Freedom, however much belauded, is, in fact, that quality or function which man shares in common with children, savages, madmen, and wild beasts. All these naturally rejoice only in freedom, and disown all restraint. The imposition of restraints upon liberty is the first great act of civilisation; and to increase restrictions is, in the general case, to make progress in legislation. No doubt, unwise restrictions have sometimes been made by intermeddling rulers, which required to be removed; but law, nevertheless, means restraint; and to be lawless is to be free. It is with

the power of human liberty as with the force of steam in a steam-engine: it is only by being confined and regulated and controlled that it becomes anything more than an idle puff or an inorganic blast. We must say, therefore, that, always supposing the existence of native social forces, not freedom but order is the grand distinctive principle of civil society. God made the world, by freedom certainly, in one sense, that is, by His own free will, but not less by restraint, by subjecting His own free thought to that law of self-consistent energy, by which a chaos becomes a cosmos. Order is the grand regulating principle of all things. The stars are not free to move otherwise than in their appointed courses; the flowers divide themselves into finely calculated sections, by laws than which no mathematics are more ingenious; even the storms and the winds have their laws, to which only the imperfection of our calculating machines, and the narrowness of our survey, give an appearance of instability. Let us say, therefore, as the counterpart of the first proposition, that the whole universe is subjected to law, and perishes and falls into chaos the moment it attempts to live by mere freedom. In this respect, the moral world, as we should anticipate, is the exact image of the physical. A congregation of the masses of people, blown up with the idea of liberty, could only produce confusion and anarchy, unless these masses are willing to submit themselves to the constraints of reason and law. History has shown this both on the large and the small scale, a thousand times. Unreined liberty leads to violence and passion; violence leads to strife and civil war; civil war ends in confusion and exhaustion; and the necessary conclusion is dissolution, destruction, and mutual extermination; unless the cure be sought, where, after such a process, it has alone been found, in military despotism. The class of men, therefore, who inflame the passions of the masses, by vague harangues about liberty, are to be accounted among the greatest enemies of the people, specially of the working man. Personally, there are no doubt great differences among such men. I am willing to think that many of them are honourable and high-principled; self-contained crotchet-mongers, sentimental idealists, fantastic philanthropists, meagre theorizers whom all

facts have not taught, may form a large proportion ; but the selfish, the ambitious, the conceited, the envious, and the proud, no doubt contribute their quota ; while to some the terrible description of the apostle Jude may be literally applicable : ' Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame ; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.' And again : ' These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts ; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.' On the contrary, the happy results of order, under the constraining power of reason, in society, are love, harmony, moderation, and toleration ; right and justice in the administration of the laws ; stability in social institutions ; peace, prosperity, and permanence. Liberty is a wild horse, which can only be made serviceable to the commonwealth by being saddled and bridled by the great master, Order ; it is a wine which, unless carefully used under the prescription of a wise physician, lifts a man for a moment into an imaginary heaven, only that it may plunge him into a real hell.

The next favourite watchword of the democrat is EQUALITY. It expresses a fundamental point essentially necessary in his system, but which is, unfortunately, also his weakest point. It is no doubt perfectly true that all men have two eyes and two legs. All men can look and walk, and eat and drink and sleep, and do everything which a pig can do as well as a man. In these low matters we find a general sort of equality amongst all men ; but precisely as we mount in the scale of excellence, the equality vanishes, and the most glaring inequality everywhere meets our eye. All men see, but few men observe accurately ; and fewer still have moral and intellectual insight. We are all naturally ignorant, stupid, obstinate, conceited, passionate, and require to be trained by a long process to any high degree of intelligence and virtue. The difference between one man and another in respect of natural capacity is immeasurable ; in respect of acquired worth even greater ; and it is this acquired worth, much more than native talent, which renders a man fit to take any share beneficially in the conduct of public

business. In every view, however, the striking fact is that eminent talent, and accurate knowledge, and high principle, are rare ; and the points in which all men are equal are precisely those from which the highest human excellence is excluded. It is a sound observation of Williams, the Polynesian missionary, that 'in the lowest stages of civilisation democracy prevails, all heads being of an equal height.' If, therefore, we are to rise in the scale of being, we must accustom ourselves habitually to recognise the great counter truth of the democratic equality, viz., the aristocratic principle of subordination and superiority.

'We live by admiration, hope, and love,'

as Wordsworth sings, and Plato teaches ;¹ and we advance in moral and spiritual dignity just in proportion as we acquire the habit of acknowledging superiority, instead of assuming equality, with our fellow-men. In this view, the democratic temper, which teaches every man to say to his neighbour, 'I am as good as you, and perhaps a little better,' must be regarded as one of the greatest antagonist powers to all popular improvement. Self-respect is no doubt a virtue ; but it is very closely allied to self-importance and self-conceit, and is in any view a very cheap virtue compared with the aristocratic and Christian one of 'honouring all men.' Instead of being blown up with a false idea of equality, men ought to be taught to know their true position, and willingly to subject themselves to their natural superiors. The feeble ought readily to submit themselves to the firm, the ignorant to the well-informed, the bad to the good. But of this healthy feeling of respect and reverence for what is superior, democracy knows nothing. The result is that wherever that system of government flourishes, there we find the rank hot-bed of conceit, insolence, vain confidence, irreverence, and hollow pretension of all kinds. The thorough democrat is the sworn enemy of all eminence ; he hates to hear any man praised as in any way superior to the crowd ; he banishes Aristides, because he is sick of hearing him called the Just ; his whole instincts and striving lead him to reduce everything to the dead level of his pet equality. He is

¹ Μάλα γὰρ φιλόσοφον τοῦτο τὸ πάθος τὸ θαυμάζειν.—*Theætet.* 155 D.

thus in a state of open rebellion against the laws of Nature and the institution of God. For everywhere in Nature, in every organic body, as well as in all societies, there is a high and a low, a controlling and a ministrant power, a dominant and a subordinate, a part formed to govern, and a part formed to obey.¹ Whoso does not know this has not learned the first lesson of social science ; and if he has not learned it from the prophets, philosophers, and apostles of antiquity, he will certainly not learn it from the demagogues and popular orators of these days, who preach political equality, despise dominion, speak evil of dignities, and earn cheap applause from an immaculate populace by haranguing against the vices of a bloated aristocracy.

The third point of democracy is SELF-GOVERNMENT. The proposition expressive of this contains the greatest of all the fallacies in the democratic logic. The real fact is the exact contrary. A multitude of human beings indiscriminately congregated, that is, acting only as a quantitative force without any regard to quality, never did, and in its very nature never can, perform the functions of governing. Where thousands and tens of thousands of persons, the most variously constituted, individually perhaps sensible and reasonable enough, are brought together, on a sudden notice, to deliberate on the most perplexed and difficult subjects, and this not under the guidance of cool reason, but, as generally happens in political assemblies, lashed into a temporary madness by the spur of ambition, and confounded by the jugglery of faction ; under such circumstances, nothing short of a miracle could lead to cool deliberation ; and cool deliberation is the necessary condition of all that rational leading of reasonable beings which is called government. Left to its natural tendencies, every multitude resolves into confusion, or rushes on to perdition. Of this the great poet who sang his grand minstrel notes, not for ancient Greece only, but for all times and all places, has left us a striking picture in the well-known popular assembly in the Second Book of the Iliad, to which Agamemnon, deluded by a lying

¹ Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι οὐ μόνον τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν συμφερόντων ἐστὶ.—Aristotle, *Pol.* 1. 5.

dream, had appealed for final decision at a critical moment of the war. With characteristic fickleness and faint-heartedness, the common people of the camp, after nine years' expenditure of life and resources, were willing to give up their greatest national expedition, and lay Europe a slave at the foot of Asia, merely that they might go home a year sooner and see their wives. But this inglorious resolution, hastily taken and hastily attempted to be put into execution, was at once checked by the interference of that national aristocracy, which, in ancient Greece, as in modern Britain, has so often proved itself the stoutest champion of popular rights, and the most clear-sighted discerner of popular interests. The wise Ulysses makes the round of the camp, and happily finds the ear of the people not yet altogether deaf to the appeal of reason, and their heart yet pervious to the sting of virtuous reproach. He tells them plainly, what infatuated democrats yet require to be told—

Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη

'Ill fares the State where the many rule!'

recalls them to their natural subjection to their superiors, and at the same time takes occasion, in a few masterly lines, to give a portrait of the demagogic man, ill-formed, ill-favoured, envious, spiteful, and slanderous, whose vocation it is to flatter the lowest class of society, and to malign the highest. Hear how he has it :—

'The ugliest man was he who came to Troy,
With squinting eyes, and one distorted foot,
His shoulders broad, and buried in his breast
His narrow head, with scanty growth of hair.'¹

But it is not in profane poetry alone that we find the portraiture of the true nature of all popular assemblies. The sacred history of the New Testament, rich in many texts which the most orthodox preachers never think of applying, supplies an illustration of the true character of a Greek ἐκκλησία, not inferior to that given by Homer. In the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we are informed that when St. Paul was at Ephesus, then a sort of Liverpool or Glasgow to the western coast of Asia, there arose no small stir about the new doctrine which the apostle preached. The people,

¹ *The Iliad of Homer.* By Edward Earl of Derby. Vol. i. p. 45.

who in all countries are generally opposed to reforms in religion, and ready to cry heresy against reasonable preachers and apostles of all kinds, found on this occasion, as is found also in the most recent times, their piety powerfully aided by their pocket, and brought the prejudices of superstition and the interests of the craft to bear in a combined battery against the strange gospeller. A meeting of the working men of Ephesus, especially of the silversmiths, who made shrines to Diana, was accordingly held; and this meeting, after the usual number of eloquent addresses by the chief men of the craft, seconded no doubt by some of the most popular clergy of the city, framed resolutions to the effect that the preaching of the apostles ought to be put down, as derogatory to the dignity of the goddess, and hostile to the interests of the craft. Immediately thereupon, while yet their livers were hot with sacred wrath, they had a great public meeting in the theatre, attended not merely by the silversmiths, but by the whole body of the working classes and other citizens, of whom, on account of the haste of the proceedings, the greater part knew not wherefore they were come together. However, on being informed that Jews were at the bottom of the commotion—a race whom they heartily hated, just as orthodox Scotchmen hate Papists and Unitarians—they set up a bawling and a braying, and a hissing and a bellowing, like a congregation of asses, serpents, and geese; and for the space of two hours caused the air to resound—for the theatre in Ephesus was open—with the cry of ‘GREAT IS DIANA OF THE EPHESIANS!’ By this prodigious amount of breath, the pulmonary force of the working classes had exhausted itself; and the town-clerk, standing up quietly, informed the assembly that there was really no cause for disturbance, that at all events nothing could be done in this way of universal roaring, and that their only plan was to get a lawyer to draw out an indictment against the strange preachers, and bring the matter before the law courts; and with these words he dismissed the assembly. Such was a democratic meeting eighteen hundred years ago in one of the richest and most influential cities of ancient Greece; and no person who has had any experience of political life in this country, can doubt that the same chaotic element exists still among indiscriminate

tumultuous assemblies, of men called reasonable—an element which bursts out occasionally with volcanic violence, even when the most approved engines are applied to keep it under restraint. How, indeed, can it be otherwise? ‘Pure democracy,’ as a great Scotch thinker and statesman said, ‘is the absurdest of all forms of government, because in it the directing and the restraining powers are one, which is impossible.’¹ Exactly so; but democratic speakers always declare that the masses of the people need no restraint; they restrain themselves; they are at once horse and rider; they have only to open their mouth, and then—VOX POPULI VOX DEI! This is the theory; but universal experience has taught that popular assemblies which pretend to govern, must in fact be governed,—governed either by their natural heads, as in the example of the Iliad, or by those occasional captains of popular movements whom their admirers call friends of the people, but whom I, marking an old Greek thing by an old Greek name, prefer to call demagogues. This observation leads us to the next two propositions of the democratic creed, containing the machinery by means of which organized popular assemblies hope to escape the danger of hasty counsels and tumultuous proceedings.

The grand modern device for making democracy innocuous is supposed to be REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT. The great majority of democrats in these times, I presume, have acquired so much wisdom from the experience of centuries, as to be willing to allow that the convocation of large masses of men for purposes of government leads only to confusion. They feel that the swelling sea of human passions which rages contagiously in popular assemblies requires a breakwater,—and this breakwater they find in representation. That representative assemblies, in which the people act indirectly through their deputies, are a capital improvement on the old Greek *ἐκκλησία* and the Roman *comitia*, where the most important functions of government were performed directly by an indiscriminate mass voting on the principle of universal suffrage, no one, however superficially acquainted with the history of the ancient republics, will deny; but to

¹ Sir James Mackintosh, in *Life by his Son*, vol. i. p. 92.

imagine that this device alone is sufficient to preserve the mixed constitution of Great Britain from being swamped by a rush of democratic forces, is a great delusion. Let us consider what a House of Representatives really means, or rather, if reason is to have anything to say in the matter, ought to mean. In our House of Commons we wish to represent the intelligence, virtue, and substance of the people. We wish to bring together a certain number of wise and good men, selected on account of their wisdom and goodness, of all varieties and grades of opinion, to deliberate with a calm, cool, and reasonable survey on the difficult problems of public policy. How are we to get hold of such men? In many ways, but certainly not exclusively in the way imagined by democrats. For, according to their system, the House of Commons cannot have the four qualities which it is absolutely necessary that a deliberative assembly should possess—variety, coolness, wisdom, and independence. In fact, your democrat still practically believes in the old fallacy, that an indiscriminate multitude can deliberate; and accordingly he sends up, instead of counsellors, mere delegates, to spout forth on a larger stage the concluded deliberations of the sovereign people. Accordingly, if at any time his favourite schemes are thwarted by the caution and moderation of the aristocratic party in the House of Commons, he goes forth into the green fields, and the crowded squares, and appeals to that great court of supreme wisdom in political matters, which with him is final—the acclamation of the millions. The man who does this, however unselfish he may be in his purpose, and pure in his intent, is the declared enemy to the constitution of this country. He excites the people to turn the national senate of free and independent counsellors into a congregation of mere mechanical organs, and slavish echoes of the popular voice. This, no doubt, is the most consistent of all courses on his part; but to thinking men it merely exhibits the great roaring sea of popular unreason, acting as in classical times, and not a whit the better for the patent breakwater. The fact is, that if by the representative system we are to represent only the hasty conclusions, and the one-sided violent views of great masses of men indiscriminately called together at the call of ambitious demagogues and the spur of venomous faction, our imagined advantage above the ancients falls

to the ground. The House of Commons becomes only a standing deputation of the mere numerical majorities of the people. Two essential qualities of such an assembly are one-sidedness and dependence. Now, two sides of a case stated with coolness and comprehensiveness are, as every court of justice knows, the indispensable condition of a sound deliberation. But in a democratic House of Commons, constituted by universal suffrage, two sides of a great public question could seldom be heard. The kind of men who can look quietly round and round a subject would never be returned. Such a man, for instance, as the late George Cornwall Lewis, according to a recent wise remark of the *Times*,¹ could not possibly be chosen by purely democratic electors. They elect the man who represents most decidedly their prejudices and their passions—for no man, as Sismondi well expresses it, can delegate the wisdom which he does not possess,—and if he, on any occasion, should take a fancy to have an independent opinion, they will soon let him know that he does not understand his duty, and must be dismissed. Thus deliberation in the great council of the nation becomes a farce, democracy rides rampant in a senate of servile sworn delegates, and modest reason, baffled by the intemperance of faction, and gagged by the intolerance of the popular will, shrinks into her private shell and retires.

A few words remain to be said on the democratic method of dealing with public questions by the vote of the MAJORITY. When reasonable beings meet together for the sake of deciding any matter, they mean to decide it not by the greatest show of hands, but by the greatest show of reason. What people ought to desire is, to be governed by the wisest and best of the community, however few, not by the mere arithmetical majority of men having, or imagined to have, an opinion. And yet, if some thousands of men parade the streets in monster processions five miles long, declaring that they wish some change in the constitution of this country, some people are apt to think that a potent reason in favour of such change has been produced. It may be so; but in this view politics is a matter with which reason has little to do, and a company of men becomes influential by mere physical

¹ Leading Article, December 3, 1866.

demonstration of swarming units, like an invasion of Norway rats. But the fact is that, as Goethe has it, men are governed at bottom by three things,—by wisdom, by authority, and by appearance; and that no government which appeals finally to mere numbers can stand. This were possible only if popular assemblies generally consisted of wise men, and if, being wise, they were able to continue wise, under the exacerbations, irritations, and excesses of a popular election. But neither of these conditions squares with the fact. We must say, therefore, that an appeal to the decision of the majority is always the resource of despair; and, if there be any other method of attaining a more reasonable result in matters of social action, these methods ought first to be exhausted. Now, here the obvious method occurs of sifting the masses, so as to eliminate the worst elements and retain the best, before the arithmetical process of counting polls commences. A majority of a select or sifted mass will produce a very different result from a majority of an indiscriminate and tumultuous mass, as the conduct of all kinds of business sufficiently shows. No doubt the select body may sometimes indulge in jobbery or downright swindle; and this malversation of a clique may often be rectified by the calling in of a large and loose multitude with effect; but these are exceptional cases, and the rule is, that no business can be conducted rationally by any other than a select minority of the select. A set of cool officials, sitting round a green table and taking the vote by a majority in a matter of professional business, which all of them understand, is a very different thing from a promiscuous assembly, voting on a matter which they either have not studied at all, or contemplate only through the false medium of party glamour and the fumes of a feverish self-importance. Even in select bodies, men have often the sense to allow the business to fall into the hands of the one man who knows what he is about; and under this intelligent despotism the society prospers. But in politics, so soon as you rouse the passions of an indiscriminate multitude, such a voluntary submission to a reasonable lordship is not to be looked for. No wild beast elects the man who is to tame it. The majority, in the most perilous and critical matters, as I read history, is pretty sure to be

either wrong altogether, or wrong in the excess of what it passionately feels to be right. If no method can be devised by which the fatal decisions of excited multitudes may be reversed, the doom of the commonwealth is sealed. Precisely when the storm rages loudest the pilot will be most wanted ; but he will not be found. The mutinous crew in the hour of peace had cast the wise captain overboard, and in the hour of imminent shipwreck nothing remains for them but to choose for their master the most energetic of the mutineers. This has been the experience of all democracies. The natural lord was banished, who used whips occasionally ; and an artificial lord is created who lashes with scorpions for a perpetuity.¹

So much for the folly of committing the control of public affairs to the decision of a mere majority. But the injustice of it is no less flagrant. One of the great objects of all government, perhaps the principal object, is to protect the weak against the strong, that is, in many cases, to protect

¹ 'Certainly the direction of a State is more difficult than that of a ship ; nevertheless, if a ship on an unknown sea had on board with a thousand ignorant persons one skilful pilot, these ignorant persons would be mad if they did not give up the helm to him, or if they pretended to regulate his navigation by the majority of suffrages. It is not the pilot who has the right to direct the ship ; it is the right of all those who are running a common risk, to profit by the skill of the most skilful for the safety of the lives and property of all. The object of association is, in fact, to bring forward the greatest talent and the greatest virtue, in order to employ them for the greatest good of all. In a time of great danger, of deep feeling, the instinct by which to discover greatness is not wanting to the masses, and genius often takes its true place without trouble. But it is rare that political questions inspire the people with the sentiment of danger and the necessity of confidence at the same time. Most frequently, if we asked each individual for his opinion, we should be far from obtaining in reply the expression of the national opinion. The ignorant populace, given up almost everywhere to retrograde prejudices, will refuse to favour its own progress. The more ignorant the people are, the more are they opposed to all kind of development, the more they are deprived of all enjoyment, and the more are they obstinately, angrily attached to their habits, as to the only possession they have left ; like horses, which in a fire it is impossible to force out of a stable in flames. Count the voices in Spain and Portugal, they will be for the maintenance of the Inquisition. Count them in Russia, they will be for the despotism of the Czar. Count them everywhere, they will be for those laws, for those local customs which most require to be corrected, they will be for *prejudices* : it would seem that this word, appropriated to opinions adopted by vulgar minds without discussion, says enough ; it suffices to teach us that the masses hold to opinions ready made, that only the small number of thinkers rise above them to consider them anew.'—Sismondi, *Essays*, pp. 289, 290.

minorities against majorities. Now if, according to the theory of democratic politicians, we override the whole country with a uniform system of governing by majorities, the necessary effect of this, as society is at present constituted, is to put the middle and higher classes everywhere at the disposal of the lower and lowest classes, wherever those classes are inspired by a common passion, and choose to combine for political purposes. And what is this but virtually to disfranchise the upper classes, to disfranchise, in fact, everything but workmen, and to create a despotism of one class of society, that is, of those who work mainly by their hands, over every other class,—to prostrate quality before quantity, to annihilate all virtue, excellence, and dignity in the commonwealth before what I do not hesitate to call the brute demonstration of superior numbers? But the working classes, perhaps, are so wise, so virtuous, and so moderate, that they will never abuse the enormous power with which democracy is prepared to intrust them. The man who utters one word to encourage this very natural conceit on the part of the multitude is either a flatterer or a fool.¹ It is the most undisputed of all maxims in political science, that, whosoever is intrusted with political power is disposed to abuse it, and will certainly abuse it, unless a sharp-eyed precaution be kept constantly awake. The working classes in congregation assembled, merely because they can outvote the rest of the community by seven to three, have no immunity from the common frailties of human nature. If the oligarchy of mediæval Venice perpetrated dark deeds at which humanity even now shudders, the de-

¹ The Trades'-Unions have asserted in the strongest terms, and in fact their whole organization implies, the right of every mere majority to control a minority by physical force. I extract from the *Pall Mall Gazette* the following utterance of one of the ringleaders of the Trades'-Union at Sheffield :—

'I maintain that all those who get their living by a trade are bound to obey the laws of the union of the trade. After entering a trade it is not a voluntary act of theirs to become members of that trade's union. The rebel States wanted to secede, to be expelled from the Union, but the United States thrashed them into obedience. So with trades'-unions. It is their duty to thrash all into submission who get their living by the trade, and who will not obey the laws of the union without thrashing. If in so doing they become obnoxious to Parliament law, they take the consequences. Never in the history of the world have any men allowed a smaller number of men to do as they liked. No man can do so unless with the consent of those around him. There is either an eye to convey determined indignation, or a hand to strike down the offender.'

mocracy of Edinburgh or London will be prepared to do the same, when the real or imagined necessity arises. Nay more, there is a contagious power in a multitude which naturally leads to excesses, from which the wise caution of an oligarchy would shrink. I believe all men have naturally a tyrannical seed in them, which passion, and ambition, and the exercise of power can at any time call forth into ripeness ; but political and ecclesiastical majorities have been in the constant habit of cheering themselves on to deeds of injustice, thinking that they were doing God service.¹

But we shall be told now, I presume, that all the above objections to democratic rule apply only to rude and uncultivated nations, and have no force in reference to the educated and Christianized masses of this Protestant country. To a man with his eyes open, who sees how elections are conducted, and on what grounds candidates are rejected or returned, this assertion must stand out as only one among the many commonplaces of flattery with which popular orators feed the ears of hearers whose willingness to be deluded is always much greater than their readiness to learn. As for Christianity, I have yet to learn that it has ever leavened the public morality to such an extent as to have had any appreciable effect on political affairs. We have only the other day witnessed a small act of a modern politico-military drama, in which kings, and cabinet-ministers, and people cheered themselves on to the commission of one of the most flagrant breaches of international law that history has to record. And as to internal politics, if there is a scene in the public life of this country in which the old Adam, as our theologians phrase it, revels as in a Saturnalia, it is a hotly contested election. In many cases it is hopeless to be returned without a preparation of intrigue, a machinery of corruption, and a battery of lies, with which a gentleman of high character and lofty Christian principle could have nothing to do. But let that pass. Are we not an educated people, being under

¹ The best example of the tyrannous tendencies of all majorities is to be found in the democratic, or at least republican, constitution of the Scottish General Assembly. In that body, any independent thinker is sure to be overborne and rejected, though learning, philosophy, and piety may all plead loudly in his favour ; whereas, within the pale of the aristocratic Church of England, every variety of opinion has hitherto found a generous and a considerate toleration.

a process of education at least, talking even of compulsory education: is there not great hope here? On this point, again I have the misfortune to think that a great amount of popular delusion is abroad. People talk as if the human brain were a collection of empty boxes, which merely required to be filled with the due amount of cognitional wares in order to be well furnished. But this is not the case. The acquisition of knowledge is a slow growth, not a hasty manufacture, to be turned out in measurable quantities by schoolmasters, professors, and education boards. The element of education no doubt has its value, and, in an indirect way, as I will afterwards attempt to show, may easily be made to exercise a certain political weight; but a direct knowledge-qualification for the masses would result in a portentous system of artificial cramming which would be no genuine test of real knowledge. But mere knowledge is a very small element in the qualifications of a good elector. What we want is wisdom, clear-headedness, discretion, moderation, coolness, independence, moral courage, experience of life, and position in society. Of these qualities a property qualification may afford a certain rough guarantee; a knowledge qualification will afford none. Such knowledge as might be brought up by any young man of one-and-twenty before an education board, would be a test of conceit rather than of wisdom. Young men are naturally conceited, and no amount of scholastic or academical outfit can shake the conceit out of them. A little knowledge is sometimes a useful thing, but only in the hands of a wise man; in the hands of a fool it is dangerous; and in the difficult and perplexed problems of politics, most of us are foolish enough till we are taught to reef the sails of our conceit by the severe lessons of experience. No young man, however well educated, should have anything to do with politics (for genius like that of Pitt is always exceptional), and he seldom intermeddles with it, indeed, as daily experience shows, without hurting both himself and the community to which he belongs.

In these remarks I speak from observation, but principally, also, from what I know best,—my own experience. I have devoted a great deal of time to the study of history and politics, and I have found it one of the most difficult of all

practical sciences. I cannot, therefore, but feel surprised exceedingly at the readiness with which some people are prepared to blurt out the dogma that a little superficial school-master's work is to be a sufficient safeguard against the obvious danger of intrusting the control of public affairs to majorities of the least thoughtful, the least instructed, and the least experienced part of the community. But in case my views on this point may be thought singular, I shall set down here the opinion of one of the best and wisest men who in modern times have given their ripe conclusions on political matters to the public, I mean M. de Sismondi :—

‘Others refer us to the progress of knowledge and to the care that will be taken of the education of the people. We eagerly accept the augury ; we hope that really free governments will feel that their first duty is to give to all citizens, not the power of leading and governing others, but the power of conducting and governing themselves ; that they will not relax their efforts to put knowledge within the reach of all, virtue within the reach of all ; that they will fix their attention on increasing the comforts of the poor, on one side to keep them from temptation, on the other to give them more leisure, and more means of exercising their intellectual faculties as well as their hands. But whatever may be their efforts, as long as there are rich and poor there will be men who cannot devote all their time to meditation and study ; there will be others who can only give up to them some moments every day, and that with a body fatigued by manual labour, and a mind distracted by the cares of life.

‘Would it be expedient to level all conditions, to divide equally all possessions, and afterwards to maintain the equality of these divisions ? But supposing that this order of things were possible, it would not do away with the necessity of manual labour, which even then must fill the greatest part of the existence of all : it would only be to forbid a life of study and meditation to every one ; the nation would only be so much the less elevated, when every one was forbidden to raise himself ; and yet it would not be possible to level native talent. Even in a nation equal in wealth, universal suffrage would always leave virtue, talent, and genius in the minority. Shall a more reasonable plan be followed ? Shall the development and the progress of all be favoured without disturbing the differences of rank ? Then every rank of intelligence will be more advanced than it is now, but the distance between them will be always the

same. It cannot be, it never will be, that a majority can be composed of superior men.'—*Essays*, pp. 229, 300.

Our array of democratic propositions and aristocratic counter propositions is now complete. What is the inference? Not, I beg you to observe, that the democratic propositions are altogether false, or the aristocratic ones altogether true; but that whatever truth, or fragment of truth, each one of the former class may contain, is liable to be met by a counter truth of the other class, which both from abstract reasoning and concrete experience possesses at least an equal guarantee. If any man supposes from any of the above statements that I appear here as an advocate either of unlimited monarchies, as in that of Prussia before 1815, or of unlimited oligarchies, as in mediæval Venice, he never was more mistaken. I have stated the case on both sides, because I believe both sides taken together contain the whole truth, either side taken by itself only half the truth, and consequently, when set up for the whole, a lie. And this is only a particular instance of one of the most deeply seated and widely acting laws of this universe of God, that the healthy condition of any organic thing only then exists when there is a well calculated balance of the opposite forces of which it is composed. All excellence is a combination of apparent incompatibles. One-sidedness though manifesting itself generally with outward signs of force, is always fundamentally weakness, and a mistake. And this, again, is only another form of Aristotle's grand practical maxim, that virtue consists in the mean between two extremes. All extremes are wrong, and can only become right by being harmonized, as in the common case of chemical action, with their contraries. Oligarchy is wrong, democracy is wrong. They are both extremes, and both despotisms. Oligarchy is the cold, cunning, secret despotism of the few over the many; democracy is the hot, violent overbearing despotism of the many over the few. Now with neither of these can a sound political philosophy have any thing to do. The last thing, however, that parties are inclined to listen to is moderation. Whether in Church or State party-men are possessed by the notion that if their ideas had full swing evils would speedily cease, and the millennium forthwith commence. But from these popular delusions it is

the very business of science to keep the mind free ; it is the function of the great statesman to step in between the contending parties and teach them to accept a healthy compromise. But how difficult this just balance of power is to achieve in the political world, the history of great nations and the fate of famous constitutions sufficiently shows. It has been achieved, to my knowledge, only once on a great and successful scale, and that is in the glorious British Constitution. In this Constitution the adverse elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy have, by the special favour of Divine Providence, been combined in such cunning proportions as to make it stand for a political model by the general consent of thinkers. And yet this is the Constitution which popular orators are doing all they can to persuade the working classes of this country to vilipend and to misprise ! Our checks and our balances have been all a mistake. We are to look to America for a model. Political perfection consists only in the unqualified sovereignty of the numerical masses. Democracy, or the sovereignty of that largest and lowest class of people who work by their hands, over those who work with their heads, is the panacea for all political evils !

With men who at this time of day have been led so far astray, as, in the full exercise of adult intelligence, to proclaim such principles, it is not to be imagined that authorities or facts will have any greater weight than reasons. Nevertheless, for the complete statement of the question, and for the consideration of those who have not yet sold their souls to a one-eyed, unhistorical view of political science, we shall now proceed to state the opinions which the greatest political thinkers have expressed on democracy ; and thereafter take a bird's-eye view of the experience of democratic government in ancient and modern times, as it has been exhibited in the public life of some of the most famous States. Of political philosophers Plato is one of the first, as well as one of the most notable ; and though he was naturally of Absolutist, or, as we would phrase it, ultra-Tory principles, and with all his wisdom not free from crotchets, yet he had the sense to see that the mixed constitution of Sparta, in which, to an Athenian eye at least, the opposite elements of aristocracy, monarchy, and democracy seemed to balance each other,

contained an element of safety which to the one-sided democratic organism of his own country was denied.¹ And, in fact, the political wisdom of Solon, which was afterwards overborne by democracy, consisted in establishing, or endeavouring to establish, in Athens, that just mixture of aristocratic and democratic forces, of which our present democratic agitators are so eager to rob the favoured inhabitants of this island.² Of a more utilitarian character than Plato, and dealing rather in hard facts than in high speculations, Aristotle, in his great political work, maintains strongly that the best constitution, at least the best which there is hope of realizing, is a mixture of oligarchy and democracy; and he insists strongly, throughout the whole fourth book, on the safety of keeping political power in the hands of the middle classes, and not allowing it to get into the hands of the lowest.³ But the most important witness from among the Greeks, in my opinion, is Polybius, who, having lived both among Greeks and Romans, had a larger field of political induction before him than even Aristotle, and whose authority in such matters is esteemed by the best political writers as second only to that of Thucydides. Like all Greeks he carried in his heart a harshly-graven outline of the hideousness of democracy, and had arrived at the conclusion, which all sensible men now believe, that the best form of government is neither monarchy, nor aristocracy, nor democracy, but a composite form, embracing the virtues and neutralizing the evils of all the three.⁴ And with profound insight he remarks that every social organism contains in its own essence the connate seeds of its own destruction, just as iron begets rust, and wood is subject to the dry-rot, which there is no possibility of preventing, except by the inoculation of a counteracting principle from within. Among the

¹ ἡ βασιλεία παρ' ὑμῖν, ἐξ ὧν ἔδει σύμμικτος γενομένη καὶ μέτρον ἔχουσα σωθεῖσα αὐτῇ σωτηρίας τοῖς ἄλλοις γέγονεν αἰτία.—*Laws*, III. 692 A.

² Σόλωνα μίξαντα καλῶς τὴν πολιτείαν.—*Ar. Pol.* II. 12. By the demagogic measures of Clisthenes and Pericles, the republic, however wisely constituted by Solon, declined into an abominable democracy, conducted not by the laws, but by the headstrong will of the people.—Schoemann *On the Popular Assemblies of the Athenians*, Cambridge, 1838, p. 17.

³ πολιτεία μίξις ὀλιγαρχίας καὶ δημοκρατίας.—*Pol.* IV. 8.

⁴ ὄηλον γὰρ ὡς ἄριστον μὲν ἡγήτεον πολιτείαν τὴν ἐκ πάντων συνεστῶσαν.—*Polyb.* VI. 3.

Romans, Cicero, who had ample experience of aristocracy and democracy, and of that death-struggle between them both which ended in the establishment of a military despotism, though he saw deeper into the flaws of the Roman political organism than the Greek historian, agrees with him in the general principle that a mixed government is the only safe one. He repeats the great and the terrible truth, to which a certain infatuation makes impassioned democrats and despots equally deaf, that there is no simple and un-mixed form of government: '*quod non habeat iter ad finitimum quoddam malum præceps ac lubricum*,' that is to say, the more unmixed any form of government is, the more patent and slippery does the road lie, down to the evil which ever loves to lodge next door to what is best. And to avoid this hasty descent from the pinnacle of triumph to the pit of perdition, the only safeguard is, instead of democracy, or any other simple form of government, '*illud quod conflatum fuerit ex omnibus*.'¹ So much for the ancients. Among modern writers the agreement on this point has been no less striking. The late Cornwall Lewis, whose learning was equal to his judgment, refers to Machiavel, Paruta, Blackstone, Burlamaqui, Paley, Zaccaria, Bellarmine, Filangieri, and Bentivoglio;² and he might have referred to a witness even stronger,—the homage of admiration and envy which the British Constitution has commanded from all the peoples of modern Europe.

Such is the weight of authority in this matter. Let us now look at facts. First, and most famous of course, we have Athens. Here, if anywhere, democracy, it should seem, may congratulate itself on having achieved a splendid triumph. But the case is just the reverse. As compared with Oriental slavery, indeed, such liberty was a great thing—the greatest thing, perhaps, next to Hebrew prophecy, in the ancient world; but as an experiment in constitution-making, compared with the present constitution of Great Britain, or even with the old classical constitutions of Rome and Sparta, the democracy of Athens was a splendid failure. Liberty and unfettered individualism are necessary to literature; creative genius acknowledges no fetters but those

¹ *Republ.* i. 27, 28.

² *Methods of Observation and Reasoning in Politics*, vol. ii. p. 76.

which it shapes for itself. In the enjoyment of this liberty, and with a fine physical and intellectual endowment from God, poetry, philosophy, and science, in ancient Athens, shot forth an efflorescence and fruitage of power, such as has been seldom equalled, and perhaps never surpassed. But this rich exhibition of intellectual force might have taken place under a limited monarchy as well as in the midst of a licentious democracy, as the names of Shakspeare and Bacon, Jeremy Taylor and Isaac Newton, loudly proclaim. The fall of Attic political liberty, in truth, dates, we may almost say, from the epoch of its greatest literary triumphs. The popular power evoked by the great struggle at Marathon and Salamis, as is wont to be the case with weak mortality in the hour of success, forthwith became rampant, and refused to acknowledge the last of those salutary checks which the aristocratic wisdom of the past had retained. The jurisdiction of the Court of the Areopagus was curtailed ; and the prophetic spirit of the wise tragedian saw already in vision the brilliant dissolution of a State where cleverness without reverence, and impetuosity without restraint, could at any moment plunge the people into an ill-considered and perilous war :—

‘ From anarchy
And slavish masterdom alike my ordinances
Preserve my people. Cast not from your walls
All high authority ; for where no fear
Awful remains, what mortal will be just !’¹

But the warning was vain. The cautious counsel of Pericles was forgotten ; the dazzling blackguardism of Alcibiades prevailed ; the expedition to Syracuse was undertaken ; and in a few years Sparta trod on the neck of Athens, and the way was prepared for the golden keys and the iron hand of Philip of Macedon. The splendour of unfettered Athenian democracy conveys thus a less valuable lesson to political science than its brevity. Aristocratic Sparta prevailed, not in intellectual vivacity indeed, but in permanency of political influence. For her one hundred years of unfettered democracy Athens paid dearly with more than two thousand years of political servitude. And now that by the glorious popular uprising of 1821 the Greek people have again won for themselves an acknowledged standing-room among the nations,

¹ *The Furies*, by Æschylus.

they have risen only to make a series of governmental blunders, of which the inherent vice of democracy is perhaps the most powerful cause. They have, indeed, had sense enough to follow the example of Sparta rather than of Athens, in preferring to be governed by one hereditary king rather than by five hundred elected counsellors; but they have failed to perceive the great truth that a hereditary monarchy can never actually prove an effective engine of good government, unless when supported by a strong aristocracy, as in England, or by a well-marshalled bureaucracy, as in Prussia. The long political history of Athens, therefore, from the unfortunate abolition of the kingship to the present hour, is only a protracted lecture on the vanity of all attempts at self-government on the part of unchecked multitudes. In the good old plan of balancing one force by another, lies the great secret of political as of dynamical equilibrium. The history of ancient Rome teaches exactly the same lesson. All the soundest social life of the Eternal City, as well as its proudest political triumphs, belong to the period when the aristocratic element was so strong as to justify Polybius in saying, that in power, though not in form, the constitution of Rome contained within itself that mixed balance of monarchic, aristocratic, and democratic forces which he admired.¹ I do not stand here as the apologist of the Roman aristocracy; a close examination might show, perhaps, that they contributed as much to the ultimate ruin of their country as the democracy; but one thing is quite certain,—democracy increased as Rome rushed to its degradation; and Julius Cæsar, according to a well-known law noticed by Plato,² mounted to absolute power, having commenced life in the capacity of what, in the Italian Republics of the middle ages, was called a *Capitano del Popolo*.³ And what political lessons do these Italian Republics themselves

¹ *Hist.* VI. 12.

² ὅταν περ φύηται τύραννος ἐκ προστακτικῆς βίβης καὶ οὐκ ἄλλοθεν ἐκβλαστάνει.—*Republ.* VIII. 565 D.

³ 'What good could come of a community in which peace and war, the appointment and deposition of the general and officers of the army, and the management of the public money and property, depended on the humours of the multitude, and their leaders, elected as whim or circumstance might determine?'—Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. i. p. 803—German.

teach, of which, after an existence equally brief as brilliant, every trace has long since disappeared from the map of Europe? The great virtue of a popular government is energy; and when this form of government conspires with happy circumstances and a finely constituted people, an epoch of highly potentiated democracy will generally be marked by the most splendid outbursts of intellectual and artistic talent. Such was the case with mediæval Italy, and specially with the great republic of Florence; but whosoever looks beyond the surface into that region, where the names of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio usher in the brightness of modern literature, will find little in annals scarred with faction and soaked in blood, to warrant any high-flown eulogium on the virtues of democratic institutions.¹ Of more recent European republics, Holland in the same manner has ceased to exist. With the heroic struggle for the rights of conscience maintained by the Dutch States against Spanish bigotry and tyranny, every man with a heart in his bosom will warmly sympathize; but in arguing from wars of national independence, we ought never to forget that they really prove nothing in favour of the form of government out of which they may have arisen or in which they may terminate. The Prussian people, under the unlimited despotism of the great Frederick, fought as heroically and as successfully against the triple coalition of Russia, Austria, and France, as ever democratic Attica did against Darius and Xerxes. When people are fighting for their existence, it is a great man that is necessary more than a good constitution; and in such cases, as an

¹ Of Padua, Lord Brougham says, 'The government of Padua was at different times almost purely democratic, when the people so far prevailed over the nobles as to vest the whole administration in the companies of artisans. Nothing could exceed the levity and uncertainty of the Paduan councils so long as this democratic influence prevailed; but it was always remarked, that when the errors, inconsistencies, and incapacity of the popular government had brought the State within a hair's-breadth of destruction, the nobles were looked on as the only resource, and generally interfered with effect.'—*Political Philosophy*, ch. xxiii. And to the same effect Professor Spalding: 'Within those Italian cities that had been most decidedly free, the dissensions which had preceded their overthrow, *removing all partial privileges and all real distinctions of rank, and in most places laying the nobles at the foot of the third estate*, did by this very means weaken all orders of the community, and generated that spiritless apathy with which the subjects of the Italian principalities submitted to the rule of their despotic masters.'—*Italy*, vol. ii. p. 133.

ancient soldier well remarked, an army of stags with a lion at their head, is better than an army of lions with a stag for their general. On the internal management of the Dutch States during the period when the name of a republic lasted, I have not made any special studies ; but if we are to trust to Sir William Temple, who had ample means of being well informed, the government of Amsterdam, the capital of the ruling province, in the hands of a body of a hundred senators, elected first by the people for life, and then, to avoid popular brawls, by themselves, was a civic oligarchy rather than a democracy.¹ But a better claim than that of Holland to be considered as the representative of republican institutions in modern Europe may be advanced by Switzerland. In regard to this country, the remark of Montesquieu holds good, that it is the nature of a republic to possess only a small territory, without which condition, indeed, it cannot exist.² But besides this, any person who has political insight must see that the continuance of this republican federation in the midst of a surrounding system of monarchies, is owing more to its strong mountain barriers, and the constant jealousy of France and Austria, than to any special virtue for self-defence which its free constitutions present. Had Switzerland stood in the same geographical relation to one great power as it now does to two, it would long ago have been absorbed by that power, just as Circassia has been by Russia, and Denmark will be by Prussia. In respect of internal government, the great Swiss writer whom we have several times quoted, while he rejoices with a just pride in the fact that his mother country has 'sought her liberty with more or less success in *balanced constitutions*,' does not fail to point out the warning fact that 'in Switzerland there are many republics, where the democratic principle has prevailed in all its rigour, where each intellect as well as each will is reckoned equal, and *where universal suffrage has stifled public opinion*.'³ And whereas

¹ Sir William Temple's Works, London, 1740, vol. i. p. 31.

² *Spirit of Laws*, VIII. 16. De Tocqueville, while he is too wise positively to assert the impracticability of anything but a small republic, nevertheless says : 'It may be advanced with confidence that the existence of a great republic will always be exposed to far greater perils than that of a small one.'—Vol. i. p. 189.

³ *Political Essays*, p. 297, where he goes on to give the details : 'In the centre of Switzerland the three little cantons of Uri, Schwitz, and Unterwalden are pure

some might imagine that it is only among the lumpish and dull peasantry that such exhibitions take place, he tells us that 'it is precisely in those republics where the constitution appears most liberal that the sovereign citizenship has most oppressed the peasants, and excited the most bitter resentment, as at Zurich, Schaffhausen, and Basle.' 'And everywhere in Switzerland,' he adds, 'the friends of progress are opposed and resisted by the democratic spirit, or the supremacy which universal suffrage gives to those who know nothing, over those who wish for the advance of true liberty.' So much for Switzerland. Of the ghastly phantoms, and blood-gouted spectres of the various forms of French democracy, as they have been exhibited across the Channel, for the disturbance, and it might be hoped the instruction, of the rest of the world, during the last seventy years, one who reprobates democracy, as I do, might easily work up a panorama that might be more effective than many arguments. But I shall suppose all this done, and even leave the democratic champion, part of whose creed it is to suppose that the people never can do wrong, in the possession of the field, when he maintains that had it not been for the abuses of monarchical and aristocratical government for centuries, and the suppression of parliamentary government in France, these revolutionary excesses never could have been committed. This is all very true; though it is certainly by no means the most democracies; among shepherds, almost equal in fortune, as well as in intelligence, it was not thought necessary to preserve greater influence for opinions resulting from mere deliberation; the elections as well as the laws, as well as all public resolutions, are carried by the votes of universal suffrage, by all the male inhabitants above the age of eighteen assembled in the *Landsgemeine*; it is really a will of their own, which the citizens of these little cantons express in these assemblies of all the people; but this will is constantly retrograde. In spite of their confederates, in spite of the clamour of Europe, they have continued the use of torture in their tribunals; they have kept up the custom of contracts to enter into the service of foreign powers; and these men, so proud and so jealous of their liberty, are the most eager to sell themselves to despots, to enable them to keep other nations in chains: every year, in short, and at every diet, they solicit their confederates to proscribe the liberty of the press. We must not suppose, however, that there are not in Uri, Schwitz, and Unterwalden, men whose more enlightened intellect, whose more elevated character, recoils from torture, trading in men, and the censorship of the press: no doubt they would form public opinion, if time were given them; but before every discussion, universal suffrage decides, by a majority, in favour of the gross ignorance of the great number, against the virtuous intelligence of some few.'

complimentary apology for popular atrocities to say that because the king behaved like a fool, and the noblemen like brutes, the people were pardonable in behaving like fiends. But France is no longer the favourite arsenal whence our British democrats filch their weapons. They have sense enough to see that the despotism by universal suffrage, which is the existing form of government in that country, has been as much the effect of popular excess as of aristocratic misgovernment. They therefore, ever eager to juggle themselves with some new delusion, point to America as to the promised Utopia of political perfection. Here there is no king to waste the public money in a superfluous civil list, no aristocracy to goad the people by pride and oppression into periodical fits of mutiny and madness. Beyond the Atlantic, therefore, in a land remote from the hereditary encumbrances and the servile decrepitude of European States—there we must accept the pure issue. Let it be so. Nothing could give a benevolent mind greater pleasure than to learn that in any quarter of the globe, under new and favourable circumstances, swarming millions of energetic human beings had at last succeeded in governing themselves by their collective wisdom alone, without the necessity of any of those checks and bulwarks which in other civil societies had hitherto been found necessary. No man should despair of his kind ; and if it should have pleased God to create a superior race of reasonable beings beyond the Atlantic, capable of solving easily social problems which have puzzled all the rest of the world, it will be our business to look on with admiration and gratitude, not with envy and detraction. But if there be any truth at all in the principles above advanced, if men, acting in political masses, are not less, but certainly more, exposed to the common weaknesses of humanity, than when acting as individuals, one thing is certain, that in order that an unchecked democracy may succeed in America, or elsewhere, it will require much more than the average amount of virtue in the mass of the people ; or, in the words of Chancellor Kent, 'to counteract the dangerous tendency of such combined forces as universal suffrage, frequent elections, all offices for short periods, all officers elective, and an unchecked press, and to prevent them from racking and destroying our poli-

tical machines, the people must have a larger share than usual of that wisdom which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated.¹ And if they do not possess this evangelic wisdom, then it requires no peculiar political sagacity to be able to predict that even those most cunning political machines, put together with consummate science by such men as Washington, Madison, and Hamilton, will, like so many other made constitutions, prove, in some violent crisis, only a very curious tissue of packthread and silk-twist to bind an infuriated tiger. Let us inquire, therefore, where the evidences of this peculiarly evangelic wisdom are found, and how they display themselves in counteracting the evils which all agree are part of the dowry of a purely democratic constitution.

On entering on this part of the argument I will make two confessions: *first*, that I have never been in America; *second*, that I am most anxious to believe the best of my fellow-beings, and that one of the greatest practical errors of my life has been in thinking too well of persons who have turned out to be either knaves or fools. I have, accordingly, sought in all quarters for witnesses on which I might found the belief that the Americans are a superior type of human beings; but I have failed to find them. I was directed by Mr. Bright to study De Tocqueville, which I did with the utmost care, but found there chiefly the most damning evidence against the system which the eloquent Manchester Gracchus so potently admires. By the much-vaunted American prosperity I am nothing moved. It is only material prosperity at the best; and this sort of advancement, in all stages of society, is as often connected with debasing as with elevating influences. That a young and vigorous offshoot of Great Britain, in a new country, with plenty of room, no dangerous neighbours,² a great demand for labour, and a constant importation of fresh labourers, should increase marvellously in those good things which political economists tabulate with pride, but which Plato, Aristotle, and the apostle Paul estimate at their

¹ *The American Union*. By James Spence. London, 1861. Page 41.

² 'In the New World man has no other enemy than himself.'—De Tocqueville. Yes; but that is the most dangerous of all. The old Adam is a terrible monster, made up of a tiger, a fox, a viper, and an ass.

true value, is only natural, and need cause no particular outcry. 'Let none admire,' says Milton, 'that riches grow in hell.' Instead of boasting about this amazing material prosperity, it would be well if both they and we bore habitually in mind the great truth which Channing told them, that noble growths are slow, and that the timbers of a stout man-of-war are made of oak, not of poplar.¹ But they have more than material advantages, we are told; they are a better educated people; the intelligence of the masses in that part of the world is something wonderful. I am glad to believe that the machinery of popular education in many of the States is far superior to what yet exists in our island, and might furnish a model after which even the best-educated parts of Scotland might be improved. But I have already stated the grave consideration that schools can furnish only the smallest part of the education necessary to make an intelligent citizen; and we must loudly proclaim, moreover, that a clever fellow is by no means synonymous with a good character.² An American writer observes: 'Never had country better laws than ours; *but the true trouble is that THE PEOPLE ARE CORRUPT.* The maxim of "ALL'S FAIR IN POLITICS," operating on a *population relaxed by an overwhelming prosperity, and cursed with a preternatural sharpness, has debauched the morality of the whole population. So long as the rulers only of a people are dishonest, liberty is safe; but what is to become of a nation, the people of which are corrupt?*'³ It would appear, therefore, that, in spite of their smartness and cleverness, the people are not morally superior to the democracy which has ruled in other countries. It does not appear that the American people, in their political capacity, are free from a single vice which stained the most corrupt democracy of ancient Rome, or of mediæval Florence. The great original sin of all democracy, the assumed right of the majority to dictate to the minority, has developed itself there in the most gigantic form; and not always, we must

¹ Spence, *The American Union*, p. 24.

² The thorough-going advocates of all sorts of moral and intellectual scepticism, the unblushing advocates of the theory that all right is convention, and all might is right, the well-known sophists, whom, in spite of Mr. Grote, I cannot force myself to admire, were all very clever fellows—*δευολ*, as Plato has it.

³ Quoted by Spence, p. 71.

add, a despotism of the real majority, but, as frequently happens, a despotism and terrorism of the violent, the passionate, and the unscrupulous, though a minority, over the majority of the moderate, cool, and reasonable part of the community. This is so notorious that it is hardly necessary to adduce proofs. De Tocqueville mentions particularly the case of the drinking habits of Philadelphia :—

‘Some one observed to me one day, in Philadelphia, that almost all crimes in America are caused by the abuse of intoxicating liquors, which the lower classes can procure in great abundance, from their excessive cheapness. “How comes it,” said I, “that you do not put a duty upon brandy?” “Our legislators,” rejoined my informant, “have frequently thought of this expedient; but the task of putting it in operation is a difficult one: a revolt might be apprehended; and *the members who should vote for a law of this kind would be sure of losing their seats.*” “Whence I am to infer,” replied I, “that the drinking population constitutes the majority in your country, and that temperance is somewhat unpopular.”’¹

Even more instructive is the following demonstration on the part of the tyrannical majority at Baltimore in 1812, occasioned by the circumstance that a newspaper editor had had the misfortune to entertain opinions contrary to those of the masses, and had also had the moral courage to express them :—

‘A striking instance of the excesses which may be occasioned by the despotism of the majority occurred at Baltimore in the year 1812. At that time the war was very popular in Baltimore. A journal which had taken the other side of the question excited the indignation of the inhabitants by its opposition. The populace assembled, broke the printing-presses, and attacked the houses of the newspaper editors. The militia was called out, but no one obeyed the call; and the only means of saving the poor wretches who were threatened by the frenzy of the mob, was to throw them into prison as common malefactors. But even this precaution was ineffectual; the mob collected again during the night; the magistrates again made a vain attempt to call out the militia; the prison was forced, one of the newspaper editors was killed upon the spot, and the others were left for dead: the guilty parties were acquitted by the jury when they were brought to trial.

‘I said one day to an inhabitant of Pennsylvania, “Be so good

¹ *Democracy in America.* By Alexis de Tocqueville. London, 1838. Vol. ii. p. 46.

as to explain to me how it happens, that in a State founded by Quakers, and celebrated for its toleration, freed blacks are not allowed to exercise civil rights. They pay the taxes ; is it not fair that they should have a vote ?”

““You insult us,” replied my informant, “if you imagine that our legislators could have committed so gross an act of injustice and intolerance.”

““What, then, the blacks possess the right of voting in this country ?”

““Without the smallest doubt.”

““How comes it, then, that at the polling-booth this morning I did not perceive a single negro in the whole meeting ?”

““This is not the fault of the law : the negroes have an undisputed right of voting ; but they voluntarily abstain from making their appearance.”

““A very pretty piece of modesty on their parts !” rejoined I.

““Why, the truth is that they are not disinclined to vote, but they are afraid of being maltreated ; in this country the law is sometimes unable to maintain its authority, without the support of the majority. But in this case the majority entertains very strong prejudices against the blacks, and the magistrates are unable to protect them in the exercise of their legal privileges.”

““What, then, the majority claims the right not only of making the laws, but of breaking the laws it has made ?”¹

Then he sums up these and other instances with the emphatic sentence, ‘Despotism enslaves the body ; democracy enslaves the soul.’² It is plain, therefore, that the brute principle of governing by a majority, in America as elsewhere, by the simple law of dynamical forces, has produced its necessary result—the prostration of all real liberty, and the establishment of a moral, sometimes a purely physical, despotism.

Closely connected with the despotic character of the popular will in America, is the crude delight with which the people swallow the grossest flattery, and their puerile sensibility to blame ; and in this respect the many-headed blatant beast in the extreme West, whom we are now called on to fall down and worship, is not a whit inferior to the one-headed monsters of whom we read in the annals of Oriental despotism. In ancient Greece, also, so glaring was the servility to which democracy had reduced the individual mind, that Socrates,

¹ De Tocqueville, vol. ii. p. 87.

² *Ibid.* p. 91.

in one of the most effective Dialogues of Plato, does not hesitate to define public speaking as a principal branch of the great art of flattery, of which gastronomy and confectionary are well-known subsidiary branches.¹ On this subject the impartial De Tocqueville is no less distinct :—

‘Works have been published in the proudest nations of the Old World, expressly intended to censure the vices and deride the follies of the times : Labruyère inhabited the palace of Louis XIV. when he composed his chapter upon the Great, and Molière criticised the courtiers in the very pieces which were acted before the Court. But the ruling power in the United States is not to be made game of ; the smallest reproach irritates its sensibility, and the slightest joke which has any foundation in truth renders it indignant ; from the style of its language to the more solid virtues of its character, everything must be made the subject of encomium. No writer, whatever be his eminence, can escape from this tribute of adulation to his fellow-citizens. The majority lives in the perpetual practice of self-applause.’²

And what kind of government, let me ask, is actually produced by this many-headed despot, living in the constant exercise of insolent coercion, and fed on the dainty diet of self-applause? Is it free from intrigue and cabal, from bribery and corruption, from parliamentary juggle and swindle of all sorts? Quite the contrary. One cannot look even superficially into the foul atmosphere of political life in that country, without becoming painfully aware of a degree of gross corruption and shameless unscrupulousness, to which the worst revelations of our bribery-committees cannot afford a parallel. That faction, intrigue, and corruption are the natural defects of elective government is one of the most elementary truths in political science ; but ‘when the head of the State can be re-elected, these evils rise to a great height, and compromise the very existence of a country.’³ Whoever denies that such intrigue and corruption are rife in America, must be struck with a blindness which scarcely a miracle could cure. The Americans are fond of slang ; and so they have added not a few phrases to the English language, as used in that part of the world, by which various species of

¹ *τέχνη κολακική*.—Plato, *Gorgias*, 463 A.

² De Tocqueville, vol. ii. p. 92.

³ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 155.

political iniquity are expressed. One of these slang words is 'log-rolling,' the meaning of which is thus explained by Mr. Spence:—

'The title of the Morrill tariff commences, "An Act, to provide for the payment of outstanding treasury notes, to authorize a loan," etc., etc. How come matters, so entirely distinct, to be mixed with the details of a tariff, of necessity complex enough when alone? Because the bill is a specimen of that original species of American legislation known as "log-rolling." The meaning of the phrase is this,—“You, help to roll my log, and I'll help to roll yours.” When two logs are put into one bill, there are, at once, two classes interested in its success. Each may, and frequently does, exceedingly dislike his friend's log; but this is a tame feeling, as compared with interest in his own. The one, is a question of his own private advantage, whilst the other, concerns nothing beyond the mere public. There is, however, a difficulty in the way of this contrivance, if too much time be afforded. Some one who is not of the compact, may be officious enough to separate the logs; or their united strength may be doubtful against a strong opposition, if there be time for thorough investigation. It follows that a "log-rolling" bill, has many more chances of getting through, by "rushing" it. This means, to keep it back till the last few days of the session, and then, amidst a crowd of other measures, by dint of vehemence, under cover of confusion, and with the powerful aid of the "lobby," to rush it through. This bill was rushed. Its fate was very doubtful; there was a very strong opposition. But there was the other log in it. If rejected, it was now too late to bring in a fresh measure, to provide for the treasury notes, and the loan, and thus many were driven to support it, in order to avert the injury of stopping the wheels of government.'

¹

Then as to bribery. The worst kind of pecuniary corruption prevails in America. In this country, election agents bribe the lowest classes of the populace; in America honourable members are paid openly for their votes, and their price is known.

'A very able lobby agent, who has been in the business many years, has given us an inkling of the mode of procedure. "When we get to Albany," said he, "we make out our lists, and, after studying them and comparing notes, we *classify* members, and make an estimate of what it is going to cost to get our bills through. We find out about how much each man expects, and who is running

¹ *The American Union*, p. 187.

him. Then we arrange the thing in New York with certain people, whose consent is necessary. The price for a vote ranges from fifty dollars to five hundred, unless it is that of a chairman of a committee. *He* wants more, because he has to appear on the record as originating the measure."

'It was probably one of these originating gentlemen who could explain the testimony given recently in an Albany corruption case by a lady who proved herself a true helpmeet to her husband. She testified that a lobby agent called at her house one Sunday afternoon, when there was "some conversation" respecting the accused Senator, which the court "ruled out." She continued thus: "The next morning I put \$2500 in greenbacks into a yellow envelope, and gave it to my only son, eleven years old. The boy got into the wagon with his father. *I never saw the money again.*"

'If there is in this world a man who can be truly said to *know* anything, Mr. Thurlow Weed knows the Legislature of the State of New York. His testimony respecting the corruption in that Legislature, as given in the *Daily Times*, a few months ago, is as follows:—

"Formerly the *suspicion* of corruption in a member would have put him 'into Coventry,' while *knowledge* of such an offence would have insured the expulsion of the offender. Now 'bribery and corruption' prevail to an extent greater than existed in the worst days of the Parliament of England, where, happily for England, the practice has been reformed, as it must be here, or corruption will undermine the government. No measure, however meritorious, escapes the attention of 'strikers.' Venal members openly solicit appointment on paying committees. In the better days of legislation, when no unlawful motive existed, it was considered *indelicate* in a member to indicate to the Speaker any preference about committees. The evil has been growing, each year being worse than the preceding, until reform is sternly demanded. Could the secret history of the present Legislature be exposed to the public gaze, popular indignation would be awakened to a degree heretofore unknown. In the Assembly everything was struck at. Not even a religious charity found exemption. The sources of rapacious corruption were the Assembly Railroad Committee, and the Committee on Cities and Villages. I say this upon reliable authority, to correct the *Tribune* and *Times*, in both of which journals this Legislature is commended for its integrity. That there were honest and honourable members in both houses, by whose integrity and firmness much bad legislation was arrested, is true. The Senate, fortunately, presents an inflexible majority of upright members; while in the House, the Ring was formidable enough to put through

whatever paid or promised to pay liberally, in defiance and derision of the efforts of an honest minority.'"¹

If, after revelations of this kind, men who certainly possess eloquence, and who ought to possess intelligence, shall still continue to perambulate the country, exciting discontent against our noble Constitution, and holding up this base and blushless transatlantic democracy as a model for our imitation, I can only believe that both they and their listeners are already become the living proofs of the grim old adage—*Quos Deus vult perdere, etc.*: WHOM GOD MEANS TO DESTROY HE FIRST MAKES MAD.

A volume would not exhaust the foul catalogue of social vices and corruptions which have sprung from the American democracy as from their natural hotbed. To me the degradation of the moral character of the individuals who are the instruments of a democratic system is a much more sad consideration than the system itself. But where every man is a politician, and politics is made up of violence, intrigue, and venality, the only way to escape the taint is to retire from the contagious atmosphere altogether. And this is exactly what the best men, by a natural instinct of self-conservation, do in modern America, as they did also in ancient Attica.² Politics, we are told, beyond the Atlantic, are neglected by men of high talent and character. They cease to be matter of independent and manly opinion; they degenerate into a trade. Men of wealth, and literary taste, and commercial standing, are outrun by the large class of officeholders who make a trade of politics. The whole power of

¹ *North American Review* for October 1866, p. 457.

² De Tocqueville (ii. 2-10), stating it as a general rule that in the United States the most talented individuals are rarely placed at the head of affairs, notes an exception to this in the following remarkable words:—'In dangerous times, genius no longer abstains from presenting itself in the arena; and the people, alarmed by the perils of their situation, *bury their envious passions in a short oblivion.*' Plato says that wise men will seek public life, not as a good thing, but as a necessary duty (*Rep.* 540 D); but in a field where power, and place, and influence are the reward, the most ambitious, the most unscrupulous, and the most selfish men will generally be more eager in the race. These are the men who are not so apt to inquire whether an occupation be noble or necessary, as whether it be profitable. And even their wives and daughters sometimes may have more to say in the matter than their own ambition or their itch for Parliamentary manipulation.

election practically passes into the hands of a knot of professional politicians, composed of briefless barristers, physicians without patients, of schemers and place-hunters, who devote themselves to the service of the party in order to be elected to some little salaried place.¹ Even when left free from the spur of the ambitious demagogue, the magic oil of the flatterer, and the glamour of the political dreamer, the people have, for the most part, neither the will nor the power to find out the best men to lead them. I do not say that, individually, they might not be able to put their finger on the men of whose character and talents they are most proud; but when acting in masses under the boiling fever of political or ecclesiastical excitement, there is a great chance that they will elect the most violent or the most cunning, rather than the most wise and virtuous man.² Besides, we must bear in mind that there is a seed of evil in the human heart, apt to shoot up into diabolical vices at all times, but specially worked and manured into rankness by the machinery of democracy. One of the ugliest and most truly diabolical feelings in the breast of man—ENVY—grows up in America, as in all democracies, as naturally and necessarily as goose-foot on a dunghill. Hear on this point the great French thinker:—

‘Moreover, the democracy is not only deficient in that soundness of judgment which is necessary to select men really deserving of its confidence, but it has neither the desire nor the inclination to find them out. It cannot be denied that democratic institutions have a very strong tendency to promote the feeling of *envy* in the human heart, not so much because they afford to every one the means of rising to the level of any of his fellow-citizens, as because those means perpetually disappoint the persons who employ them. Democratic institutions awaken and foster a passion for equality which they can never entirely satisfy. This complete equality eludes the grasp of the people at the very moment at which it thinks to hold it fast, and “flies,” as Pascal says, “with eternal flight;” the people is

¹ Spence, *The American Union*, p. 35.

² This is just the doctrine of moral philosophy which the advocates of democracy constantly forget. How is it that the morality and the reason of all masses of men often produce results of which the individuals comprising the mass would be ashamed? There are three virtues which the people, acting in masses, never have practised—justice, gratitude, and mercy; and yet the persons constituting the masses may often be in nowise destitute of these virtues. How is this?

excited in the pursuit of an advantage, which is the more precious because it is not sufficiently remote to be unknown, or sufficiently near to be enjoyed. The lower orders are agitated by the chance of success, they are irritated by its uncertainty ; and they pass from the enthusiasm of pursuit to the exhaustion of ill-success, and lastly to the acrimony of disappointment. Whatever transcends their own limits appears to be an obstacle to their desires, and there is no kind of superiority, however legitimate it may be, which is not irksome in their sight.' ¹

These facts might be sufficient to brush the paint from the fair transatlantic harlot who has been set up for us to worship—after an old French model—as the goddess of political reason. But the damning exposure of the system of government in the city of New York, which appeared in a number of the influential American Quarterly above quoted, can scarcely be passed over in silence. It appears, from that article—an article based on the most indisputable public documents, and which no American durst have published had it not been desperately true—that the management of the affairs of that great and prosperous city has fallen into the hands literally of a gang of thieves, and that the State Government in Albany is not much better. The twenty-four councillors, who are handsomely paid for the privilege of stealing from the public purse, are composed principally of young men under thirty, belonging to what in New York is called the 'ruling class,' consisting of 'butchers' boys who have got into politics, bar-keepers who have taken a leading part in primary ward-meetings, and young fellows who hang about engine-houses and billiard-rooms.' By these four-and-twenty choice senators of a democratic constituency, elected by universal suffrage, the municipal business of New York is conducted on the principle of, in the first place, devising measures the passing of which will gratify large bodies of voters, and create the greatest expenditure of public money, and then 'rushing it' through by the votes of the gang, who not only form a constant majority of three-fourths, but are dexterous masters of various ingenious and effective methods of preventing the attendance of the half-dozen honest men who may happen to be in the council, and who might some-

¹ De Tocqueville, vol. ii. pp. 4, 5.

times be able to stop the progress of some unblushing job. Even the vile obscenities recorded in the pages of Suetonius and Petronius, are to an uncorrupted mind less revolting than the brazen rascality and staring selfishness which is the soul of the municipal administration of New York. The article must be read and studied by all who would have any adequate conception of the gross profligacy and stony heartlessness which universal suffrage has elevated into the seat of magisterial authority in that city. But for the sake of those who do not possess the book, one or two extracts will vividly explain the manner of conducting civic business in this municipal pandemonium:—

‘The most usual manner of stealing is to receive money for awarding or procuring contracts, appointments, donations, or increase of salaries, which money, of course, the favoured person gets back, if he can, from the public treasury; and he usually can. The President of the Board of Health, last spring, when New York was threatened with the cholera, had occasion to remonstrate with a person who held the contract for removing dead animals from the streets, and threatened him with the breaking of the contract if its conditions were not better complied with. “That would be rather hard, Mr. Schultz,” replied the man, “for that contract cost me \$60,000.” And well it might; for the city pays \$25,000 a year for getting rid of a commodity every pound of which ought to yield the city a revenue. A dead horse, worth twenty dollars, the city pays for having carted off to where it can be conveniently converted into twenty dollars. Another contractor receives \$21,000 a year for removing night soil, which could be sold for enough to pay the cost of its removal. By various extra charges, the holders of this contract have continued to swell their gains incredibly. Mr. Jackson Schultz, the energetic and capable President of the Board of Health, has recently published his conviction, that the “total swindle under this contract is \$111,000,” and we have had the advantage of hearing him demonstrate the fact. The story, however, is too long for our very limited space.

‘Does any one need evidence that the men who award such contracts, in the teeth of opposition and elucidation, receive a large share of the plunder? The fact is as certain as though ten witnesses swore to having seen the money to them in hand paid. Three years ago a contract was awarded for sweeping the streets for ten years, at \$495,000 a year. Since the accession to power of the

new Board of Health, responsible men have handed in a written offer to buy the remainder of the contract for a quarter of a million dollars, *i.e.*, to clean the city for seven years at \$495,000 a year, and give the city a quarter of a million dollars for the privilege. There are those about the city offices who know, or think they know, how the plunder of this contract is divided. We believe we are not violating any confidence, expressed or implied, when we say, that it is the conviction of the Board of Health that \$100,000 per annum of the proceeds of this contract are divided among certain politicians; that a certain lawyer, who engineered the project, and stands ready to defend it, receives a salary of \$25,000 per annum as "counsel to the contract;" and that the men in whose name the contract is held are "dummies," who get \$6000 a year for the use of their names and for their labour in superintending the work. The contract is further burdened with the support of several hundred cripples, old men, and idle men, all of whom are voters, who are put in the street cleaning force by Aldermen and Councilmen who want their votes and the votes of their relatives, thus kindly relieved of maintaining aged grandfathers, lame uncles, and lazy good-for-nothings. These statements, we are aware, cannot be proved. Such compacts are not trusted to paper; and a witness driven to bay can always balk his assailant by refusing to criminate himself. The reader therefore may decline to believe these details. One thing remains, and is certain, that the working men of New York are annually plundered of two hundred thousand dollars per annum by this single contract.¹

Of the iniquitous system of selling public offices, reminding us of well-known facts of the worst days of the Roman Empire, the following contains a specimen:—

'It was recently proved, in the presence of the Governor of the State, that the appointment to the office of Corporation Attorney was sold to one incumbent for the round sum of \$10,000. This is bad enough, but worse remains to be told. Sworn testimony (from thirty-six witnesses) taken by a committee of investigation, establishes the appalling fact, that appointments to places in the public schools are systematically sold in some of the wards,—the wards where the public schools are almost the sole civilizing power, and where it is of unspeakable importance that the schools should be in the hands of the best men and women. One young lady, who had just buried her father and had a helpless mother to support, applied for a situation as teacher, and was told, as usual, that she must pay for it. She replied that she could not raise the sum demanded, the

¹ *North American Review*, pp. 433-435.

funeral expenses having exhausted the family store. She was then informed that she could pay "the tax" in instalments. Another poor girl came on the witness-stand on crutches, and testified that she had paid \$75 for a situation of \$300 a year. Another lady went to a member of the Ring, and told him, with tears, that she saw no way of procuring the sum required, nor even of saving it from the slender salary of the place. The man was moved by her anguish, took compassion upon her, and said he would remit *his share* of "the tax." It was shown, too, that the agent of all this foul iniquity was no other than the principal of one of the schools. It was he who received and paid over the money wrung from the terror and necessities of underpaid and overworked teachers. We learn from the report of the committee that the Ring in this ward was originally formed for the express purpose of giving the situations in a new and handsome school "to the highest bidder;" and, as the opening of the new school involved the discharge of a small number of teachers employed in the old schools, the Ring had both the fear and the ambition of the teachers to work upon. "There was a perfect reign of terror in the ward," says the report of the investigating committee. "The agent performed his duty with alacrity, and with a heartlessness worthy of the employers. It appears that he not only summoned the teachers to come to him, but that he called on their parents and friends as to the amount they should pay for their appointments,—the sums varying from \$50 to \$600, according to the position sought."

'And who were the Ring that perpetrated this infamy? They were a majority of the trustees elected by the people, and the School Commissioner elected by the people,—six poor creatures, selected from the grog-shop and the wharf, and intrusted with the most sacred interest of a republic, the education of its children. It was known before that in some of the wards the school trustees were drunkards; it was known before that little children were piled up, like flower-pots in a greenhouse, in small, ill-ventilated rooms; but no one supposed, before this investigation in 1864, that men could be elected to office who were capable of such revolting meanness as this.'¹

Then to show how little the ballot-box and other cunning inventions of democratic machinery are able to keep out the devil, in the shape of the omnipotent dollar, take the following statement:—

'At the present time, as we are informed, by one whose oppor-

¹ *North American Review*, pp. 437, 438.

tunities of knowledge are unequalled, all the political concerns of the city are controlled by about seven men,—heads of city departments and others. In most of the wards, a nomination to office by the party which is ludicrously styled Democratic insures an election by the people: and it is these seven men who work the machinery by which Democratic nominations are ground out. They are the power behind the ballot-box, greater than the ballot-box itself. Candidates for Congress, for the State Legislature, for the numerous boards of city legislators, must pass the ordeal of their inspection, and pay their price, before their names can go upon the “slate;” and such is the absoluteness of their power over ignorant voters, that they have caused to be elected to Congress by Irish votes a man who, as editor of a “Know-Nothing” newspaper, had been employed for seven years in vilifying Irishmen and their religion. They have taken up a man who commanded one of the companies of artillery that marched from the field of Bull Run because their “time was up,” and, while the whole civilized world was pointing at him the finger of scorn, elected him to one of the most lucrative offices in the United States. Of late years, these lords of the town have had the deep cunning to give a few of their best appointments and several minor offices to Republicans, as part of their system of preventing investigation. This was a master stroke. Most of the publishers of newspapers were already bribed to silence by the Corporation advertising, and all the reporters were hired not to report anything disagreeable by the annual gift of two hundred dollars.’¹

Let us not suppose that I state these facts as all the truth about America. No man admires more than I do the enterprise, vigour, and active talent which that people have displayed on many fields. But what I am now talking of is their political system, and the moral debasement which it entails on a naturally noble people. I have no pleasure in exposing their faults, but rather great pain. What I say I say in defence of our mixed constitution, and to expose the mischievous error of those who delude the ignorant and ill-informed masses in this country, by exhibiting universal

¹ *North American Review*, p. 449. In reference to the case of New York, to those who say that it is an exceptional case, my answer is, *1st*, That in many of our large cities there is a large amount of the same class of people which constitutes the lowest class in that city; and *2d*, that the case of New York is a fair instance of what universal suffrage on American ground and under American influence can do for good government.

suffrage as the grand panacea for all political evils. I am willing to allow as much excellence and efficiency in American democracy as can be proved. But the shield is not all gold. I have turned round the copper side. Let those who are capable of judging judge.

The subject of this lecture does not absolutely require me to say anything about the schemes of Parliamentary reform at present being agitated in this country. Nevertheless, it would be affectation to pretend that what I have brought forward in reference to the vices of democratic government has no reference to the present movement. On the contrary, nothing could have induced me to expose these hideous details of social corruption, had I not seen with open eyes that not a few of my countrymen are on the point of rushing into a course, which, unless wisely checked, must infallibly end in a similar ruin. I do not say that the majority of the working classes, any more than the learned and eloquent gentleman, the late Lord Advocate of the Whig Government, are democrats in principle, and mean seriously to do anything that will seriously disturb the fine social balance of our mixed constitution ; but from my position as a thinking man, uninfluenced by the movements of parties, I can distinctly discern that they are being borne along by a current which they will not long be able to control, that they have been submitting to a dictation which they ought to have scorned, and that they are using levers with which they will shake the foundations of the house in which they dwell. It is because the proposed Reform Bills of the most recent epoch of our legislation are democratic, and purely democratic, in their tendency, that as a student of history and a friend of reason, I have from the beginning decidedly opposed them. Let no man imagine, however, that I am opposed to the recent Reform Bills, because they propose to give a large increase of electoral power to the working classes. I have not the slightest objection to the working classes. Many of them are doubtless more intelligent, and more trustworthy, in a political capacity, than some classes of those immediately above them in the social scale. But what I object to is the principle on which it is proposed to give these classes additional votes ; the principle of representing numbers alone,

and determining all public questions in the last resort by the votes of the majority. This is the soul of the democratic despotism, and the rule of unreason, the iniquity of which it has been the object of the present lecture to establish. Rather than make a single movement towards disturbing the balance of our mixed constitution, proceeding on a principle so utterly false, and of which it is impossible to limit the operation within any bounds short of manhood suffrage, I am content that we should have no Reform Bill at all. To a person, indeed, like myself, looking on the whole matter merely as a man and a citizen, it showed like a madness from the beginning to talk of another Reform Bill at all, so closely on the back of the sweeping measure of 1832. To some people, indeed, that Reform Bill, of which the consequences have in the main been salutary, forms the principal argument in favour of another dose of the same Whig medicine. Never was popular logic more at fault. I have heard of a patient who, having benefited by a prescription to take six drops of a strong medicine per day, took a bottle, and killed himself. We constantly see people in Scotland who, having made themselves comfortable by taking a tumbler of toddy, make fools of themselves by taking three, and beasts of themselves by taking six. The men who brought in the great Reform Bill of 1832 declared that it was to be a final measure : and they were wise. A final measure it certainly ought to have been *in that direction*. Any other reform for the same purpose as that, viz., for the curtailment of aristocratic influence, would certainly not be wanted ; and in point of fact, is not wanted. The whole history of this country shows that the power of the monarchic and aristocratic elements in our constitution has been step by step diminishing. According to all rational calculation, what we require now is not an increase of democratic force, but rather some regulative and counteracting principle to prevent its abuse. The whole course of our legislation since the Reform Bill, whether in the hands of Whigs or Tories, has been by the people, and for the people ; and among the people, no class at the present moment receives a larger amount of parliamentary and public consideration than the working classes. No class, by the change in the value of money, and other

causes, has been rising more rapidly into social weight and significance. If I were to judge by what I see and read, they are in much greater danger of being spoiled by those who flatter them, than of being oppressed by those who don't represent them. In point of number and talent they have as many representatives in the House of Commons as any other class. Our House of Commons is already as democratic as it can be made, without destroying the just influence of the middle and upper classes. Our system of election is already too democratic in many respects to afford any rational guarantee for the return of members to the great National Council who possess the essential requisites of large views and independent character. I see manifest signs in various places, of the democratic habit of degrading a national councillor into a local deputy, of sending up a partisan instead of a thinker, of preferring the spokesman of a faction to the advocate of a people. I see men of high character and intelligence rudely called to account, reproached, slandered, and dismissed, merely because they did their duty in the House of Parliamentary deliberation with more than common intelligence, independence, and courage. And, what is worse, I see men afraid to speak the truth, and willing to set their names to measures of which they do not approve, merely to tide over the moment, to 'settle the question,' and to stop the mouth of dangerous declaimers. Is this not democracy? And we are to have more of it, forsooth! If a Reform Bill, on American principles, be carried in this country, one result of it I can predict with perfect certainty, that it will not improve the character of our national councillors. We shall have fewer of the rare and useful class of cool thinkers, more of the speaking trumpets of local faction, the standard-bearers of popular passion, and the vendors of speculative crotchets. I say therefore, again, Much rather no Reform Bill at all than one that shall acknowledge no principle other than that which has produced the greatest of all social tyrannies in America. But was not the Reform Bill of 1832 founded on that very principle of government by a majority, which is now denounced as democratic? Unquestionably it was, to a certain extent; but it was not therefore a good principle for all Bills, because

it did no harm—(if indeed it did no harm)—in that Bill. That Bill placed power in the hands of the middle classes,—the body which, as the medium between the upper and lower social extremes, Aristotle declared to be the safest.¹ The majority constituted by it was a majority of the select, if not of the best, at least of those who, as large experience has proved, can be most safely intrusted with political power. The majority now proposed to be established may form a majority of the lower and sub-middle classes against the middle and upper classes; and there lies the fault. The first care of a wise Reform Bill at the present crisis, should be not to disfranchise the natural civic aristocracy of the country in favour of the democracy. It is a law of God which cannot be contravened, that the high should rule the low; and that civil government should not be thrown into the hands of those who, by nature and the unchangeable constitution of things, are least capable of governing. Do I then mean to treat the working classes as serfs,—to give them no voice in what concerns their own life and liberty, to declare them for ever incapable of social manhood? Not at all. I do not grudge them representation; I only refuse them domination. If a Reform Bill must be brought in to ‘settle the question,’ to allay some real and much imaginary discontent, and to stifle the demagogues (though this will never be possible), let us have a Reform Bill which, instead of crouching to John Bright, and borrowing stale formulas of French liberty-mongers, shall distinctly and decidedly denounce the insufficiency of the democratic principle, and give us some reasonable guarantee for the preservation both of our civic and of our family aristocracy. Let us show the world that our British brain is capable of containing more than one idea at a time, and that we are not to be clamoured out of our common sense or cheated of our historic memories by the silly admiration of an ambitious theory. Let us give the working classes votes, that is to say, more votes than they have now,—for their actual influence is already considerable; but let us represent other things besides hands and labour. Every wise politician will agree

¹ ὅπου δὲ το τῶν μέσων, ὑπερτείνει πλῆθος, ἐνταῦθ' ἐνδέχεται πολιτείαν εἶναι μόνημον.—*Πολ.* IV. 12.

with Aristotle's doctrine, that it is politic to give as many persons as possible some share in the government of the country, because there are always some persons who will imagine that, being excluded from political influence, they are oppressed, and there will always be another class of persons eager to rise into importance by fanning this feeling into a flame. It may be true, moreover, that there is a certain virtue of moral and intellectual training in the exercise of the franchise that ought not to be overlooked. Perhaps also, as Dr. Paley said, the discussion of political questions over a mug of beer in a village pot-house may save from worse recreations. This is a view of the matter, indeed, to which individually I attach little or no weight, because my observation seems to teach me that politics is a trade which, generally speaking, does more to debase than to elevate those who have much to do with it; and I cannot see how entering with keen interest into all the selfish details of political partisanship should contribute anything towards making a man more intelligent, more virtuous, or more happy. I could point out to the working classes many more rational ways of spending their idle hours than in blowing storms in some civic or ecclesiastical tea-kettle. But if they will have it otherwise, let it be; only let me have a vote as well as you; let learning be represented as well as labour; do not, while you claim political influence for yourselves, insist on having in it such a way as will virtually disfranchise all other classes of the community, and give us a House of Commons dictated by mere numbers. In one word, save us from America!

In accordance with all that has been above argued, the three points to be kept before the eye of the statesman in the preparation of a British Reform Bill for the year 1867 should be—(1.) The securing of an adequate representation to the working classes; (2.) A special representation for the civic, moral, and intellectual aristocracy of the people; (3.) The provision of such a variety of entrances to the House of Commons as shall rescue the country from the danger of a one-sided and one-idea'd assembly of councillors elected under the swamping influence of an impassioned majority.¹

¹ The importance of this point was recognised by Alexander Hamilton, one of

But before stating specially by what arrangements these objects could be attained, I will take the liberty of quoting a scheme of Sismondi, prepared with a view to a Reform Bill in France, at once popular and aristocratic. This scheme will at least show that the conclusions to which the present discourse has arrived are not peculiar to the writer, but have been reached independently by one of the greatest political thinkers of the age.

‘Certainly, we have not the penetration to propose an electoral law, and if we allow ourselves here to make some calculations, it is only to make it understood how, by adopting the complicated system of the English, instead of the simple but deceptive system of the French, a much greater part of the nation might be associated in the elections, and still that share preserved to the national intelligence which it ought to have. We will propose, for example, to give two-fifths of the national representation to the democracy, two-fifths to the most enlightened and intelligent part of the nation, who inhabit towns, and there develop material prosperity ; a fifth to that part occupied in intellectual interests. We will lower the census to the great framers of the American constitution. I quote his opinion from De Tocqueville :—

‘There are some, who would be inclined to regard the servile pliancy of the Executive to a prevailing current, either in the community or in the legislature, as its best recommendation. But such men entertain very crude notions, as well of the purposes for which government was instituted, as of the true means by which the public happiness may be promoted. The republican principle demands that the deliberative sense of the community should govern the conduct of those to whom they intrust the management of their affairs ; but it does not require an unqualified complaisance to every sudden breeze of passion, or to every transient impulse which the people may receive from the arts of men who flatter their prejudices to betray their interests. It is a just observation that the people commonly *intend the public good*. This often applies to their very errors. But their good sense would despise the adulator who should pretend that they always *reason right* about the *means* of promoting it. They know from experience that they sometimes err ; and the wonder is that they so seldom err as they do, beset, as they continually are, by the wiles of parasites and sycophants ; by the snares of the ambitious, the avaricious, the desperate ; by the artifices of men who possess their confidence more than they deserve it ; and of those who seek to possess, rather than to deserve it. When occasions present themselves in which the interests of the people are at variance with their inclinations, it is the duty of persons whom they have appointed to be the guardians of those interests, to withstand the temporary delusion, in order to give them time and opportunity for more cool and sedate reflection. Instances might be cited in which a conduct of this kind has saved the people from very fatal consequences of their own mistakes, and has procured lasting monuments of their gratitude to the men who had the courage and magnanimity enough to serve them at the peril of their displeasure.’—P. 179.

100 fr. in obedience to the present clamour ; and giving to 84 departments (Paris not included) two deputies for each department, to be elected in the chief place, we shall have 168 deputies, representing particularly the democracy of the country, perhaps, more probably, the nobility, who will seize on it. We will add 42 deputies elected by the 21 greater cities in France, in purely democratic assemblies, such as those of Westminster and Preston in England, giving a vote to whoever can read and write. We would give an equal number of deputies, 210, to the burgesses of towns, requiring for their admission to the freedom a complete education in the secondary schools, and a degree of fortune which places them above manual labour. We would reserve at least 105 deputies for learned professions, in which all those who had received a superior education and taken degrees, should have the honour of being inscribed, and we would allow these last elections to be made by letters, that they might point out the most eminent persons, not in the provinces only, but in France. We should thus have a representation of 525 members, to the election of whom a very considerable part of the nation would have contributed, but in which, however, the share of intelligence and real will, would have been preserved.¹

Let us now see how the conditions of the problem might be dealt with, having a due regard to the present political condition of this country. In the first place, I would start from the last great Reform Bill as an accomplished fact. It is ; therefore let it be. In the second place, I would provide for the more extended representation of the working classes, either by lowering the present general franchise, as was proposed by the late Whig Government, to £7, or by creating for them a special franchise, analogous to that possessed by the English and Irish Universities. This might be done by dividing the country into districts, and enacting that all the working classes within each district, who paid certain taxes and a certain low house-rent, should elect their own member, over and above the present representation of counties and burghs. In the third place, I would balance this democratic force by the creation of a special representation, for what I have called the natural, moral, and intellectual aristocracy of the community ; and I would take these just as I find them in publicly recognised corporations, such as the Universities, the Faculty of Advocates and Writers to the Signet, the Colleges

¹ *Essays*, p. 313.

of Physicians and Surgeons, the Royal Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, the Royal Society, and such-like. The giving of a special suffrage to these bodies would secure the triple advantage of directly representing intelligent minorities, of favouring education indirectly, and of opening a door of entrance to the House of Commons, to gentlemen of culture and intelligence who might not be disposed, in Alexander Hamilton's phrase, to submit 'with unqualified complaisance to every sudden breeze of popular passion.' By such a scheme as this, and in many other ways, a just and reasonable Reform Bill might be passed, which would maintain the balance of the constitution, and not expose us to the shame of following, as a herd of slavish imitators, in the wake of vulgar French and American precedents. I do not make these suggestions with any crotchety preference. I should be content with any Bill that in some shape or other would acknowledge the principle of social aristocracy, and make a manly protest against the degrading doctrines of American democracy. The public is well acquainted with the sentiments of not a few intelligent persons, who have published their thoughts on this subject, with the view of doing something to prevent us steering right into the Maelstrom of democratic unreason. But whether it be the blind power of precedent, or whether it be laziness, or whether it be that those who should be our leaders are under some fatal necessity of being led, I do not see that public men in this country have ever bestowed on any of these proposals the attention which they deserve. To turn a reasonable proposal into a laugh is one of the most common artifices of the public oratory which pleases the multitude. The principle, for instance, advocated by Professor Lorimer of this city, and Mr. Macfie of Liverpool, of giving to certain persons a plurality of votes, is in the highest degree just and reasonable ;¹ it is only when curiously carried out in certain details that it becomes exposed to the light missiles of those who delight in any superficial semblance of incongruity. A similar remark

¹ See *Constitutionalism of the Future*, by James Lorimer, Esq., 1867, 2d edition; and *Speech delivered at a Meeting of the Liverpool Reform League* on Dec. 19, 1866, including extracts from Archbishop Whately and John Stuart Mill, on Plurality of Votes as a needful element in any Final scheme of Parliamentary Reform. London: Longman, 1867.

may be made on the various proposals which have been brought forward for enfranchising the at present disfranchised minorities. To none of these has any reasonable objection been made ; only the strength of the popular will, already strongly set in for democracy, must prevail, and the incapacity of the popular brain to entertain more than one idea at a time ! From politicians under the influence of such unreasoning forces, of course no reasonable product can be expected. If the little child will kick and roar and spit out the medicine, and the doctor is not firm, the disease must run its course. But one thing is certain ; a Reform Bill in the direction of American democracy, in this country at the present moment, will lead, by an inevitable tendency, to the overthrow of the British Constitution. Where the ground is slippery and the atmosphere turbid as in politics, great blunders are the most natural thing in the world ; but the consequences which follow on a one-eyed policy will not be retarded because the counsels of public men have been amiably hasty, perhaps, and their motives chivalrously pure. One false step, made in the direction in which we are now moving, never can be retraced. The same complexity of parties, the same compliance with clamour, the same cowardly compromise with absurdity which may lead to the triumph of the present movement, will, in the course of another thirty years, lead to another instalment of American liberty ; and then comes, according to Mr. Bright—Paradise, according to New York precedents—Pandemonium. Before a House of Commons nominated by trades'-unions and overawed by fervid demagogues, the constitution of this country would not last a year. The House of Lords, that wonderful incarnation of all that is stable, graceful, and chivalrous in society, would be voted an encumbrance ; the Crown denounced as an expensive toy ; and the Multitude and Mammon—the mechanical forces and the material interests—would enter into the undisputed heirship of the world-renowned British Constitution. May God long preserve us from such a consummation !

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BOROUGH OF ROCHDALE, AND A SINCERE FRIEND
OF THE PEOPLE,
BY THE EDITOR.

SPEECH AT BIRMINGHAM.

ON the occasion of the great Reform Demonstration at Birmingham, which was held on Monday, the 27th August, Mr. Bright delivered the following speech in the large room of the Town Hall, to a crowded and enthusiastic audience. After the extraordinary cheering which greeted his rising had subsided, the hon. gentleman said:—

Mr. Mayor and gentlemen,—I accept the address which has just been presented to me with feelings which I shall not attempt to express. I accept it as ample compensation for whatsoever labours I have expended in your service, and I shall take it from this meeting, and hold it as a constant stimulus to whatsoever labours may lie in my path in your service for the future. There are times when I feel no little despondency at the small result of many years of public labour; but to look upon a meeting like that assembled here, and to look upon that vast gathering which your town has exhibited to the country and to the world to-day, is enough to dispel every feeling of fear or of despondency, and to fill the heart and nerve the arm to new and greater labours for the future. During the last session of Parliament, in the debate on the second reading of the Franchise Bill, I took the opportunity of offering a word of counsel and of warning to the powerful party in the House which opposed that bill. In those words of warning and of counsel I asked them to remember that if they should succeed in defeating that bill and overthrowing the Government, there would still remain the people of England to be met, and the claims of the great question of reform to be considered and settled. We have not had to wait long before that which I foretold has come to pass. In London we have seen assemblies of the people such as for a generation past have not been witnessed. In many other parts of the country there have been meetings greater than have been seen for thirty years, and notably to-day there has been a voice given forth from the very centre and heart of England which will reach at least to the circumference of the three kingdoms. There has been an attempt to measure the numbers that are present in this hall at this moment. There are probably six thousand persons here. I ask any who were present to-day to reckon how many times this hall could have been filled from that multitudinous congregation upon which our

eyes rested, but to the full extent of which they could scarcely reach. It is highly probable that it might have been filled forty times from that vast number. Yes, and at this moment I am told that outside there is an audience far greater than that I now address; whilst to-morrow morning there will be millions of an audience throughout the whole of the United Kingdom, anxious to know what has been done and what has been said on this 27th day of August in this great town of Birmingham. We are not here to-night to discuss the question of reform, because that is a question which we have already settled. What we have to do is to discuss calmly our present position and our future work in reference to this great question. My honourable colleague has said that the bill of the late Government was one of singular moderation. It was also a bill—I speak now only of the Franchise Bill—of a singular and most honest simplicity; and that was the great reason that I felt it my duty, and that you felt it yours, to give it an honest support. I will just tell you how much and how little it proposed to give, or would have given, to the working classes of this country; and I think it necessary to state this because of the argument which I intend to raise upon it. The Government produced to the House of Commons a blue book, most elaborately compiled, and as far as I know, with the exception of one point, correct and trustworthy; but they proposed to inform the House of the number of working men who are now upon the register, and what addition would be made to that number if the bill passed. I differed entirely from their estimate, which I believe to have been to a very great extent erroneous, and I think I produced facts in the House of Commons which sustained my opinion. Mr. Gladstone told us that at present there are on the borough registers in England and Wales working men to the number of 126,000. He showed further that by the abolition of the ratepaying clauses, if there was no alteration in the £10 suffrage, there would be an addition of 60,000 electors, who, he reckoned, would all be working men; and then he said that if the franchise was reduced from £10 to £7, there would be a further addition of 144,000, all of whom he estimated as working men. Therefore he stated that when that bill passed there would be on the borough registers of England and Wales 330,000 working men, of whom 204,000 would be new voters added by that bill. I believe that estimate was made with perfect honesty by Mr. Gladstone, but that it was to a very large extent erroneous. I showed several boroughs, and I believe I might have gone through almost every borough in the United Kingdom, where the number of working men stated in the returns was at least double, and in many cases far more than double, the actual number upon the register. I estimated, also, that although the abolition of the ratepaying clauses might add 60,000 new votes, it would be very unfair to expect that more than one-third, or 20,000 of them—being ten pounders and upwards—would be of the class of working men. I said further that it was absurd to reckon that every man between £10 and £7 was of the class of working men, and I supposed that at least no more than two-thirds of them could be placed in that list. My estimate differed, therefore, from Mr. Gladstone's thus far. I said that of the 126,000 now upon the register there were not more than the half, or 63,000; instead

of there being 60,000 admitted by the abolition of the ratepaying clause, there would not be more than 20,000; and that, instead of there being 144,000 working men admitted by the reduction of the franchise from £10 to £7, it was a fair estimate to take two-thirds of that number, or 96,000. My opinion therefore, was, that when that bill passed, if it should pass, there would be upon the borough registers of England and Wales, not 330,000 of working men, but 179,000, and that the bill would not admit 204,000 but only 116,000 of that class. Take either my estimate of 116,000 or Mr. Gladstone's estimate of 204,000 as the number of working men to be added by the late bill to the register, and I will ask you what, after all, does it all come to? 204,000 working men according to the Government estimate, 116,000 according to mine, and in addition about 200,000 new voters added to the counties under a £14 franchise, who must of necessity be almost altogether outside the working classes. That was the bill which my honourable colleague has described as one of singular moderation. Out of five or six millions of men in the United Kingdom who are not now enfranchised, the whole number of the working classes to be admitted in the boroughs of England and Wales was only 200,000. Now that bill, so moderate that I confess I had entertained the hope that it would pass through Parliament without any great difficulty, was resisted as if it had been charged with all the dangerous matter which the Tory party actually attributed to it. It was intrigued against in a manner—I had almost said more base, but I will say more hateful than any measure I have seen opposed during the 23 years that I have sat in the House of Commons; and, finally, under every kind of false pretence, it was rejected by a small majority, and fell, and with it the Government which had proposed it also fell. The reason I have given you these figures is that I want to show you the desperate resolution of the present Government, and of the party which it represents, to deny to the working classes of this country any share in its government. I am not confined to the votes of the House and the destruction of the bill, but I am able, I think, to show you by the arguments upon which the Tory party proceeded that such is their determination, and it may be their unchangeable resolution. Several of the speakers to-night have referred to the slanders and calumnies heaped upon the great body of the people during the discussions of the last session; and, no doubt, although his name was not mentioned, the speakers had in their minds one member of the House who virtually has no constituency—whose sole constituent, at any rate at that time, is now no longer here to partake of the strife or the contests of politics, though I presume another constituent acts and reigns in his stead. If I quote anything that Mr. Lowe said, understand me that I wish to bring no charge against him whatsoever. He has spent some years in Australia, and probably has voyaged round the world; and I do not deny him the right to voyage round the world of politics—and to cast anchor in any port that may be pleasant to him. I merely intend to quote something that he said, because when it was said it was received with rapturous enthusiasm by the great party in the House who are the supporters of Lord Derby and of Mr. Disraeli. This is extracted from the *Times* newspaper, a paper in which, as is well known, the speaker

has been for many years an eminent writer, and over which, unless reports speak untruly, he has no small degree of control. He says: "I have had opportunities of knowing some of the constituencies of this country; and I ask if you want venality, ignorance, drunkenness, and the means of intimidating—if you want impulsive, unreflecting, violent people—where would you go to look for them? To the top or to the bottom? It is ridiculous to blink the fact that since the Reform Act the great corruption has been among the voters between £20 and £10 rental—the lodging-house and beerhouse keepers;" "but it is said, Only give the franchise to the artisan and then see the difference." He goes on—passing a sentence which was a classical illustration which amused the House, but which it is not necessary to quote here. He said: "You know what sort of persons live in these small houses"—houses, of course, between £10 and £7. "We have long had experience of them under the name of freemen, and it would be a good thing if they were disfranchised altogether. They were dying out of themselves, but the Government propose to bring them back again under another name, so that the effect of passing this bill would be, first, to increase corruption, intimidation, and all the evils that happen usually in elections; and next that the working men of England, finding themselves in a full majority of the whole constituency, will awake to a full sense of their power, and say, 'We can do better for ourselves. Don't let us any longer be cajoled at elections. Let us set up shop for ourselves. We have objects to carry as well as our neighbours, and let us unite to carry those objects. We have the machinery. We have our trades unions. We have our leaders ready. (Loud Opposition cheers, and laughter.) We have the power of combination as we have shown over and over again, and when we have a prize to fight for we will bring it to bear with tenfold more force than ever before.'" These are the sentiments which, uttered in my hearing, were received with enthusiastic approbation by the great body of the Tory party and by the supporters of the present Government. Observe what it really means. It is that voters now between £20 rental and £10 are so bad that if you go lower it will be something like ruin. That there will be more venality, ignorance, and drunkenness; and then, speaking to the House of Commons—in which the landed proprietors, or the bulk of them, have always acted as a general trades' union, where they raised the price of bread and diminished the size of the loaf as long as the people would let them—he says there will be combinations of working men for their special objects, and therefore—mind, this is his conclusion—shut them out for ever; bolt the door,—say, loudly and boldly, you, the Parliament of England, to the 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 of men who have now no vote, and whom we pretend to represent,—“No one of you who cannot pay a rental of £10 shall ever speak by his direct representative within the walls of this House.” That is the policy which Mr. Lowe recommends. It is not important at all because Mr. Lowe recommends it. It is important only because it has been accepted and approved by the great Tory party in Parliament. However, I say—I who am charged with designs against the safety of the institutions of this country—I say it is a dangerous policy—a policy which in other countries where carried out has done great things. Through it crowns and coronets have sometimes been lost, and I am not

sure that it is a policy which can be safely maintained with us. I asked one of the most trusted and intelligent and excellent Frenchmen with whom I am acquainted, one of the most confidential friends of the dynasty of Louis Phillippe and of the Orleans family, what it was that drove that family from France, and I referred to stories of corruption amongst ministers and other things which had been circulated in public and in private. He said: "None of these things did it. It was the attempt of the King to govern France by a parliament that represented an insignificant minority of the people, and which parliament he thought he could perpetually manage by a judicious distribution of patronage." On the principle of governing this country by a Parliament elected by an insignificant minority of the people, Lord Derby comes into office, and judging from the speeches and the votes of the last session of Parliament, his party intends as long as possible to govern upon that principle and that policy. Working men in this hall, I wish my voice had been loud enough to have said what I am about to say to the vast multitude which we looked on this day; but I say it to them through the press, and to all the working men of this kingdom, I say that the accession to office of Lord Derby is a declaration of war against the working classes. (Cheers, and a voice from the platform, "We accept the challenge.") The course taken in London the other day by the police, and it had almost been by the military, is an illustration of the doctrines and the principles of the Derby administration. They reckon nothing of the constitution of their country—a constitution which has no more regard to the crown or to the aristocracy than it has to the people—a constitution which regards the House of Commons fairly representing all the nation, as important a part of the governmental system of this kingdom as either the House of Lords or the throne itself. If they thus despise the constitution they likewise despise the claims of five millions or six millions who are unrepresented. You may work, you may pay taxes, you may serve in the army, and fight; 70,000 or more of your brethren are now living under the burning sun of India, and twice as many more are serving in the ranks in different parts of the world; and you, the great body of the people from whom these men are drawn, are not considered worthy to do so simple an act as to give a vote in your great town for your present or any future members. You are to have no vote, no share in the Government; the country you live in is not to be your country. You are like the Coolies or the Chinese who are imported into the West Indies or California. You are to work, but you are not to take root in the country, or to consider the country as your country, and, worse than all this, in addition to this refusal of the commonest right of the constitution, you are insulted by the cheers which a great party have given to the language which I have read to you to-night. You are to be told that you are so ignorant and so venal, so drunken, so impulsive, so unreflecting, and so disorderly that it is not even safe to skim off as it were the very cream of you to the number of 116,000, or it may be of 204,000, and to admit them to a vote for members of the House of Commons. This is the Tory theory. This is the faith of Lord Derby and his party, and I maintain that I am not saying a word that is an exaggeration of the truth, for I have heard that party over and over again vociferously

cheer sentiments such as I have described. The Government which has been overturned was a very different Government. Lord Russell had no fear of freedom. He could much more easily be persuaded to give up, and he would much more willingly abandon for ever the name of Russell than he would give up, his hereditary love of freedom. The Government, which was led by Earl Russell in one House and by Mr. Gladstone in the other, was founded and acted upon the principle of trust and confidence in the people. Some said there was not much difference between the Derby Government and the Russell Government. Lord Derby asked Lord Clarendon to take office in his Government. There was something charming in the very audacity of the effrontery of Lord Derby. Lord Clarendon was an eminent minister of the Government that brought in a bill which the Tory party declared to be subversive of the constitution; and Lord Derby asks Lord Clarendon to keep the Foreign-office in the new Government! The Government of Lord Derby in the House of Commons sitting all in a row reminds me very much of a number of amusing and ingenious gentlemen whom I daresay some of you have seen and listened to. I mean the Christy Minstrels. The Christy Minstrels, if I am not misinformed, are, when they are clean washed, white men; but they come before the audience as black as the blackest negroes, and by this transformation it is expected that their jokes and songs will be more amusing. The Derby minstrels pretend to be Liberal and white; but the fact is if you come nearer and examine them closely you will find them to be just as black and curly as the Tories have ever been. I do not know, and I will not pretend to say, which of them it is that plays the banjo and which the bones. But I have no doubt that, in their manœuvres to keep in office during the coming session, we shall know something more about them than we do at present; they are, in point of fact, when they pretend to be Liberal, mere usurpers and impostors. Their party will not allow them to be liberal, and the party exists only upon the principle upon which they have acted in all their past history of resisting and rejecting every proposition of a liberal character that has been submitted to them. What is this Derby principle of shutting out more than five-sixths of all the people from the exercise of constitutional rights? If any of you take ship to Canada you will find the Derby principle utterly repudiated. But in Canada there is no uprooting of institutions, and no destruction of property, and there is no absence of order or of loyalty. If you go to Australia you will find there that the Derby principle is unknown, and yet there reigns order as in this country, contentment with the institutions of the colonies, and a regard for law and property. If you go to those greatest and most glorious colonies of this country, the United States of America, there you find a people exhibiting all the virtues which belong to the greatest nations on the face of the earth; there you find a people passing through a tremendous war and a tremendous revolution with a conduct and success, with a generosity and a magnanimity which have attracted and aroused the admiration of the world; and if you go to Europe you find in the republic of Switzerland, in the kingdoms of Holland and Belgium, in Norway and Sweden, in France, and now you are about to witness it in Germany, a wide extension of the franchise, hitherto,

in this country, in our time, unknown; and neither emperor, king, nor noble believes that his authority or his interests, or the greatness or happiness of any one of those countries will be jeopardised by the free admission of the people to constitutional rights. In Germany, the vote is to be given to every man of 25 years of age and upwards. Let them propose to do the same here, and then we shall not be in advance of the great State of North Germany which is now being established. But what is it we are coming to in this country? Why, that that which is being rapidly accepted in almost all parts of the world is being persistently and obstinately refused here in England, the home of freedom, the mother of parliaments. Yet in this England five millions of grown men, representing more than 20,000,000 of our population, are to be permanently denied that which makes the only difference between despotism and freedom all the world over. I venture to say that this cannot last very long. How do we stand at this moment? The noble and illustrious lady who sits upon the throne—she whose gentle hand wields the sceptre over that wide empire of which we are the heart and centre—she was not afraid of the Franchise Bill which the Government introduced last session. Seven times, I think, by her own lips or by her pen, she has recommended to Parliament the admission of a large number of working men to the Parliamentary franchise. If this proposition was destructive, would not the Queen discover that fact? If the bill of the last session had been a pernicious bill, would the 30,000,000 of people of the United Kingdom not have been able to produce one single public meeting in condemnation of it? The middle class in our towns are by a vast majority in favour of it. All the middle class of Birmingham have sympathised with the great proceedings of this day, and I doubt not that by-and-bye we shall see in the populous districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire assemblies rivalling those which have been held in London and Birmingham, and if we go to the House of Commons—that House elected so much by landlord compulsion in the counties, and by corruption, intimidation, and tumult in the boroughs—do not suppose that I am charging that House of Commons with faults that it does not itself understand and acknowledge:—have you read the report of the proceedings at the commission for Yarmouth? Did you read that a late member for that borough is said to have spent £70,000 to maintain his seat? Did you read that one gentleman, an inferior partner in a brewery, contributed £4,000 for the election of his partner, and that another gentleman knowing nothing of that borough goes down there and supplies £6,000 to fight a contest spread then only over a few days? and remember that when Yarmouth or any other borough is thus brought before the public it is only a sample of a very considerable sack—and that for every borough which is thus exposed there are probably 10 or 20 other boroughs which are to a very large extent in the very same condemnation. Notwithstanding this, if we go to the House of Commons, we find the Parliament of England at this moment about equally divided, and that half the House was in favour of the late bill. If that be so, what is wanted in this poising and balancing of the scale? It only wants this, that the working men of England should heartily throw their influence into that side which is for their interests, and that side will prevail. You know I have preferred

that the franchise should be established upon what I consider to be the ancient practice of the country. I am not afraid of the principles of the Reform League. I have no fear of manhood suffrage, and no man is more a friend of the ballot than I am. It is a great cause which is offered to your notice to-night. It is a grand and noble flag under which you are asked to enlist yourselves. What I would recommend you to do is this—and I imagine myself at this moment to be speaking in the ear of every intelligent, sober, and thoughtful working man in the three kingdoms—let us try to move on together; let us not split hairs on this question; let us do as your fathers did thirty-four years ago; let us have associations everywhere; let every workshop and factory be a reform association; let there be in every one of them a correspondent, or a secretary who shall enrol members and assist this great and noble cause. I would recommend that the passages I have read from that celebrated and unhappy speech should be printed upon cards, and should be hung up in every room in every factory, workshop, and clubhouse, and in every place where working men are accustomed to assemble. Let us rouse the spirit of the people against these slanderers of a great and noble nation. There will come soon another election. The working men may not be able to vote, but they can form themselves into a powerful body, and they can throw their influence in every borough on the side of the candidates who pledge themselves to the question of reform. If they do this, you may depend upon it they will change many seats, and give a certain majority for reform in the next Parliament. It may be necessary and desirable to meet Parliament again with petitions from all parts of the country, signed by numberless names. There is no effort which the constitution, which morality permits us to use, that we should leave unused and unmade for the purpose of furthering this great cause; and let us be sure of this, that we demand only that the question of reform shall be dealt with by a Government honestly in favour of reform. The address which has been presented to me has referred to 1832. I remember that time well. My young heart then was stirred with the trumpet blast that sounded from your midst. There was no part of this kingdom where your voice was not heard. Let it sound again. Stretch out your hands to your countrymen in every part of the three kingdoms, and ask them to join you in a great and righteous effort on behalf of that freedom which has been so long the boast of Englishmen, but which the majority of Englishmen have never yet possessed. I shall esteem it an honour which my words cannot describe, and which even in thought I cannot measure, if the population which I am permitted to represent should do its full duty in the great struggle which is before us. Remember the great object for which we strive. Care not for calumnies and lies. Our object is this—to restore the British constitution all its fulness, with all its freedom, to the British people.

SPEECHES AT MANCHESTER.

On the 24th of September, in the Free-trade Hall, Manchester, which was crowded almost to suffocation by upwards of 5,000 persons, Mr. Bright was presented with an Address by the Reform League recently established in that city. In accepting it, Mr. Bright spoke as follows:—

I was not aware when I was invited to attend this meeting that anything different from the ordinary course of proceedings would take place. I was not informed that I should be honoured by the presentation of any address. I accept this address with many thanks for the kindness which you have shown me; at the same time I accept it with something like fear and trembling, because of the mighty responsibility which by this address you would throw upon me. I have never had any ambition for leadership; I do not feel myself to have fitness for such an office. I have worked hitherto wheresoever I chanced to be, whether in the ranks or in the front; and without pledging myself to undertake all that this address asks of me to undertake, and perform, I may, however, freely pledge myself to this, that wherever I find men willing to work for human freedom and human happiness, I trust I shall be ready to take my part with them. And now, as my eye has rested upon this wonderful assembly, I have thought it not wrong to ask myself whether there is any question that is great, that is sufficient, that is noble, that has called us together to-night, and I have come to the conclusion that great as is this meeting, and transcendentally great the meeting which was held in the middle of the day, that the question which has brought us together is worthy of our assembly and worthy of every effort we can make. We are met for the purpose, so far as lies in our power, of widening the boundaries and making more stable the foundations of the freedom of the country in which we live. We are not as our fathers were 200 years ago, called upon to do battle with the Crown; we have no dynasty to complain of, no royal family to dispossess. In our day the wearer of the crown of England is in favour of freedom. For on many separate occasions, as you all know, the Queen has strongly, as strongly as became her station, urged upon Parliament the extension of the franchise of the people. Parliament has been less liberal than the Crown, and time after time these recommendations have been disregarded, and the offers of the monarch have been rejected and denied. But no more of that now; and it is not our business to-night to assail the hereditary branch of the legislature—the House of Peers. For my share, I cannot but think that if there are dangers ahead for the House of Lords they are dangers not so much from without as from within. Its foes in my view are those of its own household. It stands in the high place of a senate, but it too much abdicates the duties of a senate; it gives its votes, its power, its proxies into the hands of one

man, and he often, and as at present, is not by any means the wisest of men. Unfortunately for that House it does almost nothing; it does not even debate freely, and the session will pass and you scarcely hear any discussion in that House which is calculated to instruct the people on political subjects. I sometimes fear that it is no longer a temple of honour, the path to which leads through the temple of virtue. It has become too much the refuge for worn-out members of the House of Commons; it becomes every year more numerous, without, I fear, becoming more useful, and unless it can wake itself up to the great duties of a senate, decay and darkness will settle upon it. Some of its members may read what I say. I beg to assure them that in these few observations I am speaking in no unfriendly spirit of the House of Lords. But we have a distinct purpose to-night, and our purpose is this, to restore the representation of the people, to make the House of Commons, the House which professes to represent the common people, a reality and no longer a sham. Now, the facts of our representation are simple, the important facts can be stated in about two sentences. I think at every reform meeting they should be restated, and they should fix themselves in the mind of every reformer throughout the country. I am charged with telling things that everybody knows; well, if we tell them often enough everybody will know. This is a fact, and it is worth mentioning, that there are seven millions of grown-up men responsible to the laws in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland; that of these about one million and a quarter are on the list of voters; that exclusive of paupers and exclusive of criminals—though I am sorry to mention these two classes in the same sentence—exclusive of these, to whom no man proposes to give the franchise, there are five millions of men in the United Kingdom who have no votes. Of the million and a quarter who have votes the counties take up about 750,000, and the boroughs about 550,000. Now, I shall say that which some men will contradict, but which I venture to say is true, when I declare that for the most part the county representation in this country is not a popular representation in any honest sense of that term. We know that with a franchise of £50 occupation and the freehold franchise added to it, that the great body of the people in every county is excluded from the elective franchise. Well, I regard the county representation to a very large extent as a dead body tied to the living body of our borough representation. I believe it will become less so. In Ireland there are some free counties; in Scotland there are some, and there will be more. But still, taking the county representation as a whole, it is in a most unsatisfactory condition. Well, but, of the boroughs where there is life and where there is some freedom, what is their condition? Only one fact. There are 145 boroughs with over 20,000 inhabitants each, and they return 215 members; there are 109 boroughs with over 20,000 of population, and they return 181 members. But look at the difference in the number of voters, the number of the population, and the amount of taxation. It is something startling and enormous. The boroughs under 20,000 have 79,000 electors; the boroughs over 20,000 have 485,000 electors. The boroughs under 20,000 have 1,350,000 people; the boroughs over 20,000 have 9,305,000 people. The boroughs under 20,000 pay £367,000 in taxation; the boroughs over 20,000 pay £5,240,000

in taxation ; and yet the boroughs under 20,000 have 215 members, as against 181 members for boroughs over 20,000. Now, I am sure you will agree with me in this, that the representation which, as regards the franchise, shuts out five millions of men, and which, as regards distribution, leaves the state of things which I have now described, can only be fairly pictured when I call it a stupendous fraud upon the people. The counties—I have Lord Derby's own authority for it—the counties are politically the hunting ground of the great landowners. Lord Derby said, "if you will tell me the politics of a few of the chief landowners in the county I will tell you the politics of the county members." The boroughs, what are they? Manchester knows no bribery, nor does Birmingham ; but of the boroughs of 20,000 population and under, how many of them are full of corruption? There are small boroughs, such as Banbury, Tavistock, and Liskeard, where, I believe, great honour and purity prevail ; but the bulk of these boroughs are accessible to the influence of any man who will come there with plenty of money in his pocket, and no principles or morals in his heart. In point of fact, without any exaggeration, we may say that all the evils which are possible to influence an electoral system are amply provided for by the electoral laws of England. Compulsion, bribery, drunkenness, lavish and disgraceful expenditure, all these not only exist but are absolutely inevitable under the state of the law which now prevails ; and I venture to say—and I never said anything in my life which I would more easily undertake to prove—that there is no remedy for this state of things where ambitious and unprincipled and rich men come into contact with small numbers of voters ; there is no remedy whatsoever but in large constituencies and the security of the ballot. Now if I have fairly described the state of things, can we wonder at the difficulty which meets us when we have any question before Parliament? Look back at the question of the corn laws, look back on the question of the paper duty, look back or look now on the question of our disgraceful expenditure, and you will find that on every occasion when the people ask for any reform of any kind, they have to make a desperate fight for it, just as though they were wresting it not from their countrymen and brothers, but from the representatives of a conquering nation. Take this last session of all—this session which has just passed over, a session ever to be remembered. The Government, headed by Lord Russell in the House of Lords, by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons—anxious to make one step forward in the direction of popular rights, brought in a bill most honest in its character, and most moderate in its dimensions. It was a bill so moderate in its dimensions, that some of us who think much more would be greater wisdom to grant, found ourselves in some difficulty in tendering to the Government our cordial support to enable them to carry that bill. Well, that bill, which I hold every man who is in favour of any reform at all had no kind of excuse for opposing—that bill was met by an opposition, I will say at once as malignant and as dishonest as I have ever seen given to any measure in the House of Commons. There was no artifice, there was no trick that was too mean and too base to be made use of to retard the progress of and ultimately destroy the bill, and to such an extent did it go that even Lord Stanley was induced, I know not how, I

know not by what evil spirit of his party—he was induced to make a proposition which to my certain knowledge some among his own party described as utterly disgraceful. The facts and the arguments on which that bill was supported and defended were not met, and never could be met. Another policy was adopted, and to get rid of the inconvenient argument of figures, they turned round and did not hesitate to slander a whole nation. The name of a gentleman eminent in these matters has already been mentioned. If I mention his name, or if I quote what he said, understand that I make no charge against him that he holds opinions which I so much deplore. Any man may hold what opinions he likes, and the opinions of any particular man in Parliament are not of very great importance. But these opinions were important because they were addressed to 300 members of the party which is now in power, and by that party they were received with uproarious and universal enthusiasm. I do not think that any meeting of the working classes held during this recess should pass without some reference to the observations of that gentleman. Bear in mind that not only were they received with enthusiastic cheering by the Tory party, but when the Queen sent for Lord Derby and committed to him the charge of forming a new Government, he either directly, or through his patron, the owner of the borough of Calne, endeavoured, as is universally believed, and as I believe, to prevail upon the man who had uttered these sentiments to become a member of his Government. These are some of his sentiments:—“I have had opportunities of knowing some of the constituencies in this country, and, I ask if you want venality, ignorance, drunkenness, and the means of intimidation; if you want impulsive, unreflecting, violent people, where would you go to look for them—to the top or the bottom? It is ridiculous to blink the fact that since the Reform Act the great corruption has been among the voters between the £20 and £10 rental—the £10 lodging-house and beerhouse keepers. But it is said, ‘Only give the franchise to the artisan, and then see the difference.’” He goes on immediately after, omitting a sentence which is nothing to the argument. “We know what sort of people live in these small houses. We have long had experience of them under the name of ‘freemen,’ and it would be a good thing if they were disfranchised altogether. They were dying out of themselves, but the Government proposed to bring them back again under another name.” That refers of course to persons who live in houses between £7 and £10 rental. Then he said if this bill should pass what dreadful things would happen. “The first stage would be in increase of corruption, intimidation, and disorder, of all the evils that happen usually in elections. What would be the second? The second will be, that the working men of England, finding themselves in a full majority of the whole constituency, will awake to a full sense of their power. They will say, we can do better for ourselves; we have objects to carry as well as our neighbours, and let us unite to carry those objects; we have machinery, we have our trades’ unions, we have our leaders all ready. We have the power of combination, as we have shown over and over again; and when we have a prize to fight for we will bring to bear with tenfold more force than ever before.” Perhaps the hint that you have your trades’ unions, and machinery, and leaders—a hint which

I offered to you some years ago—may have some effect, coming from such lips. But you see the whole tenor of these observations is this. There are men to whom I should attribute no blame for uttering them, or for holding them, for there are men so timid as to see giants and ghosts everywhere. The whole tenor of these observations is to show that the great body of the working classes—because, mind, this bill only as explained by Mr. Gladstone, and in my opinion it was an exaggerated estimate, proposed to admit 200,000 of them—these observations are based on the opinion that the whole of the great body of the working classes are in that condition of ignorance and degradation and also of hostility to the existing institutions of the country, that it would not be safe to admit to the franchise even two hundred thousand out of the five millions who are now excluded. Now, I said at Birmingham, and I say here, that in every workshop, in every room, and in every factory, in every clubhouse of every trade, there ought to be a card hung up with these remarks, these slanders of the working men, there suspended. If these statements be true, hang the card up there that you may see in that mirror what you are, and reform yourselves. If this charge be false, as I hold it to be false, then read what it is that is said of you by those who are hostile to your political rights, and draw your ranks closer together and make a more resolute and determined effort to change the state of things in this country. Some newspapers have said, since my speech at Birmingham was delivered, that it was unfair to try to place this on the back of the Tory party. Why did they cheer it? Why have their newspapers said that here is a great man, dropped down as it were from the clouds, to tell us all about the constitution of this country? Why is it that Lord Derby spent many efforts trying to persuade the utterer of these sentiments to become a member, and a powerful member of his Cabinet? I say the doctrines which Mr. Lowe uttered in that speech, I say they are in the main the doctrines upon which the Tory party has acted for generations back, although there are not many men in the House probably of that party who would dare to say what he said, and I suspect there is hardly one of them who could say it so well. I want to ask you a question. I do not know how many thousand persons there are here, but if I were to say 6,000 or 7,000—and I do not know how many thousands have been joining your demonstration to-day in Manchester; but I will put the question to them through the gentlemen below (the reporters), to whom we give so much trouble, and to whom we are so much indebted. I put this question. If these arguments of ignorance and drunkenness be true, what does it show? There is a paper published in London—the *Morning Herald*—which the other day I am told wrote some hints for me for my speech on this occasion. The *Morning Herald*, which is an organ of the Tory party, pointed out a fact, which I stated with great amplitude at a meeting of Rochdale Sunday School teachers—I think on Good Friday last—that a very large portion of the children of the working classes in Manchester—a proportion deplorably large—was growing up without any actual provision being made for their education. And the *Morning Herald* states also that in Manchester there is a great deal of drunkenness, although I believe all the figures show that there is less drunkenness in Manchester, probably, than in any other town

of equal magnitude in the kingdom. I will assume the ignorance for the moment, and assume the drunkenness, and assume the degradation to be there, and what shall I say of the Government that has permitted it? What is this Government—what is this supreme power in this country? It holds all the land, or nearly so; it holds the revenues of the richest church the world has ever seen. It has both Houses of Parliament to do its bidding. It has two national and noble universities; in fact, it has everything of power in this country, and yet according to the showing of this writer the people are ignorant and drunken and degraded. It must be far worse than that of almost any other country, because in almost every other constitutional country the franchise is far more widely extended than it is in this, and without the slightest danger to property or to order. Why is it, I ask you, that Englishmen in England are not so well educated as Englishmen in New England? In the New England States of North America there have been seven generations of men who came originally from this country, who have been thoroughly and fully instructed. I know that in every Free State—I mean in every State that was free before the late war—there is a wide suffrage; there schools are universal, and all the people have the fullest opportunity of being thoroughly instructed for the purposes of life. In this country, what are we doing? The people who have this matter in their hands, and who could settle it, are discussing questions of catechisms—Thirty-nine Articles—what they call “conscience-clauses.” They are all engaged in worrying some dry bone of this kind, whilst the great body of the people, and especially the poorest of the people, are left wholly unprovided for. I venture to say—and I would stake everything I have in the world upon it—that if the platform of the National Reform League, or any platform which gave a substantial and real representation to the whole people, was embodied in an act of Parliament there would not pass over three sessions of Parliament before there would be a full provision for the thorough instruction of every working man’s child in this kingdom. But there is another argument that was very often used in the House of Commons; which is even more extraordinary, coming from the quarter whence we heard it; and it was this—that the country is so prosperous, proving that it is so well governed that in reality there is not only no occasion for anything more, but nobody has any right to ask for anything more. It was one of the arguments, I believe, of the gentleman from whom I have quoted, that we have a right to be well governed, but that the right to govern is a right which exists and rests much higher up. We are assembled here in a building which recalls a good many memories if one had the time and I had the voice to dwell upon them. But, may I ask you why it is we are prosperous? You recollect, many of you here, twenty-five years ago—in the year 1841—this county was like a county subjected to desolation and to famine; and, in fact, it is only since 1846, since the abolition of the corn laws, since the general change to the free trade policy, that there has been continually growing that prosperity which is now brought against us as an argument why there should be no further reform in Parliament. Suppose we had the corn laws now, with the August we have had and the September we are having, gold would be going out of the country, the rate of interest

would be rising, the wages of the people would be falling, the wages they received would be absorbed in the purchase of dear food ; and generally over the whole country there would come a state of things which would give the greatest alarm to the thoughtful in the higher class, and the greatest suffering to the multitudes at the base of the social scale. But why is it—how comes it that we are not in that danger?—that we are not filled with confusion and dismay? Who was it that destroyed the curse of the corn laws, and who was it that fought desperately to maintain that curse? Surely you know who were accustomed to assemble in the Free-trade Hall, who were largely instrumental in destroying it, and you know that no man was more forward in its support than the man who is now the Prime Minister of England. If this is so—if we, the party which we represent on this platform to-night—if we did much to promote this prosperity, are we not fairly entitled to offer ourselves as advisers on the question of the franchise? What is called statesmanship is not like any other profession. In other professions failure is acknowledged, and it shuts a man out from distinction and supremacy ; but Lord Derby at this moment is Prime Minister of England whose failures are in the annals of England for thirty years past. In 1834 Lord Derby left Earl Grey's Government because he would not permit even inquiry into the excessive revenues of the Irish Church. But the Irish Church is doomed to destruction. In 1846 he left Sir Robert Peel and became the leader of the Tory Protectionists, because he would not consent to the abolition of the corn laws ; and since then he has been foremost in opposition to all good things in Parliament. Lord Derby is not the leader of his party in a high sense. He is not its educator ; he is not its guide. He is its leader in the foolish contests in which its ignorance and selfishness involves itself with the people. Only three or four days ago I opened a book which professed to be a history of the governing families of England. It is composed of articles, many of which appeared in the *Spectator* newspaper. There is one on the Stanleys of Knowsley, and they are certainly a governing family, seeing that Lord Derby and Lord Stanley are both of them in the present Government. In opening the book, I find that in the course taken during the agitation of the Reform Act, Lord Stanley, the present Earl of Derby, is stated to have leaped on the table where there was a number of reformers assembled, and to have urged upon them the necessity of refusing the payment of taxes till the Reform Bill was passed. I was not there to see it, but I have heard the story before several times ; I see it recorded in this volume, and I take it therefore to be correct. But Lord Derby in 1852 came forward "to stem the tide of democracy." In 1859 Lord Derby was the author, or head of a Government that proposed a reform bill of a most fraudulent character ; and in 1866 he is the head of a party which has destroyed an honest franchise bill, and has overthrown an honest and patriotic Government. But the newspapers which write in his support tell us that after all this his Government is not in the least disabled or precluded from dealing with the reform question. I hope no reformer will dream of such a thing. If you like you may trust your life to your most bitter foe ; but I will not do it if I know it. We had free trade from free traders ; for when Sir Robert Peel repealed

the Corn-law he was as sincere a free trader as if he had spoken free trade for the last five years from this platform on which I stand. But Lord Derby is not a reformer, nor will he introduce a Reform Bill in the character of a reformer. If he introduces one, it will be as before—it will be some juggle, some dishonest trick, something base, like the means by which they overthrew the bill of Earl Russell. If that bill had passed, moderate as it was, I undertake to say it would have been received in every part of the United Kingdom with the liveliest satisfaction. It would have given to working men, or to a number of them, a partnership in the State, and I believe that the nation would have been happier and stronger by the passing of that bill. But now discontent is growing—growing everywhere, and it will continue to grow until the discontent becomes a great peril in the country, unless a satisfactory measure is introduced and passed through Parliament. I charge Lord Derby and his friends with this. I say that they have brought class into conflict with class. I say that they have done much to separate Parliament from the nation—that they have made the House of Commons the reviler and not the protector of the people—and further, that they have frustrated the just and beneficent intentions of the Crown. And, in conclusion, I venture upon something—which some may deem a foretelling of what is to come. I say that these men who are now in office cannot govern Britain. The middle class and the working class will alike condemn them. They cannot govern Ireland. In that unhappy country their policy has begotten a condition of chronic insurrection which they can never cure. They will be excluded from power, and their policy will be rejected by the people; for it is on broad, and just, and liberal principles alone that England can maintain her honourable but not now unchallenged place amongst the great nations of the world.

On the evening of the following day, at a Banquet held at the Albion Hotel, in the same city, Mr. Bright, in responding to the toast, "The health of John Bright," said:—

I am very much obliged to you for the opinion you have expressed of me in such emphatic language; at the same time I am pained to think how much you attribute to me, and how much apparently you expect from me, for I am one of those who think that after all one man can do very little, and in a question like this we have now before us, unassisted, unbacked by the multitudes to whom Mr. Edge has referred, it is almost nothing we can do. However, I hope that amongst us we have been doing a little during the last two days. We know at the concluding meeting of this short Manchester campaign that these meetings have been very different, and each has been remarkable in its way. The first was

enormous beyond counting, and held amid most unfavourable circumstances. Some men coming from Rochdale in a train yesterday morning, in the same carriage with a relative of mine, said they were rather glad than otherwise that it did rain, for if it had not rained people would have said that they came out to enjoy the sunshine; but they would show them that they cared enough for the question of reform to come during a continuous shower of rain. Well, I thought that was rather a plucky idea that my townsman had laid hold of, and I suspect that it was an idea entertained by many present besides himself. The second meeting was also remarkable for its numbers. It was held in the finest hall in this kingdom, and I must say it was, as far as temperature was concerned, the most oppressive meeting which it has been my fortune to attend, for the fact is when we went into the room the temperature, the state of the atmosphere was just such as we expected it would be when we should leave the room; for the hall had been crammed full for two hours before we entered it; and, therefore, we went into a room where the atmosphere was already much exhausted, and we suffered, many of us, in consequence. To-night we have a very different meeting. It is not numerous beyond counting; but it is very agreeable, and the table has been loaded with everything that is wholesome and everything that is elegant for our gratification; and, after the three meetings, may we not say that, differing as they have differed, still they all had one object, and have been directed to one great purpose. There are different platforms or opinions here, and there is very great difference in the religious world, but still the religious world proposes to itself to march on to one common end. There are differences in this school of politics—the reform school—but we may still march on to one common end, which is a real representation of the people and the establishment of popular power as supreme in this country. Now, the Reform League, under whose auspices this movement here was originated—it has been carried on jointly by that body and by the National Reform Union, and the difference between them is not considerable—the Reform League hoists a flag which bears upon it these words, “Manhood suffrage and the ballot.” Now, whatever opinion any person may have with regard to the wisdom of immediately, if it was in our power, establishing these principles, or that policy, in an act of Parliament, this, I think no man can doubt, that argument on principle, almost—if not altogether—unassailable, can be brought in favour of that flag. I speak now on the question of giving a vote to every man. I believe that there is no argument worth listening to for a moment that can be brought against the adoption of the ballot. Although we may differ, I believe the difference arises from this, that many believe that something less than the proposition of the League is sufficient for the purpose of a reform that would make the House of Commons a true representation of the people; and that proposing something short of that which the League proposes, it is believed that the large portion of that middle class, to which Mr. Rumney referred, would in some degree be propitiated, and would be induced to lend their support to the less extensive proposition. I think that is quite true. I believe that the middle classes of this country, speaking of them in any way that you like, by any

kind of measurement for the ascertainment of their opinions, my own honest opinion is that they would consider at this moment that a bill that advanced as far as household suffrage was in itself, considering the opinions of the country, a wiser measure for all purposes than that of manhood suffrage, and they believe it would give to the country a really honest Parliament. A great deal may be said for that. I think myself that opinion is on the whole correct. I do not agree at all with Mr. Rumney in the dreary picture which he gave of the opinion of the middle-classes. Why, what is the result of the present system? I showed last night how entirely—almost entirely—the people took no part in county elections; that in boroughs the majority of members come from boroughs under 20,000 inhabitants; and yet notwithstanding that, you can elect a Parliament from which the people are so much excluded, and in which the aristocracy and great landowners have enormous power, you can still elect a Parliament which is within a hair's breadth of passing a measure which is, after all, a considerable extension of the suffrage; and I believe the same Parliament, if such a measure had been proposed by the Government, would have been almost as near passing a proposition for household suffrage. Therefore, I do not agree with Mr. Rumney. I think his description of the opinions of the middle classes is not accurate. If he will go into any borough in the kingdom, any free borough of any fair size, from which you may draw a fair argument, he will find that no Liberal member can be returned unless he pledges himself to a very considerable extension of the franchise; and that cannot be so, if all the middle class—I speak not of the Tories—if a great majority of the middle class in each borough were not in favour of an extension of the franchise. Well, now, my view of the whole question, and of the difference among reformers, is this: that when one sees a movement—a real movement, something grand in its proportions, powerful for the gaining of results—the plan of a sensible man who wants to do something, and does not want to split hairs, is to go with that movement and to make the best of it, and to get all that can be got out of it. Why should we who are called the middle classes see this vast volume of millions of voices gathering and rolling on? and shall we take no part in it, nor bid it welcome, nor bid it success, nor wish to see the great results which in all probability will be born of it? I was very sorry to find from the papers the other day that some friends of mine—I refer merely to one whose letter I read, in the West Riding of Yorkshire—took different views of this matter. I read a very kind and I am sure, a conscientiously-dictated letter from Mr. Baines, the member for Leeds, to the committee who are organising the great meeting that is to take place in the West Riding, declining the invitation to attend the meeting, on the ground that he was not in favour of manhood suffrage. Well, I don't blame him in the least for not being in favour of manhood suffrage. I am not in favour of manhood suffrage, as against household suffrage; and the people of Leeds or the West Riding don't want to commit Mr. Baines to manhood suffrage by his attending the meeting. I am not committed to it any the more because I have attended these meetings. No doubt it has arisen from Mr. Baines being anxious not to be misrepresented, and being so scrupulous that he should not appear to hold

out expectations to the persons attending that meeting which he was not prepared afterwards to fulfil. But so far as I have seen of the working men in connection with this movement during the last few months, I find them tolerant in a high degree, and considerate and respectful of and to all those who may honestly differ with them in any degree, and are still honestly friendly to the admission of any considerable number of them to the franchise. Well, they would admit all to work, and we should all work on with perfect unanimity up to the point where the work parts from us and falls into other hands. Make this movement as large as you like; carry it on from the West Riding to the Northumberland and the Durham districts; from there to Glasgow; and when it has exhibited itself in Glasgow, perhaps about the beginning of the year, it may reappear in greater proportions than ever in London. Let it take any proportions you please. Finally it will become a question for the deliberations of twelve or fifteen men who will be the Queen's immediate advisers, what shall be the precise measures to be presented to Parliament, and when they discuss this measure they must try to be unanimous, which is not always easy. They must try to ascertain what it is that Parliament will fairly consider and will be likely to pass. More than that. They will have to consider, not merely the voice of those who have attended these great meetings, but that portion of the people who have been silent on this question. They will have to consider that which is called the Conservative opinion of the country—the "timid opinion." They will have to consider this,—I am not speaking of those who are passionately against all reform, and who hate the very name of popular power, but I speak of the section much larger, that which lies between us and them, who are quiet stay-at-home people, who probably read their paper and have as good a feeling towards working men as any of us have, but who have not sufficiently considered this question, and who are not courageous enough in spirit to join in a great movement like this. But when the Ministry and the Cabinet come to discuss the measure to be submitted to Parliament, they must seriously take into consideration all this amount of opinion—violent some of it; less outspoken, some of it; the quiet opinion of those timid multitudes who are at home—and out of all this they must determine what is the measure which, in the then condition of public opinion, it is wise to submit to Parliament, because a measure based upon such a view can alone have a chance of passing, and when it is passed can alone be for any considerable period a satisfactory settlement of a great question like this. I say with great deference to my friend Mr. Baines, for whom I have a most unfeigned respect, and whose service in connection with this question can hardly be estimated, I am very sorry that he and others have not found it consistent with their duty to attend these meetings, and to give to them all the support in their power to make of the whole reform feeling and opinion of the country one grand force, because, depend upon it, the resistance is not easily to be surmounted, and we shall not in all probability cut off the enemy in detachments. They appear always in a powerful and united body, and unless we meet him in the same form and shape, I know not how it is possible that we can eventually triumph. I confess I am here with views which I have expressed for many years on the

question of parliamentary reform. I should not split hairs with any measure which may be introduced into Parliament. I am not likely to complain that it goes too far. I should support it if it were an honest and true measure, although I might wish it went further, and when I see a Reform League or a National Reform Union, or any other association of the people formed for the purpose of advancing this great question, I don't stop to inquire whether they may go a few leagues short of my own terminus, or a few leagues beyond it. But as far as we can go together I go with them; my views shall be added to theirs, and I trust after a time that the whole voice of the reform party in the country may be so loud that these 300 gentlemen of whom I have a very distinct and not always very pleasant recollection, that they may at last admit that the people of this country are in favour of reform; and that when I have spoken in favour of it in the House of Commons, I have been justified in saying that I expressed the opinions of millions outside that House. I believe the time is coming when this question must be laid hold of by the Government, and that Parliament will feel it dare not treat it in the future as it has treated it in the past. These great meetings, and I think Mr. Mill very wisely and justly said so, are not meetings for discussion so much as they are meetings for demonstration of opinion, and if you like, I will add, for an exhibition of force—an exhibition of force of opinion now, and if that force of opinion be despised and disregarded, it may become an exhibition of another kind of force. Now, I have been insulted in past time, not a little in this very city, because I was said to be in favour of peace at any price. I always said I was not in favour of war at any cost, as I think ten years ago my opponents were. I believe that however much any of us may have thought that political questions in our country should never again be settled by force, yet there is something in the constitution of our nature that when evils are allowed to run on beyond a certain period unredressed, the most peace-loving of men are unable to keep the peace. And bear this in mind, however much we may wish political questions to be settled by moral means, yet it is not more immoral for the people to use force in the last resort, for the obtaining and securing of freedom, than it is for the Government to use force to suppress and deny that freedom. I must ask pardon of my friends for touching on what may be termed "abstract principles." We are doubtless a very long way—longer than can be measured, I believe and hope, from the time when it will be necessary for us seriously, or for the people of this country, to consider questions of that nature. I think that question was settled in 1832, whether the changes which may be necessary in the government of the United Kingdom can be accomplished by peaceful means, or whether force will be necessary for their completion. At that time force was very nearly necessary, and the opponents of the people saw that and succumbed. Liberty from that time has grown so much that vast meetings, 200,000 in number, are gathered together under the countenance of the mayor of a great borough, and the vast multitude was marshalled at the place of meeting under the care of the superintendent of police. I have no doubt that the Mayor of Manchester, although he did not preside at the Knot Mill meeting, still sympathised with its object. We have passed the time, and may it never return, when the people of England need to speak

of force in connection with political reform. We have greater means of instruction than we had before. Every man has his newspaper, with the history of the proceedings of the world, on his table every day, and we have freedom to assemble and discuss these questions at our will. The point at which we have arrived of political liberty and instruction and of civilisation, permits us to believe that there is nothing we can fairly claim—nothing that could do us good that cannot be obtained by that grand and peaceful movement of which the meetings of the last few days have formed so eminent and useful a part. I am glad to see Mr. Beales here to-day—and the other gentlemen connected with the Reform League. I hope that wheresoever they happen to go they will be received with the cordiality and unanimity they have met in Manchester ; and I hope that when they have gone their round they will have shown to the powers that be—to the Government that is, and to the Government that shortly, I hope, is to be—that the question of reform has taken deep root in the minds of the whole nation ; and that Parliament may as well shut its doors against every other kind of legislation whatsoever until it consents to pass a bill that shall satisfy the just and anxious expectations of the people.

S P E E C H A T L E E D S .

THE 8th of October being the day fixed upon for the West Riding of Yorkshire Reform Demonstration, Mr. Bright in the evening, by invitation, delivered the following speech in the Leeds Town Hall. On rising he was received with great enthusiasm, the meeting rose *en masse*, and cheered vigorously for nearly five minutes. When silence was at length restored, the hon. gentleman said :—

Mr. Chairmam and gentlemen,—If I accept the address which has just been passed by this meeting, and handed to be by your chairman, be assured that I do it full of feeling—feeling in the first place of thankfulness to you for your kindness, and, in the second place, in fear lest in accepting it I should promise to do that which I am wholly unable to perform. Perhaps some of you in your vast meeting to-day have not sufficiently measured the forces which are opposed to you in the carrying of any great measure of reform. I must ask you not to imagine for a moment that it can be effected, as it were, by one stroke of some victorious arm, but that it must be done, and can only be done, by the combined and resolute efforts of

millions of people. Mr. Kell, in the observations he has addressed to you, referred to the opinions of a dear and lamented friend of mine. I recollect one thing which he said, and which he said often during the course of our great agitation. It was this,—That the West Riding of Yorkshire freely pronouncing its opinion influenced to a large extent the opinion of England, and on some great occasions had finally determined the policy of the Government. To-day, the West Riding, in a multitudinous meeting, has spoken with a voice loud enough to be heard all through the nation, and if I am not misinformed that vast meeting of which you have formed a part decided by unanimous consent that the representation of the people in the English House of Commons was bad and unsatisfactory to the last degree. You decided that it was bad not only for what it excluded, but also for what it included; that, whilst it excluded the great bulk of the nation, it included every form of corruption and evil of which a representative system is capable; and you came to resolutions which mean this, that you will change this system if it lies in your power, and that you and the unenfranchised millions will stand that exclusion no longer. I suppose that, after this meeting and the great events of this day, we shall have no end of criticism upon our conduct and our speeches. I find that some writers, criticising the observations I made a fortnight ago in Manchester, complain that I said very much the same thing that I had said at Birmingham. I believe that a charge of this nature was brought, more than two thousand years ago, against one of the wisest of the ancients. They said that he was always saying the same thing about the same thing—and he asked them in return whether they expected him to say a different thing about the same thing. I have another answer to make to these critics, and it is this: When they have answered what I have already said about this thing, then I will try to tell them something new. Now, that case which we submit to the thinking portion of our countrymen, is a very simple one. We say that we are the citizens of a country that has had representative institutions for many centuries. There is no time to which history goes back when there was not a representative assembly of some kind within the kingdom of England. We say further, that the House of Commons is the only real basis, and the only true security for liberty to the people of these realms. We know—everybody knows—that the Crown in our day cannot give freedom to the people, neither can it materially impair our freedom. We know further that the House of Lords, from its very constitution, from the nature of its being, cannot be relied upon as a safeguard for the freedom of Englishmen. We know that representation, and a just and a fair representation, is that which alone makes a free country. Some of our colonies, now the United States of America, a hundred years ago knew that they could not be represented in the English Parliament. They would not stand taxation from a Parliament in which they were not represented. They threw off, therefore, the supremacy of the English Crown, and declared themselves a free and independent state, and at this moment there is not an English colony, from Canada to New Zealand, that would not also throw off the supremacy of England if the Parliament or Crown of

England denied to it or its representatives a responsible government. In fact there is nothing whatever that distinguishes us from any despotic country in the world, in the matter of political freedom, except the possession of a representative assembly. We have been taught—the people of this country have been taught—in my opinion foolishly and even wickedly, to hate and despise Russia, Austria, and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, or Naples as it lately existed, and mainly because those countries were despotic countries in which the people had no influence in their government. Well, then, we come to this conclusion, that the Parliament of England, and mainly the House of Commons, is the foundation of law and order, and that, unless the people are heard in that House, the people are not the source of power, and they themselves are but little removed from a despotism, not of the Crown, but of a privileged and limited class. I believe that the House of Commons has no pretence whatever for its existence except that it speaks for the nation, of which it is a part. It is not established to speak for the Crown and the dynasty; it was not established, and ought not to exist, to speak merely for nobles and great landowners. It has not the pretence to be a popular assembly if it speaks merely for the boroughmongers, and I say that its character is degraded when on its benches can be seen by scores Mr. Moneybags, M. P., who has walked through corruption into his seat for Lancaster, for Totnes, for Yarmouth, or for a score, or it may be for two or three scores of other boroughs which are very much in the same predicament. Whilst speaking for these,—for the Crown, for the nobles, for the great landowners, for the boroughmongers, for the men who have purchased their seats in Parliament, the House of Commons is no security for the freedom of the people, and if it speaks for only one out of six or seven of the people, it is no fair representation of the nation. If it exists at all, if it is to be in accordance with the principles of the English constitution, it ought so far to represent all classes of the people that every man, whether he has a vote or not himself, can feel that he has an interest in the House, and that it watches fairly over his rights and his interests. Let us take a case, and if we had a meeting every week during the year, we should have in some way or other fresh cases to dissect. There has been during last week an election in a small town in Wales, the town of Brecon. What happened? There were two candidates. The carcass was a very small one, but there were candidates ready. One was a gentleman of whom I can say nothing but what is in his praise, for I happen to know that he resigned or quitted the representation of the Duke of Marlborough's rotten borough of Woodstock because he would not subject his own honest liberal convictions to the views of his Tory brother, the Duke of Marlborough. Well, Lord Alfred Churchill was one candidate. I forget the name of the other. (A Voice: "Howel Gwyn.") That sounds very Welsh, and is probably correct. There was a furious contest, and great excitement. Public meetings were held and speeches made, and a canvass of the most pertinacious character. I am told that the agents of great and powerful houses were begging, and coaxing, and compelling, that they might get votes, and the end was the Tory candidate polled 128, and the Liberal candidate 102 votes. So that it took just 230 votes to return this last made member to the House of Commons. Be-

fore the Reform Bill the borough of Brecon was a borough returning, I believe, two members to Parliament, and the electors consisted of ten burgesses. I believe they did not make an even dozen, although they might be 11, and the Reform Bill extended the franchise in Brecon, and added something more than 200 electors, so that 230 have just voted. I ask you whether it is possible there should be any fair representation in a borough like this. I am told, from private sources, and I see it stated in the newspapers, that at least two noble families have been very active through their agents—noble families that I am told came in with the Conqueror, and as far as I know it may be the only thing they ever did. They are noble; but, judging at least from any observation that I have been able to make, they are obscure and unknown to an eminent degree. But how can there possibly be any freedom of election in a borough which can only raise 230 voters? But this is not the only borough of that kind. Let us give, if only for a moment, our attention to one or two facts. In England and Ireland there are 16 boroughs, and the population of each of them is under 5,000, but they return 22 members to Parliament. In England, Wales, and Ireland, there are no less than 72 boroughs, whose population varies from 5,000, but is under 10,000 persons, and they return 127 members to the House of Commons. You do not know much about little boroughs; but there are small boroughs in Yorkshire, as well as in Wales and the south, in which a little compulsion or corruption, or a very acute attorney, or that sort of combination which prevails amongst a few publicans, which may be accounted for if it cannot be justified by the exceptional position in which they are placed, and that exceptional legislation to which they are subjected—in these small boroughs any of these things can make the difference whether one man or the other is returned to Parliament. In point of fact, there is no representation in these small boroughs. In them the wishes of the people are nothing; the opinion of the nation nothing; the representation is in the hands of 200 or 300 electors, manipulated, coaxed, compelled, corrupted, and bribed. Take two cases which have been prominent during the past session, and allow me to touch for a moment on the character of those unjust aspersions which have been thrown out on your character by a gentleman of great ability, capable of doing very great things, but somehow or other, I know not by what means, he is always prevented from doing them. He sits nominally for Calne in the House of Commons. In that borough there are 173 electors, but the Marquis of Lansdowne is the all-prevailing influence in it, and there is no practical or real representation left to the 173 nominal electors. Well, but this gentleman comes to the House of Commons, and you know what he said. I received to-day a letter from the town of Warwick, and I am glad to see it has become a little more lively than it was when I knew it on questions of politics. I have received from Warwick a paper in which the calumnies—and I believe them to be such—uttered against the great body of the working classes are printed on placards and circulated amongst the workshops and cottages of the working classes in that borough. I wish they were circulated in every workshop in the kingdom. I say that, unless you turn your faces against the men who thus treated you, who would injure you and then insult you, I do not know to what lengths this language and

conduct may not go in the coming session of Parliament. This gentleman, who has no constituency—for the man by whose favour he was returned to the House of Commons has now gone down in the tomb—this gentleman, returned to Parliament in defiance of the British constitution, in defiance of the orders of the House of Commons, which has declared that any attempt on the part of any peer to interfere with elections is a breach of privilege—this gentleman used this language in speaking of the men to whom the bill brought in by Earl Russell and Mr. Gladstone proposed to give the franchise. He asked us whether, if we wanted venality, ignorance, drunkenness, and the means of intimidation, if we wanted impulsive, unreflecting, violent people, we should go to the top or the bottom. He said he knew what sort of persons lived in these small houses, between seven and ten pounds rental. We have had a long experience of them under the name of freemen, and it would be a good thing if they were disfranchised altogether. He also said that one of the results of passing this bill, which he did something to prevent, would be an increase of corruption, intimidation, disorder, and all those evils which usually happen at elections. And then he describes the second result—that the working men of England, finding themselves in a full majority of the whole constituency, would awake to a sense of their power, and would do the most dreadful things, which he describes. He says they would be no longer cajoled at elections. They would set up for themselves. They would have objects to carry as well as their neighbours, and would unite to carry those objects. He says they have the machinery already. They have trades' unions and leaders, and the power of combination, and so describes the terrible and destructive things that you would do if you had the franchise, and he says of the House of Commons, “as long as we have not passed this bill, we are masters of the situation.” Now, I have said often that I do not in the least blame the speaker for frankly speaking his sentiments. I think the sentiments are altogether erroneous. I think the courage which made him express them very unfortunate, but I only consider the sentiments of importance because they were welcomed with enthusiasm, and apparently by an unanimous consent, by the whole Tory party in the House. But there is another gentleman who does not sit on our side of the House, and who now, by favour of Lord Derby, governs 100,000,000 of people in British India. That gentleman sits for a rotten borough also. If the member for Calne sits by favour of one marquis, the member for Stamford sits by favour of another marquis; and he was the man who assailed Mr. Gladstone with an unusual—perhaps in him not unusual—but with a notable animosity, because Mr. Gladstone said that the great body of the unenfranchised men of England were worthy of consideration, for they were our own flesh and blood. I say that the House of Commons, according to the spirit and meaning of the British constitution, and according to the spirit and meaning of its own standing orders, has no right to admit within its walls any man representing not a free constituency of his countrymen, but representing only a single lord and peer of the realm. Now, if there be in that House of Commons not a few of this class; if there be many representatives of half-a-dozen great landowners who sit for counties, is it to be wondered at that liberal measures make so small and difficult

progress within the walls of that House. I was very much struck towards the end of the last session by an answer that was given to me by one of the most accomplished members of that House, who has taken his seat there only since the last election, and I believe there is no man in the House whose opinion on a point like this is more worthy of attention. I asked him, as he had sat there from the beginning of the session, say from February till the month of June, what he thought of the House of Commons. His answer was given to me in language of positive sorrow. He said that he was shocked and discouraged, by what he had seen, for he said, I think this is a House in which no good can be done. Now, for what are we met here to-night, and for what did—I will not say one hundred or two hundred thousand, or a quarter of a million, but a multitude whom no man could count,—why did that multitude to-day quit all its usual labours and avocations, march long miles through your country, to gather on your neighbouring moor? It was to protest against this state of things, and if possible, to change it, and we are resolved—now, you agree with me—we are resolved—(great cheering, the meeting rising, and waving handkerchiefs)—that every member who sits in the House of Commons shall have a free constituency and that the working men in the United Kingdom shall form a fair portion of every free constituency. We propose, in fact, to restore the representation, and to restore the fair and free action of the English constitution. We believe that there is a spirit created in London, in Birmingham, in South Lancashire, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, in the Newcastle and Durham district, and in Glasgow and the west of Scotland,—there is a power rising which, fairly combined, can do all this. The working men must combine, and they must subscribe. A penny a week or a penny a month from the thousands and from the millions would raise funds that would enable you to carry on the most gigantic and successful agitation that this country has ever seen. It is mainly your own voice that will decide your own fate. I do not quite agree with some of the observations of our chairman,—the observations which have been made to-night, as if there were a chasm between you and the middle class. It is not so, and it ought not to be so, and if you will take out small boroughs, in which the middle class themselves are not independent, you will find in nearly all the great towns of the kingdom that there is a powerful middle class influence in favour of the enfranchisement of the working classes; and bear in mind further, that even of that higher class in the social scale—that class which has great wealth, and high title, and great privilege, that in the history of England there has always been men to stand out from that class, and to contend for liberty with the great body of their countrymen. If the nation is to be split into two parts, and there is to be a wide gulf between, there is nothing for the future but subjection or violence, for without this you are powerless to attain your ends. But, working with a large portion of the middle class, and with the most intelligent and just of the highest social class, we may find these great measures accomplished without the violation of public peace, and without any disruption of the general harmony which ought to prevail throughout all classes of the people. Therefore I say this, rely mainly upon yourselves, for you are the great nation excluded. See what you have done. I am not saying this to flatter,

for no word of flattery to the working class or to any other class ever passed my lips ; but when I look over this country, and see the cities you have built, the railroads you have made, the manufactures you have produced, the cargoes which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile nation the world has ever seen,—when I see that you have converted by your labour what was once a wilderness, these islands, into a fruitful garden,—when I know that you have created this wealth, and that you are a nation whose name is a word of power throughout all the world,—then I feel confident, by your united exertions, in conjunction with the middle class, you can overthrow for ever the domination of the class of which you complain. The few meetings which have been held since the close of the last session of Parliament have had a prodigious effect. There are newspaper writers who could not see a bit from January to July, and now the scales are, as it were, dropping from their eyes, and this gradual improvement of vision is going on most extensively throughout the country, and it is said now that the Tories are half repenting the course which they took during the last session. And when I say that Lord Derby is not a reformer they charge me with railing at Lord Derby, and they say that it is a positive case of injustice to charge the Tories with being hostile to reform. Well, my memory may not be as accurate as that of some people, but I do recollect that during the last session 280 gentlemen who call themselves Tories objected to Mr. Gladstone's bill because it proposed to admit, according to Mr. Gladstone's estimate, 204,000 working men, some of the unenfranchised 5,000,000, to the suffrage. It may be that the Tories did not care about this, and that all they wanted was power and place. Now, Lord Derby, in the speech which he made just after he came into office, intimated in very distinct language that if he had refused to accept it when the Queen offered it it would have been the break up of his party, for they had looked on the Treasury benches so long, and with such intenseness of vision, with such eagerness, with such hunger for what there is there, that if he, even for six months, had not allowed them to get there, they would have said that he was not worth following—that they gave up the chase, and would not follow it any longer. Well, for this what did they do? They wasted a whole session. They have disturbed the whole country, and having made these great meetings necessary, they have disgusted and estranged the unenfranchised classes merely to supplant Earl Russell in one House and Mr. Gladstone in the other. In America there are many political parties. There is a party that is always seeking office, and it goes by the name of "the bread and butter party," and it turns out after all that the party of Lord Derby is not an anti-reform party, but a bread and butter party. For six months' office, or it may run to nine or twelve months, they have rejected an honest and good measure, they have betrayed the true interests of the people,—and I believe I have seen men on that bench who would sell the mace, which is the symbol of loyalty, on the table of the House, if by doing so they could give to themselves fixity of tenure on the ministerial benches. Now, I must ask you in all seriousness to let the country know what is our object, what we propose, and how far we are honestly asking for what we believe to be good. I shall not appeal to the writers in newspapers, one of

whom, and not a very creditable one, is concealed somewhere in this town. I shall appeal only to the truth-loving vast majority of the people of this country. Our object is this, to restore popular representation in this country, and to make the House of Commons the organ and representative of the nation, and not of a small class of it. If you look over all the world you will now see that representation is extending everywhere, and the degree of its completeness is becoming the measure of national liberty, not only on the North American continent, but in the nations and kingdoms of old Europe. I have mentioned the North American continent. To-morrow is a great day in the United States, when perhaps millions of men will go to the poll, and they will give their votes on the question whether justice shall or shall not be done to the liberated African, and in a day or two we shall hear the result, and I shall be greatly surprised if that result does not add one more proof to those already given, of the solidity, intelligence, and public spirit of the great body of the people of the United States. I have mentioned the North American continent. I refer to the colonies which are still part of this empire as well as to those other colonies which now form a great and free republic. It was towards the end of the fifteenth century that the grand old Genoese discovered the new world. A friend of mine, Cyrus W. Field, of New York—is the Columbus of our time, for after no less than forty passages across the Atlantic in pursuit of the great aim of his life, he has, at length, by his cable, moored the new world close alongside the old. To speak from the United Kingdom to the North American continent, and from North America to the United Kingdom, is now but the work of a moment of time, and it does not require the utterance even of a whisper. The English nations are brought together and they must march on together. The spirit of either Government must be the same, although the form may be different. A broad and generous freedom is the heritage of England, and our purpose is this, to establish that freedom for ever on the sure foundation of a broad and generous representation of the people.

S P E E C H E S A T G L A S G O W .

ON the 16th of the same month, having been invited to address the Reformers of Glasgow, Mr. Bright visited that city on the occasion of the Reform Demonstration; and in the City Hall in the evening he delivered the following speech to an overflowing and enthusiastic audience. He said :—

Mr Chairman, and citizens of no mean city,—I accept this address which has been read in your hearing and presented to me, with a feeling of deep gratitude to those who have expressed such friendly feelings towards me, but with a deep

anxiety when I consider the intent and purport of the document. I am consoled by regarding it as in some degree a compact or covenant entered into to-night by you and those whom you represent, with me and those whom I may be supposed in some degree to represent, and that we covenant together that whatsoever is moral for us to do we engage to do in the prosecution of that great cause which has stirred the heart of Glasgow to-day. I can do but little—any one man can do but little; but you in your vast numbers can do much, and, uniting with numbers, not smaller in other parts of the kingdom, I have a strong sense that the day is fast approaching which will see the triumph of our cause, and I think he must be blind and foolish indeed who is not willing to admit that it is a great issue which is now submitted to the people of the United Kingdom. Gatherings of scores of thousands of men, extending from south to north, must have some great cause. Men do not leave their daily labour, the necessary occupations of their lives, thus to meet, unless they believe there is some great question submitted to them in which they have a deep and overpowering interest. And the question is this—Whether in future the government and the legislation of this country shall be conducted by a privileged class in a sham Parliament, or on the principles of the constitution of the nation, through its representatives, fairly and freely chosen. Now there are persons who will think that I am speaking harshly of the existing Parliament. Some probably in this meeting may think that Mr. Beales was indiscriminate in the term which he used when he spoke of our representation being steeped in corruption; but I am certain that if the representation of this country existed in any other country, and that its details were explained to Englishmen, there are not five Englishmen within the bounds, or five Britons within the bounds of this island, who would not admit that the language he has applied to the Parliament was correct. Now, what we charge against the Parliament is this—that it is chosen from constituencies not only so small that they do not and cannot adequately represent the nation, but from constituencies so small as to be influenced by corruption, and by all kind of motives that are neither national nor patriotic. In our boroughs, for example, the numbers for the most part are very small. There are, I think, 254 burghs in the United Kingdom, but there are only 54 of these that possess a constituency of 2,000 electors and upwards, and large and fair constituencies are indeed the exception. In Scotland, your burgh constituencies, though not generally very large, are larger than those in England, and to your honour it must be said that they are far more incorrupt than English constituencies. In the counties the freeholders—those who hold land for cultivation—are constantly diminishing in numbers, and that portion of the constituencies which is not composed of freeholders, is composed of tenant farmers—the most dependent class of occupiers, probably in the nation. But now, let me point to one or two facts which should sink deep in the minds of all men. Out of every 100 grown men in the United Kingdom 84 have no votes. Those 84 might just as well, for all purposes of constitutional government, so far as they are directly concerned—those 84 might as well live in Russia, where there is no electoral system of government, or in those other countries, now very few indeed, in which Parliaments and representations are unknown. If it be the fact that only sixteen men out of every hundred have votes, it is also the fact that those 16 are so arranged, and so placed, that their representation is in

reality almost entirely destroyed. If the electors were fairly divided amongst all the members, there would be nearly 2,000 electors to every member; but what is the state of things? Why, that one-third of the House of Commons, or 220 members, are actually elected by 70,000 votes—that is to say, that 220 members of the House of Commons are chosen by a number of men scattered over the country, who are fewer by almost one-half than the number of grown men in this city of Glasgow alone. And further, one-half of the House of Commons is chosen by about 180,000 electors, being only one-seventh of the whole number of electors, and much below the number of men who are to be found in the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. And if we come to that great event which excites so much interest, but which is generally of so little value—a general election—we find, I believe, that not more than 10 in 100—not more than ten per cent. of the whole grown-up male population of the United Kingdom ever come to the poll and give their vote for the election of a new Parliament. Now, with regard to a general election, some of you have read, and many of you know something of the cost and corruption of a general election. I will give you one instance and one proof of it. It has been my opinion all along that it was the duty of the Government of Lord Russell, after the defeat of their Reform Bill during the last session, to have dissolved the Parliament. I have no reason to disbelieve what is asserted, that Lord Russell himself was of that opinion, but a general election was a burden which the members of Parliament did not wish to bear. I was speaking to a member of the Government on this question about the time when the resignation of the late Government was just about to be submitted to the Queen, and I was telling him that I thought the true policy, the constitutional policy, of the Government was to dissolve the Parliament. A portion of his answer was this:—A member who sits on our side of the House had spoken to him about it. He said, “My election has already cost me £6,000”—and he added, “I have, besides, £3000 more to pay.” He said further, what was very reasonable, that this was a heavy burden, that it was grievous to be borne, that it put him to exceeding inconvenience, and, if the Parliament were dissolved, he could not afford to fight his county or his borough, as the case might be, but would be obliged to retire from the field, and leave the contest, if there should be a contest, to some one else. You will believe, then, that the Government were greatly pressed by this consideration, and this consideration, added, it may be, to others, induced them to resign office rather than to dissolve Parliament. Thus you have a proof that whereas general corruption and putridity are the destruction of most bodies which they affect, the corruption of the present Parliament was, and is, the cause of its present existence. Now bear in mind that this state of things which I have been describing obtains at the present moment, 34 years after the passing of the great Reform Bill. What the Government must have been before that bill was passed it is scarcely possible to describe or to imagine; but I have no doubt of this, that it was one of the worst governments in civilised countries, and in Europe; and I think this may be fairly argued from the fact of the incessant wars in which the country was engaged for 150 years before that reform; from the enormous debt that was created; from the crushing taxes that were fixed upon the people; and, worse almost than that, from that most infamous law which ever passed a Parliament of civilised men—the law which limited the supply of bread to the

people. Now, if the Clerk of the House of Commons were placed at Temple Bar, and if he had orders to tap upon the shoulder every well-dressed and apparently cleanly-washed man who passed through that ancient bar, until he had numbered 658; and if the Crown summoned these 658 to be the Parliament of the United Kingdom, my honest conviction is that you would have a better Parliament than now exists. Now this assertion will stagger some timid and some good men; but let me explain myself to you. It would be a Parliament, every member of which would have no direct constituency, but it would be a Parliament that would act as a jury that would take some heed of the facts and arguments laid before it. It would be free, at any rate, from the class prejudices which weigh upon the present House of Commons. It would be free from the overshadowing pressure of what are called noble families. It would owe no allegiance to great landowners, and I hope it would have fewer men amongst it seeking their own gains by entering Parliament. With the Parliament which we have now and have had, facts and arguments go for very little. Take that question to which I have referred, of limiting the supply of bread to the people. The corn law was on the statute-book for 31 years—16 years before the Reform Bill, and 15 years after the passing of that bill—but from the first hour of its enactment until the hour of its destruction the facts and the arguments against it were equally clear and equally conclusive. They would not be convinced though one rose from the dead, and that which convinced them at last was the occurrence of a great famine in Ireland, which destroyed or drove from the country hundreds of thousands of the citizens of the empire. I maintain with the most perfect conviction that the House of Commons, representing as it now does counties and boroughs such as I have described, does not represent the intelligence and the justice of the nation, but the prejudices, the privileges, and the selfishness of a class. Now, what are the results of this system of legislation? Some of them have been touched upon in that address which has been so kindly presented to me. You refer to the laws affecting land. Are you aware of a fact which I saw stated the other day in an essay on this subject—that half the land of England is in the possession of fewer than 150 men? Are you aware of the fact that half the land in Scotland is in the possession of not more than 10 or 12 men? Are you aware of the fact that the monopoly in land in the United Kingdom is growing constantly more and more close? And the result of it is this—the gradual extirpation of the middle class as owners of land, and the constant degradation of the tillers of the soil. Take a matter about which many Scotch farmers know something—take the perpetual grievance of the game laws. In the House of Commons that question can scarcely be discussed. The landed interest, as it did in the late cattle plague debate, tramples down Government and borough members and everybody and everything that thwarts their inclination. Take the general—I am sorry to say the too general—subserviency of the tenant farmers in the matter of elections in your country—in Scotland. I entertain the hope that you will lead the way to the deliverance of the farmers from this slavery. In the last elections for Kincardineshire and for Aberdeenshire, the tenant farmers have taken the politics of those counties into their own hands. I hope, and I believe, that the tenant farmers of Scotland—the most enlightened agriculturists that live on the face of the earth—I hope they,

with perfect justice, and perfect courtesy to their landowners, will still exert their legitimate and right influence in the election of members for the counties of Scotland. But take—what some of you cannot comprehend—take the helpless poverty of the farm labourers in the southern counties of England. Their wages are very low. Their helplessness is extreme. Their power to deliver themselves—their power to combine seems at the lowest ebb. Look at their ignorance! A friend of mine—a member of the House of Commons, who lives within six miles of the Royal town and Castle of Windsor, told me only the other day that he knew the case of a family near his house in which there had grown up eleven children, not one of whom could read or write in the least degree. And he said that he had lately had in his employ upon his property seven men, of whom four could neither read nor write, two of them could read most imperfectly, and one of them could read and write about as well as the other two could read. Bear in mind that all this exists within six miles of the Royal Castle of Windsor. It exists in a neighbourhood where lords and squires and established clergymen swarm. Such is the state of ignorance of that population at this moment. In the county from which I come, girls of the age of from fifteen to twenty years are earning; many of them, I believe, double the weekly wages of the able-bodied farm labourer, the head and father of a family, in some of the southwestern counties of England. But what must be the ignorance of that population with such wages offering to them in Lancashire and Yorkshire that they scarcely hear of them. They seem to have no aspiration to better their condition, and there is no sensible emigration from these wretched counties to the more prosperous counties of the north. Your address refers to pauperism—the gulf of pauperism. In the United Kingdom at this moment there are more than 1,200,000 paupers. The pauperism of the United Kingdom last year—and it will not cost less, I believe, this year—cost the ratepayers—those who pay taxes for the relief of the poor—more than seven and a half millions sterling, and this does not include many thousands of vagrants who also come occasionally under the name of paupers. Now look, I beg of you, to this mass of misery. It is so great a mass that benevolence cannot reach it. If benevolence could do it, there would be no pauperism in England, for in no country do I believe that there is more benevolence than there is in the United Kingdom. The kindness of the women of England is beyond all measure and beyond all praise of mine. There does not exist among created beings, beneath the angelic ranks, those who are more kind and charitable than the women of the United Kingdom. But benevolence can touch scarcely the fringe of this vast disorder. There is another virtue we could add, and that virtue and that quality is justice. It is not benevolence but justice that can deal with giant evils. It was not benevolence that gave the people bread twenty years ago, but it was justice embodied in the abolition of a cruel and a guilty law. But justice is impossible from a class. It is most certain and easy from a nation; and I believe we can only reach the depths of ignorance and misery and crime in this country by an appeal to the justice, the intelligence, and the virtue of the entire people. That address has mentioned another question—the question of your national expenditure, of your army and navy; and I will state only one fact with regard to the navy. I believe since the great war, since 1815, that the navy of this country has cost more than four

hundred millions sterling. I believe that during the last six years it has cost as much as the United States navy during the same time: we have been in a condition of profound peace; the United States have had to build or buy six hundred ships, to man them, to furnish them with munitions of war, and to fight them during the greatest struggle that any nation ever waged. And yet at this moment, after spending so much, we have Sir John Pakington, the great reconstructor, coming into office, and promising, not to extend the liberties of the people, but to reconstruct a navy on which such enormous and countless sums have already been sunk. Then, take the taxes. Well, something has been done to make the taxes more equal; but take the taxes which are levied under the name of probate and legacy and succession duties; and I will give you a case which it is just possible you have heard before from my lips. A member of the House of Commons—at least he was so when he gave me this fact, though I am sorry to say he is not one now—a member of the House of Commons told me he had had left to him by a person not related to him by blood an estate in land worth £21,000; the timber upon it was worth £11,000; altogether £32,000. The tax, when the property is left to a person who is not a relation of the man who leaves it, is 10 per cent.; the tax therefore on £32,000 would be £3,200; and if any one of you received a legacy like that in cash, in shares, in ships, in stock-in-trade, in any of those things which are not lands and houses, he would pay £3,200. But my friend receiving his legacy in land, and the timber upon it, paid just £700. And why? For this reason only, that the law was made by a landed and propertied Parliament, and the owners and inheritors of lands and houses were considered specially worthy of its regard. But I may be asked—and no doubt some man who, after this meeting, will take up his pen to write a criticism on my speech, or upon this meeting, will ask—how comes it, if Parliament is so bad, that so many good things have been done by Parliament during the last thirty or forty years? I acknowledge that good things have been done, and I ought to know, because I have been concerned in the doing of some of them. But by whom were they done? Mainly by that force in Parliament which is sent there by the great and free borough constituencies of the kingdom. The members for the great towns—although but a minority, and not a very large minority—are the moving force by which these good things have been done. It has not been the policy of the Tories to do good things—and I have seen the time when the Whigs have been much less zealous about them than I could have wished. They have sprung from the people, and the people have carried them. What there has been of real representation in Parliament has urged these measures forward. What there has been of sham representation has uniformly opposed these measures. Now, I am of opinion that the rich people of a country, invested with power, and speaking generally for rich people alone, cannot sufficiently care for the multitude and the poor. They are personally kind enough, but they do not care for the people in the bulk. They have read a passage in Holy Writ that “The poor ye have always with you”—and therefore they imagine that it is a providential arrangement that a small section of the people should be rich and powerful, and that the great mass of the people should be hardworking and poor. It is a long distance from castles, and mansions, and great houses,

and abounding luxuries, to the condition of the great mass of the people who have no property, and too many of whom are almost always on the verge of poverty. We know very well all of us how much we are influenced by the immediate circumstances by which we are surrounded. The rich find everything just as they like. The country needs no reform. There is no country in the world so pleasant for rich people as this country. But I deny altogether that the rich alone are qualified to legislate for the poor, any more than that the poor alone would be qualified to legislate for the rich. My honest belief is, that if we could be all called upon to legislate for all, that all would be more justly treated, and would be more happy than we are now. We should have then an average; we should have the influence of wealth and of high culture, and of those qualities that come from leisure, and the influence of those robust qualities that come from industry and from labour. Suppose now, without arguing for this or that particular measure of Reform, that we could add another million to the existing constituencies, what would be the result? We should modify the constituencies. Instead of the people coming to the hustings at the nomination and holding up their hands for this candidate or that, and having for the most part no power in the election, the inhabitants of the town would have a much greater power than they have now. The constituency would be less open to management than it is at present; majorities on one side or the other would be larger and less open to corruption; and we should have members whose opinions and whose conduct would be modified by this infusion of new and fresh blood into the constituencies which send them to Parliament. We should do this further—we should bring the rich and the great more into contact with the people, and into a better acquaintance with human wants and with the necessities and feelings of their countrymen. What other thing would happen? I dare venture to assert this, that Parliament then would not revile and slander the people as it does now. Nor would it cheer with frantic violence when their countrymen are described in hideous and hateful colours. Probably what I call the Botany Bay view of their countrymen would be got rid of, and we should have a sense of greater justice and generosity in the feeling with which they regard the bulk of the nation. And if there was more knowledge of the people there would assuredly be more sympathy with them; and I believe the legislation of the House, being more in accordance with the public sentiment, would be wiser and better in every respect. The nation would be changed. There would be amongst us a greater growth of everything that is good. I should like to ask if there are any ministers of religion in this audience. I have sometimes thought that I should like to have an audience of 4,000 or 5,000 of them, to whom I could preach a political sermon, and to whom I could tell something which I fear their theological schools have failed to teach them. An eminent man of your country, the late Dr. Chalmers, in speaking of the question of free trade, and particularly of the struggle for the abolition of the corn laws, uttered some memorable words. He said he thought there was nothing that would tend so to sweeten the breath of British society as the abolition of the corn laws. I believe now that there is nothing which would tend so to sweeten the breath of British society as the admission of a large and generous number of the working classes to citizenship and the exercise of the franchise. Now, if my words

should reach the ears and reach the heart of any man who is interested in the advancement of religion in this country, I ask him to consider whether there are not great political obstacles to the extension of civilisation and morality and religion within the bounds of the United Kingdom. We believe—these ministers, you, and I—we believe in a Supreme Ruler of the Universe. We believe in His omnipotence; we believe and we humbly trust in His mercy. We know that the strongest argument which is used against that belief, by those who reject it, is an argument drawn from the misery, and the helplessness, and the darkness of so many of our race, even in countries which call themselves civilised and christian. Is not that the fact? If I believed that that misery, and that helplessness, and that darkness could not be touched or transformed, I myself should be driven to admit the almost overwhelming force of that argument; but I am convinced that just laws, and an enlightened administration of them, would change the face of the country. I believe that ignorance and suffering might be lessened to an incalculable extent, and that many an Eden, beautiful in flowers and rich in fruits, might be raised up in the waste wilderness which spreads before us. But no class can do that. The class which has hitherto ruled in this country has failed miserably. It revels in power and wealth, whilst at its feet, a terrible peril for its future lies—the multitude which it has neglected. If a class has failed, let us try the nation. That is our faith, that is our purpose, that is our cry—Let us try the nation. This it is which has called together these countless numbers of the people to demand a change; and, as I think of it, and of these gatherings, sublime in their vastness and in their resolution, I think I see, as it were, above the hill tops of time, the glimmerings of the dawn of a better and a nobler day for the country and for the people that I love so well.

On the following morning Mr. Bright was entertained at a public breakfast at the Cobden Hotel, in the same city, when several speeches were delivered. Mr. Bright spoke as follows, after a reference to the complimentary remarks to himself of previous speakers:—

Passing away from sentiment to business, it occurs to me that, although it is now a long time since Scotland and England were united as one country, and although they are, as I believe, for ever, so far as we can see, inseparably united, yet, being in Scotland, it is hardly possible to consider any public question without some direct reference to Scottish interests. The position of this part of the United Kingdom on the question of reform is one very peculiar, and one having a special interest. Scotland has as I think every fair man will admit, not her proper share in the composition of the House of Commons. I am not quite certain now what is the increased number of members that Scotland should have, judging arithmetically from her population, her wealth, and her contribution to the public taxes; but I think the increase should not be much short of twenty members. In a bill

which I brought before the public soon after I was here eight years ago, and for the preparation of which I was greatly indebted to my hon. relative the member for Edinburgh—in that bill I think I proposed that an addition of fifteen or sixteen—Mr. M'Laren says he thinks it was eighteen—additional members, should be given to Scotland. In the bill which the late Government introduced to the House of Commons, I think the addition proposed was seven. That was a measure of partial, rather of scanty, justice; but still it was looked upon with extreme jealousy, and was met by a strong threatened opposition on the part of the Tory party in the House. I am not very much surprised at the jealousy and the threatened opposition which I find in discussing the question of Reform. The Tories, members of the present Government, their supporters in Parliament, and their newspapers, constantly regard the question as one which is to add power to or take power from a given party. They discuss it as if it were not a question—as it is not with them—of justice to all the people, and of a fair representation to all classes, but as it may interfere with and affect their particular party interests. Therefore it was not to be wondered at that, seeing the condition of the representation of Scotland, the members of the present Government, then the leaders of the Opposition, and their friends in Parliament, should look with great hostility upon any proposition that proposed to transfer members from small, corrupt, and rotten boroughs in England, to independent, moral, and sober constituencies in this part of the island. But the English people, I believe, certainly the English reformers, have no such jealousy, because they accept freely the entire, the thorough, the perpetual union of the two countries, and therefore they regard every Scotchman as they regard an Englishman in this question of reform, and they have this additional inducement to do so, because they know at least that the Scottish people in their representation will do as well for England and for Englishmen certainly as any part of England does for itself or for Scotland. Your representation is in a peculiar position, as compared with that of any other portion of the United Kingdom. In the first place, you send no Tory members for any of your boroughs. There are two of your borough members, who did not behave very well during the last session of Parliament, and who, I believe, disappointed their constituencies very much; and if their constituencies had been sitting in the gallery of the House of Commons, and had heard all that took place, I am not sure that their doubts of the fidelity of those members would not have been very much strengthened. But still your borough constituencies are in this condition—that not only do they return no Tory to Parliament, but there is no Tory party in any one of those boroughs sufficiently strong to feel itself justified in proposing a Tory candidate for the approbation of the constituency. That is a very satisfactory state of things. I could give some reasons for it which probably have not struck some people in England, and perhaps have not occurred to people in Scotland. One reason is that you have no boroughs so small as the very small boroughs in England; secondly, that your population, as a whole, stands in a higher position with regard to education and political intelligence; and thirdly, you have in Scotland (I speak of the Established, apart from what may be called the Free Churches) a church establishment which, though I think a church establishment may be considered to be politically and reli-

giously an evil, yet you have a church establishment of a liberal and even of a republican form of government as compared with the hierarchical establishment of England. And in Scotland the boundaries of the Established Church do not, with any degree of accuracy, if they do at all, mark out the boundaries of a political party. In England it is otherwise, and the Established Church of England is, in point of fact (with, of course, a multitude of exceptions), the Tory party of England. These are the reasons, I believe, why in this country your representation is, in my opinion, so much more creditable to your intelligence and advantageous to the empire than that of other parts of the United Kingdom. Your counties, however, are not in a position so distinguished as your boroughs; but I was glad to have the testimony two years ago of one of your county members, and a highly respectable member too, to the fact that the counties were, as I think, making progress, but as doubtless, he thought, were going backward. I met him in the Highlands, and in the intervals of some Highland games that were proceeding we discussed a little of politics, and the difference between the constituencies of Scotland and England. He said, with rather a melancholy air and sadness in his voice, "Yes, you have got all the boroughs in Scotland," meaning the Liberal party, "and you are gradually taking all the counties." That statement has received some confirmation since then. Two counties to which I referred last night, Kincardineshire and Aberdeenshire, have returned members not of that party which has hitherto dominated amongst the landed proprietors, and there is some reason to believe that the complaint which has made its appearance among the tenant farmers of those counties may prove infectious or contagious, and may spread over their borders and infect other counties as well. I cannot believe, for example, that in the county of Haddington the tenant farmers will consent to be represented long as they are now. When I look back to the conduct of the member for that county at the last election on the hustings; when I look to his conduct in the House of Commons with regard to the requirements and interests of the people, and in connection with this question of reform, I will never believe, until the Scotch people are wholly changed, that there can be in any county of Scotland a population, or an electoral body even, that can be in favour of representation by a gentleman whose performances have been so marked in a direction adverse, as I believe, and as I think they believe, to the true interests of the people. The Scottish farmers are, probably, the best agriculturists in Europe, and it is a great pleasure, not only to travel through the Highlands of your country, but to travel through the Lowlands, where there is so much fertility, and where the harvests bear testimony to the industry and skill of the cultivators. But it is a melancholy thing to think that those men who can do so much with the soil should be in any degree acting under a sort of traditional subserviency to the owner of the soil, and neglecting or refusing to exercise freely the powers which the constitution has placed in their hands. The fault is far more obvious and far more grievous in England; but as Scotch farmers have led the farmers of the United Kingdom in a wise and successful cultivation of the soil, I know not why they should not lead them in that emancipation from the political domination of their landlords, which, I am sure, before many years, will come not only in Scotland, but through every portion of the United Kingdom. Mr.

Crawford has referred to the transactions of yesterday. I was present at the great meeting and the great procession in Birmingham. I heard much of the meeting in Manchester, and also of that which was held last week in the West Riding of Yorkshire. I am certain the transactions of yesterday do not fall below in any degree those to which I have referred. I will not venture upon language of great eulogy upon what I saw, but for three hours there passed before this window a procession of men. I think the smallest and most moderate computation of their numbers, made with regard to the speed they passed, would bring the procession to a number exceeding 50,000, and probably reaching 60,000 men. Look at their demeanour, look at their dress, look at the character stamped upon their countenances, look at the variety of the industries which they represented, look at the feeling of pride they had in the noble labours in which their lives are spent. Take into consideration all this, and say whether it be right, and whether it be safe—for that is the dogma of the Tory party—perpetually to deny to these men those common rights which belong to all the citizens of this country, upon the known and admitted principles of the British constitution. Your motto is, "Let Glasgow flourish!" But what would Glasgow be without the men who formed that procession? And what would your country be, what would be the United Kingdom, what would this empire be, if the men of their class could, by any sudden change, be taken from amongst us? The nation would dwindle into no nation at all, and those men who from their heights of power and wealth look down upon the multitude whose business it is to labour and obey the law, and yet have no share in making that law,—those men would be at once dethroned from being the apparent leaders of a great nation, and would themselves, incompetent as they are, have to descend to works of common labour, which they now despise. There was one thing I was delighted to see yesterday. It was evident in Birmingham as much as it was evident here,—more evident in Birmingham than it was in Manchester and in Leeds,—that there seemed to be a great union of all classes in the proceedings. Employment for the time appeared to have ceased, except that employment which was the business of the day. There seemed to be—I may be speaking from inadequate means of observation—but there felt to me throughout yesterday as if the men who lived in the great houses around us had a sympathy in the purposes in which the great body of the people were engaged. If that be so, it augurs well for the cause; and I think it desirable should be known throughout every portion of the kingdom, for I am satisfied that the influence of yesterday's proceedings will not end with yesterday; it will not end with Glasgow and the west of Scotland, but it will be felt in every portion of the United Kingdom. It is quite clear that this movement in which we are engaged is beginning to be, and has already assumed the proportions of a national movement. What was done in London three months ago was as nothing to what can be done in London now, when those who are leading the movement undertake to set it in motion again. Birmingham was all alive, and if there were any opposed they were in holes and corners, out of sight; but, in fact, in Birmingham there are very few to oppose, and I must say when they do oppose, they do it with a moderation and an absence of rancour that I have scarcely seen in any other part of the kingdom. In Manchester there was a downpour of rain, as we say in Lancashire, from six o'clock in the

morning to four o'clock in the afternoon, and if there had not been something as robust in the politics as there is in the health and character of Lancashire working men, it would have been impossible to have had on that day any great demonstration of numbers. In Yorkshire, those who saw the procession and the meeting say there was never anything like it in the West Riding during the memory of the oldest politician. If this matter has assumed a national character, as I believe it has, may we not hope that, before long, it may produce some great and decisive result? I am going, I suppose now, within a fortnight from this time, to pay a visit to some, I will say, like our chairman, too kind friends of mine in the city of Dublin. I have been invited to attend a public banquet and be the guest of certain persons who form a very favourable opinion of my political career. Irish questions, no doubt, will be discussed more than questions, as we should say, clearly affecting the whole empire; but I believe the whole empire is deeply interested in what we commonly call "Irish questions." I should like to tell the Irish people that there is no disposition on the part of the people of Great Britain, whether of England or of Scotland, to do them injustice. The injustice they have suffered has been from the governing classes in England, and from the governing classes in Ireland. It has not been from the people of the United Kingdom—and the more speedily and the more entirely the nation of the three kingdoms is admitted to its fair share in parliamentary power, the more speedily and more completely will justice be done to Ireland, and justice also be as fully done and secured to and for the whole people of the United Kingdom. I shall say no more but to tell you I have had singular pleasure in coming to Glasgow on this occasion; but I am, as you may suppose, always very much happier the morning after a great meeting than I am the morning before it; for I feel, notwithstanding no little practice in public speaking, and no little familiarity with the subjects to be discussed, a sense of a very heavy responsibility which I cannot shake off. I have been placed, in connection with this question, in a very prominent position, altogether unsought for by me. I have no anxiety to be a leader in politics, or to be lionised in great cities; but from my youth upwards I have had a horror and a hatred of that which is unjust to the people. It was that feeling that led me to join one of whom I cannot speak without a faltering voice in that great labour in which we worked so long together, the abolition of the monopoly in food, and now if I am engaged more prominently than some men may think I ought to be in this question, it is because I would wish to join my countrymen in striking down monopoly of a wider influence, and which, when it is gone, ten or twenty years afterwards, all thoughtful and good men in the country will rejoice at as much as they now rejoice that the monopoly, the stupid and ignorant monopoly, of the landowners no longer limits the supply of food to a great people.

SPEECHES AT DUBLIN.

On the 30th of October Mr. Bright was entertained at a Banquet in the Rotunda, Dublin, and on rising to respond to the toast of his health, the hon. gentleman was greeted with enthusiastic cheers, which continued for a considerable time, the entire company standing, and the ladies in the gallery waving their handkerchiefs. When silence was restored, Mr. Bright said :

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen,—I feel myself more embarrassed than I can well describe, at the difficult but still honourable position in which I find myself to-night. I am profoundly moved by the exceeding and generous kindness with which you have received me, and all I can do is to thank you for it, and to say how grateful to my heart it is that such a number as I see before me—I will say of my countrymen—have approved generally of the political course which I have pursued. But I may assure you that the difficulty of this position is not at all of my seeking. I heard during the last session of Parliament that if I was likely to come to Ireland during the autumn, it was not improbable that I should be asked to some banquet of this kind in this city. I had an intention of coming, but being moved by this kindness or menace, I changed my mind, and spent some weeks in Scotland instead of Ireland. When I found from the newspapers that an invitation was being signed, asking me to come here, I wrote to my honourable friend, Sir John Gray, to ask him if he would be kind enough to put an extinguisher upon the project, inasmuch as I was not intending to cross the Channel. He said that the matter had proceeded so far that it was impossible to interfere with it—that it must take its natural course, and the result was that I received an invitation signed, I think, by about 140 names, amongst whom there were not less, I believe, than twenty-two members of the House of Commons. Well, as you will probably imagine, I felt that this invitation was of that nature that, although it was most difficult to accede to it, it was impossible to refuse it, and that accounts for my being here to-night, and is a simple explanation of what has taken place. I said amongst the signatures were the names of not less than 22 members of the House of Commons. I speak with grief when I say that one of our friends who signed that invitation is no longer with us. I had not the pleasure of a long acquaintance with Mr. Dillon, but I shall take this opportunity of saying that during the last session of Parliament I formed a very high opinion of his character. There was that in his eye and in the tone of his voice—in his manner altogether, which marked him for an honourable and a just man. I venture to say that his sad and sudden removal is a great loss to Ireland. I believe amongst all her worthy sons, Ireland has had no worthier and no nobler son than John Blake Dillon. I shall not be wrong if I assume that the ground of my visit to Dublin is to be found first in the sympathy which I have always felt and expressed for the condition, and for the wrongs, and for the rights of the people of Ireland, and probably also because I am supposed, in

some degree, to represent some amount of the opinion in England, which is also favourable to the true interests of this island. The Irish question is a question that has often been discussed, and yet it remains at this day as much a question as it has been for centuries past. The Parliament of Kilkenny, a Parliament that sat a very long time ago, if indeed it was a Parliament at all—it was a Parliament that sat about 500 years ago, that I believe proposed to inflict a very heavy penalty if any Irishman's horse was found grazing on any Englishman's land, and it was a Parliament which left on record a question, which it may be worth our while to consider to-night—it put to the King this question, "How comes it to pass that the King was never the richer for Ireland?" We, 500 years afterwards, venture to ask this question, "Why is it that the Queen, or the Crown, or the United Kingdom, or the Empire, is never the richer for Ireland,"—and if you will permit me I will try to give you as clearly as I can something like an answer to that very old question. What it may be followed by is this, How is it that we, the Imperial Parliament, cannot act so as to bring about in Ireland contentment and tranquillity, and a solid union between Ireland and Great Britain? and that means further, how can we improve the condition and change the minds of the people of Ireland? Some say, I have heard many who say it in England, and I am afraid there are Irishmen also who would say it, that there is some radical defect in the Irish character which prevents the condition of Ireland being so satisfactory as is the condition of England and of Scotland. Now, I am inclined to believe that whatever there is that is defective in any portion of the Irish people comes not from their race, but from their history, and the conditions to which they have been subjected. I am told by those in authority that in Ireland there is a remarkable absence of crime. I have heard since I came to Dublin, from those well acquainted with the facts, that there is probably no great city in the world—in the civilised and Christian world—of equal population with the city in which we are now assembled, where there is so little crime committed. And I find that that portion of the Irish people which has found a home in the United States has in the period of sixteen years—between 1848 and 1864—remitted about £13,000,000 sterling to their friends and relatives in Ireland. I am bound to place these facts in opposition to any statements that I hear as to any radical defects of the Irish character. I say that it would be much more probable that the defect lies in the Government and in the law. But there are some others who say that the great misfortune of Ireland is in the existence of the noxious race of political agitators. Well, as to that I may state, that the most distinguished political agitators that have appeared during the last 100 years in Ireland are Grattan and O'Connell, and I should say that he must be either a very stupid or a very base Irishman who would wish to erase the achievements of Grattan and O'Connell from the annals of his country. But some say (and this is not an uncommon thing)—some say that the priests of the popular church in Ireland have been the cause of much discontent. I believe there is no class of men in Ireland who have a deeper interest in a prosperous and numerous community than the priests

of the Catholic Church; and further, I believe that no men have suffered more—have suffered more I mean, in mind and in feeling, from witnessing the miseries and the desolation which during the last century (to go no further back) have stricken and afflicted the Irish people. But some others say that there is no ground of complaint, because the laws and institutions of Ireland are, in the main, the same as the laws and institutions of England and Scotland. They say, for example, that if there be an Established Church in Ireland there is one in England and one in Scotland, and that Nonconformists are very numerous both in England and in Scotland; but they seem to forget this fact, that the Church in England or the Church in Scotland is not in any sense a foreign church—that it has not been imposed in past times, and is not maintained now by force—that it is not in any degree the symbol of conquest, that it is not the church of a small minority, absorbing the ecclesiastical revenues and endowments of a whole kingdom; and they omit to remember or to acknowledge that if any Government attempted to plant by force the Episcopal Church in Scotland or the Catholic Church in England, the disorders and discontent which have prevailed in Ireland would be witnessed with tenfold intensity and violence in Great Britain. And these persons whom I am describing also say that the land laws in Ireland are the same as the land laws in England. It would be easy to show that the land laws in England are bad enough, and that but for the outlet of the population, afforded by our extraordinary manufacturing industry, the condition of England would in all probability become quite as bad as the condition of Ireland has been; but if the countries differ with regard to land and the management of it in their customs, may it not be reasonable that they should also differ in their laws? In Ireland the landowner is the creature of conquest, not of conquest of 800 years ago, but of conquest completed only 200 years ago; and it may be well for us to remember, and for all Englishmen to remember, that succeeding that transfer of the land to the new comers from Great Britain, there followed a system of law, known by the name of the penal code, of the most ingenious cruelty, and such as, I believe, has never in modern times been inflicted on any Christian people. Unhappily, on this account, the wound which was opened by the conquest has never been permitted to be closed, and thus we have had landowners in Ireland of a different race, of a different religion, and of different ideas from the great bulk of the people, and there has been a constant and bitter war between the owners and occupiers of the soil. Now, up to this point I suppose that even the gentlemen who were dining together the other evening in Belfast would probably agree with me, because what I have stated is mere matter of notorious history to be found in every book which has treated of the course of Irish affairs during the last two hundred years. But I think they would agree with me even further than this. They would say that Ireland is a land which has been torn by religious factions, and torn by these factions at least in the North as much as in the South; and I think they would be doing less than justice to the inhabitants of the North if they said that they had in any degree come short of the people of the South in the intensity of their passionate

feelings with regard to their church. But Ireland has been more than this—it has been a land of evictions—a word which, I suspect, is scarcely known in any other civilised country. It is a country from which thousands of families have been driven by the will of the landowners and the power of the law. It is a country where have existed, to a great extent, those dread tribunals known by the common name of secret societies, by which, in the pursuit of what some men have thought to be justice, there have been committed crimes of appalling guilt in the eye of the whole world. It is a country, too, in which, and it is the only Christian country of which it may be said for some centuries past—it is a country in which a famine of the most desolating character has prevailed even during our own time. I think I was told in 1849, as I stood in the burial ground at Skibbereen, that at least 400 people who had died of famine were buried within the quarter of an acre of ground on which I was then looking. It is a country, too, from which there has been a greater emigration by sea within a given time than has been known at any time from any other country in the world. It is a country where there has been, for generations past, a general sense of wrong, out of which has grown a state of chronic insurrection; and at this very moment when I speak, the general safeguard of constitutional liberty is withdrawn, and we meet in this hall, and I speak here to-night, rather by the forbearance and permission of the Irish executive than under the protection of the common safeguards of the rights and liberties of the people of the United Kingdom. I venture to say that this is a miserable and a humiliating picture to draw of this country. Bear in mind that I am not speaking of Poland suffering under the conquest of Russia. There is a gentleman now a candidate for an Irish county, who is very great upon the wrongs of Poland; but I have found him always in the House of Commons taking sides with that great party which has systematically supported the wrongs of Ireland. I am not speaking about Hungary, or of Venice as she was under the rule of Austria, or of the Greeks under the dominion of the Turk, but I am speaking of Ireland—part of the United Kingdom—part of that which boasts itself to be the most civilised and the most Christian nation in the world. I took the liberty recently, at a meeting in Glasgow, to say that I believed it was impossible for a class to govern a great nation wisely and justly. Now, in Ireland there has been a field in which all the principles of the Tory party have had their complete experiment and development. You have had the country gentleman in all his power. You have had any number of acts of Parliament which the ancient Parliament of Ireland or the Parliament of the United Kingdom could give him. You have had the Established Church supported by the law, even to the extent, not many years ago, of collecting its revenues by the aid of military force. In point of fact, I believe it would be impossible to imagine a state of things in which the principles of the Tory party have had a more entire and complete opportunity for their trial than they have had within the limits of this island. And yet what has happened? This, surely. That the kingdom has been continually weakened—that the harmony of the empire has been disturbed, and that the mischief has not been confined to the United Kingdom, but has spread to the colonies. And at this moment, as we know by every arrival

from the United States, the colony of Canada is exposed to danger of invasion—that it is forced to keep on foot soldiers which it otherwise would not want, and to involve itself in expenses which threaten to be ruinous to its financial condition, and all that it may defend itself from Irishmen hostile to England, who are settled in the United States. In fact, the Government of Lord Derby at this moment is doing exactly that which the Government of Lord North did nearly a hundred years ago—it is sending out troops across the Atlantic to fight Irishmen who are the bitter enemies of England on the American continent. Now, I believe every gentleman in this room will admit that all that I have said is literally true. And if it be true, what conclusion are we to come to? Is it that the law is bad which rules in Ireland and the people good, or that the law is good and the people bad? Now, let us, if we can, get rid for a moment of Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, Protestantism, and Orangeism on the one hand, and of Catholicism, Romanism, Ultramontanism on the other,—let us for a moment get beyond all these “isms,” and try if we can discover what it is that is the matter with your country. I shall ask you only to turn your eye upon two points—the first is the Established Church, and the second is the tenure of land. The church may be said to affect the soul and sentiment of the country, and the land question may be said to affect the means of life and the comforts of the people. Now, I shall not blame the bishops and clergy of the Established Church. There may be, and I doubt not there are, amongst them many pious and devoted men, who labour to the utmost of their power to do good in the district which is committed to their care; but I venture to say this, that if they were all good and all pious, it would not in a national point of view compensate for this one fatal error—the error of their existence as the ministers of an Established Protestant Church in Ireland. Every man of them is necessarily in his district a symbol of the supremacy of the few and of the subjection of the many; and although the amount of the revenue of the Established Church as the sum payable by the whole nation may not be considerable, yet bear in mind that it is often the galling of the chain which is more tormenting than the weight of it. I believe that the removal of the Established Church would create a new political and social atmosphere in Ireland—that it would make the people feel that old things had passed away—that all things had become new—that an Irishman and his faith were no longer to be condemned in his own country—and that for the first time the English people and the English Parliament intended to do full justice to Ireland. Now, leaving the Established Church, I come to the question of the land. I have said that the ownership of the land in Ireland came originally from conquest and from confiscation, and, as a matter of course, there was created a great gulf between the owner and the occupier, and from that time to this doubtless there has been wanting that sympathy which exists to a large extent in Great Britain, and that ought to exist in every country. I am told—you can answer it if I am wrong—that it is not common in Ireland now to give leases to tenants, especially to Catholic tenants. If that be so, then the security for the property of the tenant rests only upon the good feeling and favour of the owner of the land, for the laws, as we know, have been

made by the landowners, and many propositions for the advantage of the tenants have unfortunately been too little considered by Parliament. The result is that you have bad farming, bad dwelling-houses, bad temper, and everything bad connected with the occupation and cultivation of land in Ireland. One of the results—a result the most appalling—is this, that your population are fleeing from your country and seeking a refuge in a distant land. On this point I wish to refer to a letter which I received a few days ago from a most esteemed citizen of Dublin. He told me that he believed that a very large portion of what he called the poor, amongst Irishmen, sympathised with any scheme or any proposition that was adverse to the Imperial Government. He said further, that the people here are rather in the country than of it, and that they are looking more to America than they are looking to England. I think there is a good deal in that. When we consider how many Irishmen have found a refuge in America, I do not know how we can wonder at that statement. You will recollect that when the ancient Hebrew prophet prayed in his captivity he prayed with his window opened towards Jerusalem. You know that the followers of Mahommed, when they pray, turn their faces towards Mecca. When the Irish peasant asks for food, and freedom, and blessing, his eye follows the setting sun; the aspirations of his heart reach beyond the wide Atlantic and in spirit he grasps hands with the great Republic of the West. If this be so, I say, then, that the disease is not only serious, but it is even desperate; but desperate as it is, I believe there is a certain remedy for it, if the people and the Parliament of the United Kingdom are willing to apply it. Now, if it were possible, would it not be worth while to change the sentiments and improve the condition of the Irish cultivators of the soil? If we were to remove the State Church there would still be a church, but it would not be a supremacy church. The Catholics of Ireland have no idea of saying that Protestantism in its various forms shall not exist in their island. There would still be a church, but it would be a free church of a section of a free people. I will not go into details about the change. Doubtless every man would say that the present occupants of the livings should, during their lifetime, not be disturbed; but if the principle of the abolition of the State Church were once fixed and accepted, it would not be difficult to arrange the details that would be satisfactory to the people of Ireland. Now, who objects to this? The men who are in favour of supremacy, and the men who have a fanatical hatred of what they call Popery. To honest and good men of the Protestant Church and of the Protestant faith there is no reason whatever to fear this change. What has the voluntary system done in Scotland? What has it done amongst the Nonconformists of England? What has it done amongst the population of Wales? and what has it done amongst the Catholic population of your own Ireland? In my opinion the abolition of the Established Church would give Protestantism itself another chance. I believe there has been in Ireland no other enemy of Protestantism so injurious as the Protestant State Establishment. It has been loaded for 200 years with the sins of bad government and bad laws, and whatever may have been the beauty and the holiness of its doctrine or

of its professors, it has not been able to hold its ground, loaded as it has been by the sins of a bad government. One effect of the Established Church has been this, the making Catholicism in Ireland not only a faith but a patriotism, for it was not likely that any member of the Catholic Church would incline in the slightest degree to Protestantism so long as it presented itself to his eyes as a wrong doer and full of injustice in connection with the government of his country. But now, if honest Protestantism has nothing to fear from the change that I would recommend, what has the honest landowner to fear? The history of Europe and America for the last one hundred years affords scarcely any picture more painful than that which is afforded by the landowners of this kingdom. The Irish landowner has been different from every other landowner, for the bulk of his land has only been about half cultivated, and he has had to collect his rents by a process approaching the evils of civil war. His property has been very insecure—the sale of it sometimes has been rendered impossible. The landowner himself has often been hated by those who ought to have loved him. He has been banished from his ancestral home by terror, and not a few have lost their lives without the sympathy of those who ought to have been their protectors and their friends. I would like to ask, what can be much worse than this? If in this country 50 years ago, as in Prussia, there had arisen statesmen who would have taken one-third or one-half the land from the landowners of Ireland, and made it over to their tenants, I believe that the Irish landowner, great as would have been the injustice of which he might have complained, would in all probability have been richer and happier than he has been. Now, what is the first remedy which you would propose? Clearly this—that which is the most easily applicable and which would most speedily touch the condition of the country. It is this—that the property which the tenant shall invest or create in his farm shall be secured to the tenant by law. I believe that if Parliament were fairly to enact this it would make a change in the whole temper of the country. I recollect in the year 1849 being down in the county of Wexford. I called at the house of an old farmer of the name of Stafford, who lived in a very good house, the best farmhouse, I think, that I had seen since leaving Dublin. He lived on his own farm, which he had bought fifteen years before. The house was a house which he had himself built. He was a venerable old man, and we had some very interesting conversation with him. I asked how it was he had so good a house? He said the farm was his own, and the house was his own, and, as no man could disturb him, he had made it a much better house than was common for the farmers of Ireland. I said to him, “If all the farmers of Ireland had the same security for the capital they laid out on their farms, what would be the result?” The old man almost sprang out of his chair, and said—“Sir, if you will give us that encouragement, we will *bate* the hunger out of Ireland.” It is said that all this must be left to contract between the landlord and the tenant; but the public, which may be neither landlord nor tenant, has a great interest in this question; and I maintain that the interests of the public require that Parliament should secure to the tenant the property which he has invested in his farm. But I would not stop here.

There is another, and what I should call a more permanent and far-reaching remedy for the evils of Ireland, and those persons who stickle so much for political economy I hope will follow me in this. The great evil of Ireland is this—that the Irish people—the Irish nation—are dispossessed of the soil, and what we ought to do is to provide for, and aid in, their restoration to it by all measures of justice. Why should we tolerate in Ireland the law of primogeniture? Why should we tolerate the system of entails? Why should the object of the law be to accumulate land in great masses in few hands, and to make it almost impossible for persons of small means, and tenant farmers, to become possessors of land? If you go to other countries—for example, to Norway, to Denmark, to Holland, to Belgium, to France, to Germany, to Italy, or to the United States, you will find that in all these countries those laws of which I complain have been abolished, and the land is just as free to buy and sell, and hold and cultivate, as any other description of property in the kingdom. No doubt your Landed Estates Court and your Record of Titles Act were good measures, but they were good because they were in the direction that I want to travel further in. But I would go further than that; I would deal with the question of absenteeism. I am not going to propose to tax absentees; but if my advice were taken, we should have a Parliamentary commission empowered to buy up the large estates in Ireland belonging to the English nobility, for the purpose of selling them on easy terms to the occupiers of the farms and to the tenantry of Ireland. Now, let me be fairly understood. I am not proposing to tax absentees; I am not proposing to take any of their property from them; but I propose this, that a Parliamentary commission should be empowered to treat for the purchase of those large estates with the view of selling them to the tenantry of Ireland. Now, here are some of them—the present Prime Minister Lord Derby, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Fitzwilliam, the Marquis of Hertford, the Marquis of Bath, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Devonshire, and many others. They have estates in Ireland; many of them, I dare say, are just as well managed as any estates in the country; but what you want is to restore to Ireland a middle-class proprietary of the soil; and I venture to say that if these estates could be purchased and could be sold out farm by farm to the tenant occupiers in Ireland, that it would be infinitely better in a conservative sense, than that they should belong to great proprietors living out of the country. I have said that the disease is desperate, and that the remedy must be searching. I assert that the present system of Government with regard to the church and with regard to the land has failed disastrously in Ireland. Under it Ireland has become an object of commiseration to the whole world and a discredit to the United Kingdom, of which it forms a part. It is a land of many sorrows. Men fight for supremacy, and call it Protestantism; they fight for evil and bad laws, and they call it acting for the defence of property. Now, are there no good men in Ireland of those who are generally opposed to us in politics—are there none who can rise above the level of party? If there be such, I wish my voice might reach them. I have often asked myself whether patriotism is dead in Ireland? Cannot all the people of Ireland see that the calamities of their country are the

creatures of the law, and if that be so, just laws can only remove these calamities. Now, if Irishmen were united—if your 105 members were for the most part agreed, you might do almost anything that you liked—you might do it even in the present Parliament; but if you are disunited, then I know not how you can gain anything from a Parliament created as the Imperial Parliament is now. The class that rules in Britain will hear your cry as it has heard it before, and will pay no attention to it. They will see your people leaving your shores, and they will think it no calamity to the country. They know that they have force to suppress insurrection, and, therefore, you can gain nothing from their fears. What, then, is your hope? It is in a better Parliament, representing fairly the United Kingdom—the movement which is now in force in England and Scotland, and which is your movement as much as ours. If there were 100 more members, the representatives of large and free constituencies, then your cry would be heard, and the people would give you that justice which a class has so long denied you. The great party that is now in power—the Tory party—denies that you have any just cause of complaint. In a speech delivered the other day in Belfast, much was said of the enforcement of the law; but there was nothing said about any change or amendment in the law. With this party terror is their only specific, and they have no confidence in allegiance except where there is no power to rebel. Now, I differ from these men entirely. I believe that at the root of a general discontent there is in all countries a general grievance and general suffering. The surface of society is not incessantly disturbed without a cause. I recollect in the poem of the greatest of Italian poets, he tells us that as he saw in vision the Stygian lake, and stood upon its banks, he observed the constant commotion upon the surface of the pool, and his good instructor and guide explained to him the cause of it—

“This, too, for certain know, that underneath
The water dwells a multitude, whose sighs
Into these bubbles make the surface heave,
As thine eye tells thee wheresoe'er it turn.”

And I say in Ireland for generations back, that the misery and the wrongs of the people have made their sign, and have found a voice in constant insurrection and disorder. I have said that Ireland is a country of many wrongs and of many sorrows. Her past lies almost all in shadow. Her present is full of anxiety and peril. Her future depends on the power of her people to substitute equality and justice for supremacy, and a generous patriotism for the spirit of faction. In the effort now making in Great Britain to create a free representation of the people you have the deepest interest. The people never wish to suffer, and they never wish to inflict injustice. They have no sympathy with the wrongdoer, whether in Great Britain or in Ireland; and when they are fairly represented in the Imperial Parliament, as I hope they will one day be, they will speedily give an effective and final answer to that old question of the Parliament of Kilkenny—“How comes it to pass that the King has never been the richer for Ireland.” (The honourable gentleman resumed his seat amid the most enthusiastic demonstrations of applause.)

On the following day (Wednesday) Mr. Bright received a deputation from the Cork Farmers' Club, by whom he was presented with an address thanking him for his services to Ireland and for his efforts to improve the condition of the occupiers of the land. In acknowledging the address, Mr. Bright said :—

I am in a much greater difficulty than I should be if I had 3,000 or 4,000 people to speak to on an occasion of this kind. I observe in the second paragraph of the address which you have kindly brought, that you refer to supposed services which I have rendered to the cause of humanity and freedom. The fact is, I feel what I suppose everybody feels who is honestly engaged in public life—that after a good deal of work, of many years of labour, very little has been done, for the world seems to move on very slowly, and what any man can do to make it move appears to be very little. But I have always had the opinion that a people are very much what their laws make them. I entirely disbelieve those theories which assume that it does not matter very much what kind of laws you have—that, after all, everything depends on a man's self. A great deal depends on a man's self, but a great deal depends on the laws; and I think, if we trace history back and look over the countries we know something of, we shall find that the people are in the main what their laws and institutions make them. Now, my mind, from a very young age, has led me always to a feeling that laws should be equal and should be just; that all the people living in a country have an equal right to be considered and well treated by the institutions and laws under which they live. In this country, more perhaps than in almost any other country in Europe, that has not been the principle on which the government has been conducted, because it is quite clear that the laws have been made until recently by a party, or rather for the supremacy of a party more than for the whole people; and as regards the land, which is the question to which you particularly refer, there can be no kind of doubt of this, that the laws have been absolutely the product of the selfishness and ignorance of the landed proprietors, and by no means the product of the general intelligence of all classes in this country. It is the same to a great extent in England, where, as Mr. Murphy knows perfectly well, in the House of Commons there are questions which you can discuss with an expectation that they will be fairly considered; but if you come to any question connected with the land, with the supremacy of that particular property in the country, argument is of no avail whatever, and the slightest tendency to what I would call intelligence and justice with regard to that is met by the most determined opposition by the great landowning classes in the House. Of course, there are many admirable exceptions there, as there are here; but, on the whole, the great weight of that party and class is directed against any wise change in regard to the laws affecting property in land. Now, twenty years ago, they thought we were going to ruin them when we were proposing to allow foreign corn to come to the country free of duty; and I believe there were

many of them who did absolutely believe that their estates would be of no value, and that, as far as landowning went in Great Britain and Ireland, the world was about coming to an end. They find, now, they have got rid of all the odium of that system, and at the same time they have not got rid of their land, but their land is of more value than it was before. Certainly in England farmers are in a more satisfactory position than they were before. The whole tone of society in England is wonderfully improved by the change which took place in 1846. I believe that, if in England and in Ireland the laws of political economy were applied to land, we should find just as great a change from this point forward with regard to matters which are influenced by laws affecting land, as we have found in past times by the abolition of the laws which prevented the importation of corn. I remember my lamented friend, Mr. Cobden, who was not likely to undervalue the effect of free trade in corn, saying, on more than one occasion, that the men who hereafter would entirely free the land—place the laws with regard to land on a just and satisfactory footing—would at least confer as great a benefit upon the people as he and those of that former agitation had been able to confer, by the success of our movement. He was no mean judge of such a matter, and his opinion is worth taking note of, for he was not a man of violent party feeling at all, but judged this question, perhaps, with a dispassionateness and intelligence which have never been exceeded by any public man amongst us. Now, there is this difficulty in discussing the whole Irish question. The great Church party is the Tory party. The boundaries which mark out the limits of the Established Church are almost the boundaries which mark out the limits of the Tory party. They think that if the Irish Church were got rid of—if the voluntary principle were established as the universal practice in Ireland—that principle would by-and-by cross the Channel, and raise an equal contest to be settled in like manner in Great Britain; and although if you were at the Antipodes (I am speaking of the church as a political institution) you might sweep it off the face of the earth and there would be no tears shed in the House of Commons; yet being so near home, they have no doubt a great dread that the same thing would be asked for and done hereafter in England. And so with regard to land in a degree not less obvious. They think that the concession of any measure of tenant right or security for a tenant for his improvements, would be followed by a coercive movement on the part of the tenants in England and Scotland; and in England and Scotland the tenantry are so powerful, that if they once put their heads in one direction there is no possibility of withstanding them. They are much more powerful than the tenants are here, because you, acting alone, have to act upon a great and powerful body in London. If you had a parliament in College Green, clearly the tenantry of Ireland, with the present feeling in Ireland, would be able to force that parliament to any measure of justice they desired; but as you have to deal with a great parliament sitting at London, all the clamour you make, the demands you may urge from this side of the Channel, come with a very feeble effect in London, especially as it can only be represented by about one hundred members, and of those it unfortunately happens that a considerable number are not willing

to support the demands that are made. But if, in England the tenantry, and in Scotland the tenant farmers—the most capable and most intelligent agriculturists perhaps in the world—if they were to join in favour of measures, such as measures hostile to the game laws, hostile to any injustice which is supposed to exist with regard to the improvement of the tenants, it would be quite impossible for the Parliament to resist their demands. You see, therefore, the great difficulty you have to contend with. You have to wrest your rights from a Parliament sitting in London, to which you send 105 members. Perhaps half are not in favour of your rights, and, therefore, the 50 who are so are lost in the 600 they find there, and the effort on the part of your members to do anything is one of the most disheartening things that any representative of the people can have to do. I have, since I have been in Parliament, which is now 23 years, heard a hundred times, nay, much oftener, blame attached to the Irish members for the little they do there. I believe that at this moment the Irish Liberal members are the most respectable, and the most respected and influential of all the Irish Liberal members that have sat in Parliament for the last 23 years. That is my opinion. I think it is admitted in the House of Commons, universally, that the Irish Liberal members of this Parliament are not inferior, but are superior to the Irish Liberal members that sat in former Parliaments during the last 25 years; but, notwithstanding that, and although I think they have a corresponding increase of influence, yet it is one of the most difficult things in the world for fifty men, acting amongst 600 men, some hundreds of miles from those whom they represent, to work up any question which may be against the prejudices and sympathies of the 600 amongst whom they are acting, and, therefore, Irish constituencies, whilst they should make no allowance in favour of those members who are not honest towards them and do not do their duty, yet for those who are honest and do their duty, they should make allowance. They have difficulties in the Parliament in London which are vastly greater than the difficulties of an English member, or than those the Irish members would find if their Parliament was sitting in this country. Now, what can be done with regard to this question? I say I don't know that I can do much. I have always given what support I could to any proposition that appeared to me reasonable and right on this question in Parliament. During the last session we had the great advantage of the assistance of a most eminent man, the member for Westminster, Mr. J. Stuart Mill. He made an admirable speech in favour of tenant improvement, and a speech which I have no doubt had a considerable effect on the House; but I trust more to two things than to any others in regard to this question. The first is the necessities of party if this Government goes out, which is not a thing impossible, and is a thing, probably to be desired. Another Government coming in will no doubt be under a distinct pledge to endeavour to settle this land question upon some sensible and just arrangement, and from that something may be gained; but I believe what we have most to rely upon is the hope that before long we shall have a better representation. There is nothing in the world more certain than this, that if you call a meeting in any part of Great Britain where you have got a fair average of middle class people or working

class people, and you will state to them in such a manner as I have been accustomed to—state with any degree of conciseness and fairness what you want in this respect,—I believe you will not find a sensible man to dissent from the proposition that these questions are questions of great importance, and ought to be entertained and adjusted by the Government and Parliament. And, therefore, if the time should come—and I hope it is not far distant,—that the people are let in and that Parliament is more popular, if you like, more democratic, the complaints made from this side of the Channel will be listened to there with more attention, and your 100 members, or so many of them as may be in favour of justice to Ireland, will find an increased and increasing power there to sympathise with them, and bring these questions to some wise and just arrangement. I don't know that I have any more to say. I am very sensible of your kindness, and it appears to me almost unreasonable that any of the citizens of Cork should come so far on this occasion and address me in the manner you have done. The Irish question has been to me one of great interest from my earliest connection with public life. I knew Mr. O'Connell with a certain intimacy, and when I was a very young member of the House of Commons, I often, if I found an opportunity, sat by him, for I found his conversation not only very amusing but very instructive. He knew everybody, and almost everything, and his comments on all that passed were very pleasant to listen to, and often very informing. I don't know how—whether it is from a natural love of what is just or not—but I always had a great sympathy with the Irish people and Irish questions, and as long as I remain in Parliament, or in public life, or in life at all, and am capable of thinking, I believe I shall be of opinion that we in this generation do owe it to ourselves, and owe it to Ireland, to make such amends as we can for an amount of neglect, and cruelty, and injustice committed in the past, such as I think no civilised or Christian nation has ever inflicted on another Christian nation. I thank you most sincerely for your great kindness to me, and I hope you may rely upon it that whatever I have done from that sympathy in past times, I shall not withhold in the future. Only you must not exaggerate what I can do or what anybody else can do; but if you get your members to unite cordially with the really Liberal party which is every day growing in England, I hope by and by you will have gained something. If we regret the darkness of the past of Ireland, we may do something to make us hope for a brighter and pleasanter prospect for the future.

ON the 2nd of November Mr. Bright attended a meeting of the Working Men of Dublin, in the Theatre of the Mechanics' Institution, James Haughton, Esq., in the Chair. An address of welcome to Mr. Bright was presented to him, amid loud and general cheering. The address expressed the thanks of the working men of Ireland to Mr. Bright, and stated that the Irish people had no hope of relief from an English House of Commons as at present constituted. Mr. Bright, in acknowledging the address, said:—

When I came to your city I was asked if I would attend a public meeting on the question of Parliamentary Reform. I answered that I was not in good order for much speaking, for I have suffered, as I am afraid you will find before I come to the end of my speech, from much cold and hoarseness, but it was urged upon me that there were at least some, and not an inconsiderable number, of the working men of this city who would be glad if I would meet them; and it was proposed to offer to me some address of friendship and confidence such as that which has been read. I have no complaint to make of it, but this, that whilst I do not say it indicates too much kindness, yet that it colours too highly the small services which I have been able to render to any portion of my countrymen. Your countrymen are reckoned generally to be a people of great gratitude and of much enthusiasm, and, therefore, I accept the address with all the kindness and feelings of friendship with which it has been offered, and I hope it will be, at least in some degree, a stimulant to me, in whatever position in life I am placed, to remember, as I have ever in past times remembered, the claims of the people of this island to complete equal justice with all portions of the people of the United Kingdom. Now, there may be persons in this room, I should be surprised if there were not, who doubt whether it is worth their while even to hope for substantial justice, as this address says, from a Parliament sitting in London. If there be such a man in this room let him understand that I am not the man to condemn him or to express surprise at the opinion at which he has arrived. But I would ask him in return for that, that he would give me at least for a few minutes a patient hearing, and he will find that, whether justice may come from the north or the south, or the east or the west—(cries of "The West," and great cheering)—I, at any rate, stand as a friend to the most complete justice to the people of this island. When discussing the question of Parliamentary Reform, I have often heard it asserted that the people of Ireland, and I am not speaking of those who are hopeless of good from a Parliament in London, but that the people of Ireland generally imagine that the question of Parliamentary Reform has very little importance for them. Now I undertake to say, and I think I can make it clear to this meeting, that whatever be the importance of that question to any man in England or Scotland, if the two islands are to continue under Imperial parliamentary government, it is of more importance to every Irishman. You know that

the Parliament of which I am a member contains 658 members, of whom 105 cross the Channel from Ireland, and when they go to London they meet—supposing all the members of the House of Commons gathered together—553 members, who are returned for Great Britain. Now, suppose that all your 105 members were absolutely good and honourable representatives of the people of Ireland—I will not say Tories, or Whigs, or Radicals, or Repealers, but anything you like,—let every man imagine that all these members were exactly the sort of men he would wish to go from Ireland, when the 105 arrive in London they meet with the 553 who are returned from Great Britain. Now, suppose that the system of Parliamentary representation in Great Britain is very bad, that it represents very few persons in that great island, and that those who appear to be represented are distributed in the small boroughs over different parts of the country, and in the counties under the thumb and finger of the landlords, it is clear that the whole Parliament, although your 105 members may be very good men, must still be a very bad Parliament. Therefore, if any man imagines—and I should think no man can imagine—that the representation of the people in Ireland is in a very good state—still, if he fancies it is in a good state—unless the representation of Great Britain were at least equally good, you might have a hundred excellent Irish members in Parliament at Westminster; but the whole 658 members might be a very bad Parliament for the United Kingdom. The member for a borough or a county in Ireland, when he goes to London, votes for measures for the whole kingdom; and a member for Lancashire or for Warwickshire, or for any other county or borough in Great Britain, votes for measures not only for Great Britain but also for Ireland, and therefore, all parts of the United Kingdom—every county, every borough, every parish, every family, every man—has a clear and distinct and undoubted interest in a Parliament that shall fairly and justly represent the whole nation. Now, look for a moment at two or three facts with regard to Ireland alone. I have stated some facts with regard to England and Scotland at recent meetings held across the Channel. Now for two or three facts with regard to Ireland. In Ireland you have five boroughs returning each one member, the average number of electors in each of these boroughs being only 172. You have 13 boroughs, the average number being 316. You have nine other boroughs with an average number of electors of 497. You have, therefore, 27 boroughs whose whole number of electors, if they were all put together, is only 9,453, or an average of 350 electors for each member. I must tell you further that you have a single county with nearly twice as many voters as the whole of those 27 boroughs. Your 27 boroughs have only 9,453 electors, and the county of Cork has 16,107 electors, and returns but two members. But that is not the worst of the case. It happens both in Great Britain and Ireland, wherever the borough constituencies are so small, that it is almost impossible that they should be independent; a very acute lawyer, for example, in one of those boroughs—a very influential clergyman, whether of your church or ours—when I say ours, I do not mean mine, but the Church of England—half-a-dozen men combining together, or a little corruption from candidates going with a well-filled purse,—these are the

influences brought to bear upon those small boroughs both in England and Ireland. A great many of them return their members by means of corruption, more or less, and a free and real representation of the people is hardly ever possible in a borough of that small size. But if I were to compare your boroughs with your counties, see how it stands. You have 39 borough members, with 30,000 electors, and you have 64 county members, with 172,000 electors. Therefore you see that the members are so distributed that the great populations have not one quarter of the influence in Parliament which those small populations in the small boroughs have. We come next to another question, which is of great consequence. Not only are those small boroughs altogether too small for independence, but if we come to your large county constituencies, we find that from the peculiar circumstances and the relations which exist between the voter and the owner of the land, there is scarcely any freedom of election. Even in your counties I should suppose that if there was no compulsion from the landowners or their agents, that in at least three-fourths of this island the vote of the county electors would be by a vast majority in favour of the Liberal candidates. I am not speaking merely of men who profess a sort of liberality which just enables them to go with their party, but I speak of men who would be thoroughly in earnest in carrying out, as far as they were able, in Parliament, the opinions which they were sent to represent by the large constituencies who elected them. The question of the ballot is, in my opinion, of the greatest importance in Great Britain and Ireland, but is of more importance in the counties than it is in the large boroughs. For example: in Great Britain, in such boroughs as Edinburgh and Glasgow, and Manchester and Birmingham, and the metropolitan boroughs, where the number of electors runs from 10,000 to 25,000, bribery is of no avail, because you could not bribe thousands of men. To bribe 100 or 200 would not alter the return at an election with so large a constituency. But what you want with the ballot is, that in the counties where the tenant farmers vote, and where they live upon their land without the security of a lease, or without the security of any law to give them compensation for any improvements they have made upon the land, the tenant farmer feels himself always liable to injury, and sometimes to ruin, if he gets into a dispute with the agent or the landowner with regard to the manner in which he has exercised his franchise. And what will be very important also, if you have the ballot, your elections will be tranquil, without disorder and without riot. Last week, or the week before, there was an election in one of your great counties. Well, making every allowance that can be made for the supposed exaggerations of the writers of the two parties, it is quite clear to everybody that the circumstances of that election, though not absolutely uncommon in Ireland, were still such as to be utterly discreditable to a real representative system. And you must bear in mind that there is no other people in the world that considers that it has a fair representative system unless it has the ballot. The ballot is universal almost in the United States. It is almost universal in the colonies, at any rate in the Australian colonies; it is almost universal on the continent of Europe, and in the new parliament of North Germany, which is about soon to be assembled, every man of 25 years of age is to be allowed to vote, and to vote by ballot. Now, I hold, without any

fear of contradiction, that the intelligence and the virtues of the people of Ireland are not represented in the Parliament. You have your wrongs to complain of—wronges centuries old, and wrongs that long ago the people of Ireland, and, I venture to say, the people of Great Britain united with Ireland—My friend up there will not listen to the end of my sentence. I say that the people of Great Britain, acting with the people of Ireland, in a fair representation of the whole, would long ago have remedied every just grievance of which you could complain. Now, I will take two questions which I treated upon the other evening. I will ask about one question—that is, the question of the supremacy of the Church in Ireland. Half the people of England are Nonconformists. They are not in favour of an Established Church anywhere, and it is utterly impossible that they could be in favour of an Established Church in an island like this—an Established Church formed of a mere handful of the population, in opposition to the wishes of the nation. Now take the principality of Wales. I suppose that four out of five of the population there are Dissenters, and they are not in favour of maintaining a religious Protestant establishment in Ireland. The people of Scotland have also seceded in such large numbers from their Established Church, although of a democratic character, that I suppose those who have seceded are a considerable majority of the whole people,—they are not in favour of maintaining an ecclesiastical establishment in Ireland in opposition to the views of the great majority of your people. Take the other question,—that of land. There is nobody in Great Britain of the great town population, of the middle class, or of the still more numerous working class, who has any sympathy with that condition of the law and of the administration of the law which has worked such mischiefs in your country. But these Nonconformists, whether in England, Wales, or Scotland, these great middle classes, and still greater working classes, are in the position that you are. Only sixteen of every hundred have a vote, and those sixteen are so arranged that when their representatives get to Parliament they turn out for the most part to be no real representatives of the people. I will tell you fairly that you, as the less populous and less powerful part of this great nation—you of all the men in the United Kingdom, have by far the strongest interest in a thorough reform of the Imperial Parliament, and I believe that you yourselves could not do yourselves by yourselves more complete justice than you can do fairly acting with the generous millions of my countrymen in whose name I stand here. You have on this platform two members of the Reform League from London. I received yesterday, or the day before, a telegram from the Scottish Reform League, from Glasgow. I am not sure whether there is a copy of it in any of the newspapers, but it was sent to me, and I presume it was sent to me that I might read it if I had the opportunity of meeting any of the unenfranchised men of this city. It says: The Scottish Reform League request you to convey to the Reformers in Ireland their deep sympathy. They sincerely hope that soon in Ireland as in Scotland and England, Reform Leagues may be formed in every town to secure to the people their political rights. Urge upon our friends in Ireland their duty to promote this great movement, and to secure at home those benefits which

thousands of their fellow-countrymen are forced to seek in other lands—where land and State Church grievances are unknown. We also seek co-operation, knowing that our freedom, though secure to-morrow, would not be safe so long as one portion of the United Kingdom were less free than the others. There is the outspoken voice of the representatives of that great multitude that only a fortnight, since I saw passing through the streets of Glasgow. For three hours the procession passed, with all the emblems and symbols of their various trades, and the streets for two or three miles were enlivened by banners, and the air was filled with the sounds of music from their bands. Those men but spoke the same language that was heard in the West Riding, in Manchester, in Birmingham, and in London, and you men of Dublin, and of Ireland, you never made a mistake more grievous in your lives than for you to come to the conclusion that there are not millions of men in Great Britain willing to do you full justice. I am very sorry that my voice is not what it was, and when I think of the work that is to be done sometimes I feel it is a pity we grow old so fast. But years ago, when I have thought of the condition of Ireland, of its sorrows and wrongs, of the discredit that its condition has brought upon the English, the Irish, and the British name, I have thought, if I could be in all other things the same, but by birth an Irishman, there is not a town in this island I would not visit for the purpose of discussing the great Irish question, and of rousing my countrymen to some great and united action. I do not believe in the necessity of widespread and perpetual misery. I do not believe that we are placed on this island, and on this earth, that one man might be great and wealthy, and revel in every profuse indulgence, and five, six, nine, or ten men should suffer the abject misery which we see so commonly in the world. With your soil, your climate, and your active and spirited race, I know not what they might not do. There have been reasons to my mind why soil and climate, and the labour of your population, have not produced general comfort and competence for all. The address speaks of the friendly feeling and the sympathy which I have had for Ireland during my political career. When I first went into the House of Commons the most prominent figure in it was Daniel O'Connell. I have sat by his side for hours during the discussions in that House, and listened to observations both amusing and instructive on what was passing under discussion. I have seen him, too, more than once upon our platform of the Anti-Corn-law League. I recollect that on one occasion he sent to Ireland expressly for a newspaper for me, which contained a report of a speech which he made against the corn law when the corn law was passing through Parliament in 1815, and we owe much to his exertions in connection with that question, for almost the whole Liberal—I suppose the whole Liberal—party of the Irish representatives in Parliament supported the measure of free trade of which we were the prominent advocates; and I know of nothing that was favourable to freedom, whether in connection with Ireland or England, that O'Connell did not support with all his great powers. I know nothing pleasanter, and hardly anything more useful, than personal recollections of this nature. Why is it, now, there should be any kind of schism between the Liberal people of

Ireland and the Liberal people of Great Britain? I don't ask you to join hands with supremacy and oppression, whether in your island or ours. What I ask you is, to open your heart of hearts, and join hands for a real and thorough working union for freedom with the great people of Great Britain. Before I sit down, I must be allowed to advert to a point which has been much commented upon—a paragraph in my speech made the other night with regard to the land. There are newspapers in Dublin which I need not name, because I am quite sure you can find them out—which do not feel any strong desire or conscientious compulsion to judge fairly anything I may say amongst the various measures which I propose for what I shall call the pacification, and redemption if you like, of the people of Ireland. It was this I said: "It is of the first importance that the people of Ireland, by some process or other, should have the opportunity of being made the possessors of their own soil. You will know perfectly well that I am not about to propose a copy of the villanous crimes of 200 years ago, to confiscate the lands of the proprietors, here or elsewhere. I propose to introduce a system which would gradually, no doubt rapidly and easily, without injuring anybody, make many thousands who are now tenant farmers, without lease and security, the owners of their farms in this island. This is my plan, and I want to restate it with a little further explanation, in order that these gentlemen to whom I have referred may not repeat the very untrue, and I may say dishonourable comments which they have made upon me. There are many large estates in Ireland which belong to rich families in England,—families not only of the highest rank, but of the highest character,—because I will venture to say there are not to be found amongst the English nobility families of more perfect honourableness and worth than some of those to whom my plan would be offered; and, therefore, I am not speaking against the aristocracy, against those families, or against property, or against any body, or against anything that is good. I say, that if Parliament were to appoint a commission, and give it, say, at first, up to the amount of five millions sterling, the power to negotiate or treat with those great families in England who have great estates in Ireland, it is probable that some of those great estates might be bought at a not very unreasonable price. I am of opinion it would be the cheapest money that the Imperial Parliament ever expended, even though it became possessed of those estates at a price considerably above the market price. But I propose it should be worked in this way. I will take a case. I will assume that this commission has got a considerable estate into its possession, bought from some present owner of it. I will take one farm, which I will assume to be worth £1,000, for which the present tenant is paying a rent of £50 a year. He has no lease. He has no security. He makes almost no permanent improvement of any kind; and he is not quite sure whether, when he has saved a little more money, he will not take his family off to the United States. Now we will assume ourselves, if you like, to be that commission, and that we have before us the farmer who is the tenant on that particular farm, for which he pays £50 a year, without lease or security, and which I assume to be worth £1,000. The Government, I believe, lends money to Irish landowners for drainage purposes at about 3½ per cent per annum. Suppose the Government were to

go to this farmer and say, "You would not have any objection to become possessed of this farm?" "No, not the slightest," he might say, "but how is that to be done?" In this way; tell the farmer—you may pay £50 a year, that is, 5 per cent. on one thousand pounds; the Government can afford to do these transactions for $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; if you will pay £60 a year for a given number of years, which any of the actuaries of the insurance offices, or any good arithmetician may soon calculate,—if you will pay £60 for your rent, instead of £50, it may be fifteen, or twenty years, or more,—at the end of that time the farm will be yours, without any further payment. I want you to understand how this is. If the farmer paid ten pounds a year more towards buying his farm, the fact is, that the £1,000 the Government would pay for the farm would not cost the Government more than £35, and therefore the difference between £35 and £60 being £25, would be the sum which that farmer, in his rent, would be paying to the commission, that is, the Government, for the redemption of his farm. Thus, at the end of a very few years the farmer would possess his own farm, having a perfect security. All the time nobody could turn him out if he paid his rent, and nobody could touch him for any improvement he made on his land. The next morning after he made that agreement, he would speak to his wife and to his big boy, who had perhaps been idling about for a long time, and there would not be a stone on the land that would not be removed, not a weed that he would not pull up, not a particle of manure that he would not save; there would not be anything that he would not do with a zeal and an enthusiasm which he had never known before to cultivate that farm; and by the time the few years had run on when the farm should become his without any further purchase, he would have turned a dilapidated, miserable little farm into a garden for himself and family. Now, this statement may be commented on by some of the newspapers. You will understand that I do not propose a forced purchase, or confiscation. I would undertake even to give—if I were the Government—to every one of these landlords twenty per cent. more for his estate than it will fetch in any market in London or in Dublin, and I say that to do this would produce a marvellous change in the sentiments of the people, and in the condition of agriculture in Ireland. But I saw in one of the papers a question to which I may give a reply. It was said, how would you like to have a commission come down into Lancashire and insist on buying your factories? I can only say that if they will give me 10 per cent. or 20 per cent. more than they are worth they shall have them to-morrow. But I do not propose that the commission should come here and insist on buying these estates. They say, further,—Why should a man in Ireland keep his estate, and not a man in England who has an estate in Ireland? There is this difference. A man in Ireland, if he has an estate of 10,000 acres, it is probably his ancestral home. He has ties to this which it would be monstrous to think of severing in such a manner, but a man living in England, who is not an Irishman, and never comes over here except to receive his rents (which, by the way, he generally gets through his bankers in London), who has no particular tie to this country, and who comes over here occasionally merely because he feels that, as a great proprietor in Ireland, it would be scandalous never to show

his face on his property and amongst his tenants—to such a man there is nothing much of sentiment in it that he should not part with his land at a fair price. I have been charged with saying very severe things of the English aristocracy. Now, it is not true in the sense in which it is imputed to me. I have always said that there are many men in the English aristocracy who would be noblemen in the sight of their fellow-men, although they had no titles and no coronets. There are men amongst them of as undoubted patriotism as any man in this building, or in this island, and there are men amongst them, who when they saw that a great public object is to be served for the benefit of their fellow-men, would make as great sacrifices as any one of us would be willing to do. I am of opinion therefore,—I may be wrong, but I will not believe I am until it is proved,—I am of opinion that if this question were discussed in Parliament when the next Irish land question is discussed, and if there was a general sentiment in the House of Commons that some measure like this would be advantageous for Ireland, and if it were so expressed, it may be assumed that it would be accepted to a large extent by the people of the United Kingdom,—then I think that a commission so appointed would find no difficulty whatever in discovering noblemen and rich men in England, in Scotland too, who are the possessors of great estates in Ireland, who would be willing to negotiate for their transfer, and that commission, by the process I have indicated, might transfer them gradually but speedily to the tenant farmers of this country. I am told that I have not been much in Ireland, and do not know much of it. I recollect a man in England during the American war asking me a question about America. When I gave him the answer it did not agree with his opinion, and he said, “I think you have never been in America, have you?” I said I had not; and he replied, “Well, I have been there three times, and I know something of them.” He was asking me whether I thought the Yankees would pay when they borrowed money to carry on the war; and I thought they would. But, as he had been there, he thought his opinion was worth more than mine. I told him I knew several people who had lived in England all their lives, and yet knew very little about England. I am told that if I were to live in Ireland longer amongst the people I should have a different opinion, that I should think the church of a small minority was honest, in the face of the great church of the majority; that I should think it was not the fault of the landowners or of the law in any degree, but the fault of the tenants that everything went wrong with regard to the land; and that I should find that it was the Government that was mostly right, and the legislation right, and that it was the people that were mostly wrong. There are certain questions with regard to any country that you may settle in your own house, never having seen that country even upon a map. This you may settle, that that which is just is just everywhere, and that men, from those of the highest culture even to those of the most moderate capacity, whatever may be their race, whatever their colour, have implanted in their hearts by their Creator, wiser much than these men, the knowledge and the love of justice. I will tell you that, since the day when I sat beside O’Connell—and at an earlier day, that I have considered this question of Ireland. In 1849, for

several weeks in the autumn, and for several weeks in the autumn of 1852, I came to Ireland expressly to examine these questions by consulting with all classes of the people in every part of the island. I will undertake to say that I believe there is no man in England who has more fully studied the evidence given before the celebrated Devon commission in regard to Ireland than I have. Therefore I dare stand up before any Irishman or Englishman to discuss the Irish question. I say that the plans, the theories, the policy of legislation of my opponents in this matter all have failed signally, deplorably, disastrously, ignominiously, and, therefore, I say that I have a right to come in and offer the people of Ireland, as I would offer to the people of Great Britain and the Imperial Parliament, a wise and just policy upon this question. You know that I have attended great meetings in England within the last two months, and in Scotland also. I think that I am at liberty to tender to you from those scores, or hundreds of thousands of men the hand of fellowship and goodwill. I wish I might be permitted when I go back, as in fact, I think by this address that I am permitted to say to them, that amidst the factions by which Ireland has been torn, amidst the many errors that have been committed, amidst the passions that have been excited, amidst the hopes that have been blasted, and amidst the misery that has been endured, there is still in this island, and amongst its people, a heart that can sympathise with those who turn to them with a fixed resolution to judge them fairly, and to do them justice. (Loud cheers, which were prolonged for several minutes, the audience rising and waving their hats.) I have made my speech. I have said my say. I have fulfilled my small mission to you. I thank you from my heart for the kindness with which you have received me, which I shall never forget. And if I have in past times felt an unquenchable sympathy with the sufferings of your people, you may rely upon it that if there be an Irish member to speak for Ireland, he will find me heartily by his side.

SPEECH AT MANCHESTER.

At the great Reform Banquet in the Free-trade Hall, Manchester, November 20th, 1866, Mr. Bright, M.P., who was present, rose amidst enthusiastic cheering, continuing for several minutes, the greater part of the audience standing. He said:—

Although, perhaps, this is one of the most striking and important meetings which have been held in this country during the last few years, you will, perhaps, be surprised to learn that I came to it with a sense almost of indifference: not indifference as to its importance; but with an absence of that feeling of responsibility which has pressed so much upon me, on some recent occasions. For the committee were kind enough to send round to

their guests a list of the speakers who were expected to address the meeting. I found them much more numerous than is common, and I found my name about half way down the list. I took it, therefore, for granted that I could come, for once, in some degree, as a spectator and a listener, rather than as a prominent actor at the meeting. Some gentlemen who were expected to be here are not here—Mr. Stansfeld, because he is ill; Mr. Layard, because he has not returned from the Continent. And Mr. Forster, who seems less able to occupy the time of an audience when he comes into Lancashire than he is in Yorkshire—has spoken, I may say, uttering the feeling of the whole meeting, for a very much shorter time than we had a right to expect. I shall trust, therefore, to those who come after me to say a good deal which I shall not take up your time in attempting to say to-night. During the last memorable session of Parliament you will probably recollect that it was a very common thing in the mouths of the opponents of the Government bill to say that the working men—the aggrieved party—felt no grievance; for they scarcely expressed any opinion on the bill—in its favour, or, indeed, any opinion at all on the question of their own admission to the franchise. I was repeatedly charged with being in the position of a leader in a case, and it was said that, after all, I had no clients and no following. There was a general taunt uttered that we were very much exaggerating the case of the working men, and that the condition of that large class was so comfortable and so prosperous that they were perfectly content with the Government as it is carried on by a Parliament so inadequately representing the whole nation. I suspect that the argument, so far as it was uttered, and had any force, has now been fully and satisfactorily answered. But these gentlemen have turned right round, and have now another thing to say about our meetings. They say that the middle class stands entirely aloof, that nobody really cares for reform but the working men, and that no great question can be carried, or sensibly affected, in this country by the opinions and action of working men alone. They point to the great meetings that have been held, and after dividing the notorious and proved magnitude of the meetings by four or six, they then conclude that there were a few thousands of working men present; but members of Parliament, manufacturers, merchants, and what they call the respectable and influential classes were found to be entirely absent. But they forget that these meetings at which they say working men only attended were meetings called expressly by working men and for working men. But if they want to know, or wanted to know, how far the main objects of those meetings received sympathy from a more powerful class, they might have come to those meetings to have learned. In Birmingham, as you know, the Mayor was in the procession, and the chief constable of the town took charge of all the arrangements of it; and in the great Town-hall of that city, the Mayor took the chair at the evening meeting, and I venture to say that it would be impossible in any town in this kingdom to assemble upon the platform a greater amount of what these gentlemen call respectability, wealth, and station in the town than were assembled there and then. If they had come to this hall on the evening of the great meeting in Manchester, and if they had gone to the Town-hall of Leeds, or

to the City-hall of Glasgow, they would have found that after the scores of thousands that had attended the great open-air meeting in the daytime there was a meeting most important, most influential, omnipotent indeed, within that town in which it was held. In the town of Leeds, I was told nearly 1,000 persons paid 5s. each to attend the meeting in the Town-hall, and I think that is some sign of the class of persons who attended. But if there was any question on this matter, I would ask those gentlemen to come on this platform to-night. Here is the largest and finest hall in Britain, the largest and finest hall in Europe, I believe the largest and finest hall in the world, and yet this hall is crowded with persons to whom our opponents, I think generally, unless they were very fastidious, would admit the term respectable and influential. I doubt if there has ever been held in this kingdom, within our time, a political banquet more numerous, more influential, more unanimous, more grand in every respect, than that which is held here to-night. Just now, it is the fashion to flatter and to court the middle class. The middle class are told that since the Reform Bill of 1832 political power has been in their hands; before 1832 it was with the lords and great landowners, but since 1832 it has been in the hands of the middle class, and now the middle class are asked whether they are willing to surrender that power into the hands of a more numerous, and, as these persons assert, a dangerous class, who would swamp, not the highest class of lords and great landowners, highest in social position, but would swamp also the great middle class with whom power is now said to rest. And they try to teach the middle class that there is an essentially different interest between them and the great body of the people who are not yet admitted into that class. They say the one class is in power, and the other class is outside, and out of power, and they warn the middle class against admitting the outsiders into partnership with them, for fear that they should dethrone the middle class and set up an unintelligent, unreasoning, and selfish power of their own. That is the sort of argument which is used to the middle class to induce them to take no part in any measure that shall admit the working class to a participation in political power. I should be ashamed to stand on any platform and to employ such an argument as this. Is there to be found in the writings or the speaking of any public man connected with the Liberal or the Reform party so dangerous and so outrageous a policy as that which these men pursue? When separating the great body of the people into the middle and the working class, they set class against class, and ask you to join with the past and present monopolists of power in the miserable and perilous determination to exclude for ever the great body of your countrymen from the common rights of the glorious English constitution. There is no greater fallacy than that—that the middle classes are in possession of power. The real state of the case, if it were put in simple language, would be this—that the working men are almost universally excluded, roughly and insolently, from political power, and that the middle class, whilst they have the semblance of it, are defrauded of the reality. The difference and the resemblance is this, that the working men, come to the hustings at an election, and when the returning-officer asks for the show of hands every man can hold up his hand although his

name is not upon the register of voters; every working man can vote at that show of hands, but the show of hands is of no avail. The middle class have votes, but those votes are rendered harmless and nugatory by the unfair distribution of them, and there is placed in the voter's hand a weapon which has neither temper nor edge by which he can neither fight for further freedom, nor defend that which his ancestors have gained. On a recent occasion, perhaps it was when I last stood on this platform, I stated certain facts which have not, from that day to this, been contradicted—I stated that out of every 100 men throughout the United Kingdom, grown-up men, liable to taxes, expected to perform all the duties of life, responsible to the laws, 84 were excluded from the franchise, and that 16 only were included. I want to ask whether the 16 out of the 100 may be said to include all the middle class? But there is another fact, if possible more astonishing still, and that is that three men out of every 100 throughout the United Kingdom do apparently by their votes return an actual majority of the present House of Commons. But if a majority of the House of Commons be returned by a number so small as three out of every 100 of the men of the United Kingdom, and if the other House of Parliament asks for no votes at all, I ask you whether it is not a fact of the most transparent character that power, legislative and governing, in this country does not rest with the middle classes? What Mr. Forster says is quite true. You may have suffrage—this or that, but you may have distribution of power so and such that even your present representation, bad as it is, may be made something even worse. Take the case of your boroughs, in which alone may be said to rest everything that exists in the United Kingdom of a free election. Divide the boroughs, 254 in number, into two classes, those under 20,000 inhabitants and those over that number. Under 20,000 there are 145 boroughs; over it 109. But the boroughs under 20,000 return 215 members, against 181 that are returned by the boroughs over 20,000. But that gives only a very misty idea of the state of the case. Those boroughs over 20,000 inhabitants, having 39 members fewer than the the boroughs under 20,000, still are in this position—their members represent six times as many electors, seven times as much population, and fourteen times as much payment of income-tax as the larger number of members represent. It is clear beyond all cavil—for figures, after all, are difficult things to meet and controvert if they are correct—that your representative system, even in the boroughs where alone it exists in any life at all—is a representative system almost wholly delusive, and defrauds the middle classes of the power which the act of 1832 professed to give them. And your county representation is almost too sad a subject to dwell upon. Every man who occupies a house or land of an annual value less than £50 is excluded; the number of freeholders in the main diminishes, and really there remains scarcely anything of independent power and freedom of election within the majority of the counties of the United Kingdom. So, then, I come to this conclusion, that the working classes are excluded and insulted, and that the middle classes are defrauded; and I presume that those who really do wield the power despise the middle classes for their silence under this system. When I look at the great middle class of this country, and see all that it has

done, and see the political position in which it has been to some extent content to rest, I cannot help saying that it reminds me very much of the language which the ancient Hebrew patriarch addressed to one of his sons. He said : "Issachar is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens." On the one side there is the burden of seven and a half millions per annum, raised by way of tax, to keep from starvation more than one million two hundred thousand paupers within the United Kingdom—and on the other hand, and higher up in the scale, there is mismanagement the most gross, there is extravagance the most reckless, and there is waste the most appalling and disgraceful which has ever been seen in the government of any country. And this is the grand result of a system which systematically shuts out the millions, and which cajoles the middle classes by the hocus pocus of a Parliamentary Government. Sir, I am delighted beyond measure, after many years of discussion, of contemplation of labour—in connection with this great question—I say I am delighted to believe that the great body of the people, call them middle class or call them working class, are resolved that this state of things shall exist no longer. During the last session of Parliament there has been made by an honest Government an honest attempt to tinker the existing system. For, after all, the bill of the last session, honest and well intended and valuable as it was, was still but a tinkering of a very bad system. But the Tory party refused even to have it tinkered. They remind me very much of a wealthy but a most penurious old gentleman, who lived some years ago in my neighbourhood, and who objected, amongst other expenses, very much to a tailor's bill, and he said that he had found out that a hole would last longer than a patch. I am not sure that that is not the case with Lord Derby and his friends ; for it was one of their great arguments that if the bill of the Government passed it would inevitably follow that something more would almost immediately be demanded. They were so anxious that things should remain as they are that they refused to admit 200,000 more of the middle class by the lowering of the county franchise, and they refused with equal, perhaps with greater pertinacity, to admit 200,000, but, as I believe, not much more than 100,000 working men, to electoral rights. They would not suppress, nor allow the suppression of one single rotten borough, and in fact there was no abuse, however foul, however intolerable, however putrid, to which they would allow the legislative reforming knife to be applied ; and they determined to keep everything just as it is. And now these gentlemen, that we were obliged, to our great misfortune, to contend with so much last session, are in office. They call themselves Her Majesty's servants ; but they have not yet dared to proclaim that they are the accepted servants of the people. Some of their papers, and some papers which are not theirs, give us to understand,—for the papers are often understanding a great many things of which they know nothing,—that the Cabinet meetings held during the last fortnight have landed us in this strange position—that the men who were against all reform six months ago, are now warmly engaged in concocting a measure which shall be satisfactory to the great body of the Reformers of this country. My opinion is this : First of all, that the papers know nothing about it ; secondly, that the

Government, we are obliged to call them a Government, has not made up its mind at all whether it will bring in a Reform Bill or not. In point of fact, Lord Derby is waiting to see what the weather will be. And I suppose they will postpone their decision perhaps for some few weeks to come. Who knows but that they will wait till this day fortnight—or yesterday fortnight? Yesterday fortnight, on Monday, the 3rd of December, it is said that, following the example of Birmingham, and the West Riding, and Glasgow, and Manchester, and Edinburgh, the men concerned in the trades in London will make what they call a demonstration, that is, that on behalf of the question of reform they will assemble and will peacefully walk through some of the main streets of the West End of London, for the purpose of showing that they take an interest in this great question. I know nothing of the arrangements, except what I see in the papers; but it is said that more than 200,000 men have arranged to walk in that procession. I hear on no mean authority that certain persons at the West End are getting up a little alarm at what may happen on the 3rd of December. What will happen we all know. If the police do not interfere to break the peace, the peace will not be broken. And, probably, what happened on the last occasion may be of some use in teaching the Home Secretary his duty on this occasion. There are persons, doubtless, so credulous and so willing to wish well of everybody as to imagine that Lord Derby's Government will bring in a satisfactory Reform Bill. They say that Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington carried Catholic Emancipation; that Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington repealed the Corn Law; and why should not Lord Derby pass a Reform Bill? Why, Lord Derby is neither the Duke of Wellington nor Sir Robert Peel. He deserted both those eminent men in 1846, rather than unite with them to repeal the corn law; and he has never shown, from that hour to this, one atom of statesmanship, or one spark of patriotism, that would lead us to expect that, on this occasion, he would turn round and, neglecting his party, do something for his country. It is all very well to say that if the Government bring in a very good bill, we who want a very good bill will support it. But it is no use dealing in phraseology and platitudes of that sort. Look at the Cabinet of Lord Derby; look what the members of it said and did during late years, and during the late parliamentary session. Lord Derby has told us that it was his mission to stem democracy; his friends in the House of Commons declared last session that the passing of that bill of the Government would be to hand over the country to the democracy of the working classes. Mr. Disraeli, in his speeches, was ingenious beyond his fellows, as indeed he generally is, for if he had not been he would not have been in the position in which we find him. But Mr. Disraeli was anxious to cut off all free election in counties. He is of opinion, so far as I gather from his speeches, that the more entirely the county representation can be made conterminous with the great estates of the peers and the great landowners, the more entirely it will be after his own fashion and his own wishes. There is no more perilous idea can be entertained by any statesman; if you once get the nominees of the great landowners and the lords on the one side of the House, and the repre-

representatives of everybody else on the other side of the House, the beginning of the end will have come. And whilst Mr. Disraeli is tickling the ears and the fancy of the country gentlemen behind him, he is propounding a plan which, if it were carried into effect, would end in the utter extinction of the political power of the country gentlemen and the peerage of England. Mr. Disraeli and Lord Stanley were the men in the last Derby Government who proposed to disfranchise 70,000 county voters whose property was within the limits of the boroughs, and I cannot believe that men who made such a proposition seven or eight years ago can produce a good honest Reform Bill now. Lord Stanley made a speech during the discussions on the late bill which his party and their press said was unanswerable. It was a speech leading to this conclusion, that he would give no votes to any of the working class until he saw, by the distribution of seats, that those votes could be made of no use to them. And Lord Stanley lent himself to an unhappy trick, intended, as it appeared to us, to take the Government and the House by surprise, and by which, by gaining a sudden and accidental division, he might have destroyed both the bill and the Government. Lord Cranbourne is a member of this Cabinet,—Lord Robert Cecil that was a short time ago,—Lord Cranbourne quarrelled violently with Mr. Gladstone because Mr. Gladstone said the working men were of our own flesh and blood. He treated that observation very much in the same way that the Carolinian planter and slaveholder in the Senate of the United States would have replied to my friend Mr. Sumner if he had said the black and white were equal in the eye of God, and of one flesh and blood. General Peel is a member of this Government, and he protested violently against any reduction of the franchise, as indeed did Sir Stafford Northcote, who is, I think, now the President of the Board of Trade. I want to ask you whether from these men you are to expect, you are to wait for, with anxious and hopeful looking forward, any Reform Bill? And, after all these speeches had been made, Lord Derby did his utmost to prevail upon Mr. Lowe to become a member of his Cabinet. If, after all this, they were to attempt to manufacture and introduce a Reform Bill, they would cover themselves and their party with humiliation and with certain failure. I know that in this country politicians change sides; office has a wonderful effect upon men. I suppose that there are men here such as were described by our witty friend, Mr. Hosea Biglow, in painting the character of some politicians in America. He said of them as we perhaps may say of Lord Derby and his party,

"A merciful Providence fashioned them hollow,
On purpose that they might their principles swallow."

But, notwithstanding that provision, that merciful provision, for statesmen, I confess that I do not believe that the Government have determined to bring in a Reform Bill, or that they can by any possibility bring in a bill which the Reformers of this country can accept. They have done everything during the past session by fraudulent statements—by insults to the people—by the most evident baseness of party action—to destroy the moderate and honest attempt of Lord Russell to improve the representation. And I do not believe that in one short year they can turn round; and, capacious

as may be the internal cavity of the Tory Government, I think they cannot in one short year swallow all their Conservative principles. If a man were to tell me that he had a broth composed of half-a-dozen most poisonous ingredients, and that he could make of it a most wholesome dish, I think I should not believe him. And if he tells me that Derby, and Disraeli, and Stanley, and Cranbourne, and General Peel, and the rest of them, after the speeches to which I listened six months ago, are about to produce a wholesome, and salutary, and liberal Reform Bill, I must ask him not to impose for a moment on my understanding. The enemies of the bill of 1866 cannot become the honest friends of reform in 1867—and the conspirators of the session which has just expired cannot become honourable statesmen in the session which is about to commence. My opinion may be no better than that of any other man. This, however, may be good advice—that all reformers should be on the watch, for there are enemies enough to our cause, and false friends enough to convince us that it is by no means out of danger. But the next bill—what must it be? One thing I think we have a right to insist upon, that the next bill which is introduced by a Liberal and Reform Government shall be in its suffrage based upon the ancient borough franchise of the country. Household or rating suffrage has existed for centuries in our parishes. It has existed for many years in our municipal corporations. It has never been found either in parish or corporation to be destructive of the interests of the people of those circumscribed districts of the country. I say, therefore, that we ought to stand by the ancient Constitution of England. I believe Lord Russell, speaking of him in his private capacity, would be in favour of extending the borough franchise, at least to the limits of the municipal franchise. There is reason to believe that Mr. Gladstone himself would approve of such a measure. We know that the late Attorney-General, one of the most eminent lawyers and one of the most accomplished members of the House of Commons, publicly and openly expressed himself in favour of that change. I believe the middle class, as a rule, the Liberal portion of the middle class, would have no objection to see the franchise extended to all householders in boroughs. I believe if it were so extended we should arrive at a point at which, so long at any rate as any of us are permitted to meddle with the politics of our country, no further change would be demanded. I therefore am entirely in favour of it, because I believe it to be wise in itself, and because it is the ancient borough franchise of this kingdom. I am in favour of the constitution. I would stand by it; wherever it afforded support for freedom I would march in its track. That track is so plain that the way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein. I would be guided by its lights. They have been kept burning by great men among our forefathers for many generations. Our only safety in this warfare is in adhering to the ancient and noble constitution of our country. And when we have restored it to its ancient strength, and invited the great body of the people to take part in political power, then the House of Commons will be the servant of the nation and not its master, and it will do the bidding, not of a small, a limited, often an ignorant, necessarily a selfish class, but the bidding of a great and noble people.

SPEECH IN LONDON.

ON the 4th December, the day following the great Trades' Demonstration in London in favour of Parliamentary Reform, Mr. Bright addressed a crowded and most enthusiastic audience in St. James's Hall. He said :—

It is about eight years since, in a speech which I delivered on the question of Parliamentary Reform, that I took the opportunity of giving what I thought was somewhat wholesome counsel to the unenfranchised working men of this country. I told them that the monopolists of political power in this country would not willingly surrender that power or any portion of it; and further, that no class that was excluded could rely upon the generosity of any other class for that justice which it demanded, and that, therefore, although large numbers of the middle class were then, and are now, in favour of the enfranchisement of a large number of the working class, yet that they would not make that great effort which is necessary to wring political power from those who now hold it and to extend it to those who are now and were then excluded from it. I said that if the working men wished for political power they had only to ask for it in a manner to show the universality of their desire and the union and the power which they were able to bring to bear upon it; and I recollect particularly making a suggestion that involved me in a good deal of unfriendly criticism, namely, that I thought the time had come, or would soon come, when it would be the duty of the working class to make use of that great organisation of theirs which extends over the whole country—the organisation of trades and friendly societies for the purpose of bringing to bear upon the Government the entire power of their just demand. I said, further, that I believed one year only of the united action of the working class through this existing organisation would wholly change the aspect of the question of Reform. Now it appears that the wholesome counsel which I gave eight years ago has become the counsel of all those who are in favour of the enfranchisement of the working man, and that counsel has been adopted recently to a large extent, and every man in the kingdom feels that the aspect of the question has been wholly changed. But, as has been already said to-night, it is very difficult to please those by whom we are opposed; and, as was said eight years ago, so it is said now, that it is very undesirable that associations like these, that were not formed for political purposes, should be worked for political ends. That is a matter of which the members of these societies must be held to be the best judges. We have known other societies that did not profess to be political, which have entered largely into political matters. I

know that some years ago nearly all the agricultural societies of the country were converted into political societies, for the purpose of sustaining an Act of Parliament which denied an honest and fair supply of food to the people of this country ; and even now, when the agricultural societies and farmers' clubs meet, we hear that sort of curious and confused political discussion which takes place when the country gentlemen and the county members make speeches to their tenantry and county supporters. But these critics of ours say that this measure—the combination of the trades' unions for political purposes—is one that excites their fears, and is of a very formidable nature. It was precisely because it would be of a formidable nature that I first recommended it. The fact is, that the millions can scarcely move, but that the few who are timid and in some degree ungenerous in this matter, feel themselves alarmed ; but you cannot help being numerous. If you had had better government during the last 100 years—if the land had been more in the hands of the people and less in the hands of a small class—if you had had fewer wars, lighter taxes, better instruction, and a freer trade, one-half of those in this country who are now called the working class would have been, in comfort and position, equal to those whom we call the middle class. But this is your great difficulty now, and it is the great difficulty of our opponents—you are too numerous, they think, to be let in with safety, and they are finding out that you are too numerous to be kept out without danger. But if these associations and the combinations of these societies are formidable, who have made them formidable ? These societies took no part in political movement until they were challenged to it by the speeches, the resolutions, the divisions, and the acts of a great party in the Parliament of the kingdom. Did they fail to have fact and argument in favour of the change proposed last session ? No ; but fact and argument had no effect upon whatever there is of reasoning power in the ranks of the Tory party. Did they think that the working men of this country—those who built this great city—those who covered this country with great cities—those who have cultivated every acre of its area—who have made this country a name of power through all time and throughout the whole world—did they for one moment imagine that you would lie down and submit, without raising your voice against them, to the scandalous and unjust imputations that were heaped upon you ? Did they think that you would be silent for ever, and patient for ever, under a perpetual exclusion from the benefits of the constitution of your country ? If they are dissatisfied with this movement, what would they have ? Would they wish that, as men did fifty or sixty years ago, instead of making open demonstration of your opinions, you should conspire with the view of changing the political constitution of your country ? Would they like that you should meet in secret societies, that you should administer to each other illegal oaths, that you should undertake the task of midnight drilling, that you should purchase throughout London and the provinces a supply of arms, that you should in this frightful and terrible manner endeavour to menace the Government, and to wring from them a concession of your rights ? But surely one of two modes must be taken. If there be a deep and wide-spread sentiment of injustice no longer tolerable, then, judging from all past history of all people, one of two modes will be

taken, either that mode so sad and so odious of secret conspiracy, or that mode so grand and so noble which you have adopted. You have at this moment across the Channel, if the reports which the Government sanction are true, an exhibition of a plan which I deplore and condemn. You have there secret societies, and oaths, and drilling, and arms, and menaces of violence and insurrection. Is there any man in England who would like to see the working men of Great Britain driven to any such course in defence or in maintenance of their rights? Well, I hold, then, that all men in this country, whatever be their abstract opinions on this question of a wide extension of the suffrage, should really rejoice at the noble exhibition, the orderly and grand exhibition of opinion which has been made by the working men of England and Scotland during the past three months. I said that if there be a grievance—a deep-seated sentiment that there is a grievance—there must necessarily be a voice to express and to proclaim it. What is the grievance of which you complain? You are the citizens, the native inhabitants of a country which is called constitutional; and what is meant by that is that your Government is not the despotic Government of a monarch, or the oligarchical Government of an oligarchy; but that it is a Government, a large and essential portion of which is conducted by honestly elected representatives of the people; and the grievance is this: that this constitution, so noble in its outline and so noble in its purpose, is defaced and deformed, and that when you look at it it seems in this respect absolutely worse than any other representative constitution existing in the world. For I believe there is no representation whatsoever at this moment in America or in Europe that is so entirely deformed from its natural, just, and beautiful proportions, as is the representative system of this country. What can be more clear than this—that the aristocracy of land and of wealth usurp the power in both Houses of Parliament? The Lords represent themselves, and generally the great landowners, with great fidelity. But, at the same time, we must admit and deplore that at least one-half of the House of Commons is in fast alliance with the majority in the House of Lords. Now, I have said before—I repeat it again—that there is no security whatsoever for liberty under any Government unless there be an essential power in a fair representation of the nation. An illustrious man, the founder of the great province, and now the great State of Pennsylvania—William Penn—in the preface to his constitution for that province—a constitution of the widest and most generous freedom—uses these words:—“Any Government is free to the people under it, whatever be the frame where the laws rule, and the people are a party to the laws; and more than this is tyranny, oligarchy, or confusion.” Now, let us ask ourselves, can it be fairly said, can it be said without the most direct falsehood, that the people of this country, through the House of Commons, are really a party to the laws that are made? It is not at all disputed that only sixteen out of every one hundred men are now on the electoral rolls, and are able, all other circumstances favouring, to give their vote at a general election, and it is not disputed that half the House of Commons—that an absolute majority of that House—is elected by a number of electors not exceeding altogether three men out of every hundred men in the United Kingdom.

I have taken the trouble to make a little calculation from the facts contained in a very useful book published by a very old friend of mine, Mr. Acland, called the "Imperial Poll-Book," from which a great amount of valuable information may be had upon this question. I have taken out the number of votes given at the last contested election that has been held for every borough and county in the United Kingdom since the passing of the Reform Bill, and I find that there being, so far as I know, at least one contest in every place since that time, the whole number of votes given at the contest in every borough and county is short of the number of 900,000, which is about one in eight of the men in the country; and if you deduct from that number the double votes, that is the men who vote for more than one county, or who vote for a county and a borough, in all probability there would not be registered more than 800,000 votes at a general election in the United Kingdom where there was a contest in every county and in every borough. But I take the election of 1859, which is the last the particulars of which are given in the "Imperial Poll-Book," and I find there that the whole number of votes registered, so far as I could make them out, at the general election of 1859, was under 370,000. Now, deduct the double votes from this, and probably there would not be at that general election, or at the general election of last year, more than 300,000 or 320,000 men who recorded their votes? Some other allowances must be made. There are boroughs, and there may be counties, in which the opinion falls so much on one side that there could be no chance of a contest. For example, in the borough which I am permitted to represent there would be no contest, and therefore that borough would not supply any figures to those figures which I am quoting. But there are many boroughs, as we all know, in which there is no contest; in some boroughs there is no contest because there is no freedom of election. And there are many counties in which there is no contest because there is no freedom of election in those counties. But I quote these numbers to show to you that when the Queen orders through her Ministers what is generally called an appeal to the country, it is at the very utmost an appeal to 800,000 electors, and in all probability the appeal is answered by registered voters numbering from 300,000 to 400,000. Well, after this, then, I undertake to say that the people are not, in the sense of our constitution, a party to the laws, and that the Government of the United Kingdom, in the sense indicated in the quotation that I have made from William Penn's preface to his constitution, is not free to this people. And let me tell you what doubtless many men have not thought of, that there is no form of government much worse than the Government of a sham representation. A Parliament like our Parliament has members enough, and just enough of the semblance of representation, to make it safe for it to do almost anything it likes against the true interests of the nation. There is nothing so safe as a Parliament like this for the commission of what is evil. There is not representation enough to make it truly responsible to the intelligence, and the virtue, and the opinions of the nation. Take a case which is in the recollection of all of us. Is there any man in the world who believes for a moment that any monarch that ever sat on the English throne would have dared in 1815 to have passed

the corn law—to have brought into action in this city of London, horse, foot, and artillery—to have surrounded his own palace—and to have beaten off the people who were protesting against the enactment of that law? But the Parliament of England did that, and a Parliament of landowners, for the express and only purpose of increasing their own rents by the sacrifice of the comfort, the plenty, the health, and the life of the great body of the people. But to come only to the last session of Parliament. We will not go back to the time before the Reform Act. We will only go to the last session of Parliament. Look at their responsibility then, and their sense of responsibility. Look at the moderation of that bill which was brought in by the late Government. Was it possible to have proposed a more moderate measure than that of the late Government? Well, but what happened? A Parliament of landowners and of rich men, who have wholly despised that great national opinion which has been exhibited during the last three or four months, resisted that measure with a pertinacity never exceeded, and with an amount of intrigue, and I say of unfairness to the Government, which they durst not for one single night have attempted if they had felt any real responsibility to the people of this country. And now they resist up to this moment, and for aught I know may resist when they meet at the beginning of February next, and they may possibly resist until the discontent which is now so general shall become universal, and that which is now only a great exhibition of opinion may become necessarily and inevitably a great and menacing exhibition of force. And these opponents of ours, many of them in Parliament openly, and many of them secretly in the press, have charged us with being the promoters of a dangerous excitement. They say we are the source of the danger which threatens; and they have absolutely the effrontery to charge me with being the friend of public disorder. I am one of the people. Surely, if there be one thing in a free country more clear than another, it is that any one of the people may speak openly to the people. If I speak to the people of their rights, and indicate to them the way to secure them—if I speak to the monopolists of power of their danger—am I not a wise counsellor—both to the people and to their rulers? Suppose I stood at the foot of Vesuvius or Etna, and I saw a hamlet, or a homestead standing upon its slope, and I said to the dwellers in that hamlet, or in that homestead, You see that vapour which ascends from the summit of the mountain. That vapour may become a dense, black smoke that will obscure the sky. You see that trickling of lava from the crevices or fissures in the side of the mountain. That trickling of lava may become a river of fire. You hear that muttering in the bowels of the mountain. That muttering may become a bellowing thunder, the voice of a violent convulsion that may shake half a continent. You know that at your feet is the grave of great cities for which there is no resurrection, as history tells us dynasties and aristocracies have passed away and their name has been known no more for ever. If I say this to the dwellers upon the slope of the mountain, and if there comes hereafter a catastrophe which makes the world to shudder, am I responsible for that catastrophe? I did not build the mountain, or fill it with explosive materials. I merely warned the men that were in danger. So, now, it is not I who am stimulating men to the violent pursuit of their

acknowledged constitutional rights. We are merely about our lawful business—and you are the citizens of a country that calls itself free, yet you are citizens to whom is denied the greatest and the first blessing of the constitution under which you live. If the truth must be told, the Tory party is the turbulent party of this nation. I left the last session of Parliament just about the time when the present Ministers, successful in their intrigues, acceded to office—I left the Parliament with a feeling of sadness, of disgust, and of apprehension. I said to myself, I may as well judge of the future by the past. The Parliament of England will not do justice to the people until there happens something that will suddenly open their eyes. I remembered what took place in the year 1829 when the Duke of Wellington said : Either give political power and representation through Catholic members to the Catholics of the United Kingdom, or encounter the peril and loss of civil war in Ireland. Up to that moment Parliament had refused to do it. Then Parliament consented and the thing was done. In 1832 you were within twenty-four hours of revolution in this country. This great class which sits omnipotent in one House, and hardly less so in the other, might then, and probably would have been extinguished, and what there would have been left except the people it is difficult to imagine. In 1846, although every intelligent man in every country in the world admitted the justice and force of our arguments against the corn law, still it required the occurrence of a crushing and desolating famine in Ireland—a famine which destroyed as many lives in that country as would have been destroyed by a great war, and which drove into exile as many of the people of that island as would have been driven into exile by the most cruel and relentless conquest—it required all that before the Parliament of England, the men amongst whom I sit, and whose faces are as familiar to me as those of any person whom I know in life—I say that it required all that before Parliament would consent to give up that intolerable wrong of taxing the bread of an industrious people. Now, suppose that the bill which was brought into the House last session as a franchise bill only—which was done, as was admitted by Lord Russell, in adoption of advice which I had publicly given to the Government, and which advice I believe was eminently sound, and ought to be followed whenever this question is dealt with again by a Liberal and honest Government—I say, suppose that that bill, instead of being met with every kind of unfair and ungenerous opposition, had been wisely accepted by the House of Commons and become law, what would have been the state of the country during the present autumn and winter. It would have been one of rejoicing and congratulation everywhere. Not because the bill included everybody and satisfied everybody, but all working men would have felt that the barrier created at the Reform Bill, if not absolutely broken down, was at least so much lowered that the exclusion was much less general and less offensive. You would have had this result, that we, the people in these islands, would have been no longer two nations. We should have felt more—that henceforth we are one people. Every element of strength in the country would have been immeasurably strengthened, and there would have been given even to the humblest of the unenfranchised a feeling of hope which would

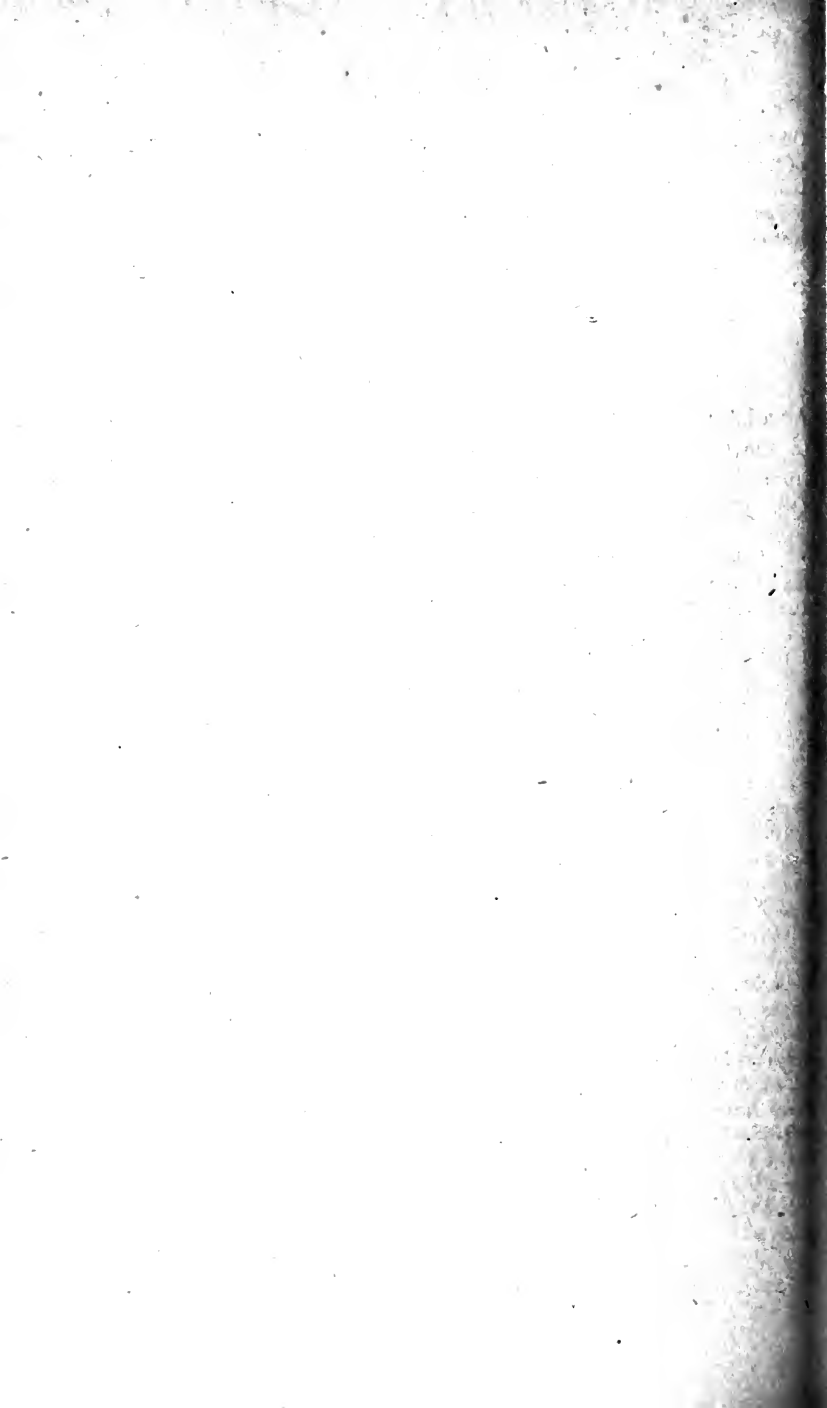
have led him to believe in, and to strive after, something higher and better than that to which he had hitherto been able to attain. Now, who prevented this? Surely we did not prevent it. We who thought we were speaking for the general good of the people, we accepted the measure with an honourable sincerity and fidelity. We said that it is good to the point to which it steps forward. It is perfectly honest; it is no trick or subterfuge. It will give satisfaction to some hundreds of thousands, and it will give that which is as great a boon—it will give hope to millions whom it does not include—and therefore, in perfect honourableness, we accepted that measure; and who opposed it? None other could effectually oppose it than Lord Derby and the party of which he is the acknowledged and trusted leader. They and he opposed and rejected that bill, and they and he are responsible for what has been done since in the country as a necessary and inevitable consequence of that rejection. Lord Derby now stands nearest to the throne, and I venture to say that he is now not a strength but a weakness to that throne. By his conduct—and by the conduct of his party, which he adopts—he thwarted at once the benevolent intentions of the Crown and just expectations of the people. I confess that I am astonished at the conduct of the Tory party in this matter. When the bill was introduced into the House of Commons, it appeared to me to be the very last that any statesmen with a spark of sense or honesty could offer any opposition to, and I did not believe that on the other side of the House there was, I will say, if you like, bitter partisanship or stupidity enough to induce them to fight a combined battle with all who would join them for the purpose of rejecting that bill. Now, one would suppose that the present Government had troubles enough on hand in what is called the sister country without urging the people to excitement here. Ireland, as I have described it before Irishmen, is the favoured field on which all the policy of the Tory party has been exhibited, displayed, and tried. Well, in Ireland the Habeas Corpus Act is suspended. Individual liberty, except by consent of the Executive, is abolished; troops are pouring into the country; ironclads, it is said, are ordered to the coast to meet some, I hope and believe, imaginary foe—and the country gentlemen and their families are reported to be fleeing from their ancestral homes to find refuge in garrison towns; and all this is the magnificent result of the policy of the party of which Lord Derby is the head and hope. And now even, up to this very last session of Parliament, that party had no remedy for this state of things but that ancient, and rude, and savage remedy, the remedy of military force. But with all this in Ireland, as I hope and believe, greatly exaggerated by some public writers, yet still with enough to cause pain and anxiety, was that a judicious course for the present party in power to create a great excitement in Great Britain? I say that Lord Derby, as the representative of his party in Parliament, is himself the fomenter of discord, and that his party, and not our party, is at this moment the turbulent element in English political society. And let me tell this party—I tell them nothing from this platform that I have not told them upon the floor of the House of Commons—let me tell them that this question will not sleep. Some months ago there was a remarkable convention held in Switzerland composed of men of eminence

and character, by which an address or memorial was prepared and forwarded to the Government of the United States, congratulating them upon the close of their gigantic struggle, and upon the establishment of universal freedom throughout the wide bounds of the republic. There was a passage in that memorial, an expression of true philosophy and true statesmanship, to this effect: "Unfinished questions have no pity for the repose of nations." That referred to the great question of negro slavery; but it is just as true when it is applied to the question before us, where from five to six millions of grown men in this United Kingdom, under a constitutional Government and with a representative system, are shut out directly and purposely from that constitution and representation. This great question which we are debating to-night is an unfinished question, and, as the Swiss express it, it will have no pity on the repose of this nation until it is a finished question. I observed to-day, in a newspaper considered by some to be of great authority, that the working men are supposed by what are called our betters—for that paper only writes for our betters—they are supposed to have now done enough, and they are exhorted—by the very hand, probably, which during the whole of the last session of Parliament was doing all it could against them—to stand still and wait for the action of Parliament. Well, but it is the same Parliament, it is the same House of Commons which I left with sadness and apprehension in July last. There are in it yet the men who, on our side of the House, betrayed the cause which they were supposed to sit there to defend, and the only change that we know of is, that the men who threw out with all terms of ignominy the bill which we wished to pass last session, are now and will be in February next—if they do not break in pieces before—they will be then on the Treasury bench, and will take that leading and authoritative position in the House which belongs to the Ministers of the Crown. Now, I differ from this writer altogether; I would not put any confidence in the course to be taken by this House of Commons if I were a man unfranchised and asking for a vote. I should like them to tell me that they had wholly repented of the cheers with which they met all those vile and violent imputations upon your character. My opinion is this: that your duty, your obvious duty—a duty from which you cannot escape—is to go on as you have begun, to perfect in every part of the country your organisation in favour of your enfranchisement. It is to bring every society with which you are connected, to give itself for a time—it will only be a short time—to the working out of your political redemption. I should advise you, whether you are supporters of the Reform League in London, or are connected in any way with the Reform Union of Manchester or any similar association, to establish a system of small, but weekly or monthly contributions. Do not allow my friend Mr. Beales—or my ancient friend and political brother, Mr. George Wilson, of Manchester—do not allow them to want the means to carry on and direct the great societies of which they are chiefs. And let me beg of you, more than all else, to have no jealousies amongst each other. Give our chairman his due; give Mr. Beales and the council their due; give every man who, with a single eye to this great question, is working zealously in your cause, his due, and help in every way you can every honest endeavour to bring this great national question to such a solid and final issue,

that it shall no longer disturb the repose of this nation. And lastly, I beg of you to rise to something like a just contemplation of what the great issue is for which you are contending. It is to make you citizens of one of the noblest nations on the face of the earth, of a nation which has a grand history in the past, and which I trust, and partly through your help, will have a still grander history in the future. Let me beg of you, then, and it is the last word I may speak to you to-night, that in all you do you may be animated by a great and noble spirit, for you have set your hands and hearts to a great and noble work.

At a later period of the Meeting, on the motion for a vote of thanks to the Chairman, Mr. Bright took occasion to express his dissent from observations made by one of the speakers in reference to the Queen. He spoke as follows :—

I rise for one moment before the vote of thanks is put. I need hardly say that I entirely concur in it, and I hope it will receive the unanimous support of the meeting; but I rise for the purpose of making in one sentence a reference to a portion of the speech of one of the speakers, which I hope I did not fully comprehend, but, if I did, in which I am totally unable to concur. He made an allusion to the great meeting of yesterday, to the assemblage in the park and the neighbourhood of the Palace. He also made observations with regard to the Queen, which, in my opinion, no meeting of people in this country, and certainly no meeting of Reformers, ought to listen to with approbation. Let it be remembered that there has been no occasion on which any Ministry has proposed an improved representation of the people when the Queen has not given her cordial, unhesitating, and, I believe, hearty assent. Let it be remembered, if there be now at her side a Minister who is opposed to an improvement of the representation of the people, it is because, in obedience to well-known rules and constitutional practice, the decision of the House of Commons on the bill of last Session rendered it necessary for her to take the course which she then did take. But the hon. gentleman referred further to a supposed absorption of the sympathies of the Queen in grief for her late husband to the exclusion of sympathy for and with the people. I am not accustomed to stand up in defence of those who are possessors of crowns. But I could not sit here and hear that observation without a sensation of wonder and of pain. I think there has been by many persons a great injustice done to the Queen in reference to her desolate and widowed position. And I venture to say this, that a woman, be she the Queen of a great realm or the wife of one of your labouring men, who can keep alive in her heart a great sorrow for the lost object of her life and her affections, is not at all likely to be wanting in a great and generous sympathy with you.



REFORM BILL, 1866.

EPITOME

OF THE

DEBATE ON THE MOTION

OF THE

RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE,

FOR LEAVE TO BRING IN A BILL

TO EXTEND THE FRANCHISE

IN ENGLAND AND WALES,

12th and 13th March, 1866.

LONDON:

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1866.

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9, STRAND, W.C.

P R E F A C E.

THE length of a newspaper Report of a great debate in Parliament deprives many of the pleasure and instruction to be obtained from its perusal: while the form of the newspaper itself renders it unsuitable for preservation as a record. The object of the present EPILOGUE is to counteract these drawbacks. A debate of important and permanent interest is reduced to an amount which may be read in an hour or two: to a size and type not incompatible with a Library shelf. The Editor has striven to reproduce in each speech every argument bearing upon the actual subject; and, by quoting *verbatim* the more striking expressions, to retain the characteristic oratory of each speaker. Irrelevant, personal, and much declamatory matter has been expunged; but every fact or statistical deduction for the foundation of an argument has been retained. It is thus hoped that in a bulk less than one-fourth of the original debate is contained the cream of the matter, manner, and argument of all the speeches.

Should this Epitome of the Debate on the First Reading of the Reform Bill meet with public approval, it is purposed to produce a similar Epitome of the Debate on the Second Reading, immediately that Debate shall have taken place.

March 1866.

S P E A K E R S .

[NOTE.—The letters and figures after each Speaker's name show his generally accepted political opinions (L. Liberal, C. Conservative); and his Parliamentary service.]

March 12.

		Page
MR. GLADSTONE, Chancellor of the Exchequer	South Lancashire .. [L.—32]	1
MR. MARSH	Salisbury [L.—9]	20
SIR JAMES FERGUSSON	Ayrshire [C.—7]	22
MR. P. W. MARTIN	Rochester [L.—10]	23
SIR FRANCIS CROSSLEY	North West Riding .. [L.—14]	24
MR. CRAWFORD	London [L.—9]	24
MR. SERJEANT GASELEE	Portsmouth [L.—new]	24
MR. DUTTON	Cirencester [L.C.—9]	25
SIR HENRY HOARE	Windsor [L.—new]	25
LORD ROBERT MONTAGU	Hunts [C.—7]	25
MR. HANBURY	Middlesex [L.—9]	26
MR. LAING	Wick Burghs [L.—7]	26
MR. BAINES	Leeds [L.—7]	30
CAPTAIN GROSVENOR	Westminster [L.—new]	31
MR. HORSMAN	Stroud [L.—30]	32

March 13.

MR. LOWE	Calne [L.—14]	40
MR. VILLIERS, President of the Poor Law Board	Wolverhampton .. [L.—31]	50
MR. R. N. PHILLIPS	Bury [L.—2]	52
MR. LEATHAM	Wakefield [L.—new]	52
MR. ARTHUR W. PEEL	Warwick [L.—new]	53
MR. ALLEN	Newcastle-under-Lyme [L.—new]	53
MR. SCHREIBER	Cheltenham [C.—new]	54
MR. LONG	North Wilts' [C.—7]	54
MR. MELLER	Stafford [C.—new]	54
MR. ACKLAND	North Devon [L.—10]	55
MR. WHITESIDE	Dublin University .. [C.—15]	55
MR. FAWCETT	Brighton [L.—new]	58
MR. BRIGHT	Birmingham [L.—23]	60
VISCOUNT CRANBOURNE	Stamford [C.—13]	63
MR. JOHN HARDY	Dartmouth [C.—1]	65
MR. HIBBERT	Oldham [L.—4]	65
SIR RAINALD KNIGHTLEY	South Northamptonsh. [C.—14]	65
MR. W. DUNCOMBE	North Riding [C.—12]	65
MR. GLADSTONE, Chancellor of the Exchequer	South Lancashire .. [See above]	66

REFORM: 1866.

ON THE MOTION FOR LEAVE TO BRING IN THE BILL.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, March 12, 1866.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER asked that the paragraphs of the Queen's Speech which related to the Electoral Franchise might be read at the table. This motion having been agreed to, the CLERK at the table read the paragraphs as follows:—

“ I have directed that information should be procured
“ in reference to the rights of voting in the election of
“ Members to serve in Parliament for counties, cities, and
“ boroughs.

“ When that information is complete, the attention of
“ Parliament will be called to the result thus obtained, with
“ a view to such improvements in the laws which regulate
“ the rights of voting in the election of Members of the
“ House of Commons as may tend to strengthen our free
“ institutions, and conduce to the public welfare.”

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER again rose, and, addressing himself to the Deputy Speaker, said—Sir, taking into view the extent and complexity of the question itself, the strange fluctuation of circumstances which has marked its history, and the weakness of the hands into which it has now fallen, I may say that few Ministers have, in recent years, risen

under greater difficulties than attend my present task. Those difficulties affect in the first place Her Majesty's Government; but, though concentrated in greatest weight on us, they are not ours alone. The interest of the question is common to the whole House and to every party, or section of a party, sitting in it. For these, read just now, are not the only paragraphs in which the representation of the people has been brought under the notice of Parliament. By no less than five Administrations, in at least five Royal Speeches, have Ministers affirmed that the time had come to revise the representation of the people. Those speeches have not been confined to periods when one side of the House was in power. In 1859 and 1860, both parties gave those solemn pledges in the face of the country. With such an accumulation of authority from every quarter in my favour, I hold it superfluous to discuss the general question of whether there ought to be a revision of our electoral system. I assume that these repeated declarations have established the necessity of Reform, and I now ask grave and earnest attention to the serious measure I bring forward on the subject. The origin of this question is emphatically the work of Parliament. Let me remind the House of what occurred in 1851, an event which in a high and peculiar sense saddles with the responsibility of its introduction not one or other Government, but the House of Commons itself. An independent member—the member for East Surrey (MR. LOCKE KING), on the 20th February, 1851, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to grant a 10% occupation franchise in counties. The sole opponent of that motion was Earl Russell; every other member either approved or was silent. The Government were beaten by a majority of twenty-one. The minority consisted of fifty-two members, and among those not more than twelve or fifteen sat on the benches of the party opposite. The initiation of the question of a county franchise, which, it was understood, must speedily be followed by the question of the borough franchise, rested therefore peculiarly with the House of Commons. We consequently invite you now to a work which is our common interest. The election of a new Parliament marks the time when the sense of the people's representatives should be taken in regard to our electoral laws. The Government duty was plain, to examine the materials of the case, to cast aside every consideration narrower than the great public and national interest, disregarding the

mere convenience of this party or that, to be more studious of the substance than of the shadow, to apply their best powers to the framing of a prudent, but effectual measure. Then to await the issue at the hands of Parliament; but as far as depended upon them, having framed their measure, to sustain and support it with all the energy and decision they could command.

Our first question was most important, whether to attempt legislation or merely to inquire, in the present session? Careful examination of facts lay at the very threshold of the subject. Want of definite and authentic information formed the great object of contention in the debates of 1860. Such were the doubts, misgivings, and scepticism on both sides in regard to the figures, that we felt it essential to make Parliament, as well as ourselves, masters of the statistics of the case. Well, before approaching any other public domestic question, the present Cabinet devoted itself to considering the heads upon which such precise information was needed. Measures were immediately taken to procure the information under the heads decided on, and the duty has been ably carried out by the Poor Law Board, and especially by Mr. Lambert, who has been principally concerned in the collection. Members will admit they approach the question with a knowledge of facts they never possessed before. Had we failed to obtain this information we should have postponed legislation, but when we saw what could be procured, and the manner in which the statistics rolled in upon us, we did not hesitate, as early as the commencement of the session, to pledge ourselves to the introduction of a measure on the subject. Murmurs have been heard at the delay in the production of these papers—delay which has been ascribed to the hesitation and vacillation of Government. This was not the case, for on Friday evening I could not obtain even for myself a finished copy of the papers, other than the copy laid on the table of the House, which consequently had to pass out of my hands. It is now the 12th March when I make you the first proposal for the introduction of a Bill; but Easter approaches, and it will be impossible to read it a second time before the second week in April. We had therefore to measure our powers with regard to legislation in the present session. Then, of course, arose next the question, Are we to have what may be termed a complete measure or one that is incomplete? Now, what is meant by a complete revision of our electoral

system? I must omit from a complete definition some branches of legislation which are or have been favourites with a portion of the members, and which the Government do not admit to be necessary. Therefore I do not refer to such questions as secret voting or shorter Parliaments, but to what belongs really to a complete revision of our representative system.

In the first place must be considered the franchise in England and Wales, and in Scotland. The Irish franchise also must be considered; but that question is simple, as the electoral arrangements in that island are much more perfect than in this country. Then comes the group of questions included in the phrase "re-distribution of seats;" questions between the three kingdoms, between town and country; between total extinction, as in Schedule A, milder amputation, as in Schedule B, or the yet milder grouping of boroughs together proposed in 1852. Then there is another question which can never be avoided in reviewing your electoral system—the present boundaries of boroughs. The natural boundaries of each, as determined from time to time by public convenience, are an essential part of any complete review of our electoral system. Not less urgent is the consideration of the law with respect to corrupt practices at elections. Lastly, comes a question of importance concerning the machinery for registration, and for holding elections. These questions have been further complicated by the speculations of many men of great ability and authority. I attach no great importance to the propositions founded on these speculations, which, however ingeniously supported by argument, are innovations demanding careful, searching, and jealous examination.

Would it be possible for Parliament to devote itself during the present session to the complete review I have described? The omnipotence of Parliament is a grand, constitutional idea; but time and space yet exist; and I would ask, what is the time at our command, and what the time requisite for dealing with this question? The second reading being the 12th of April, there will be about twenty-four Government nights between that and the middle of July, which will be the latest period for sending such a Bill to the House of Lords. Of these twenty-four, one-half must necessarily be occupied with financial business. Beyond this, we shall be dependent on the charity of private members. What happened on similar occasions in former

years? In 1860 we spent whole nights in trying to do nothing. The great Reform Act gives an idea of the time required by complete reviews of our electoral system. One out of three Bills occupied fifty nights of the House of Commons; but 100 nights at least were needed for the complete review achieved in 1831-32. Certainly at that period there was political heat and apprehension not now existing, and such a review at the present day would occupy less time. But the time occupied in passing that and the subsequent Acts was six or eight times that now, by the most sanguine estimate, at our command. Then, you completely reviewed your electoral system; but you turned day into night, summer into winter; you sacrificed every man's domestic engagements: you sacrificed, for two years, all other serious legislation. Circumstances are now different: we hope for indulgence, and I do not anticipate obstruction. In 1860, Mr. DISRAELI called for deep and deliberate investigation: to pass by such a call would be a breach of duty on our part. We have, therefore, determined that it is impossible to do more than approach this question; than to take first, what is first in natural order of importance, which we do not doubt to be that which relates to the enfranchisement of large masses of our fellow-countrymen now excluded from the electoral suffrage, but qualified, as we believe, to use it. To have introduced a Bill which did not include these first and most legitimate claimants, would have rendered certain another most disastrous and discreditable failure. We therefore determined to confine our Bill to the electoral franchise, founding our determination on the circumstances amid which we stand, and on the opportunity at our command. It may be fairly asked what view we take of the Scotch electoral franchise? What we think is, that a fair review of our representative system must include, if not all, most of the important subjects I have named. The present plan is incomplete; but it will be asked, "Do you intend to complete it?" I have ever been averse to pledge future sessions. So various are the circumstances affecting an empire like ours, that we must look to the future itself to determine the proper opportunities for dealing with this important question.

Having concluded that we ought to deal with this question of Parliamentary representation, it was obvious that the Bill of 1860—for which as a Government, composed of nearly the same individuals, we were responsible—formed

a natural starting point. Taking, first, county representation, a question beset not so much with difficulty as with jealousy, it was proposed in 1860 in MR. LOCKE KING'S Bill to reduce the occupation franchise from 50*l.* to 10*l.* We now propose a modification of his plan, to reduce the occupation franchise from 50*l.* to 14*l.* That reduction of the franchise from 50*l.* downwards will not precisely correspond with the 50*l.* franchise as it now exists. We leave that 50*l.* franchise precisely as it stands. The occupation franchise between 50*l.* value and 14*l.* value will be an occupation franchise, not of land alone, but of a house, or of a house with land. That is the nature of the franchise which we propose, and the effect may be easily computed from the papers which have been laid on the table. It would correspond as nearly as possible with the effect of a 12*l.* rating franchise. Its effect, after making deductions for those who do not claim to vote, and have not occupied a sufficient length of time, will be to add 171,000 persons to the present number of county voters. I may be asked why we do not go down to the limit of 10*l.*? I certainly know of no danger in such a course; but we think, on the whole, that by the change recommended in the Bill we shall obtain not only a very large, but a very independent, addition to the county constituencies. We think that by going from 14*l.* to 10*l.*, we should render them less independent. It will, I think, be admitted on all hands that this considerable enfranchisement must be viewed as a middle-class enfranchisement, and not in any way a ground for apprehension. The number of the working classes having a 14*l.* rental franchise will be too small to be taken into account. We have, however, looked further, to see if there were interests of a more strictly proprietary character, connected with tenure, the most properly of all belonging to the county franchise, not provided for, and we found such county interests within the limits of cities and boroughs. A 40*s.* freeholder within a borough had a county vote; but if he had a copyhold, a rare case, or a leasehold, a common case, just as valuable as a 40*s.* freehold, and in many cases fifty times as valuable, he had no county vote. We propose, therefore, to give the possessor of copyhold and leasehold property within boroughs the right of voting beyond those boroughs, as if they were freeholders within the limits of those boroughs, and to enable them under the same conditions as those freeholders to come on the county register. Materials are not to be obtained for

estimating the numerical effect of this proposal. The change cannot be large, and it must, I think, be good, as far as it goes, because it will give a kind of representation thoroughly germane to the purposes of a county representation. The only other topic I need name as affecting counties is those franchises new to the Constitution, and distinct from the franchise of tenure and occupation, which may be properly called "special" or "by-franchises." A number of such franchises were proposed by the Bills of 1854 and 1859. They are not suitable or adequate as a general basis for extending the franchise. In general they do not admit any large number of persons whom you cannot get by the old constitutional means of occupation and tenure. They increase the expense of your electoral system by a multiplicity of titles. On the whole, therefore, we are unfavourable to these special or by-franchises; but, notwithstanding, I think there are sufficient grounds for one exception, the *Savings-Bank franchise*. It has the following advantages: first, it meets a prevalent feeling that it is desirable to include within the franchise, by a method of what I may call spontaneous selection, many who could not be included by any other measure of franchise founded on the old principle. It has the advantage of enabling persons of provident habits, but otherwise unable to vote, to take part in the choice of those who govern the country. There is, moreover, the notable gain that a savings bank franchise is attended with no complication of title whatever. Inspection of a depositor's book, occupying one minute, would show the state of his balance. We propose that all adult males, being depositors to the amount of 50*l.* or upwards for two years, whether in the ordinary savings bank or in the Post Office savings banks, shall be entitled to be registered for the places where they reside. That place would commonly be out of the limits of a town, because in towns the nature of the franchise would include the great bulk of such savings bank holders, while a large proportion of these depositors would be below the 14*l.* holding which we propose as the occupation franchise for counties. With respect to the term, two years, for the duration of the deposit, it has been deemed necessary to have a certain period in order to prevent this franchise becoming a means of corruption. Now we find that no less than 94,000 adult males in England and Wales are depositors to the amount of 50*l.*, and of those the depositors for two years amount to 87,000. But we cannot reckon on all this

enfranchisement. In reality, the savings bank franchise would be a delusion as a measure of large enfranchisement. Firstly, a large proportion will be enfranchised by other titles; and secondly, an immense deduction must be made for those who will not bear the trouble of making an annual claim; for as money in savings banks is being continually withdrawn, an annual claim to be put on the register becomes necessary. We do not think this collateral and ancillary franchise will add more than 10,000 or 15,000 people to the county constituencies. However, a franchise generally tends to enlarge itself. This completes what I have to say regarding the county franchise, which we take to be a middle-class enfranchisement not tending to increase the share of the working classes in the representation; but, on the contrary, tending proportionally to diminish that representation, because the influence of the working class, represented by small freeholders, will exhibit a smaller per-centage to the entire county constituency in the provinces.

For the purpose of enfranchisement the inhabitants of towns may be divided into four classes. One, and the principal class, inhabit separately rated houses of their own, and pay their own rates. These, the proper objects of the Reform Act of 1832, I shall call rate-paying householders. The next class consists of persons inhabiting their own houses, separately rated, but whose rates are paid by the landlords. I shall designate these by their best known name—compound householders. The third class, now wholly disfranchised, are those who do not pay their own rates, and whose holdings are not separately rated. They inhabit a separate portion of a house, not separately rated, and they pay their rents without any reference to rates whatever. The first two classes we think to be properly householders. There has been a tendency to consider the third class as qualified for the franchise, though not householders; but I much doubt whether, except in a few instances, as Victoria-street, where the houses are partitioned into separate holdings of superior value, this class should be on the register of voters at all. We hold it better to deal with them as lodgers, in whose class, substantially, they are found. The fourth class are lodgers proper, who inhabit their own rooms, but as inmates in the houses of others.

We now approach the vexed question of the town franchise. What is the present state of the town constituencies? and what progress has been made, as compared

with the population in many towns, since 1832? In 1832 the town constituencies numbered 282,000 voters. Of these, 63,000 and odd were freemen, 44,000 and odd were voters under scot and lot and other old rights, and 174,000 were 10*l.* householders. The ten-pounders rose to 463,000. The gross total of the constituency—we have no net totals—the gross total of the constituency was 514,000. That shows since 1832 an increase of 82 per cent. Within the same period the population of towns has increased as follows:—In 1831 the population of the towns was 5,210,000; in 1865 it was 9,356,000. The increase has been 4,119,000, or 75 per cent. So that the proportion of growth of the constituency in towns (I call attention to this) notwithstanding the vast augmentation of the wealth of the country has but just exceeded the growth of the population. In counties the growth of the constituency has been as great, but of the population much less. I mentioned that the town constituency was 514,000. Double entries having been carefully struck off, the net constituency is 489,000. The 10*l.* voters of the working-class represent 108,000. Of the freemen and old voters the working class represents 20,000. That 128,000 gives the working class 26 per cent. Our definition of the working men may be disputed: no doubt it is a large one; but I believe it to be the best definition which can be found. I do not believe it admits of accurate definition, and, perhaps, 10 or 20 per cent. of those so included belong to the debateable ground of being considerably interested in shopkeeping. But deduct those 20 per cent., and the result will still be that 21 per cent, even if not the 26 per cent. of the constituency belong to the working classes. I own it is more than I expected to find. I am very glad it is so; and if the per-centage were still higher, I should like it all the better. But this infusion of the working class in the present constituency is exceedingly unequal. I have gone roughly over the 200 boroughs, and I find sixty boroughs in which the proportion the working class possessed of the franchise is not less than one-third. I gathered thirty other boroughs, commonly boroughs of greater importance, and in these I found the proportion of the working class was not more than one-tenth; and this distribution of the working class is not only unequal, but I must say, as a northerner, it is least where it ought to be largest, I mean in the towns of the north. As an illustration I will mention six towns. In Oldham, with a constituency of 2,375, the

[Gladstone.]

working class represent 315, or 1 in 8 of the population; in Halifax, with a constituency of 1,710, the working class stands at 171, or 1 in 10; in Stockport, with a constituency of 1,348, the working class is 1 in 11; in Bradford, with a constituency of 5,189, the working class is 438, or 1 in 12; in Leeds, with a constituency of 7,217, the working class stands at 523, or 1 in 14; and last of all there is a town that deserves special mention—I mean the town of Rochdale, not only on account of the distinguished man (Mr. Cobden) by whom it was about twelve months ago represented, but also because before all other towns it has done most to prove the title of the working class to the franchise—the town where originated that remarkable system of ousting the trader and taking their supplies into their own hands, resulting in the greatest comfort and profit to themselves. What is the case in Rochdale? With a constituency of 1,348, the enfranchised working class stands at only 68, or 1 in 20. If, then, the per-centage of the working class on the whole constituency be more satisfactory than I expected, the distribution is less satisfactory. The exclusion in Rochdale of a district naturally belonging to the borough shows, as before stated, that a new arrangement will be necessary as regards boundaries. We have, then, 21 or 26 per cent. of the working class in the present constituency. How was it in 1832? I apprehend that there cannot be the smallest doubt of these propositions—first, that the enfranchisement of the working class in 1832 was not excessive; secondly, that the working class has since 1832 greatly and undeniably advanced in all that can entitle men to some share in the government of their country. It cannot be denied, either as regards education, conduct, obedience to law, self-command, endurance, avidity for knowledge and self-improvement, that the working man, if fit in some degree in 1832 to share political privileges, has attained some additional fitness now. How stands the case since 1832? In 1832 there were 62,000 freemen; I take the proportion of working men to have been 54 per cent. of that number; that is, there were 34,000 belonging to the working class. The scot and lot and potwallopers were 44,000, and only 60 per cent. of these voters belonged to the working class. In my opinion that is a very moderate estimate. The 10% occupiers in 1832 were 176,000. I assume, for the purpose of comparison, that in 1832 the working class represented only 15 per cent. of the 10% occupiers of that day. The result is, that of the total con-

stituency, 282,000, the proportion belonging to the working class was 87,000, or 31 per cent. They are now 26 per cent. If these statistics prove anything they show that the working class, which ought to have been an increasing and growing class, has borne a diminishing proportion, and consequently that the time has arrived for increasing their share in the elective franchise. Gentlemen opposite will derive immense consolation from the distribution of working class voters in different parts of the constituency. There is not unnaturally considerable apprehension that the enfranchisement of the working classes would lead to the diminution of Conservative influence. But how stands the proportion of the working class in the metropolitan boroughs as compared to the rest of the country? England, without the metropolitan boroughs, has in its town constituencies 27 per cent. of the working classes, while the metropolitan boroughs have only 23 per cent. of them, and yet if there be one section of the House Liberal—advanced Liberal—it is the representatives of metropolitan constituencies. I may be asked if we have taken the Bill of 1860 as our guide in regard to towns. In introducing that Bill, Earl Russell estimated, as a maximum, that it would enfranchise 194,000 persons. From later information Sir George Lewis—than whom none could be a more acute and impartial judge—estimated the number at 160,000. MR. BRIGHT had taken it at from 160,000 to 170,000. That was not an unreasonable enfranchisement; but it was badly distributed. The metropolis has one-third part of the population of the whole of the towns in the country, and the operation of the Bill would have been highly unequal as between the metropolis and the provincial towns. Very large numbers would have been enfranchised in very many considerable towns; but in London numbers are excluded from the franchise, who come within the spirit of the law. I refer to compound householders, not less than 40,000 in London alone, and these the Bill of 1860 passed by, being really of no use to London. There the descent of rents from 10*l.* to 6*l.* was of no importance at all. It is true that that Bill for establishing a 6*l.* landlord franchise enfranchised between 160,000 and 200,000 men; and other estimates were placed against ours. The then Member for Marylebone stated that the 6*l.* rental would introduce 400,000 voters: a Committee of the House of Lords decided that such a measure would enfranchise 300,000.

It was in our view essential, as declared by a motion carried in this House in 1859, that any fresh enfranchisement in the towns must be an enfranchisement downwards; but we cannot overlook the claims of those persons who pay rent, a sufficient presumptive qualification, but are at present debarred from the franchise. Our first duty is, then, to ascertain who above the line of 10*l.* are without the franchise, though within the spirit of the law. What are the defects in the law which bring this disfranchisement about? By the present law a man, though otherwise qualified, cannot be brought on the Register unless he has paid the Queen's taxes and local rates made since a certain date. This is usually called the ratepaying clause. Great complaint is made as regards the ratepaying part of the clause. Local officials, biassed by party views, have in some cases not applied for the rates until after the date they should have been paid. This clause we propose to do away with altogether. It works very unequally, and I do not exaggerate in saying that in Liverpool the rates of at least 6,000 or 7,000 persons are habitually collected from the landlords, by arrangements with the parish officers, and the holders disfranchised. In abolishing these clauses, we expect their victims, almost entirely working men, to give an addition of not less than 25,000 persons to the constituency. We then come to compound householders, who should, we think, be treated precisely as rated householders. As an economical truth, it is certain that the rates of compounding houses, though paid in the first instance by the landlords, are ultimately and really paid by the tenant. This payment of rates, therefore, does not found an effective distinction between the classes. The law is defective in this respect, that the name of the compound householder does not commonly appear on the rate book. It ought so to appear, and in an amendment that we shall have to propose in the law of rating, we shall provide that the name of the holder of a house, as well as of any rated holding that is not a house, shall appear upon the rate book; from whence, just like the name of a ratepaying householder, it will pass to the list of voters, without imposing trouble or burden of any kind upon the householder himself. It will be subject to scrutiny by the revising barrister, and, unless proper objection is preferred, will remain on the register. An effective, instead of, as at present, a speculative enfranchisement will thus be given to the compound house-

holder. Birmingham is one instance of this; but the metropolis a far greater one. There, not one in fifty of the compound householders is on the register, and when they are on it is because an election agent has thought it worth while to get them there. That, we think, is not a satisfactory state of things.

Then comes the other class, also very numerous in the metropolis, to which I before alluded, the dwellers in flats and portions of houses which, though having a separate access, are not separately rated. We leave these just as they are. At present, if they can prove their holding to be of the clear annual value of 10*l.* and can get rated, which, I believe, they are entitled to demand, they may by a circuitous process get themselves registered on the list of voters. This process proves generally an insuperable difficulty. That difficulty will be obviated by our Bill, as the man need not be rated. But a public officer can have no means of knowing the rent these people pay. Consequently we must leave this class of persons subject to the burden of claiming. A man who can show that his rooms are worth 10*l.* will come upon the register without having to get rated, but he will have to renew his claim from year to year. We believe this will be an addition of nearly 35,000 persons. Thus far for enfranchisement above the line, amounting to 60,000 persons, viz., 25,000 by the abolition of the ratepaying clauses, and 35,000 by the new provisions of the law with regard to compound householders.

I now come to what is commonly called the lodger-franchise. We propose to place lodgers, properly so-called; that is, persons who hold rooms as inmates of another man's family, exactly upon the same footing as those who hold tenements or apartments. These two classes we shall treat together, viz., those in tenements and apartments, and those who dwell in lodgings; and we provide that if they can show the rooms they inhabit to be of the clear annual value of 10*l.*, of course without including either rates, taxes, or rent of furniture, they will be entitled, by claiming year by year, to be placed upon the register. The conditions of time are the same in all cases. In the Bill of 1859 the then Ministry proposed that any person paying 20*l.* by the year, or 8*s.* per week, for any rooms, furnished or unfurnished, should be entitled to claim to be placed on the register. Now, we think there are insuperable difficulties connected with the

rent of furnished apartments. In the first place, the clear annual value of rooms is estimated daily in every town, and is capable therefore of some definite standard; but the rent of furniture, the payment, that is, for the use of moveable commodities, would be a very fluctuating and inconvenient basis for the franchise. But it is more defective still when we consider that the rent includes not only furniture but personal service also. It includes sometimes firing, sometimes cooking, very commonly the use of the kitchen fire. The basis is too slippery for enfranchisement. We think our proposition will include every case, and more than every *bond fide* case, which would have been covered by the Bill of 1859, because furnished lodgings at 20*l.* a-year ought, as a rule, to be worth more than 10*l.* clear annual value. I can give no information as to the numbers who will be enfranchised as lodgers, but my firm belief is that the number will be small, while it will be a middle-class, rather than a lower-class, enfranchisement. The operation of claiming, and that year by year, must be very burthensome to working men, whereas educated young men, such as clerks and men of business, desirous of the franchise, will consider it no trouble. We may calculate, therefore, on a certain amount of middle-class enfranchisement, but I should mislead the House did I pretend to think that many working men would obtain votes under the lodger-franchise. A great number of working men now inhabit tenements, out of whom scarcely any find their way to the register, and therefore I do not venture to add any figures on that head, but take the 60,000, whom I have already named, as the amount of additional enfranchisement by the foregoing propositions.

I now come to the question of enfranchisement below the line—that is, downwards, which is not only a necessary, but the most important part of any measure on this subject. Earl Russell in 1860 adverted to the possibility of changing the 6*l.* rental franchise for a rating franchise of the the same kind. The value of a rating franchise is obvious, as affording a standard fixed, not by a man's own act, but by a public officer for other than political purposes. The Small Tenements Act—adopted in most boroughs—provides that every tenement up to 6*l.* shall have its rates paid by the landlord. Now there would be a great advantage in saying, “We will adopt the precise limit which Parliament has indicated of the capacity to pay direct local taxes;

“where that capacity begins the franchise shall begin; where that capacity does not exist, the franchise shall not.” However, on looking to the operation of the Small Tenements Act, we found that under it we should not enfranchise more than 80,000 persons, a number which could not be regarded as anything like a settlement of the question. But we were then called upon to consider the great change and reform which has been effected by Mr. VILLIERS, through the medium of the Union Assessment Act. Formerly, the inequality of rating was so gross and monstrous in different parts of the country, that the rating-book would have proved an unsatisfactory basis for the franchise. The rating is now immensely improved; but the question is, is there not another basis, more nearly coinciding with the present basis, though different in local operation, which is better in every way than the rate-book? The basis which I mean is the clear annual value as determined, *prima facie*, by the column in the rate-book which is called “gross estimated rental.” In every case where rating is good, gross estimated rental is good also, and avoids very many kinds of inequality and injustice which is inherent in rating. The rateable value contains no independent element: it is important to the parish officer, as showing the net value of a tenement to the landlord, but with which the legislature has nothing to do. A man may pay 10*l.* a year for two houses; one, substantial, requiring only 6 or 8 per cent. to be deducted for repairs, while the other, slightly built, may demand a much larger outlay. The same rent is paid; but, under a mere rating franchise, one would be enfranchised, and the other not. We propose, therefore, that the gross estimated rental shall be the basis, and the column of gross estimated rental in the rate-book shall, until contested, be *prima facie* evidence on the clear annual value.

We thus secure the double object of adhering to the present definition, and of avoiding the inequalities inherent in rating, while we at the same time get the simplicity, certainty, and facility afforded by the parish rate-book. There will, of course, be always an appeal to the Revising Barrister; but in all boroughs, except thirty, the gross estimated rental appears as nearly as possible equal to the rack-rent. Of these thirty boroughs, about half exhibit a considerable inequality, only because the operations under Mr. VILLIERS’ Act are not complete; but before any practical steps could be taken under this Bill, those opera-

[Gladstone.]

tions will be completed. There are certain other local cases in the metropolis where the column of gross estimated rental is not in accord with the Union assessment, representing, indeed, a mere conventional sum. This inequality we propose to correct by enactments on the subject; but even while it still exists, the income-tax returns, representing a sum considerably above the rack rent, give a means of applying a sufficient test. The gross annual income-tax returns, allowing for all excesses, give a total valuation of 39,238,000*l.*, and the gross estimated rental, though still defective in some places, amounts to 37,375,000*l.* The difference at this moment therefore is only 1,863,000*l.*, or 5 per cent. We therefore feel that we have got a secure basis of operation which will be the means of introducing a great practical improvement.

The present town constituency comprises 488,000 voters, of whom 126,000 are believed to belong to the working classes, and 362,000 to the classes above them. We propose, as already said, to add 60,000 to the 10*l.* voters. All these I take as belonging to the working classes, and not to the lodger or savings-bank class, both of which would be insignificant, and this would make 186,000 of that class. If a 6*l.* rental were added, the result, calculated upon the most careful investigation, would give 242,000 additional voters, whom I take as all belonging to the working class, making a gross total of 428,000 persons, which would in fact place the working classes in a clear majority on the constituency. I do not think that is a proposal Parliament would adopt. I cannot say I think it would be attended with great danger; but I am sure it is not according to the view or expectation of Parliament. And although I do not think that much apprehension need be entertained with respect to the working classes, yet I fully admit that, upon general grounds of political prudence, it is not well to make sudden and extensive changes in the depository of political power. I do not think we are called upon to give over the majority of town constituencies to the working class. We propose, therefore, to take the figure next above that, *viz.*, 7*l.* clear annual value. The 7*l.* is not very far from that apparently fixed by the Small Tenements Rating Act; but the result, as to admission, will be considerably larger. The net number to whom this would extend the franchise I estimate at 156,000, and from this a deduction must be made of a certain number of freemen who already have the franchise.

Deducting then one-third of the total freemen now enjoying the franchise, there remain 144,000 persons to be enfranchised by the reduction to a 7*l.* clear annual rental. I believe that there are very few persons living in houses between 7*l.* and 10*l.* who do not belong to the working classes. Five per cent. would be an overstatement for such persons, and it is needless to take in view the reduction by this number. Again, some deduction must be made on account of the more frequent removals among the holders of small houses; but on the other hand, an increase will be made from the same class by the abolition of the rate-paying clauses, and by the savings-bank franchise. I think these modifying circumstances may be held to balance each other, and I estimate the addition to the working-class voters by the 7*l.* franchise at 144,000. All admit that the franchise ought to be attainable by the working man. Let us consider his position with regard to the 10*l.* franchise. 10*l.* clear annual value, with the proper addition for rates and furniture, must cost the man not less than 16*l.* I am safe in saying that the working man does not spend more than one-sixth of his income on his house; therefore his income must be 96*l.*, or at least 1*l.* 17*s.* a week continuously, or 2*l.* a week if allowance be made for necessary breaks. Few of the working classes can hope to receive 2*l.* a week in wages, and a 10*l.* franchise is therefore neither liberally nor largely within their reach. The 7*l.* franchise works differently. Adding, as before, 60 per cent. for rates and furniture, it would come in the gross to 11*l.* 4*s.*, representing an income of 67*l.* 4*s.*; or, instead of 37*s.* a week, a little under 26*s.* a week. Now, 26*s.* a week is unattainable by peasants or mere hand labourers, but is generally attainable by the artizans and skilled labourers of our towns.

I will now endeavour to give a general view of the figures in order that they may be placed clearly before the House. In counties, if our Bill becomes law, the working classes will be a smaller proportion of the whole constituency than they now are. In the towns the voters of the classes apart from the working classes amount to 362,000. The working class has now 126,000 persons, and there will be new electors of the working class for houses above the line of 10*l.* amounting to 60,000 and below the line of 10*l.*, so far as we can calculate, 144,000, making the number of the working classes in the constituency 330,000, or a total addition of 204,000 to the 126,000 now included. The

total enfranchisement contemplated in counties is, by the 14*l.* occupation franchise, 172,000, to which, however, is to be added whatever may be thought fit for copyholders, leaseholders, and the savings bank franchise. In towns there will be an addition of 204,000 persons, making a total addition of 376,000, so far as we may venture to offer definite figures on this subject. With respect to the lodger franchise, to the county copyhold, and county leasehold franchise, and the savings bank franchise, we are pretty safe in throwing in 24,000 as necessary to make up round numbers, and in stating that the total enfranchisement will be 400,000 persons, of whom one-half will belong to the working class, and the other half to the middle class—among whom there are many persons of education, although not of great means or fortune. And now as to the proportion which the new constituency will bear to the householders. There is in our towns a population of 9,326,000. Of these the adult males are 2,331,000, and the adult male occupiers 1,347,000. Of those occupying houses at and over 7*l.* there are 847,000. The actual present constituency of 488,000 represents 36 per cent. of the male occupiers. The proposed constituency of 692,000 would represent 51 per cent. of those male occupiers, and of the working classes there would be 330,000 enfranchised against 588,000 unenfranchised, being less than two in five, but more than one in three of the working classes. The actual gross constituency of England and Wales stands thus. There are 550,000 in the counties; and 514,000 in towns: making a total of 1,064,000. But a very large deduction must be made for those who possess a plurality of votes. I cannot think that even upon the most liberal estimate the present constituency consists of more than 900,000 electors. In addition to these, we propose to bring in 400,000, making in England and Wales a total constituency of 1,300,000. The total number of adult males is 5,300,000, so that the whole number enfranchised in town and country will be one in four as nearly as possible. I do not know whether the House would like me to recapitulate very shortly our propositions. The first is to create an occupation franchise in counties including houses beginning at 14*l.* rental, and reaching up to 50*l.*, the present franchise. The second is to introduce into counties the provision that copyholders and leaseholders within Parliamentary boroughs should be put on the same footing that freeholders in Parliamentary

boroughs now stand in for the purpose of county votes. The third is a savings bank franchise, which will operate in both counties and towns, but which will have a more important operation in the counties. In towns we propose to place compound householders on the same footing as ratepayers. We propose to abolish tax-and-ratepaying clauses, and to reduce 10*l.* clear annual value, and to bring in the gross estimated rental from the ratebook as the measure of the value, and thus, *pro tanto*, make the ratebook the register. We propose also to introduce a lodger franchise, both for those persons holding part of a house with separate and independent access, and for those who hold part of a house as inmates of the family of another person. Then there is the 10*l.* clear annual value of apartments, without reference to furniture. We propose to abolish the necessity in the case of registered voters for residence at the time of voting. And, lastly—I say lastly because there are some other provisions, but I do not think it needful to trouble the House with them now—we propose to follow the example set us by the Government of Lord Derby in 1859, and sustained and supported, I must say, by many great authorities, and to introduce a clause disabling from voting persons who are employed in the Government yards.

The plan I now submit makes certainly a large addition to the constituency. The number of persons enfranchised will be greater than those enfranchised by the Reform Act, who did not exceed 300,000. As respects the county vote, we do not apprehend that it will raise any question of principle; as regards the borough vote, we hope that it is a liberal, as we are sure it is a moderate and a safe plan. In towns it alters greatly the balance between the working classes and the classes above them, without, however, giving the absolute majority to the working classes. We shall be told we have done too little or too much. We have done our best. We have taken account of the state of the country, and of the qualifications of the people for the political franchise. We are mindful that the limbo of abortive creations is peopled, unhappily, with the skeletons of Reform Bills. We do not wish to add to the number. If told we ought to have done more, our answer is that it was our duty to take into view the sentiment of the country, disposed to moderate change, but sensible of the value of what it possesses, sensitive with regard to bringing what it possesses into hazard. And whatever the opinion of the growing capacity and intel-

[Gladstone.]

Peroration.

ligence of the working classes, yet it is true of them, as of any class, that it is a dangerous temptation to human nature to be suddenly invested with a preponderating power. We may be told, on the other hand, that we have done too much. I hope that may not be said. I would beg opponents of the principle of extension downwards to consider what an immense value there is in the extension of the franchise for its own sake. Liberty is good not merely in its fruits, but in itself. This is what we constantly say in regard to English legislation when we are told that affairs are managed more economically, more cleverly and effectually in foreign countries. Yes, we answer, but here they are managed freely; and in freedom, in the free discharge of political duties, there is an immense power both of discipline and of education for the people. If issue is taken adversely upon this Bill I hope it will be taken directly, upon the question whether there is or is not to be an enfranchisement downwards. We hold that enfranchisement to be essential, and we cannot look upon this large addition to the political power of the working classes as if it were an addition fraught with nothing but danger. We cannot look upon it as the Trojan horse approaching the walls of the sacred city, and filled with armed men, bent upon ruin, plunder, and conflagration. We cannot join in comparing it with that *monstrum infelix*; we cannot say,—

“ Scandit fatalis machina muros
Fœta armis; mediæque minans illabitur urbi.”

I believe those persons whom we ask you to enfranchise should be welcomed as recruits for an army. We ask you to give—within prudent limits, but ungrudgingly. Consider how far you can safely extend the pale of the Parliamentary constitution; but do not do it as if you were compounding with danger and misfortune. Do it as a boon to be reciprocated in grateful attachment. Give these persons new interests in the constitution, which shall beget new attachment to the constitution; for the attachment of the people to the Throne and to the laws under which they live is, after all, more than your gold and your silver, more than your fleets and your armies, at once the strength, the glory, and the safety of the land.

Mr. MARSII.—The measure which has just been so eloquently described is the beginning of the end. There have been no petitions for a 7l. franchise, very few for a 6l.

[Marsh.]

franchise. The tendency of the Bill is towards universal suffrage. Far from settling this question, it is the very measure to keep it unsettled. In quiet times, those whom it is proposed to admit to the franchise might display Conservative tendencies; but in a political fight, when Conservatism would most be needed, the less Conservative would they be. Look at Australia, where a popular House of Assembly overrides everything. Those who want reform are those who wish to bring us to the level of democracy. Every man favours democracy when he has a particular hobby to ride; at present, the peace party. I deny that democracy favours freedom—commercial, civil, or religious. Protection was the child of democracy; the navigation laws were of Cromwell's time; it required all the energies of the great ruler of France to induce his people to accept free trade; and America, and even some of our own colonies, cling tenaciously to protective tariffs. Does democracy favour freedom in France, where the press is gagged and has received this year twenty-one warnings, six condemnations, four suppressions, and two interdictions? Here democracy enforces the rules of trade unions; in Australia, it seeks to enforce the rules of trade by law. There have been religious democracies in Spain, Naples, and France; but they have not promoted religious freedom. The interests of the working classes have not been neglected here; many acts have been passed for their special benefit. Railways have been compelled to carry them at a certain price; the truck system has been made illegal; the health of towns has been promoted, Post Office savings banks have been established, Government annuities have been introduced, factory Acts passed, a Bill relative to the dwellings of the poor is now before Parliament, taxes have been reduced, and many which are paid are no hardship at all. It is said that the working class has made great advances in intelligence since 1832. All arguments that the intelligence of the working class qualify them for the franchise, apply with equal force to their qualification to serve as jurors, yet nobody contends that the qualification for jurors should be lowered. Wherever are the best houses, there, as a general rule, are the most intelligent people; so that "bricks and mortar," as it is called, forms a very good qualification after all. Any nation starting with a high franchise enters on her political career with greater chance of success than by adopting a contrary course. Belgium started with such a franchise,

[Marsh.]

while in Italy the franchise, corresponding nearly to our own 10%, has succeeded as far as she has gone. Look on the other hand at Australia, with a beautiful country and an unrivalled climate. Political corruption of the grossest kind prevails. Members of the Assembly accept bribes; legislate for their own gain; abuse each other in the strongest language.

The question is, how to prevent democracy gaining ground? I reply, it can only be done by the inherent excellence of our mixed Constitution, which saved us when the power of Spain was destroyed, and when the French revolution broke out. We ought to show the House of Commons now, as ever, in advance of public opinion. As was said by Sir Robert Walpole, *Quieta non movere*. I feel this most strongly. Others may have heard and read of democracy; but I have seen and felt it in its deepest reality. I hope the House will pause before it does anything to cause us to drift into democracy, or which would do away with that Imperial Parliament by which the country has been governed so long and so well.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON.—I regard it as a grave prospect that we are to look forward to discussions on this great subject, not only at the present time, but in succeeding years. This is the first time, since the great measure of 1832, that we have been called upon to consider a Government Bill dealing with but a fragment of the great question of the representative system. All previous ministerial measures have attempted to deal with the subject in a comprehensive manner, suited to a settlement of the question for many years to come. MR. GLADSTONE had told me earlier in the evening that inquiries have been set on foot as to the electoral statistics of Scotland; but could give no undertaking as to when the returns might be expected. As to Ireland, the right hon. gentleman has said nothing. But what is the prospect even with regard to England? Is it possible that the question can be fully debated and decided between this time and the middle of July? To my mind the measure is, in one respect, so complex that I am unable to realize its scope and object. Proposals are submitted respecting several of those franchises on which Her Majesty's Ministers had cast so much ridicule when they were proposed by Lord Derby's Government. When exceptional franchises are proposed by Government, it is not to be supposed that others will not be

[Fergusson.]

brought forward by Honourable Members of this House. I presume it is intended to consider next session the representative system of Scotland, in which the electoral body has altered in character, since 1832, at least as much as in England. Ireland will perhaps be ready for consideration in 1868. The question being so difficult, should we not follow the precedent of 1830, when the measure was submitted to Parliament before Christmas, the whole of the following session being devoted to its discussion, instead of as at present, the first stage only being got through before Easter. MR. BRIGHT advocated two months ago the acceptance of the Government proposal, because it might be employed as a lever for future proceedings. Immediately afterwards MR. W. E. FORSTER delivered a similar speech. Now, it is by no means certain that the present Parliament is capable of entertaining the question of Parliamentary Reform. The statistics on which the measure is professedly founded have been produced singularly late. Perhaps no one has shown greater ignorance in regard to them—if I may say so, with the utmost respect—than MR. GLADSTONE himself. Last session he maintained that the working classes were less than one-tenth of the borough constituency. How did this harmonize with the statistics now presented? It showed an astonishing misapprehension of the facts of the case. The general feeling of how deeply we should feel Lord Palmerston's loss is now realized by the proceedings of the Government, professedly immediately after his burial. I utterly disclaim fear at the introduction of the working classes to the franchise; for I have found among artisans intelligence not behind that possessed by large portions of the present constituency. If, however, the object be to maintain a just balance and not to throw the whole power of election into the hands of one class, I am exceedingly surprised at the course pursued by the Government. I look forward with grave apprehension to long discussions of fragmentary portions of great questions, which must cause much excitement in the country, the ultimate results of which cannot, at present, be foreseen.

MR. P. W. MARTIN.—I offer an earnest hope that Government will not mar a measure of enfranchisement by disfranchising the employés in the dockyards. Those people have returned Sir Frederic Smith for Chatham, through several Liberal Administrations. Devonport has recently

[Martin.]

returned two Opposition Members; and I think a charge of corruption cannot be sustained against the voters of that place. Neither venality nor bribery having been proved against them, it is too bad to disfranchise them for merely exercising the Englishman's privilege of grumbling a little. I trust that lengthened discussions will not be brought forward to demolish this Bill, and still more that it will not ignobly perish by a shot in the rear from its own allies.

SIR FRANCIS CROSSLEY.—Owing to the instructions under which the present electoral statistics were compiled, I do not consider that they controvert Mr. GLADSTONE'S statement last session that the working men formed only one-tenth of the town constituency. I regret that Government has not further extended the franchise to 10*l.* for counties and 6*l.* for boroughs; but, from the fear entertained by the Opposition and by some on the ministerial side of this House, I consider the Government has acted honestly in the measure brought forward, and on that account I and the great body of reformers out of doors will support them. I trust the present Parliament will settle the distribution of seats, but I think it wise to treat the distribution and the franchise in separate measures. The good sense of the House should acknowledge that the Bill is prepared with great care, and is likely to settle the question for a long time.

MR. CRAWFORD.—I wish to call attention to the virtual disfranchisement of electors in large cities, where business is carried on, by the operation of the 7-mile radius, which excludes them from voting because they do not live within 7 miles of their place of business, for which they pay rent and taxes. Times are changed, and a distance of 20 or 30 miles is now, practically, no more than 7 miles used to be. The abolition of the ratepaying clause and the lodger franchise will meet with general approval. The middle course steered by Government will, I think, be generally upheld by metropolitan members. I wish to know whether copyholders and leaseholders in boroughs are to be taken out of the town register and transferred entirely to the county register.

MR. SERJEANT GASELEE.—I think the dockyard disfranchisement a decided blot in the Bill. Scarcely a case of bribery has been proved against that class of voters. I would rather have seen a proposal to enfranchise other classes of public servants, such as those in the Post Office and the Custom-house. I am surprised at a proposition of

[Gaselee.]

disfranchisement from MR. GLADSTONE, and I protest against it.

The HON. RALPH H. DUTTON.—I am not a dockyard representative, but I happen to know many dockyardmen, and am at a loss to understand why by a measure for admitting so many of the working class to the franchise, that very franchise should be taken away from some of the most intelligent among them. I concur with SIR F. CROSSLEY that as Government has resolved on descending from 50*l.* to 14*l.*, and from 10*l.* to 7*l.*, it is scarcely worth their while to stop short in their concession to those who demand a still further reduction of the franchise. I do not fear the working man, but as I read the statistics there seems to be in the towns 26 per cent. of the representation in the hands of working men, and if the large towns, whence the cry for reform principally comes, be taken by themselves, the working class will be found to have 40 or 50 per cent. of the representation. I cannot see who will benefit by the proposed savings-bank franchise: no working man could afford to keep 50*l.* in a savings-bank; a small tradesman would not do so when he could make 12 or 15 per cent. on it in his trade. In practice, the use of that provision will be by persons who will keep 50*l.* in a savings-bank for the purpose of obtaining a vote, without complying with the conditions that would otherwise be required for securing the franchise. My present impression is that the Bill will not be found a satisfactory measure of reform.

SIR HENRY HOARE.—I think the Bill excellent as far as it goes. There is no danger from the admission to the franchise of the men to whom the Bill gives votes. But the present is like giving a carriage without horses. What we want is a measure for the distribution of seats, and unless Government give a distinct pledge that such a measure will be introduced, I shall feel bound to vote against this Bill at a future stage.

LORD ROBERT MONTAGU.—I have misgivings as to the series of Reform Bills in prospect session after session. Year after year the country is to be kept in agitation, and members will never know how to be certain of their constituencies. In my county there are five large towns, of which one is a borough. Reducing the county franchise to 14*l.* will transfer the election of members from the rich farmers, a most respectable class, who now vote, to the small shopkeepers in the unrepresented towns. A simul-

[Montagu.]

taneous re-distribution of seats might have rectified this, as several towns could have been united in forming boroughs. As it stands, the Bill seems expressly designed to swamp the agricultural interest. Those for whom the franchise is to be lowered are they who, on several recent occasions, have sought to drive the country into war.

MR. HANBURY.—Reserving my opinion on the details, I cannot help expressing my general approval of the Bill, which I think meets all the requirements of those I represent. For the last twenty-five years I have employed a great number of working men, and I can say from my experience that a more respectable and intelligent class does not exist. I do not think they desire to impair the Constitution, which is as beneficial to them as to other classes.

MR. LAING.—The clear issue before us is the question of re-opening the great Reform settlement of 1832, by a measure which, on the face of it, is not a complete and final settlement. MR. GLADSTONE'S speech was one of the most conclusive I ever heard; but my conclusion was different from that which he meant to convey. I can quite believe how late the admirable statistical returns before us were received, for if they had been received earlier the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER must have come to a very opposite conclusion. If they show one thing more than another, it is that the case is much stronger than was supposed for a redistribution of seats, and very much weaker for the extension of the franchise downwards. I say this on MR. GLADSTONE'S own authority, for in 1860 his conviction was that out of the 480,000 persons constituting the borough constituency, above one-ninth belonged to the labouring classes. The others were freemen, scot and lot voters, and here and there 10% occupiers. MR. GLADSTONE'S conviction in 1860 was therefore that the 10% franchise admitted the smallest fraction of the working class. Now these remarkable returns show that in 1860 the Government based their Reform Bill on data which were erroneous to the extent of very nearly 300 per cent. They based it on the calculation that less than 50,000 working men were included in the franchise, and that these were almost entirely freemen, old scot and lot voters; but it was now disclosed that there were 136,000, of whom no less than 108,000 were 10% householders.

The only valid reason I ever heard for re-opening the settlement of 1832 was the belief that it was too rigid and

[Laing.]

exclusive, and did not admit the working class to anything like a fair share in the representation. Now these returns prove that so far from being of insignificance in the amount, the share of the working men in the borough representation is 26 per cent. on the whole number of borough electors. So far from the system being rigid, the number is shown to be rapidly and steadily on the increase. No doubt the number of working men admitted in different towns under the 10*l*. franchise is very unequal; but the returns show that it is just in the growing towns, in the great seats of industry, or in the new and rising towns springing into importance, that the increase of the number of working men admitted to the 10*l*. constituency is most marked. Taking the great cities, seats of industry—in Southwark the proportion of working men is as high as one-half; in Manchester it is 27 per cent.; Salford, 34; Sheffield, 50; Wolverhampton, 24; Nottingham and Leicester, 40. The proportion in which working men share the franchise is also peculiarly large in places which have advanced greatly in late years without being seats of manufacturing industry, as Brighton, Cheltenham, and Southampton, in which the proportion has now gone up to 50 per cent. This brings us to a great fallacy of the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, who says that the proportion of the whole is not greater than it was in 1832. But why is this? Because in 1832 they had a large body of freemen, scot and lot, and old voters. They had died out; but their place was more than taken by a new class, who had shown themselves the *élite* of the working class by rising so much above the general level as to occupy comfortable houses at a rental of 10*l*. That was a growing franchise; and if wealth and wages advanced as at present, there would be a steady increase both in the absolute numbers and proportion of working men admitted to the franchise. This greatly reduces the strength of the argument, for re-opening the settlement of 1832, that the working men are almost entirely excluded.

But how stands the case as regards the re-distribution of seats? Could a stronger case exist than that disclosed by the Parliamentary returns? I find forty boroughs in which the population is under 7,000; the number of electors is 400 in each. Those forty boroughs, with an united population of 200,000 and 16,000 voters, return sixty-four members to this House. Contrast that with the single county of Lanarkshire, with a population of 530,000, returning one member.

[Laing.]

Dundee, with a population approaching 100,000, has one member, just one sixty-fourth of the representation enjoyed by the forty small boroughs, whose united population only doubles that of Dundee. Glasgow, with 329,000 population, and more than 20,000 electors, only returns two members against the sixty-four of the small boroughs. In eighteen boroughs, returning twenty-three members, the population has diminished since 1832: while in the largest manufacturing towns in the North the number of 10% electors had in the same time increased 178 per cent. The disparity of representation was here obvious. Take the smallest borough returning two members—Honiton. In 1831 it had a population of 3,509; this was now 3,301. A decrease of 208 had taken place in the number of electors, and there were now but 348 on the register; yet Honiton had as great a voice in the Government of the country as Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, or Dublin. Such anomalies can only be defended on the ground that they formed part of a great settlement, which has worked well, and which it is inexpedient to disturb. Once re-open that settlement, and there is not a vestige of argument for retaining the existing distribution of seats. In every previous Reform Bill the re-distribution of seats has been recognized as an essential part. The real practical question in any Reform is not whether men who live in 7*l.* or 8*l.* houses are to return the members, but how to contrive such a balance of political power as shall fairly represent all the different interests of the country; above all, as shall strike a fair balance between the Progressive and Conservative elements. Prior to 1832 the country was brought into great danger by the predominance of the Conservative element. But since 1832, could any one say that the Conservative element unduly preponderated? Has not abuse after abuse been reformed, until at last we have no practical abuses left? The existing system works admirably, yet Parliament is asked to re-open most exciting questions. It is all very well for members of Mr. BRIGHT'S school, who regard our present system as an oppressive monopoly, to desire to reopen questions which would excite agitation without settling anything. I am not disposed in any way to assist that school in inserting the point of a lever into the wall of the constitution which it is intended to topple down on my own head. Who can doubt that if this extension of the franchise be granted this year, applica-

[Laing.]

tion will be made next year for the redistribution of seats? The balance of progressive and conservative elements in the country depends greatly upon the application of seats taken from the small boroughs. The settlements proposed in 1854, 1859, and 1860 gave these seats to ten counties, which was calculated to give the Conservative element a fair counterpoise for what they might lose by the disfranchisement of the small boroughs or the lowering of the suffrage. But if the changes are all in one direction on behalf of the progressive element the balance will be destroyed, and you will risk the introduction of further changes, such as you might not altogether like to contemplate. If once you depart from the 10*l.* franchise established in 1832, what prospect is there of being able to draw a line anywhere else and taking a stand upon any other figure? Once admit the franchise to be a right, and limit it as you may, it will land you in universal suffrage; but hold it to be a trust, and then it follows that it is a trust to be exercised by that portion of the community which has reached a certain standing and acquired a certain stake in the country, and whose ability to act upon solid sense and reflection rather than from inconsiderate impulse may be presumed upon. The figures presented to the House would give more than half the borough representation to the working class, a measure from which Mr. GLADSTONE admitted that the House would recoil. The indiscriminate lowering of the franchise must deteriorate the intellectual quality of the constituency. The returns showed that the places distinguishable by a large number of working men are also unfavourably distinguished in our electoral annals. It will be a matter of notoriety that in the ordinary run of small boroughs to diminish the franchise would be to increase the cost of election. Some of the fancy franchises, if made large enough, would admit a number of the working classes, which would be an unmixed good. What could produce a more excellent moral effect than the savings-bank franchise, if it were low enough? And why not extend the franchise to other classes of property? Why should not any man have a vote who possesses 30*l.* or 40*l.* of realized property of any sort in a bank in any other form?

I feel bound to express my deep disappointment at the Government having resolved to deal with this measure piecemeal and not in one comprehensive scheme. What were the grounds upon which the House is asked to enter-

[Laing.]

tain the Bill—simply pledges, given some years ago. I cannot give the Bill my support, and I have given no pledge so to do.

MR. BAINES.—The latter half of MR. LAING'S speech consisted of an exposure of the absurd anomalies in the present distribution of seats. That was surely enough to refute his first argument that no practical grievance exists sufficient to call for a revision of the representation. Similarly, in 1830, had the Duke of Wellington affirmed that no conceivable form of representation could exceed in excellence that then existing, and the Reform Act of 1832 was regarded by Conservatives as nothing less than a revolution, subjecting intelligence and education to the ascendancy of the uneducated classes. These prognostications have been falsified, for MR. LAING has just stated, and MR. LOWE stated on a former occasion, that Parliament since 1832 has been a perfect model of a Legislative Body. Certainly, many practical grievances have been removed since 1832; but why? Simply, because of the popular element infused into the Legislature. An extension of this element would, I believe, produce a similar beneficial effect. The practical anomalies cited by Mr. LAING are surely a practical grievance, and it is surely another that the proportion of the working classes in boroughs has sunk from 31 to 21 per cent. MR. GLADSTONE indeed, stated it, at first at 26 per cent., but subsequently assented to 21 per cent.; and considering the unprecedented advance, material, moral, and intellectual, achieved during the last thirty years, it is a grievance that the working class proportion in borough constituencies should be only two-thirds of what it was in 1832. Without regarding the Bill as perfect, I can state that it gives considerable satisfaction on this side of the House, though, perhaps, not to all the Members round me. I rise to point out those parts which are imperfect. MR. GLADSTONE computes the working classes now enjoying the franchise in boroughs at 126,000; but the accuracy of that may be doubted, as several important classes of men are included, who, though in one sense working men, should in truth be classed in a higher rank. The Poor Law Board had directed that small tradesmen should be included, and these ought to be struck off the working class. For instance, there are in Wakefield but 80 working class voters, yet by including small tradesmen or those whose families keep shops, this is raised 120, or 50 per cent. For Oldham, I have been assured that not more

[Baines.]

than one-half of the 315 voters returned as of the working class properly belong to that class. Consequently, instead of taking the total at 126,000, MR. GLADSTONE would have been far beyond the mark in taking 100,000, and even that would include many of the old freemen and scot and lot voters. Again, it is wrong to assign the whole 60,000 compound householders to the working class, as a large proportion consists of small tradesmen. It is, further, a mistake to state all those enfranchised by the 7*l.* clause as of the working class; in reality, many of them will be clerks, retired tradesmen, &c. MR. GLADSTONE'S calculation of the number of working men who will have a vote, if the Bill pass, is at least 100,000 too high. Would the country be revolutionized by such a Bill? What are the facts? Out of a total population of 5,180,000 adult males, 1,300,000, or 1 in 4, would be enfranchised; the bulk of the unenfranchised remainder belonging to the working classes. So that, although the working classes are three times as numerous as the upper classes, they will have only one-fourth of the total elective franchise. Notwithstanding these miscalculations, and though the right honourable gentleman might properly have lowered the rental to 6*l.*, there is much in the Bill that is excellent, and I approve of the various minor alterations it contains.

Captain the Honourable ROBERT W. GROSVENOR.

—It strikes me that many honourable members fail to appreciate the exact position this question occupies before the country, or the difficulties in framing a Reform Bill which shall raise the people without flooring the Ministry; which shall admit a proportion of working men to the franchise, and at the same time not admit the Opposition to official residences in Downing Street. For fourteen years the question of Reform has been before Parliament; but during that time its position before the country has materially changed. For fourteen, twelve, or even ten years the discussions were confined to statesmen; now, such have been the strides of progress, the unenfranchised themselves discuss their claims in a moderate and intelligent, but firm and determined spirit. It is too much to say there is no agitation in the country on the subject: there is agitation, and the whole strength and colour of it is derived from the fact that it is of a peaceful and orderly kind. Shall we wait until the character of the agitation changes? While Lord Palmerston so ably presided over the last “long Parlia-

[Grosvenor.]

ment" there were reasons, personal and political, why the people should acquiesce in a temporary postponement of their claims. Now that that great man is gone, now that all danger from foreign politics is over, now that we have a Government pledged more than all its predecessors to reform, it would be impolitic and dangerous to trifle any longer with the question. No doubt the arguments against piecemeal legislation are of some force in the abstract: no doubt a comprehensive measure dealing uniformly with the subject in all its branches would commend itself to the mind as symmetrical and complete. But would it pass? It is to this hankering after the symmetrical and complete that we owe the long disappointment so deeply dissatisfactory to the people. I am not going to assert that the measure now before us is the best possible; but it will have my cordial support, because I think it fairly embraces the chief points of the long-promised concession. I would remind the House that whatever the opinion of individuals on this or that particular scheme, there is no more important object now than to re-establish among the people that confidence which has been somewhat impaired by a long course of promises lightly broken, and of pledges wholly unredeemed.

The Right Honourable EDWARD HORSMAN.—There are two subjects of congratulation: first, we have the long-expected Government Reform Bill; secondly, it is so very satisfactory to advanced reformers. MR. BAINES is very happy because his own single-barrelled Reform Bill, which would not go off last year, is reproduced, though in a cut-down form. He has, however, quite misunderstood the able speech of MR. LAING, who did not say there were no anomalies in our representative system; but that the anomalies were far greater in the distribution than in the suffrage; that you were beginning at the wrong end in correcting the smaller anomalies, and thereby necessitating new agitation, further demands, and greater changes. At the commencement of his speech, MR. GLADSTONE alluded to the discreditable failures of the past, partly as an apology for now bringing the subject forward. I will not follow him through his statistics: for this question is in reality not a statistical, but a constitutional one. We are not dealing to-day with details, but with principles. First establish the course on which to legislate, and then make statistics subservient as auxiliaries. I prefer dealing with that portion of MR. GLADSTONE'S speech in which he vindicated the policy of the

[Horsman.]

Government in taking up this question at all. He began by a reference to the past; but of what does that history remind us? Five times have the lips of Royalty been stained by promises which have never been kept. Five times have Ministers been committed to pledges which have never been performed. True! sad! and very discreditable! but to whom? Not to the House of Commons, which was never a party to those pledges. Of the five Cabinets committed to Reform, on four of those five occasions Lord Russell was a prominent member of the Administration; and it was he, and he only, who insisted on the introduction of those Reform Bills, and they were notoriously introduced less to meet exigencies of the nation than the exigencies of a particular Minister. This is an important fact; for there is a vast difference between one individual Minister four times insisting upon the necessity of a change and four distinct and separate Ministers approaching the question from opposite points of view and concurring in the same necessity. But Mr. GLADSTONE threw the responsibility of originating this measure not on the Ministry but on Parliament. How did he prove that? He says that, in 1851, there was a division on Mr. LOCKE KING'S Bill, and that therein Lord Russell was defeated, and that it was in consequence of that defeat that the House of Commons forced upon Government the necessity of legislating in this direction. This, according to MR. GLADSTONE, was the foundation for all the subsequent proceedings of the Government; but if I can show the foundation to be rotten, the whole superstructure comes tumbling to the ground. What are the facts? It was in the debate on the introduction of the Bill that Lord Russell spoke; but in what sense? So far from allowing the House to originate the policy of the Government, he rose and said it was twenty years since the Reform Act of 1832 had passed, and he offered to give a pledge that if Mr. LOCKE KING would withdraw his motion the Government would introduce a Reform Bill in the following year. Neither the House nor the honourable Member was satisfied with the assurance, and in a very thin House of only 156 Members the Government was defeated by 100 to 52 votes. That division took place on the motion for the introduction of the Bill, a motion usually assented to as a matter of form. But, after MR. LOCKE KING had defeated the Government, the House perceived the seriousness of the question, and in a much larger House rejected the Bill on its second reading by a division of 299

[Horsman.]

to 83. Lord Russell's promise was given on the introduction of the Bill, and his defeat was in a thin House; while the second reading was rejected by more than three to one. This, then, was the event which was said to show the House so determined to have a Reform Bill. We know from Earl Grey that in the reformed Cabinet of 1852 there was only one Reformer. Lord Russell, on the occasion alluded to, pledged the Cabinet to reform without the knowledge or sanction of his colleagues. His colleagues next year supported his Bill out of consideration for the noble Lord, and because, feeling the Cabinet to be *in extremis*, they knew it could never pass. That Bill was the key to the legislation of the last fourteen years, and shows that the series of Bills brought in by a succession of Cabinets were, in effect, the work of one and the same man, tending to one and the same end. The Bill of 1854 was pressed by a reluctant Cabinet upon a reluctant House, in the teeth of protests from all quarters. The House and the country alike refused it support. In 1857, Lord Palmerston confessed that a Bill was not prepared. Then came the Bill of the Derby Cabinet in 1859, which rather took the Liberal party by surprise, and was nearer legislation than we have been since that time; and it was universally admitted to be a better Bill than any Lord Russell's Cabinet had ever produced; but the country did not want the Bill, and it was notoriously against the feelings of the great majority of the party by whom it was introduced. Next came the Bill of 1860, with an unexampled conjuncture of Parliamentary leaders in its favour. The nation was in despair, and so made itself felt, that the House of Commons rebelled against its leaders, wore out the Government with inexhaustible rhetoric, and fairly laughed the Bill out of the House. But the history of these Bills would be incomplete unless I borrowed an illustration very opportunely furnished by MR. BRIGHT. In declining an invitation in 1860 to a Reform banquet at Glasgow, that honourable gentleman described Lord Palmerston's colleagues—now sitting on the Treasury bench—as preferring “their places to their honour as public men,” and as consenting “to the greatest political fraud of our time, rather than leave the Treasury bench even for a season.” Now that is strong language, but a specimen of the hon. Member's “pure Saxon.” But MR. BRIGHT expressly concurred in the withdrawal of that Bill; and for five years afterwards gave that Government his undiminished support,

[Horsman.]

voting confidence in them on the only occasion offered for doing so. Was he not then an abettor in their fraud and dishonour? One month he decries the Government; the next he upholds in the highest terms the same Administration; and the following month the wind changes again.

From 1852 to 1865 this question of Reform has been agitated under the most favourable circumstances. It has been taken up by every Administration, and supported and relinquished by every prominent public man. It has had three-fourths of the press, and all the patriots of one side and the other, in its favour. The Bills were rejected, the agitation a failure, and the country was brought slowly, but surely, to the conviction that the proposed changes were not founded in reason, that they were opposed to justice, fatal to the growth of liberty. The morality, the statesmanship of every class, from highest to lowest, clung with instinctive fervour to the institutions which they saw approached with an unfriendly hand, and with one will and one voice forbade that that old tree of English liberty, that was the growth of ages and the admiration of nations, should be transformed into the brazen image of ignorance and intolerance, which the worshippers of trans-Atlantic equality wanted to set up. Undoubtedly there is no previous instance, at least in our time, of any question five times recommended from the throne not passing into an Act. But the nation demanded to be let alone. The only novelty about this new attempt of the Government is their chivalrous determination to stand or fall by their measure; but the temper of the country and the House has rendered this course imperative. No more trifling with Reform can be permitted. There are three essentials to any Government attempting to deal with the great question of Reform. First, that the Government itself should be a strong Government; second, that the Bill should settle the question for a generation at least; and, third, that the Government should have the power of appealing to the country by a dissolution. Now have we a strong Government? For a test, compare the present body of men with the Ministry which failed to pass Reform in 1860. Then there were ten members in the House of Commons. Four of these that are gone, Lord Herbert, Sir G. C. Lewis, the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Palmerston, remind us, by their very names, that they were the great strength of the Cabinet. To compare that Cabinet with the present is almost like comparing a

[Horsman.]

living, moving, sentient being with his own skeleton. Then next is this a settlement of the question? MR. GLADSTONE repeated twice, "We have done at least something." Well, but the country does not want you to do something; it wants you to settle something, and if you don't settle something you are not doing, but unsettling everything. Now, a Government cannot do anything so mistaken and mischievous as to raise great issues which it cannot define, and to let loose a force which it cannot control? What are you settling? Do you solve the universally granted question of admitting the masses to a share of political power without giving them a monopoly of it? What is your principle? Is it the old principle of the representation of property? Is it the Manchester principle, that representation and taxation ought to go together? There is nothing in the present Bill to dignify with the name of a principle. It merely goes on the stale device of moving the franchise downwards. What does this settle? Why, MR. BAINES' 6l. Bill last year was taken to be only an instalment. But MR. GLADSTONE avows that he does not profess to effect a settlement. He looks to the future to take care of itself. This may be a good rule in a Manchester business; but it is not statesmanship. Of course we can only deal with the circumstances of our own session, our own Parliament, or our own generation; but if we deal with the present on false principles, which will become precedents, we are not leaving the future to take care of itself. No doubt circumstances are shifting and variable, but principles are enduring and eternal; and is it not evident that one false step made upon false principles in this matter is but kindling a conflagration for our successors to extinguish? The right honourable gentleman is the last man from whom I should have expected such a policy for the mere retention of office; for although we know that under some foreign governments the Minister of State is only separated from the herd of politicians by the arrival of quarter-day, we know, and no one better than MR. GLADSTONE, that that is not a perfect measure of the English statesman. Now, as to dissolution, nothing can justify it on any particular question, except the necessity of ascertaining the opinion of the country, with some hope that the response will be favourable to the Government dissolving Parliament. But on Reform the national opinion has been ascertained unequivocally on two recent occasions. The dissolution of 1859 was expressly on Reform, and on Reform the new Parliament refused to legis-

[Horsman.]

late. Again, in 1865, MR. BAINES' 6l. Bill came in close at the end of the session, but members, with the hustings before them, threw it out. I cannot put my finger on one who lost his seat through voting against that Bill; but the independent members who supported it fell grievously on the benches behind me, among the very body-guard of MR. BRIGHT. What more can the Government want with dissolution? It has already shown that the further a man goes in Reform the more precarious becomes his seat, and under such circumstances a dissolution would be suicidal. All upholders of Reform agreed that it could not be, without strong support out of doors. There was none: Lord Palmerston had left the country in profound calm. You remember what Lord Palmerston answered on the hustings to a Mr. Rowcliffe, who asked him why the Government had not introduced a Reform Bill—"Why," answered his Lordship, "because we are not geese." Lord Palmerston would not have allowed England to be governed from Lancashire, or the Liberal party domineered over by MR. BRIGHT; but the man who had been a pigmy in the hands of Lord Palmerston was a giant in the hands of his successor; and now we are to have Reform, comprehensive Reform, after the Birmingham model. MR. BRIGHT went down a Plenipotentiary of the Government into the provinces, and lashed the people into fury with the recital of imaginary wrongs and fabricated grievances. If we have not had the riots of 1831 revived, we are indebted for our escape, not to MR. GLADSTONE'S colleagues, but to the good sense and loyalty of those who are wiser in head and sounder in heart than some incendiary politicians in high places, who have done their utmost to excite the nation. I have treated this as a Government measure, but we all know it is so only by courtesy; and that however short it may fall of the original conception and design, it had its birth, not in Downing-street, but in Birmingham.

Now, what are the titles to our confidence and support of this new ruler whom Earl Russell seems determined to set over us? I do not deny that MR. BRIGHT is sincere in seeking to bring about the changes which he advocates; but I maintain that he does not desire them in the sense in which we do, viz., for the reforming, and strengthening, and perpetuating what we admire and value in England. We understand the word "Reformer" only in one sense,—a sincere adherent, friend, and upholder of our present form of

[Horsman.]

Government, honestly striving to render it more permanent and durable. But if he who professes to be a Reformer be a passionate admirer of Republican institutions, openly avowing that our English institutions are faulty in those respects in which they differ from republican institutions, and that the changes which he would introduce should be gradually after the model of the latter; if he publicly deprecates and decries, not the defects of our English form of Government, but that form of Government itself; then I say such a person cannot sympathize with our views; he cannot honestly co-operate in our objects. Out of MR. BRIGHT'S own mouth, I will ask you to say whether he does not fall under the description which I have given? In the time of the Derby Government he prepared a Reform Bill. The speech, from which the following is an extract, was delivered by him in his official character as representative of those who called him to prepare the Bill:—

“I shall take the course of addressing myself to this question according to the light I have with regard to it from great study, from much consultation with others, and from an honest wish that I have, that the question of Reform should be rightly viewed by every intelligent man among my countrymen. Now, we will mention two or three things that we do not want. We do not propose in the smallest degree to call in question or to limit the prerogatives of the Crown. I believe we are prepared to say that if the Throne of England be filled with so much dignity and so much purity as we have known it in our time, and as we know it now to be, we hope that the venerable monarchy may be perpetual.”

But that hope of perpetuity is contingent on the occupation of the Throne always coming up to an almost ideal standard of personal excellence. I call it ideal, because if we look through the long lines of Sovereigns of this and other countries, I know not when during so protracted a reign you can find such another realization of so high a standard. The honourable Member's “if” is quite unknown to the British Constitution. And now we come to the House of Lords. Let us see what the honourable Member's opinions are in regard to the House of Lords.

“We do not propose even to discuss, much less to limit, the legal and constitutional privileges or prerogatives of the House of Peers. We know, everybody knows, nobody knows it better than the Peers, that a house of

[Horsman.]

hereditary legislation cannot be a permanent institution in a free country."

Now, I deny that the peers, this House, or the country know any such thing. I say that the Constitution entirely contradicts the Member for Birmingham. The Constitution says that an hereditary peerage is a permanent institution in a free country, because it is compatible with freedom. I believe that there is an irreconcilable enmity between democracy and freedom; but I know of no irreconcilable enmity between freedom and an hereditary House of Lords. On the contrary, I believe that it is its hereditary character that secures to the House of Lords the independence that renders it a stronger bulwark of freedom than an elective Chamber can possibly be. But when the honourable gentleman says that an hereditary peerage is incompatible with freedom, what is that but saying that it ought to be abolished, or, in other words, that the Constitution ought to be so far abolished? The hon. gentleman would have the monarchy elective, the House of Peers elective, and the House of Commons chosen by universal suffrage. What then becomes of the British Constitution, and how far are we removed from a republic? This is the hon. gentleman who is the confidential adviser of the head of the Cabinet, and the director and dictator of the Liberal party. I believe much of the future of England must depend upon the spirit with which this new House of Commons realizes and rises to the discharge of its first and most responsible duty. That is, to vindicate the supremacy of Constitutional opinions—to spurn the dictation of an intolerant minority—to uphold those principles of freedom which have not been successfully defended against the encroachments of monarchs and the passions of the multitude in order to be now surrendered at the feet of a more ignoble tyranny; and that policy of progress—of sound, peaceful, and constitutional progress, which has hitherto reflected the growing intelligence of the nation, and which can only be arrested or fatally driven back by the successful machinations of those who would trade alternately on the weakness of Ministers whom they despise, and on the ignorance of the masses, whose contempt for the abortive agitation of the last four months has proved how deeply sensible they are of the blessings of the institutions under which they live, and how they have become too enlightened to be deluded, and, to the disgrace of demagogues, betrayed.

[Lowe.]

On the motion of MR. LOWE, the debate was then adjourned till the following day.

Tuesday, March 13, 1866.

Debate resumed.

The RIGHT HON. ROBERT LOWE.—In the course of a long and illustrious political career, this House of Commons has gathered into its hands a very large proportion of the political power of the country. It has outlived the influence of the Crown; it has shaken off the dictation of the aristocracy; in finance and taxation it is supreme; it has a large share in legislation; it can control and unmake, and sometimes nearly make, the Executive Government. When British history shall be the history of a nation passed away, it may probably be thought that too much power was concentrated in the House; too much hazarded on the personal qualifications of its members. In proportion to its power, is the effort high and noble of endeavouring to amend its constitution. Let it not be lightly tampered with. In any extension of the franchise, we should always bear in mind that the end we ought to have in view is not the class which receives the franchise, but the Parliament itself by which political power is exercised. To consider the franchise as an end in itself, is to mistake the means for the end. The franchise is an enormous advantage to the country; but to look on it as the end rather than the means, is like the man who, finding that money contributed to his pleasure when young, and to his power in middle life, at the end of his days, when pleasure could charm no more, and power was beyond his grasp, turned his attention from the end to the means, and loved the money for its own sake. MR. GLADSTONE has not dealt altogether respectfully with the House in calling upon us to entertain a proposition touching most nearly a vital part of our constitution; effecting, if carried out, an immense redistribution of political power, and an enormous alteration in the constituencies, without stating the reasons which induced the Government to lay the proposition before us. I am not wedded to anything just because it exists, and I am prepared to follow experience

[Lows.]

and expedience as my political guide. As far as my own feelings are concerned, I care not what the amount of the franchise is, or what the place in which parliamentary power is vested. But although, therefore, I am perfectly ready to entertain this question, I think it but fair to existing institutions to say that the burden of proof is in their favour; that the presumption is in favour of that which is, until it is removed by some argument which shows that that which is can be replaced by something better. The Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to consider the burden of proof to lie in the opposite direction. I, for one, deprecate a proposal to pull down the noble work of our forefathers, before a single word is said to show why we should assail it. MR. GLADSTONE found time enough to discuss many less important subjects. He discussed with the utmost sagacity and felicity the difference between "annual value" and "gross estimated rental;" he was eloquent on compound householders, tenants of flats, lodgers, and other abstruse personalities; but he did not find a moment to explain why the Constitution, under which we have so long lived, should not be left to us a little longer. The Bill proposes, briefly, to increase the whole electors of the country, estimated at 900,000, by 400,000, that is, by one-half of the present constituency. MR. GLADSTONE proposes to make 171,000 new electors in the counties, and 204,000 in the boroughs, the latter being derived almost exclusively from the class of persons renting at 10*l.* or under. As regards the counties, the proposition will very much enlarge the electoral area, enormously increase the expenses of elections, and create a great redistribution of political power. Whether right or wrong, we should have a reason for this change. The right honourable gentleman opposes the county voters, as being of the middle class, to the borough voters, as being of the working class; and according to his showing we are to have in the boroughs 330,000 voters of the working class, and 360,000 not of the working class. That is the system he proposes for our adoption. Now the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER admits, and the statistics before us prove, that one-fifth of the whole number of electors are of the working class. This is a grave and momentous fact, proving, firstly, that Government were entirely mistaken on the main ground on which they introduced the present measure, viz., that the best of the working class were excluded from the franchise. I make this statement on the authority of a work on the English Government

[Lowe.]

and Constitution issued by Lord Russell twice in the course of last year. It is clear that the noble Lord wrote under a delusion, which was shared by almost every gentleman on the Treasury Bench. These statistics prove that the franchise has to a great extent been within reach of the working class, and the Bill having been proved to be grounded on a mistake, I ask under what principle the Government propose now to go on with it? We have no statistics to show when it was, that the great increase in the constituencies took place. There has, however, been a great expansion in everything during the last fifteen or sixteen years, and we know that the causes of this expansion are permanent and not transitory. The first is the gold discovery in California and Australia, which has caused an apparent rise of prices, so that both rents and wages have risen. The great and continued emigration from Ireland has also kept up the rate of wages: while again the vast extension of our trade and commerce has made labourers more and more in demand. Therefore we shall not be wrong in considering that these causes and their effects are by no means spent; and why have we not a right to look forward to the same process of expanding enfranchisement going on hereafter, and with redoubled vigour, which has been going on since the passing of the Reform Act. MR. GLADSTONE said he did not wish to see the working class in a majority among the electors. He cared little for himself, but he had a regard for his weaker brethren, and, therefore, gave up the 6*l.* borough franchise, which would have produced 428,000 electors, for a 7*l.* franchise, which produced 330,000. But not limiting ourselves to the present, what are the prospects with regard to the constituencies? What chance is there that the principle now enounced will remain inviolate? Is it not, on the contrary, certain that in a few years the working men will be, from the causes I have mentioned, the majority. When Government propose a 7*l.* franchise, encouragement is given to turn a 6*l.* house into a 7*l.* house. An immense amount of expansion will take place in that way, and in a short time we shall see the working classes in a majority in the constituencies. I have had opportunities of knowing some of the constituencies of this country: and I ask, if you want venality, ignorance, drunkenness, and intimidation; if you want impulsive, unreflecting, violent people, where would you go to look for them—to the top or to the bottom? It is ridiculous to blink the fact that, since the Reform Act, the

[Lowe.]

great corruption has been among the voters between 20*l.* and 10*l.* rental, the 10*l.* lodging-house and beer-house keepers. Some honourable gentlemen are like the ancients, who thought the Hyperboreans were perfectly warm, because they lived beyond the north wind, when they think that if they only get a little below the 10*l.* franchise they will discover a perfectly virtuous standard. The question then becomes exceedingly simple, what sort of persons live in these small houses? We have long had experience of them under the name of "freemen"; and it would be a good thing if they were disfranchised altogether. They were dying out of themselves; but Government propose to bring them back again under another name. What good will the country at large get by this reduction of the franchise? A large addition to every constituency from that class to which we always look, if there be anything wrong going on. It will greatly increase the expense of canvassing, of elections, of electioneering. The working men, finding themselves in a clear majority, will unite to carry their own objects. When we shall have a Parliament appointed by these deteriorated constituencies, what do you expect Parliament will stop at? Parliamentary life would not be worth preserving. Look at the position Parliament will occupy. While we have not passed this Bill, we are masters of the situation. Let us pass the Bill, and we become mere Gibeonites—hewers of wood and drawers of water—rescued for a moment from slaughter, that we may prepare the Bill for re-distribution, with a threat hanging over us that, if we don't do the work, we shall be sent about our business, and make way for another Parliament.

Another feature in this Bill is, that it is merely a franchise Bill, and does not deal with re-distribution. In so framing it, Government have acted on advice given by MR. BRIGHT. That gentleman in 1859 expressed totally opposite views; but I can believe him consistent all the while, for I believe he does desire, as the great thing needful, a re-distribution of seats; but he doubts if he would obtain now such a re-distribution as he wants, and therefore, like a good workman, he says, "Let us make the tools first, and then we shall speedily construct the machine." Those tools are the House to be created by the present Bill, brought in at his own instance, excluding the re-distribution until an assembly much more democratic than the present can be brought together. We shall have an opportunity of considering the

[Lowe.]

Bill on the second reading, and I earnestly hope that honourable gentlemen will weigh what I have said. And remember, there is another principle assumed throughout MR. GLADSTONE'S speech; that you cannot possibly make constituencies too large, so long as you don't put flagrantly improper people into them: that is, I believe, a mistake. It is quite possible to make constituencies so large as to deter from sitting in this House men of moderate opinions and moderate means; so large as to divide the representation between millionaires, to whom expense is of no moment, and demagogues, who compensate for want of money by pandering to popular passions. This House has not merely to represent the people; it has also, under our happy constitution, to form that school of statesmanship through which politicians must pass to the Executive Government. By forming your House solely with a view to members and representation you destroy the element out of which your statesmen must be made. The Reform Bill of 1832 has greatly invigorated our legislation, but it may be a question whether it has been equally efficient in invigorating our Executive Government.

And, now, I will ask, what reason can possibly be alleged—the Government has given us none—for bringing in this Bill at all? Is it demanded out of doors? Has there been any energy in the demand for such a franchise? Have any petitions been presented for this Bill. I hear that four have been presented. Is it from the constituencies the pressure comes? Lord Russell himself declares that selfishness in the constituencies shuts out the working men. The constituencies then, clearly, do not want reform. Is it from this House? The same noble Lord, in answer to a deputation, said, “I anticipate the greatest difficulty from the House of Commons.” Lastly, is it from the Cabinet? Here again I call upon Lord Russell, for MR. BRIGHT has asserted that he found that noble Lord as ardent as possible for Reform, but with immense difficulties to deal with in his Cabinet.

[MR. BRIGHT denied the utterance of the speech imputed to him.]

What I have quoted I read in the “Star,” which I take in when I want information about the honourable member. It is said that it is in deference to public opinion this Bill is brought in. I have shown that it is not because the working man is excluded. MR. GLADSTONE says members on both sides are committed to Reform. Now, I apprehend that every

[Lowe.]

gentleman entering this House does so, not as Member for any particular borough or county, but as a representative of the whole country, and with an obligation, which no promise can alter, that he will to the best of his ability do his duty to the country. Then, if a gentleman by pledges has got into a situation incompatible with honour, he should get out of it. If he remain in it, he will be in that position described by one of our greatest poets,

“His honour in dishonour rooted stood,
And faith unfaithful made him falsely true.”

I have little to add in respect of the reasons for introducing this measure. The plan is to assume that there are reasons. Bring in the Bill; *solvitur ambulando*; let it walk by itself. You seldom hear a gentleman argue from the beginning so as to show why we should have Reform at all. I don't now say we should not have it; but I say you should not deal with the franchise as if it were prize-money you were going to distribute. When the common people are told there is anything to be got, they think that, as in the administration of justice, there should be equality for all; they think that Government ought to distribute everything equally as among co-partners. But that is an entire misunderstanding of the duties of a Government. Government does not deal with justice, it deals with expediency. The object is to construct the best machinery for the purpose to which it is to be applied, and in doing so we may violate any law of symmetry, equality, or distributive justice. The real object of this Bill being to alter the constitution of, and re-distribute power in, this House, I think Government ought to commence by examining the state of the House, wherein it has succeeded, and wherein it has failed. Then improve the good, if they can, and remedy the bad. Government not having taken this trouble, but having rather mixed their drugs, without looking at their patient, let us try for ourselves that difficult thing “to see ourselves as others see us.” I think we may say without self-praise, that this House holds—not only in England, but throughout the world—a position far above that held by any other deliberative assembly which ever existed. It is more respected all over the world; its debates are more read; and they exercise more influence on mankind than those of assemblies infinitely more popular. I may go further and say that it has discharged its principal functions—those of finance—with greater success than any other deliberative

[Lowe.]

assembly. Of course it is not perfect: nothing human is. I know there is a clamour that the poor man is not represented in this House; but can any one say that the interests of the poor are neglected here. I will not say what this House has done in legislation: I said it last year, and I will not repeat it. This House is also one of the most orderly of deliberative assemblies: it is independent, free from corruption, industrious. These are great merits. Will the Government proposal leave all these things as it finds them? As the polypus takes its colour from the rock to which it fixes, so do the members of this House take their character from the constituencies. If you lower the constituencies, you lower the representatives, you lower the character of the House. You will find that result in all the assemblies of Australia and North America. But this House, like all human institutions, possesses imperfections, and I will point out one or two of them. A great change, operating unnoticed since 1832, is that the House is much nearer its constituents and much more influenced by them. Formerly there was a great gulf between a man and his constituents: now by railway and telegraph they can communicate with their members, and it has happened before now, that in the course of a debate a member's vote has been changed by instructions from his supporters. This is the less informed, who have not heard all the arguments, correcting the better informed, who has. Would more democratic constituencies be more or less tolerant of the adverse opinions of their honest and able representative who does not follow their whim of the moment? Then, once more, there is the relation between this House and the Executive Government. Working together they are invaluable: the House derives support from having a Government to lead it, and access of dignity and power from being able to interrogate the Ministers of the Crown, the fountains of all political information. Ministers sit in this House and are a part of it: they and it gain infinitely by contact with each other, and anything tending to sever the connexion between them must be dangerous and most mischievous. The first Reform Bill, how successful soever in legislation, has not been equally so in this matter. It has been painful to observe the growing weakness of the Executive. Formerly motions for papers or inquiry would be resisted and refused if inexpedient; but what Minister now ventured to refuse? The whole machinery of Government has fallen too much

[Lowe.]

into the hands of this House, and, if the process continues, the result must be to transfer the responsibility from Ministers to the House of Commons. These things are matters of very serious importance. You know that the wise men who founded the Constitution of America foresaw that, with its democratic foundation, it would be absolutely impossible to have the English system; so they established a system under which the Executive Government and the Legislature should exist for a different period of years, and should be elected by different authorities, in order that they might have no point of contact with each other. The feebleness which that quality imparted to the Executive and Legislature in America may be seen in the discord now likely to break out between the head of the Executive and the Legislature. Now that was a state of things which could not exist for a moment in this country. If the House means to retain its influence over the Executive, it must beware of putting itself on too democratic a base. In proportion as it does it will lose the power of working the existing system, until at last it will be driven, as Australia and other Colonies have been driven, to appoint the Executive for a number of years certain, whether in harmony or not with the Legislature. Now with America and Australia as examples before us, is it wise to push forward in the same direction?

Then, again, elections become day by day more expensive. I refer, of course, to legitimate expenses. It is not difficult to account for this. A torrent of wealth is flowing into the country, and persons naturally seek a seat in this House, for purposes political or non-political. There are, for instance, representatives of great companies and great interests, and gentlemen wishing to get into society under the stimulus of their wives and daughters. This is a serious matter, because it is only through this House the most important members of Government can enter the Government, and if you require, in addition to the immense labour and vicissitudes of public life, that aspirants for office shall expend more in conciliating electors than they will receive from the public, you will make public life impossible to the class of men which you wish to have. How long will the small boroughs exist with a democratic constitution?—those small boroughs about which MR. GLADSTONE made so eloquent a speech in 1859, and which sent to Parliament such men as Chatham, Pitt, Fox, Canning, and Peel. And

Lowe.]

how, when these boroughs are thrown away, will you supply their places? Unless, like the American Congress, you desire to dissolve your connection with the Executive altogether, it is necessary that these be kept up, or other means devised to bring about the same result. Then there is the private business of the House, when we are supposed to be investigating the schemes of people who have raised capital to carry them out, whereas often they are schemes got up by people with no capital at all, in order that they may sell the approval of this House on the Stock Exchange. Then, again, there are other affairs equally unpleasant, such as Government subsidies of different kinds. I wish an end could be put to these things: but do you think that by lowering the franchise you will redress any of these evils? Is it our experience, looking at America, that democratic institutions render people jealous of the moral character of their representatives? I believe that while the Government Bill, now proposed, would fail to alleviate any of these evils, there is not a single merit in our present constitution, which it would not injuriously affect. Let Government tell us what are the faults of the House of Commons, and how the measure will remedy those faults, rather than fling the measure on the table and say that we must adopt it, without hearing one reason for or against a state of things which has existed so long and so happily. It has been said that precisely the same arguments have been used now as in 1832. Now the arguments against Reform in 1832 were excellent, only they did not conform to the facts of the case. Is the present instance in the same category? The controversy in 1832 was perfectly defined. Did the system then existing work well or not? The country decided, I think very rightly, that it did not. But that is not the controversy now. The point in dispute is, admitting the system to work well, ought we not still to alter it? Again, the grievance complained of in 1832 was a practical grievance.

There is no grievance now but a theoretical grievance. And is this to be any settlement of the question? Why, it is improbable this Bill alone could be settled this session. It would then be argued over again next session. Then we are promised Bills for Scotland and Ireland; then three Re-distribution Bills; then a Boundary Bill; then a Registration Bill; and lastly, an Anti-corruption Bill. Thus the settlement promised is really a revision of our whole electoral system in a series of nine difficult Bills. Sup-

[Lowe.]

posing the Bills are passed, as they will be passed, if at all, in deference to mere numbers at the expense of property and intelligence; in deference to democratic passion, disguised under a love of symmetry and equality; still you will leave inequalities enough to stir this passion anew. The grievances being theoretical, and not practical, will survive as long as practice does not conform to theory; and practice will never conform to theory until you have universal suffrage and equal electoral districts. I say, therefore, there is no element of finality in this measure; and I shall guide my own vote with reference to its influences on the good or bad working of the House of Commons, and not with reference to any theories about the ideal of good government. Well, the right honourable gentleman, who had not time to give us a reason for introducing the Bill, found time to give us a quotation, and it was a quotation of a very curious kind, because, not finding in his large classical *repertoire* any quotation that would exactly describe the state of perfect bliss to which his Bill would introduce us, he was induced to take the exact contrary, and make a quotation to show us what his Bill was not.

“Scandit fatalis machina muros,

“Fœta armis,”

he exclaimed, “and that,” he added, “is not my Bill.” Well, that was a very apt quotation, but there was a curious felicity about it which he little dreamt of. The House remembers that among other proofs of the degree in which public opinion is enlisted in the cause of Reform was this,—that this is now the fifth Reform Bill that has been brought in since 1851. Now, just attend to the sequel of the passage quoted by the right honourable gentleman. I am no believer in *sortes Virgilianæ*, and the House will see why in a moment:—

“O Divûm domus Ilium, et inclÿta bello

“Mœnia Dardanidûm! quater ipso in limine portæ

“Substitit, atque utero sonitum quater arma dedère.”

But that is not all:—

“Instamus tamen inmemorès, cœcique furore,

“Et monstrum infelix sacratâ sistimus arce.”

Well, I abominate the presage contained in the last two lines, but I mix my confidence with fear. The intentions of the new Parliament are hidden in the future. It may be that they will take the advice tendered with so much eloquence and authority by my right honourable friend. It may

[Lowe.]

be that we are destined to avoid this enormous danger. But it may be otherwise; and all I can say is, that if my right honourable friend does succeed in carrying this measure through Parliament, when the passions and interests of the day are gone by, I do not envy his retrospect. I covet not a single leaf of the laurels that may encircle his brow. I do not envy him his triumph. His be the glory of carrying it, mine be the glory of having, to the utmost of my poor ability, resisted it.

The Right Honourable CHARLES PELHAM VILLIERS.—I think we ought to endeavour to regard ourselves as the world regards us. The view taken outside of this House is not one of trust or confidence in the sentiments of Members who speak upon these questions. It is notorious that the subject we are now discussing is one on which the House of Commons is not trusted. Wherever you go it is a common belief that this Bill will be thrown out by the House, because its object is to reform the House itself. MR. LOWE says that MR. GLADSTONE gave no reason for this measure. Yes; he gave a reason which was founded on the honour, morality, and respectability of every one of those Ministers who have at different times advised Her Majesty that the representation required amendment. MR. LOWE'S alarm at the change now proposed is the more remarkable, because in 1859 his name is found in the majority which asserted that no Reform would be satisfactory which did not reduce the franchise. All the evils in the management of this House—all the wild statements made at public meetings, are quoted now against a reduction of the franchise. MR. LOWE lives in dread of democracy, and he regards with the greatest apprehension anything tending to increase the influence of the people. Now, what has he been doing himself? What has this House been doing? What levels the distinction between classes? What are the greatest distinctions? Ignorance and poverty on one side, station and knowledge on the other. And what has he been trying to do? Why, to promote the education of the people. Why does he not argue, then, against education? Clever men, in this House and out of it, predicted the disturbance of all the relations of society from educating the lower classes. The next thing likely to improve the people was the removal of the restraints upon industry. MR. LOWE advocated that removal. These are things to establish equality. The people have now more intelligence and education than they ever had before. Where

[Villiers.]

is the evidence of their bad intentions? Where are their public speeches against the Crown, the Church, the House of Lords, and other institutions of the country? Who will not say that our institutions are more secure, in proportion as the people have become free and intelligent, and believe that more justice has been done to them? Lord Russell had said that in 1832 the franchise was placed higher than the then Government considered necessary. It is not a secret that Mr. LOWE and Mr. WALPOLE were both in favour of an 8*l*. franchise; and yet the former entertains all these terrors and alarms about our proposed 7*l*. one. To show how far evil predictions on these subjects are verified, I can quote passages from the speeches of Lord Kingsdown, the late Sir Robert Inglis, Mr. Croker, and Sir John Malcolm on the great Reform Act, showing the terrible results that were expected from that event, and how signally such predictions have failed. Now, in contrast to these unfulfilled prophesies I can quote what, in 1832, fell from another hon. Member for Calne. I mean Lord Macaulay, who said, among other pertinent things, that "he did not support that Bill because he thought that democratic institutions were best for all ages and all countries, but because he thought that a more popular constitution than that which then existed in this country, and in the then age, would produce good government." I agree with those authorities who say that we ought to be guided by the consideration of what is suitable for our time and country. The people do not deserve the slurs Mr. LOWE has cast upon them. Everybody knows what sufferings have been borne, with the greatest patience and fortitude, by the people of Lancashire under the sore trial of the cotton famine. That excellent behaviour was partly attributable to their superior knowledge (as compared with the upper classes) of the merits of the American war question. Nothing could induce them to swerve from the absolute principle of neutrality, and they were ready deliberately to undergo any suffering rather than that the Government should intervene in that great contest. I do not think there is any good ground for saying that this measure is too narrow in its scope, and ought to be more comprehensive in character. On four distinct occasions a measure comprehending too much has been brought in, and failed. I know of nothing opposed to precedent in introducing a measure not in itself complete. Parliamentary Reform has been treated during the last fifteen years in its

Villiers.] I

separate branches. We have had separate Bills for England, Scotland, and Ireland; by a distinct Act the property qualification for members was changed, by another abolished. There has been one Act on registration, one on the rating of compound householders, another on the period of polling, another on the polling places, another for the punishment of corruption; by a distinct Act, Sudbury and St. Alban's were disfranchised; by another, the Representatives of Yorkshire and Lancashire increased. MR. LAING did not, like MR. LOWE, deprecate all Reform action; but considered that we ought to deal with the re-distribution of seats first. Well, that is a nice question, and altogether of policy. Every great measure yet brought forward has met with similar violent opposition; and often the very men thus violently opposing have themselves been advocates of the measure on a subsequent occasion. Are honourable Members aware what rejecting this measure really signifies? Is it that the people must resort to other than constitutional means? We have the power now of passing a measure which the people of this country will accept, though not all that they desire.

MR. R. N. PHILLIPS.—I come to this House not by reason of pledges, but because my constituents, among whom my life has been passed, believe that I shall uphold their rights. Viewing the difficulty of passing any measure of Reform through this House, I thank the Government for their proposal, which, if passed, will add a large number of people to the franchise. Under it my electors in Bury will be raised from 1,300 by an addition of 400; and I shall feel my position strengthened by representing so increased a number. I also thank the Government for their dealing with the county franchise, which, though some would have preferred a 10% franchise, is both bold and fair.

MR. LEATHAM.—Taken as a whole, I believe the Bill will give great satisfaction, and it will have my hearty support; as I am convinced it will meet with the approval of the industrious, loyal, and contented people of this country. I have always wished to see the working classes fairly represented; and I am quite content with the proposed addition of 144,000 to the electoral roll. Had the measure gone further there might have been a difficulty in dealing with them, owing to their large numbers. There were mistakes in the computation of the working men said to be now enfranchised, as many were wrongly included as working

[Leatham.]

men who, although working themselves, were actually employers of labour. I protest against the time of the House being occupied, as last night, by personal attacks; members who have sat long in the House should set a better example to the new members.

MR. ARTHUR W. PEEL.—The opponents of the Bill array themselves into three classes. The first, under Mr. Lowe, contend for “No franchise under 10%,” but in reality object to any extension of the franchise at all. A second class oppose the Bill because it does not go far enough. While the third class of opponents hold that it is not sufficiently comprehensive. Now, had I had the framing of the Bill, I would have had a 10% franchise in counties and a 6% franchise in boroughs; but that is not reason enough to induce me to oppose the whole Bill. As regards the boroughs I shall be content with the 7% rental franchise as a settlement of the question for years to come. The redistribution of seats and the machinery of elections demand, however, speedy legislation. My borough (Warwick) illustrates the decrease of the proportion of working men in the franchise, as pointed out by MR. GLADSTONE. In 1832 the electors were 1,300, now there are but 760, yet the population has increased from 9,000 to 10,000. An objection raised to admitting the working classes to the franchise on the ground that it is the thin edge of the wedge, which would lead to absolute democracy, is a fallacy; for it presupposes that the working men move as one great and united body. In canvassing Coventry in 1862, amid great social distress, I found the greatest diversity of political opinion among the electors, as great as between the Ministry and the Opposition, and yet 70 per cent. of them belonged to the working classes. I am convinced that the working classes are as capable of exercising the suffrage honestly and independently as any that now possess it. Looking to the substantial merits of the Bill, I will adopt every means to promote its success.

MR. ALLEN.—The Bill meets the general approval of honourable Members on the Ministerial side of the House, and doubtless of the great mass of the people of the country. The simple question is, Shall we trust the people or shall we not? Mr. LOWE thinks not. In my borough (Newcastle-under-Lyme), working men constitute 60 per cent. of the electoral body, and during my canvass I was astonished at the intelligence, political knowledge, and good conduct they

[Allen.]

displayed. The experience of the last few months has convinced me that there is, on the part of the working classes, a deep-settled determination to have their just rights; and unless this Bill be passed, Parliament will soon be compelled, by irresistible force, to pass a more sweeping measure.

MR. SCHREIBER.—I must ask for more figures. The Government have gone to rate-books in quest of political wisdom which was from below. I now invite them to a little upward research. I appeal to Members on both sides of the House, whether we are not lamentably ignorant of the constitution of our present constituencies? Do we know where the real power now resides? The history of 1852 would suggest that the political masters lived in houses rented at less than 20*l.*, but we have no certain information. Such information would now possess an important practical bearing. It is impossible to estimate the effect of proposed changes without knowing the precise analysis of the present constituency. I desire also to know in what proportion the voters on the existing register are assessed to property and income-tax. Until this information be given, I must adhere to the opinion that the House has been invited to approach the question upon most inadequate and imperfect knowledge.

MR. LONG.—The measure is incomplete and unsatisfactory. In former measures, as in 1859, an educational franchise was included, but none now. There is no step taken to re-arrange the limits of boroughs, so as to make the constituents within them fairer samples of the various classes of the community. The Bill is either a sham or a reality. If a sham, it is unworthy of support from any quarter; if a reality, it can only form part of a great scheme, which the House should have before it in its entirety. I protest against this presentation of a mere instalment; and, as a measure tending to interfere prejudicially with institutions of which this House is the guardian, I am opposed to its provisions.

MR. MELLER.—I do not think it well that institutions, which have stood the test of time, should be lightly abandoned; nor, so far as I can see, is there now any good reason for the proposed change. I have heard of no grievance with which the House, as now constituted, is incompetent to deal. Would an extension of the franchise have prevented Fenianism? I believe that fully 26 per cent. of the working

[Meller.]

classes are now represented, and that the electoral system, despite some anomalies, fairly reflects the national interests. MR. GLADSTONE called the 14*l.* occupation franchise in counties a middle class enfranchisement; but I doubt if these 14*l.* voters would have much sympathy with land, while the leasehold and copyhold tenures would be biassed rather by borough than county influences. As to the savings bank franchise, as an advocate of provident prudence, I cannot see why the claims of those with money in the funds should be ignored. The proposal that a man paying 4*s.* a week for lodgings should obtain the franchise, I consider a most democratic and revolutionary measure. I myself possess some flats let out in the way described, and so far from being occupied by the middle classes, they are entirely occupied by artizans. Assuming that the tendency of all these contemplated changes is democratic, democracy we know leads not to liberty, but to its very opposite. I should welcome to the constituency the proposed new comers did I not consider that they would disturb the equilibrium of the State. MR. GLADSTONE bids us not to be alarmed, and alludes to the wooden horse. I answer in few words—

Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.

MR. ACLAND.—I regret that some professed Liberals have stabbed the Government measure from the rear. I was a follower of the late Sir Robert Peel, but my convictions have moved on. During eighteen years' absence from Parliament I have studied the unrepresented classes. This matter should not now be trifled with by friend or foe. We shall be safe in trusting the people, and this House will fail in its duty unless it ally itself with popular sympathies, and give the working classes that increased representation to which their intelligence and education entitle them. I think the Bill is a fair measure of relief to the working class, but I regret that it includes none of the "fancy" franchises. I should have been pleased to see a franchise created in connection with provident societies and benefit clubs. I think education, well used, should be a qualification. The lodger franchise is good. I consider the measure, on the whole, a reasonable solution of one important branch of Reform.

The Right Honourable JAMES WHITESIDE.—The no-principle of this Bill is beginning to be understood, and when Mr. ACLAND said he would leave it to be discussed by the Opposition he forgot that the debate has been carried on

[Whiteside.]

by gentlemen on the Ministerial side, scarcely an observation having been made by us on a motion, which we are of course anxious to discuss, but which we naturally suppose must be best understood by gentlemen on the Ministerial side. No one has risen on the Treasury bench since Mr. GLADSTONE, except Mr. VILLIERS, who has shown in what thorough contempt he holds the British constitution. What does he mean by it being the first duty of the House to fix the number of voters and then to distribute members among them? Is it that we are to upset everything in the country? However, Mr. VILLIERS' speech seemed to come more from the scissors than the head. What is the use of quoting speeches made forty years ago? It would be better for present Ministers to prove the necessity on present grounds for their proposed measure. I deny that Members on this side of the House are opposed to an extension of the franchise, but we are opposed to a measure of this nature—unsettling everything and settling nothing. I recollect MR. BAINES' Franchise Bill, which MR. GLADSTONE complimented, and then recommended to be withdrawn. I would ask MR. LOCKE KING what sort of support Lord Palmerston gave his 10% county franchise. The noble lord's speech in reference to that subject was a charming example of the way in which a politic Minister could say obliging things to the honourable gentleman and then snuff him out. That is the sort of support the Cabinet have given for four or five years to earnest men who brought forward measures of reform. I am not impressed with the sincerity of Ministers who pursue that course. MR. GLADSTONE works practically with the Rule of Three, and does with figures what he pleases. I distrust his figures very much. When supporting MR. BAINES' bill, he asserted as a fact "that the influences of the working classes was almost infinitesimal in the franchise of the country." It now appears that the working classes represent 26 per cent. of the borough constituency, and MR. LOWE has shown, in a speech which has not been answered, that the causes which have operated to give the working classes such a share now do and must continue to operate to increase it. To say that a sufficient number of working men are represented, but are unequally distributed over the country, is to prove nothing, because our system of representation never was that men should be equally represented all over the country. MR. LAING's speech was wise, politic, and constitutional. He proved to demonstration

[Whiteside.]

that if the inequalities of the electoral system demanded that the settlement of 1832 should be reopened, the inequalities in the representation of particular boroughs, cities, and counties, were far greater than any inequalities in the electoral body itself. Is it true that Ministers could not bring in a complete measure? If not, it proves either Ministerial imbecility or Ministerial dishonesty. To show that the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER has not the least atom of foundation for what he has said, I will recall the scope of the Reform Bill introduced in 1859 by Lord Derby's Government. Now the whole nine questions held before us for future torture are all disposed of in it, including enfranchisement and disfranchisement. I would remind Mr. LAING that Honiton, the borough he mentioned, was dealt with. That Bill proposed to favour Birkenhead and Staleybridge; to divide the West Riding into three divisions, and Middlesex into two. It provided complete systems of registration and polling, and disposed of the whole question of the right of voting. Thus all the points introduced by Mr. GLADSTONE with such pomp as subjects for nine separate measures were disposed of in one Bill, which Lord Russell helped to strangle. No one can believe that it would have been impossible now to introduce a complete measure. It is given us in fragments in deference to Mr. BRIGHT. I believe in that gentleman's sincerity, and never more than when he remarked that there are three things to be done. First, to get an extension of the franchise, and rest awhile; next, the ballot; and after that, a re-distribution of seats. The design is the thing to look to: if it were accomplished we should be to all purposes a democracy. I do not mean that the form of the Constitution would be abolished; but that the entire power of the State would be lodged in this House; the House of Lords would be a pleasant so-so sort of a place; the Crown, a myth.

I have something to say on the 40s. franchise. Lord Derby's Bill proposed to abolish the county votes of 40s. freeholders in boroughs, on the ground that those who lived in counties should vote for the counties alone, and those in boroughs for the boroughs alone. What was the 40s. franchise when created? 40s. in that day were worth as much as 40l. now. In olden times they had no idea of a man having a vote unless he had sufficient property to insure an interest in the stability of the country. And now it is proposed to aggravate the anomaly which time has produced in this originally

Whiteside.]

sound arrangement. I do not know what is intended for Ireland, but presume it is to lower the franchise. At present we have a good constituency in the 8*l.* rating in boroughs and 12*l.* rating in counties. The Scotch representation is also left in obscurity.

The belief that these measures can be taken *seriatim* seems most unphilosophical, when we consider how delicate a subject is the constitution of the country. I defy any man to tell the result of adding 400,000 to the present constituency; yet we are invited to introduce them first, and then ascertain the consequences. That seems impolitic, unless we at the same time deal with the re-distribution. Giving the working classes the franchise will not elevate them. They must elevate themselves as others have done: and we must hold out the franchise above them as an inducement to raise themselves to its standard. I am satisfied that the constitution of this country stands on a sound and satisfactory basis, and I hope that this Parliament will prove themselves the faithful, wise, and fearless guardians of the blessings which we now enjoy.

MR. FAWCETT.—If, in the least degree, I represent the working classes, I am happy to say that I accept this measure thankfully, and will do all in my power to give it a most cordial support. The arguments and reasoning of MR. LOWE, acute and profound though they be, will fail to convince me, and influence the country, unless he can answer me one question—did not he join the combination which declared that no Government was worthy the confidence of this country, unless it reduced the borough franchise? That combination was a factious one, based on insincerity. Also did not Mr. LOWE become a Member of the Government which came into power expressly for the purpose of carrying an extension of the suffrage? In 1860, did not the Right Hon. Gentleman acquiesce by his silence in a measure wider than the present one proposed? Did he less know then the evils of the course? He had then, as now, read his *Bentham*, and his *Aristotle*; had seen Australia and witnessed the democracy of that country. Now, within the last four years an event had occurred, in itself a more unanswerable argument in favour of the suffrage than fifty volumes of statistics. An important branch of industry has been paralyzed; an important section of our labouring population reduced from comparative affluence to the depths of destitution and distress. They had shown no deficiency in social virtue; but

[Fawcett.]

a manly independence. It had been said that the Lancashire operatives would rise, and insist upon the raising of the blockade; but they nobly preferred and bore all their misfortunes rather than that the evils of slavery should be continued. Mr. MARSH has bid us look at Australia! Do so, and see the results of democracy. Had I been there, as the Hon. Member has been, and met with great pecuniary success; if I knew, as he knows, that property in that country was as secure, and the laws as well and justly administered as at home; I should know better than to speak of the people as if they were a nation of bandits. Look to Australia with its popular institutions? Why, Australia does not yield even to this country in its loyalty to our beloved Queen. The people there are free, happy, and wealthy; and have not, as we have, a burden of destitution to support. Now, Mr. LAING and Mr. LOWE said plainly that wherever in a constituency there were most working men, there also was most bribery. I do not represent a small borough, but a peculiarly working man's constituency. Mr. LOWE has also said that if the working men were increased, it would be impossible for any but a rich man to get into the House. I am averse to entering on personal history; but I feel bound to give evidence upon this subject. I went to the borough I now represent an unknown man, without a single friend. I told the electors at once that I was an exceedingly poor man; that I could not afford to employ a single paid agent or canvasser; that all my income was obtained by intellectual exertion in a fair, open field. I have not promised to subscribe a single shilling to any of their institutions, and the only pledge I gave was that I would give up my whole time and energies to the discharge of my Parliamentary duties. There were 2,000 working men in Brighton, and nine-tenths of that body, or more, voted for me on the terms I have stated. Now, I will challenge Mr. LAING, a gentleman having great commercial eminence, and doubtless vast wealth, to go down to Brighton and squander his gold; but, as long as I do my duty, I defy him to shake the humblest, lowest, poorest man who voted in my favour.

It is frequently stated that the working classes, if admitted to the franchise, would overwhelm every other class by voting *en masse*. Why should they so vote? On questions which affect them, the working classes are as much divided in opinion as any other classes. It is a mistake to suppose

[Fawcett.]

that every Hon. gentleman, who professed to represent peculiarly the working classes, was admired or trusted by them. With what favour would those who desire an extension of the Factory Act look upon Mr. BRIGHT, and members like him, who had opposed the passing of those Acts? I think those who call for a complete measure of Reform do so because they are not very anxious for any measure of Reform at all. Finally, I welcome a Bill which adds to the electors 400,000 independent, intelligent, patriotic men.

MR. BRIGHT.—Although during this debate the subject of much unusual attack, I have not risen to defend myself, for I leave my course in this House, and my political character, to the impartial view of Members, and the just judgment of my countrymen outside. Nor do I rise to defend the Bill, but to explain what I understand it to be, and the grounds upon which it appeals to us for support. What it proposes to do it does distinctly, and without tricks, not giving in one clause and withdrawing in another. Every admirer of the Bill of 1832 should support that part of the Bill which removes the legal obstacles by which many intended to have been enfranchised in 1832 have up to this time been deprived of their votes. The Reform Act proposed to give a vote to every 10*l.* occupier of a house in a borough. Owing partly to the wording of the Act, partly to the decisions of judges and courts, this extension of the franchise was never complete; and by the operation of clauses which made it necessary that the occupier should himself pay rates, many thousands will have been disfranchised to this hour. With regard to the county franchise, I think the Government have displayed great feebleness. While reducing the franchise they should not have stopped at 14*l.*, but should go down to 10*l.* Lord STANLEY and Mr. DISRAELI brought in a Reform Bill containing some good and some bad things; and one of its propositions was a 10*l.* county franchise. They believed, and no doubt believe now, that 10*l.* is a proper franchise for counties in England and Wales, and I shall be glad to see them consistent by proposing in Committee to alter this 14*l.* to 10*l.* Many of us in this part of the House will give them our most cordial support. I can promise, too, that Mr. LOWE will go with them, for he has fixed his affection on a 10*l.* franchise, and if he approve that sum for a borough he can hardly deny it to the county, where the 10*l.* householder is usually in better circumstances than in the borough. Again, I have heard from Irish members that a 12*l.* rating franchise (equiva-

[Bright.]

lent I presume to a 14*l.* rental franchise) works well in Irish counties. We then come to the only point on which there can be difference of opinion, and I think the world has never seen before an assembly of 500 or 600 intelligent gentlemen so excite themselves over the simple question whether the franchise in boroughs shall remain at 10*l.* or be fixed for a time at 7*l.* I should be very happy if the working classes could surmount this barrier of 7*l.*, and if that should ultimately be found equal to a household suffrage. But can any gentleman suppose that this or any such measure can be final? We must have a poor notion of what our children will be, if we think that they will not be as able to decide the future of this question as we are its present.

In addition, the Bill proposes a lodger or tenement occupation franchise. Mr. DISRAELI proposed something of the same kind, but fixed the amount at 20*l.*, while this Bill makes it 10*l.*, being nearly the same for a holding of that kind that 7*l.* would be for a house. Some one has said, and many have written, that this Bill is my Bill, and that the Government have adopted a Bill on my recommendation. Now, I cannot find a point in this Bill which is as I recommended. I never was in favour of a 6*l.* franchise, and should never have proposed it. I believe in a household franchise for the boroughs of this country. A 7*l.* franchise is a proposition which I never said one syllable in favour of, and it never entered my mind that Government would split hairs in this fashion. But, now, here it is offered, and unfortunate beggars in the House, as outside it, cannot be choosers. Government have been splitting hairs between 6*l.* and 7*l.*; I hope the Opposition will not split hairs between 7*l.* and 8*l.*, to which latter figure Mr. HENLEY and Mr. WALPOLE are, I believe, attached; for considering the expectation of the country it would be very ungracious in them not to concede the 1*l.*, in answer to the concession of 1*l.* that I make.

Mr. LOWE regards the 10*l.* franchise as the salvation of the country. I do not know whether he would think 9*l.* perilous, or 8*l.* of doubtful utility; but a 7*l.* franchise he regards as actually destructive of the institutions of the country. I never knew a more appalling and gloomy picture of the condition of this House and of the country that that Hon Member drew, and the whole foundation is that Government propose to introduce a franchise into boroughs 1*l.* lower than that recommended by Messrs. WALPOLE and HENLEY. If gentlemen opposite make it impossible to get this suffrage

[Bright.]

question out of the way during the present session, I think they will live to regret the course they have taken.

There is one other proposition—the savings-bank franchise. I think that Mr. DISRAELI had something like it in his Bill. Now I conscientiously think that such a franchise is the very worst of all the fancy franchises that ever were proposed. It is unequal in the last degree and, besides, the source of every kind of fraud. I agree with Mr. LAING, who asked why 50*l.* in a savings bank should give a better position than an equal sum fairly invested in any kind of property. For many a good action a man may have to withdraw 5*l.* and lose his vote, while the less heroic man would retain his money and his vote. It will lead to great frauds, because the members of a family will enter their money in the name of one member of it, in order to give him a vote.

I have now gone through the Bill and I ask Hon. Members what they think of it? Mr. GLADSTONE tells us that in England and Wales there are 5,500,000 grown men, and that under this Bill there will be 1,300,000 electors. It will leave 4,000,000 grown men without the franchise; of those he says 330,000 will be working men. This I think an exaggerated statement, for he includes 60,000 who now live in 10*l.* houses and, moreover, every occupier between 10*l.* and 7*l.* There is no one in this House who has not been astonished to hear how many working men there are said to be in the present constituency. Half this statement is a delusion of the most transparent kind. I know from experience that in a good many boroughs it is so.

In 1859, I find Mr. LOWE, in an election speech, saying that it was “the duty of Government to prepare a measure of Reform.”—The right hon. gentleman has a very short memory, or else he trifles with the House. Is it conceivable that the man who so spoke in 1859, can have made such a speech as we have just heard? Has absence from office produced this curious effect? I don't complain that men are so fond of office, though I cannot understand why they should be. But if I may be allowed to parody one or two lines of the stanza in one of the most beautiful poems in our language, I might ask—

“For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
That pleasing, anxious office e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the Treasury,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?”

What I do complain of—and it is a fair complaint—is this that

[Bright.]

when place recedes into the somewhat dim past, that which when they were in office was deemed patriotism vanishes with it. Now Mr. LOWE, who had his head broken at Kidderminster, left that place and went to Calne, a village somewhere in the West of England, where he found 174 electors, about seven of whom were working men.—Now the tumult there was worse in a legal point of view even than at Kidderminster, for the mob of that little village shut the police force up in the Town-Hall and had the whole game in their own hands. Mr. LOWE's nominal constituency is those 174 electors; but his real constituency is one Member of the House of Parliament, who could have sent here his butler or his groom. Now, let us not take the disparaging view of our countrymen offered by Mr. LOWE and Mr. MARSH, who, perhaps from their associations at the Antipodes, seem to take only a Botany Bay view of the subject. Now, is it not inconceivably better to show trust in the people; for of all the follies, all the crimes, which individuals commit, that of constant distrust of their fellow subjects, of all the citizens of the country, is about the wildest and most foolish. The Duke of Wellington had defied the Reform agitation of his time: three days after—fearless and honest, as he was—he had to resign. The statesmen of the time of Charles I upheld household suffrage. Lord Somers maintained later that by birth every Englishman was entitled to a vote. Now, if this Bill be rejected, you will show that you are against all Reform; whereas, if it passes you will show that you are not cut off altogether from sympathy with your people. Unless you moderate your views with regard to the great bulk of the working classes, you will find your country gradually weakened by a constantly increasing emigration; for working men know the advantages, social and political, of colonial and American life. I give the Bill my support; because, as far as it goes, it is a simple and honest measure, and because I believe that, if it becomes law, it will give some solidity and duration to everything that is good in the Constitution and to everything that is noble in the character of the people of these realms.

VISCOUNT CRANBOURNE.—We have witnessed to-night what may be called a lover's quarrel between Mr. BRIGHT and the Chancellor of [the Exchequer. No deep wound was inflicted; but just such kind and gentle censure has been administered as will cover the pretence of there being a difference between them, and will serve to dis-

[Cranbourne.]

guise those common and conjoint intrigues which have been the occupation of the winter. In main points, however, Government have scrupulously followed Mr. BRIGHT's dictation. Mr. GLADSTONE has passed through many phases of character; but there is one golden link that connects them all, and that is his persistent, undying, hatred of the rural interest. The counties now have two grievances: first, the number of their representatives is inadequate as compared to the boroughs; secondly, their rural votes are swamped by the urban votes of unrepresented towns among them. This state of things must be infinitely aggravated by the proposed Bill, and in more than a quarter of the counties of England the county representation must be turned into an urban representation. If there is to be a Re-distribution Bill, it ought to come side by side with the Franchise Bill, in order that we may see the bearings of one upon the other. Referring to statistics, I find that in seven boroughs, which have thirteen members, the working class are in a majority with a 10% franchise; in twenty-two boroughs, with forty members, they have it at 8%; and in forty-seven boroughs, with eighty members, at 7%. Therefore, according to the Government statistics, if this Bill pass, there will be 133 members at the absolute disposal of the working classes. You will say that that of the 334 English borough members this will leave 201 middle class members against these 138 working class members. Yes; but now turn to the re-distribution. Almost all the places likely to be disfranchised are on the middle class side of the account, and not on the working class side. By the proposal of 1854, fifty-five middle class seats were to have been taken from boroughs. This would have transferred the majority to the working class members. With this prospect before us, we have a right to ask for some consideration for a class not thought much of now—owners of property. We often hear of the anomaly of the working classes being unrepresented: we hear little of the anomaly that wealth and property are practically unrepresented. The whole centre of gravity of the Constitution now is placed on voters between 30% and 40%. If you correct anomalies correct them fairly and fully. The chief function of this House is the management of finance, and one would suppose that he who contributes 10,000*l.* a year, should have a larger voice in the management than he whose contribution is but 10*l.* But no! you allow your policy to be regulated entirely by those who pay smaller sums. Now, practically.

what are the demands of the working-men? They have stated them for themselves at public meetings. They demand manhood suffrage, and without any long waiting for it; that work be provided for all men willing to work. Why, this is a reproduction of the *ateliers nationaux* of the French Revolution. If this Bill pass, Mr. BRIGHT, or some keener demagogue who may supplant him, will next demand still stronger democratic measures, based on these and similar demands of the working classes. If a popular storm, backed by great popular suffering, arise at any time, you must meet it with the force then at your disposal. It will not avail you to have lowered the franchise and tampered with the Constitution now. Rather economise your strength; make head against the violent impulses of the populace, and you may be able to override the tempest we are threatened with, when it shall come.

MR. JOHN HARDY.—Mr. LOWE has grown wiser as he has grown older, and Mr. GLADSTONE never made a more constitutional speech than some years ago, in defence of small boroughs. I am not ashamed to represent a small borough, and I enter this House in a more independent position than those returned by large constituencies, and pledged to support a Reform Bill. The present measure begins at the wrong end. I would have supported a re-distribution Bill. Mr. GLADSTONE considers that a 6l. franchise would swamp the constituencies, and yet he goes within 1l. of that dangerous limit. I am not against extending the franchise, but I am against lowering it; and I will give my most hearty opposition to the Bill of the Government.

MR. HIBBERT.—I consider that the statistics given overstate the share of the working-men in the representation. I hope Members on this side the House will be united, and enable Government no longer to dally with this question, but to carry their Bill by a large majority.

SIR RAINALD KNIGHTLY.—I move the adjournment of the Debate.

[The question of Adjournment was put, and negatived without a division.]

SIR RAINALD KNIGHTLY.—I consider that this Bill will augment the disproportionate influence of the boroughs as compared with the counties.

The Hon. W. DUNCOMBE.—I desire a return of 40s. freeholders in counties, and of how many of them belong to the working class.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.—I do not think this information can be obtained. Moreover, it would be objectless, as it is not proposed to give the working class a county franchise. As there is no desire that the debate should be adjourned, I will not trouble the House with any reply, but will merely say that the Government is quite content with the course of the discussion, and perfectly satisfied that their measure will receive full, fair, and earnest consideration at the hands of the House of Commons.

The question being put, leave was given, and the Bill, having been formally brought in by the **CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, SIR GEORGE GREY, and MR. VILLIERS,** was read a first time.

The second reading was fixed for the 12th April.

THE BILL.

A BILL TO EXTEND THE RIGHT OF VOTING AT ELECTIONS OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

Whereas it is expedient to extend the right of voting at elections of members of Parliament for counties, cities, and boroughs in England and Wales :

Be it enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :—

PRELIMINARY.

I. This Act may be cited for all purposes as “ The Franchise Act, 1866.”

II. This Act shall not apply to Scotland or Ireland, or to the University of Oxford or Cambridge.

III. The following terms shall in this Act have the meanings hereinafter assigned to them, unless there is something in the context repugnant to such construction ; that is to say—

“ Month ” shall mean calendar month.

“ Member ” shall include a knight of the shire.

“ County ” shall not include a county of a city or county of a town, but shall extend to and mean any county, riding, parts or division of a county, returning a member or members to serve in Parliament.

“ Borough ” shall extend to and mean any borough, city, place, or combination of places, not being a county as hereinbefore defined, returning a member or members to serve in Parliament, and shall include every place sharing in the election of a member for a borough.

“ Clear yearly value,” as applied to any premises, shall mean a sum equal in amount to the rent a tenant might reasonably be expected to pay by the year for such premises if let to him, he undertaking to pay all usual tenant's rates and taxes, and tithe commutation rent-charge (if any), but no deductions being made in respect of the probable annual average cost of repairs, insurance, and other expenses (if any) necessary to maintain the premises in a state to command such rent ; and for the purposes of this Act the gross estimated rental for the time being of any premises, as ascertained for the purposes of the poor rate, shall, until the contrary is proved, be deemed to be the clear yearly value of such premises.

“The Registration Acts” shall mean the Act of the sixth year of the reign of Her present Majesty, chapter 18, and the Act of the twenty-eighth year of the reign of Her present Majesty, chapter 36, and any other Acts or parts of Acts relating to the registration or qualification of persons entitled to vote at the election of members to serve in Parliament for England and Wales.

COUNTY AND BOROUGH FRANCHISES.

IV. Every man shall be entitled to be registered as a voter, and when registered to vote for a member or members to serve in Parliament for a county, who is qualified as follows, that is to say:—

1. Is of full age, and not subject to any legal incapacity; and,
2. Is on the last day of July in any year, and has during the twelve months immediately preceding, been the occupier, as owner or tenant, of premises of any tenure within the county of a clear yearly value of 14*l.* or upwards.
3. The qualifying premises must consist of a house or other building which, either alone or with land held by the occupier in the county, is of the value aforesaid, with this proviso, that where the premises consist partly of a house or other building and partly of land, the building must either be the dwelling-house of the occupier, or must itself be of a clear yearly value of 6*l.* or upwards; and,
4. Where the occupier is tenant of the qualifying premises the whole must be held under the same landlord.

V. Every man shall be entitled to be registered as a voter, and when registered to vote for a member or members to serve in Parliament for a borough, who is qualified as follows:—

1. Is of full age, and not subject to any legal incapacity; and,
2. Is on the last day of July in any year, and has during the twelve months immediately preceding, been the occupier, as owner or tenant, of premises of any tenure within the borough of the clear yearly value of 7*l.* or upwards.
3. The qualifying premises must consist of a house or other building which, either alone or with land held by the occupier within the borough, is of the value aforesaid, with this proviso, that where the premises consist partly of a house or other building and partly of land, the building must either be the dwelling-house of the occupier or must itself be of a clear yearly value of 3*l.* or upwards; and,
4. Where the occupier is tenant of the qualifying premises the whole must be held under the same landlord; and,
5. The occupier must have resided in the borough, or within seven statute miles of some part of the borough, for the six months immediately preceding the said last day of July in such year.

VI. Different premises occupied in succession by any person as owner or tenant shall have the same effect in qualifying such person to vote for a county or borough as the continued occupation of the same premises, and where premises are in the joint occupation of several persons as owners or tenants, and the aggregate value of such premises is such as, estimated according to this Act, and divided amongst the several occupiers, would, so far as the value is concerned, confer on each of them a vote, then each of such joint occupiers shall, if otherwise qualified, and subject to the conditions of this Act, be entitled to be registered as a voter, and when registered to vote at an election for any county or borough.

VII. Every man shall be entitled to be registered as a voter, and when registered to vote for a member or members to serve in Parliament for a borough, who is qualified as follows (that is to say):—

1. Is of full age, and not subject to any legal incapacity; and
2. Is on the 1st day of July in any year the occupier of lodgings within the borough, and during the twelve months immediately preceding has been in the occupation of the same lodgings, such lodgings being part of a dwelling-house, and of a clear yearly value, if let unfurnished, of 10*l.* or upwards; and

3. Has resided in such lodgings during the six months immediately preceding the said 1st day of July; and has on or before the 20th day of July in each year claimed to be registered as a voter at the next ensuing registration of voters.

VIII. Every man shall be entitled to be registered as a voter, and when registered to vote at the election of a member or members to serve in Parliament for a county or borough, who is qualified as follows (that is to say):—

1. Is of full age, and not subject to any legal incapacity; and
2. Has resided in such county or borough for a period of six months immediately preceding the 1st day of July in any year, and for the two years immediately preceding the said 1st day of July has kept a balance of not less than 50*l.* deposited in some savings-bank in his own name and for his own use; and
3. Has on or before the 20th day of July in each year claimed to be registered as a voter at the next ensuing registration of voters.

REGULATIONS AS TO RATING.

IX. In every rate made for the relief of the poor the following rule shall be observed (that is to say):—

1. Every house or other set of premises occupied by a different person as owner or tenant shall be entered separately in the rate-book, whether the owner is or is not assessed to, or has not compounded for, the rate payable in respect of such premises, and in every case the gross estimated rental, as well as the rateable value of the premises, and the name of the person occupying as owner or tenant, shall be specified.
2. Where a house or other building forms part of any premises hereby required to be separately entered, the rate-book shall, in describing the premises, specify the fact of their being such house or other building.
3. For the purposes of this section, persons occupying jointly as owners or tenants shall be dealt with as if they were one occupier, with this difference, that the names of all such occupiers shall be stated, with the addition that they are joint occupiers.
4. Every rate made for the relief of the poor shall, in addition to any other particulars which the form of making out such rate may require to be set forth, contain an account of every particular set forth in the Form marked A in the Schedule to this Act annexed, so far as the same can be ascertained.

REGISTRATION OF VOTERS.

X. The following regulations shall be observed with respect to the registration of voters:—

1. The overseers of every parish or township shall make out or cause to be made out a list of all persons on whom a right to vote in respect of the occupation of premises is conferred by this Act, in the same manner and subject to the same regulations, as nearly as circumstances admit, in and subject to which the overseers of parishes and townships in boroughs are required by the Registration Acts to make out or cause to be made out a list of all persons entitled to vote for a member or members of a borough in respect of the occupation of premises of the clear yearly value of not less than 10*l.*

2. In boroughs the claim of every person desirous of being registered as a voter for a member or members to serve for such borough in respect of the occupation of lodgings shall be in the Form marked B in the said Schedule, and have annexed thereto a declaration in the form and be certified in manner in the said Schedule mentioned, or as near thereto as circumstances admit.

3. The claim of any person desirous of being registered as a voter for a Member or Members to serve for any county or borough in respect of a qualification as a depositor in a savings bank shall be in the form marked C in the

said Schedule, or as near thereto as circumstances admit; but no such claim shall be received by the Overseers unless it have annexed thereto a certificate in the form marked D in the said Schedule, or as near thereto as circumstances admit, and signed in the case of a Post Office savings bank by some officer authorized to sign the same by the Postmaster-General; and in the case of any other savings bank, by two of the trustees or managers of such savings bank, or by some officer authorized by them.

4. The Overseers in counties and boroughs shall annually give notice requiring every person claiming to be registered in respect of a qualification to vote as a lodger or as a depositor in a savings bank to send in his claim to them, such notice to be given in the same manner, so far as circumstances admit, in which Overseers in counties give notice under the law now in force to persons desirous of being placed on the list of county voters requiring such persons to send in their claims to the Overseers.

5. Upon the receipt of a claim by a person claiming to be registered as a lodger, having annexed thereto such declaration and certified as aforesaid, or of a claim accompanied by such certificate as aforesaid, on the part of a person claiming to be registered as a depositor in a savings bank, the Overseers may make all such objections to the claim so made as Overseers in counties are empowered to make in receiving claims of voters, but, subject thereto, shall place the claimant on the list of voters for the parish or township in which the residence of the voter is situate.

6. All the provisions of the Registration Acts shall apply to voters on whom the franchise is conferred by this Act, in the same manner in all respects, so far as is practicable, as they apply to the voters in the said Acts mentioned.

7. All precepts, notices, lists of voters, registers of voters, instruments, and proceedings relating to the registration of voters, shall be altered, framed, and expressed in such manner as may be necessary for carrying into effect the provisions of this Act.

XI. Every person on whom a right of voting at an election of a Member or Members for a county or borough is conferred by this Act shall, subject to the conditions affecting his right to be registered in any year, be entitled to be registered in any register of voters to be formed for such county or borough subsequently to the 10th day of June which first happens after the passing of this Act, and shall be entitled to vote at any election of a Member or Members for such county or borough which may take place after the formation of such register.

XII. If any person whose certificate is required under this Act in support of the claim of a person to vote in respect of a qualification as depositor in a savings bank wilfully refuses to give such certificate, he shall, on summary conviction, be liable to a penalty not exceeding 5*l*.

XIII. If any person is guilty of any of the following offences, that is to say:—

1. Wilfully gives any certificate required by this Act falsely;
2. Forges, counterfeits, or alters any such certificate, or any signature thereto;
3. Knowingly makes use of, in support of a claim to vote, any false certificate, or any forged, counterfeited, or altered certificate;
4. Wilfully makes any false statement in any claim or makes any false declaration in respect of any claim made under the provisions of this Act;

Such person shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and, on being convicted thereof, shall be liable to imprisonment with hard labour for a term not exceeding two years.

AMENDMENT AND REPEAL OF ACTS.

XIV. Subject to the provisions of this Act all laws, statutes, usages, provisions, and penalties now in force respecting the registration of voters and election of Members to serve in Parliament for England and Wales shall be

and remain in full force, and apply to any persons acquiring or seeking to acquire a vote under this Act.

XV. Sections 24 and 25 of the Act of the second year of King William IV, chapter 45, shall be repealed, and in place thereof be it enacted, no person shall be entitled to be registered as a voter for a county Member or Members in respect of any premises situate in a borough if he would be entitled to be registered in respect of such premises as a voter for a Member or Members of Parliament to serve for such borough.

XVI. No person employed in any Government arsenal, dockyard, or yard, or in any factory connected with Her Majesty's army or navy, shall be capable of voting at any election of Members for the county or borough within which such arsenal, dockyard, yard, or factory is situate during the time that he is so employed, and for two months after he has quitted such employment; and the vote of such person, if given, shall be void, notwithstanding that the name of such person may have been inserted in the register in force at the time of such election.

XVII. The power of inspecting and making extracts from rate-books given by the 16th section of the Act of the 6th year of the reign of Her present Majesty, chapter 18, to any person whose name is on any list of voters for the time being for any city or borough, or who claims to have his name inserted in any such list, shall extend and be exercised to or by any person whose name is on any list of voters for the time being for any county, or to or by any person who claims to have his name inserted in such list.

XVIII. Every person claiming to vote as a depositor in a savings bank shall vote at the booth at which he would vote if he were registered as a voter in respect of property situate in the parish, township, or place in which he resides.

XIX. There shall be repealed—

1. The whole of the Act of the session of the 11th and 12th years of Her present Majesty, chapter 90, intituled "An Act to regulate the Times of Payments of Rates and Taxes by Parliamentary Electors;" and all other enactments now in force which require, as a condition of the registration in any year of any voter, or of his title to vote, that he should have paid any rates or taxes; or direct overseers to give public notice as to the payment of rates and taxes by occupiers of premises; or provide that the assessors or collectors of taxes are to deliver to the overseers a list of persons in arrear of taxes payable as therein mentioned;

2. So much of the 79th section of the Act of the 6th year of the reign of Her present Majesty, chapter 18, as relates to the residence of voters at the time at which they give their votes; and any other enactments that are inconsistent with this Act.

SAVING CLAUSE.

XX. Nothing herein contained shall affect the right which any person may have acquired of voting at the election of a member or members to serve in Parliament for a county or borough in pursuance of any register of voters in force at the time of the passing of this Act, so long as such voter retains the qualification in respect of which he is registered at the time of the passing of this Act.

SCHEDULE.

FORM A.

AN Assessment for the Relief of the Poor of the Parish of Saint Mary's, in the City of Carlisle, and for other Purposes chargeable thereon according to Law, made this 25th day of March, in the Year of Our Lord 1866, after the Rate of One Shilling in the Pound.

No.	ARREARS.		RATE.							Amount of Rate assessed upon and payable by the Owner instead of the Occupier, by virtue of the Statute or Statutes in that behalf.	
	Due or If Excused.	If Excused write the word "Excused."	Name of Occupier.	Name of Owner.	Description of Property Rated.	Name or Situation of Property.	Estimated Extent.	Gross Estimated Rental.	Rateable Value.		Rate at 1s. in the £
1.	£ s. d.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
1	James Smith ...	John Green ...	House ...	Tower Street ...	A. B. P. ...	£ s. d. 30 0 0	£ s. d. 25 0 0	£ s. d. 1 5 0	£ s. d. —
2	William Jones	William Fisher.	Warehouse	Fisher Street	24 0 0	20 0 0	1 0 0	—
3	Henry Parker	William Fisher.	Building and land	Brown's Lane ...	2 0 0	7 10 0	6 15 0	0 6 9	—
4	Moses White ...	Abel Turner ...	House ...	North Street	7 10 0	6 0 0	0 6 0	0 4 6

FORM B.

CLAIM OF LODGER.

Borough of

To the Overseers of the Parish [or Township] of

I hereby claim to be inserted in the list of voters in respect of the occupation of the under-mentioned lodgings, and the particulars of my qualification are stated in the columns below :

Christian Name and Surname at full length.	Profession, Trade, or Calling.	Description of Lodgings.	Description of House in which Lodgings situate, with Number, if any, and Name of Street.	Name, Description, and Residence of Landlord or other person to whom Rent paid.

I, the above-named _____, hereby declare that I was [or am], on the 1st day of July in this year, and have been during the twelve months immediately preceding, the occupier of the above mentioned lodgings, and that I have resided therein during the six months immediately preceding the said 1st day of July, and that such lodgings are of a clear yearly value, if let unfurnished, of £10 or upwards.

Dated the _____ day of _____

Signature of Claimant

Witness to the signature of the said

And I certify my belief in the accuracy of the above claim, }

Name of witness

Residence and calling

This claim must bear date the 1st day of July, or some day subsequent thereto, and must be delivered to the overseer on or before the 20th day of July.

FORM C.

CLAIM IN RESPECT OF DEPOSIT IN SAVINGS BANK.

County of

or

City [or Borough of]

To the Overseers of the Parish [or Township] of

I hereby claim to be inserted in the list of voters as a depositor in a savings bank, and the particulars of my place of abode and qualification are stated in the columns below :—

Christian Name and Surname at full length.	Profession, Trade, or Calling.	Place of Abode, with Number of House, Name of Street, &c. (if any).	Nature and Particulars of Qualification.	Number of Certificate annexed.*
			Depositor in the Savings Bank of	

* Insert the distinguishing number of the annexed certificate.

This claim must bear date the 1st day of July, or some day subsequent thereto, and must be delivered to the overseer, with the certificate annexed, on or before the 20th day of July.

FORM D.

CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT IN SAVINGS BANKS.

Certificate No

We, the undersigned [being two of the trustees [or managers] of the Savings Bank], or [I, the Undersigned, being an officer appointed and authorized by the trustees [or managers] of the Savings Bank for that purpose], or [I, the undersigned, being an officer appointed by Her Majesty's Postmaster-General], do hereby certify that of has a sum of not less than £50 deposited in the said bank, and that he has had not less than such amount so deposited in the said bank for the two years immediately preceding the 1st day of July in this present year.

Dated the day of 18

Signature and description }
of persons signing }
Official address }

NOTE.—The officers by whom these certificates are granted must insert a distinguishing number to each certificate.

The certificate must be issued on or subsequently to the 1st day of July, and must be delivered to the overseer, with the claim, on or before the 20th day of July.

(Sherbrooke, Robert Lowe, Viscount)

Representation of the People Bill.

SECOND READING.

SPEECH

OF THE

RIGHT HON. ROBERT LOWE, M.P.

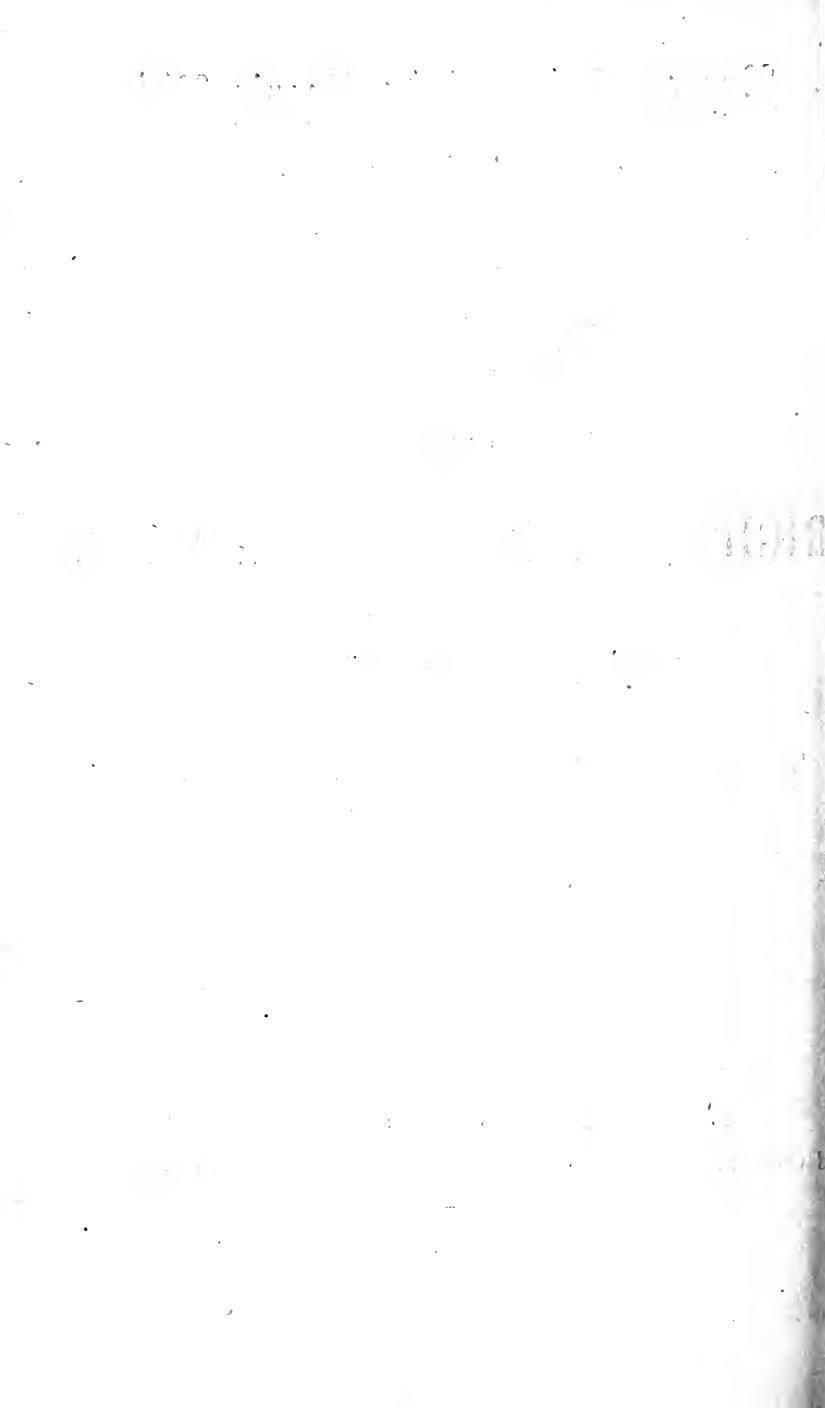
HOUSE OF COMMONS,

THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 1866.

LONDON:

ROBERT JOHN BUSH, 32, CHARING CROSS, S.W.

Price Fourpence.



THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL.

THE order of the day for resuming the adjourned debate having been read,

Mr. LOWE rose and said,—Sir, as we are now on the second reading of the Bill for reducing the electoral franchise, it is not inopportune to ask, what is the principle of the Bill. Our information on that subject at the present moment is very meagre. We have heard from my Right Hon. friend the President of the Board of Trade that the principle of the Bill is to reduce the franchise; and we have learnt from the Solicitor-General for Scotland, as I understood him, that the principle of the Bill is to fill up two blanks with figures—which the Government propose to fill up with “seven” and “fourteen” respectively; but which we may fill up with any numbers we think proper. These are the rather faded and colourless views which have been imparted to us on this important subject. I submit that they are no answer to the question at all; because the principle of a Bill does not mean the scope and tenour of a Bill. It does not mean what the Bill professes to do, but it means the grounds and reasons on which it is based; and on that subject, so far as I am aware, the Government are entirely silent. I can only imagine two grounds on which this Bill for lowering the elective franchise can be proposed to the House. The first of these grounds is, that the franchise is a thing which ought to be given for its own sake; the second is, that it is a means for obtaining some ulterior object. Which of these two is the principle of this Bill? The first principle has, at any rate, the merit of extreme simplicity. Those who profess it are very little troubled either with proof or investigation. According to that theory, all they have to do is to find a person fitted to have the elective franchise—and they are not very particular or exacting in proof of fitness, nor very strict in the presumptions they apply to it—and having found that person, the giving of the franchise to him follows as a matter of immediate and cogent necessity. According to this view, this is not a question of politics at all, but of morality—of right and wrong. It is a “debt,” to use the word of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and when you find a man presumably fit for the franchise, according to this view, you are as much bound to give it to him as you are to pay your ordinary debts. To deliberate or hesitate about it is an act of injustice, just as it is to deliberate or hesitate about paying your ordinary debts. All who are not admitted to the franchise become creditors of the State, and every hour we withhold it from them is wrong accumulated upon wrong—a denial of justice, a disgrace and opprobrium to those who withhold it. Now, that is one view that may be taken. It is very important to know whether that be the view on which this Bill is brought forward, because it is a view which, whatever other merits it has, entirely eludes anything like reason or argument. It either flies so high or sinks so low that it is impos-

sible to deal with it by argument. Those who propound it may be great philosophers—they may be inspired apostles of a new Religion of Humanity; but so far as they lay down this doctrine they are not politicians, nor do they use arguments within the range of the science or art of politics. They may, on the other hand, be victims of the most puerile fallacy. They may have mistaken the means for the end, and inferred, because we all believe, from our long experience of it, that the elective franchise is a good thing for the purpose of obtaining the end of good government, therefore it is necessarily a good thing in itself. They have this great advantage, in common with all enthusiasts and all persons believing in immediate intuition, over those who are not so fortunate, that they emancipate themselves from the necessity of looking at consequences. They are free from those complicated, embarrassing, and troublesome considerations of the collateral and future effects of measures, which perplex ordinary mortals. They avert their minds altogether from these things, and fall back on the principle that the thing is right in itself, and they disembarass it of all consequences. That is one view that may be taken of the principle of this Bill. The second is a much humbler, but a much sounder doctrine, and that is that the franchise, like every other political expedient, is a means to an end, the end being the preservation of order in the country, the keeping a just balance of classes, and the preventing any predominance or tyranny of one class over another. Now, Sir, this principle, we have been told, is not one of the principles of the British Constitution, and I will therefore, with the permission of the House, read a few words from the preamble of a statute passed in 1429, the eighth year of Henry VI., and the first statute, as far as I am aware, that contains any declaration with regard to the electoral franchise. The words are these:—

“Whereas the elections of knights of shires have now of late been made by too great and excessive number of people, either of small substance or of no value, whereof every one of them pretended to have a voice equivalent as to making such elections with the most worthy knights and squires dwelling within the same county.”

And then follow words enacting that no man shall have a vote in the election of knights of the shire, unless he have a freehold amounting to 40s. per annum in value. Now, look at the principles which this preamble contains. In the first place, it recites that too great a number of persons have taken part in the elections, and it thus clearly contemplates the very evil with which we are so much threatened now in many directions—namely, the too great size of electoral districts, the augmentation of constituencies to a degree that makes them unmanageable. In the next place, it clearly implies that a class may be swamped by another class, poorer, less important, and less entitled to weight in the country, because it recites that most worthy knights and esquires are overbalanced by persons of small substance, who have voices equivalent to theirs; and in the next place it establishes the principle that there ought to be a certain fitness in a man before he is allowed to vote for members of Parliament. Now those three principles are pretty well what is embodied in the doctrine that the franchise is a means to an end, and that doctrine, as I take it, is, that the franchise, though it ought not necessarily to be given to every one fit for it, should never be given to any one who is unfit. It implies in the second place that in giving votes you should have regard not merely to the fitness

of the person, but to the influence which that person or class of persons will exercise over the general well-being of the State; and in the third place it seems to me clearly to imply that we ought to be careful so to deal with the franchise that no one class may swamp or overpower another or the other classes. I therefore think that that ancient authority very clearly lays down this second principle, which has at any rate this advantage, that though we may differ as to the quantity of the franchise, some wishing for more and some for less, we have a common ground of argument. If the principle of expediency is conceded, we may succeed in convincing each other of our errors, or may come to some sort of compromise, whereas with persons who hold the first principle there is no common ground whatever, and it is therefore of no use attempting to reason with them, because all reasoning must proceed on something admitted on both sides if conviction is to be obtained. A man who holds the theory I do about politics, namely, that everything is to be referred to the safety and good government of the country, has no common point of departure with the man who maintains, like the Hon. Gentleman, the Under Secretary of the Foreign Office, that it is better we should be governed by large representative bodies and governed badly, than governed by small representative bodies and governed well. And now, Sir, I ask, which of these two is the principle of this Bill; and in order to ascertain that, I should wish to ascertain what the Bill will do, and what will be the number of persons who will be enfranchised under it. If I know that, and if I know also the manner in which those numbers will be distributed, I have then *data* in my own mind from which I can argue to my own satisfaction as to what is the ground of this Bill, and what Her Majesty's Government intend by it. But, Sir, I am met here by an immense difficulty, and a difficulty entirely created by the Government themselves, for it is impossible for me, as things stand at present, to guide the vote I am asked to give either by reference to the number of persons who will have the franchise, or by reference to the manner in which they will be distributed. The Government has that information in its hand, but it chooses, for reasons which I will consider presently, to withhold that information from the House, and to insist upon our coming to a conclusion without it.

Now, Sir, when this Bill was first brought in it was intended, I have no doubt—in fact it was clearly apparent—to be merely a Bill for the extension of the franchise, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer very properly acted on a principle which I never heard of any Government deviating from before. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in order to assist our deliberations, laid before us the statistics of what would be done by the proposed change, and whether we agree to the principle or not, nothing could be more satisfactory. But then when certain members pressed them the Government began to slide. They slid first by saying, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer did, that they would lay a Bill for the redistribution of seats on the table. Advancing a little further still they said they would not only lay a Bill on the table, but would proceed with it as soon as ever they could; and growing bolder the further they went, they gave us the usual formula, which now seems to apply to every act of the Government, that they were prepared to “stand or fall,”

by it. But now that we have got to this point the case is changed. Her Majesty's Government, when they made up their minds at any rate to bring in a redistribution Bill and stand or fall by it, had really but one course to pursue in common fairness to the House and to themselves, and that was to withdraw the Franchise Bill and bring in a Bill combining both measures. To downright plain common sense there was no alternative, and had the matter been resolved on at once, I have no doubt it would have been done. But it was wrung from them little by little, and self-love, and pride, and a number of other motives which I shall not stop to enumerate, induced them, while they believed themselves forced to concede a great deal, to appear to concede as little as possible, and so they clung to this shred of withholding information from us, and upon that they have made it plain that they are going to put not only their Bill, but the Administration itself, in peril. Now, Sir, I confess that I have never read of or seen any conduct on the part of any Government so utterly irrational as this. It is quite clear that till we know how these seats are to be distributed we do not know the number of electors that this Bill will bring into existence; because, suppose the seats of the small boroughs—take any you like, and there is one which people would rather take than any other—take any you please, and take Burnley or any such place, and transfer the seat from one borough to the other, and it is not merely a transfer of an amount of political power, but you call into existence several thousands of £7 voters, who had no electoral existence before. So it is right we should know what number of persons we are going to enfranchise, it is right we should also know what the redistribution is to be. But that is not all. The Hon. Member for Birmingham said the other night, and said with truth, that you might have universal suffrage established by law, but, giving the redistribution to a person adverse to that, he could contrive completely to neutralize it and could make matters worse—that is, as the Hon. Member means, less popular—than at present. Thus we are not only in ignorance of the number of people to be enfranchised, but utterly in ignorance of what is to be the effect of it. We do not know in the least what the effect will be, and yet the position of the Government is that we are to go on and read this measure a second time, while they, having this information in their possession, speaking to us, and arguing with us with all this knowledge in their hands, withhold it from us, and insist that we shall vote upon this measure without it. Now it is very common and very right for Governments, when there are matters which, on the ground of public policy, should not be made known, to call upon their supporters, and even on the Opposition in some cases, to give them so much confidence as to allow them to keep back information. But this is no matter of that kind. This is a matter, as far as I can understand, kept back through mere wantonness, a trial of power to see whether the Government can make the House of Commons pass under the yoke or not, to see whether they can exhibit us to the country as persons who are content to be treated with this degree of indignity, who before we have any opportunity of committing ourselves, of saying or doing anything which would lead the Government to suppose that we are unwilling to pass this measure, are subjected to the indignity of having the most important of its provisions concealed from us, and told to vote just as if

we had them before us. Look at the language which Ministers employ in speaking of the House of Commons. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking to an applauding audience at Liverpool, deliberately tells them that he knows the people with whom he has to deal; that is, of course, that we—I do not speak of myself or of those Hon. Members who have been exposed to so much animadversion, but the House of Commons at large—are people better known than trusted. Look, too, at the manner in which my Right Hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade speaks of us. He told us the other night that he wanted to bring the matter before us pure and simple, to get us into a corner and compel us to speak. Now, is that a respectful manner for a Minister of the Crown to speak of the House of Commons? If it was a question of a horse, and he wanted to try whether it was a roarer, I could understand his getting it into a corner of the stable and giving it a hard punch in the ribs to see whether it would grunt or not, but I really did think that the Commons of England were not exactly persons to be treated in this manner. But look at the Right Hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He said with much unction, “Some people say we have divided this Bill into two halves because we knew we could not carry the whole at once, but that we can carry it if we can cut it in two; well, that,” he said, “is exactly why we did it.” That is to say, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade want to force us, to compel us; and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, with admirable candour, says he hopes he can take us in. He thinks we are not aware that two halves make a whole, and therefore that he can palm upon us one half and then another, the two being much larger than the whole; and he thinks we shall be willing to accept them from him, and shall not be able to see through the deceit, even when he has been so kind as elaborately to explain it. It has always been said, and more particularly by Hallam, that one of the great advantages of having the leading members of the Government in this House is that they owe a double allegiance—one as the servants of the Crown, and another as members of the House of Commons; so that while not wanting in their duty as servants of the Crown, they have always been anxious to maintain the dignity and privileges of this House. Hallam was a good historian, but he was no prophet. Had he had the happiness of witnessing the conduct of the present Government he would have found that, whatever their allegiance to the Crown, the main object of their action, upon which they are staking their very existence, is to humiliate and degrade the members of this House in the eyes of their constituents. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, the leader of this House, has evidently no confidence in us. If we have no confidence in him we know well enough what must happen. But although he makes a parade of a feeling of disrespect for us, while he seeks to place us in the most humiliating position, we are asked to put the most implicit confidence in him. This is not a course that the dignity and position of this House will permit you to adopt, and I might paraphrase an old epigram and say to the Right Hon. Gentleman,—

“Whatever the pain it may cost,
 “It is time we should each say adieu;
 “For your confidence in us is lost,
 “And we’ve not got sufficient for two.”

The position held by the Right Hon. Gentleman is a most remarkable one, and but few men could get into such a position twice in their lives, yet the Chancellor of the Exchequer has had that unapproachable felicity. When he went as High Commissioner Extraordinary under the Government of Lord Derby to the Ionian Islands the Right Hon. Gentleman proposed to reform the Ionian Constitution, and one of the reforms was that the powers of the Lord High Commissioner should be defined by an Act of the Assembly. They were very sweeping and arbitrary. But he said there must be an exception to the rule, and that exception must be of all the powers that Her Majesty by Order in Council chose to exempt from the operation of the Act. You need not wonder that the Act did not pass. But let us look a little further. I have shown—and I do not propose to dwell upon that point, because it has been so admirably put by the Noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn—that we are asked to discuss this Bill while we are shut out from the information on the subject that we ought to have. Look at the present position of the Government as shown by their own admission. They admit that before we go into committee we ought to have the whole of the information we ask for before us. They admit that we have a right to know that the Government will proceed with the second measure immediately, and yet they say, although they know that the same process of debate can be repeated on going into committee, as on the second reading, they will not give us the information we require until by reading the Bill a second time we have pledged ourselves to adopt the Bill, and until they have got us into a corner. It has not been attempted yet—it is a task well worthy of the subtle genius of the Right Hon. Gentleman—to define the relation of the information to this Bill, to show that it is information so estranged and remote from the principle of the Bill that it ought not to be laid before us on the second reading, yet that it is so intimately bound up and entwined with the principle of the Bill that it must be laid before us and well considered before we go into committee. I cannot, of course, vouch for the truth of the rumour, because I think Government have gone quite far enough in the way of conceding things that are to be done after the second reading, while maintaining their singular policy with regard to what shall be done before the second reading, but I am told we are to have one more concession. If we will only consent to give the Chancellor of the Exchequer this victory over us by giving the Bill a second reading, while we are utterly in the dark, to please him, he will undertake that the two Bills shall advance *pari passu*, and that one shall not be passed without the other. This may meet some of the objections brought against the Bill, but it will not meet any of the objections I have suggested. Would it show you that you are properly treated by the Government—would it show that you are doing your duty to the country and to your constituencies, in sanctioning by your vote a measure the grounds and results of which are studiously and purposely concealed from you? Would it show that you are acting in a manner worthy of the dignity of this great assembly and of the relations between this great assembly and the Executive Government, upon which the whole working power of our Constitution depends? I refer to this because it is supposed that these things may be mentioned to us at the last moment, when it is too late to

reply to them. But I beg that you will consider these questions before it is too late, and I am sure that you will see that the statements should they be made do not remove the real solid objections to the Bill. The Noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn argued with great force that the question of this proposed Redistribution Bill must come before a House of Commons elected either by the present or by the new constituency. In the first case, the House under such circumstances would really be legislating with a halter round its neck. The measure of its compliance with the demands of the Government would be, not what it might think right, but what it might believe that the Parliament succeeding it would do. It would cease to be a free agent, and would be placed in a situation which I think no House not smitten with a most inordinate love of life would wish to occupy. The other alternative is that the matter should be decided by a House elected by the new constituency. That will be a provisional constituency in which the Government themselves profess no confidence, as they tell you that as soon as it is created they are going, by the redistribution of seats, to alter its numbers and electoral districts. The Hon. Gentleman the Member for Westminster meets that argument of the Noble Lord by saying that he is contented with the Bill as it stands. He thinks that a sufficient answer, and member after member gets up and says the same thing. The question, however, is not whether the Hon. Member is satisfied, but whether the Government is consistent. It is an argument against the Government that if they thought this constituency was not fit to be a permanent one for the legislation of this country, it was monstrous to take such measures as would possibly throw the decision of this case into the hands of the very constituencies they had themselves treated as provisional and transitory. The argument of the Noble Lord is an *argumentum ad homines* as regards the Government, and is not addressed to the individual convictions of members. I conclude that, on the clearest ground of self-respect, of what is due to the dignity and the honour of this House, and to the traditions of centuries entrusted to us, we ought never to allow—and I never will, as far as my vote goes—any Government to attempt anything of the kind. Besides the pleasure of the victory over the House of Commons there is another motive—they want to get something they could not get if they disclosed the Seats Bill. We are not told what that something is, but we are furnished with the most pregnant grounds for conjecture, because it must be something so important that the Government prefers to stake its existence upon it rather than reveal it to the House of Commons. Every member who has the fortune to sit for a borough which is threatened by the Seats Bill has a right to put the worst construction upon this measure. Besides, if it were only a little matter that lay behind, surely you cannot imagine Government going with their eyes open to what looks very like assured perdition, rather than let us know the details of the Redistribution Bill.

Having been headed off by the Government in my attempt to satisfy myself as to the question of the franchise, I might throw the matter up in despair, but as I am anxious to pick up all the information I can I will state what I know upon the subject. The main fault in my reasoning will

be that it is not applicable to the future state of things, because that state of things is studiously concealed from us. It appears that the effect of this Bill, according to the figures of the Government, will be to introduce 144,000 £7 electors into the different boroughs, and the result will be that the working classes will have a majority in 95 boroughs, almost a majority in 93, and more than one-third of the representation in 85. This is mere matter of calculation, and an application of the rule of three sum we are asked to do. But then you must add to these figures 60,000 compound house-holders and non-ratepayers. You must take into consideration that the gross estimated rental is lower than the actual rental, that in 30 boroughs the Assessment Act has never come into operation at all, and that they contain one-half of the borough population. There is always a tendency in a progressive state of society for the actual rental to rise above the gross estimated rental, and therefore very considerable allowance must be made for that. Then there are a great many persons of the lodger class. All these things put together satisfy me that the majority of the 334 boroughs in England and Wales will be in the hands of the working classes immediately on the passing of the Bill. The argument of Mr. Baxter—not the member for Montrose, but a gentleman who has written a very excellent pamphlet upon the subject—shows a state of things well worthy of attention. He shows that taking the three decades since the passing of the Reform Bill the increase in the franchise was much more rapid in the first and least prosperous decade than in the other two. It increased 43 per cent. in the first decade, 27 in the second, and 20 in the third. Is not this a proof that the £10 franchise eats up the £8 and £9, which are drawn into the higher rate, while the higher fattens upon the spoil of its immediate inferiors in the world? And the same process will go on. The £7 will eat up the £6 and the £5. The £7 franchise is 2s 9d a-week, and 2s 6d a-week will give £6. 10s. You see, therefore, how easy it is to ascend. The difference is merely one of threepence per week, and the margin is, consequently, very small. I am now only expressing my honest conviction on this matter. I cannot pretend to give it to the House upon complete evidence, because I have not the materials for demonstrating it to you. But that I have not those materials is not my own fault, but the fault of the Government, and, therefore, in considering this matter it ought to weigh most strongly against them.

I now come to another subject, and that is the treatment of the House by the Government. Even before this House came into existence in its corporate capacity the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Noble Lord at the head of the Government set to work to devise its destruction, and the Members of this House have been treated rather as condemned criminals than as friends in council. The Right Hon. Gentleman in his opening speech forbore to give the House any reasons for bringing in this Bill. The policy of its introduction was challenged pretty warmly in the debate which took place at the time, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer forbore to reply. It was perfectly open to him to adopt that course, and to reserve his statement for the second reading. But what was the next thing? My Noble Friend the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho)—to whom the Government owe their idea of

collecting statistics—took the opportunity of asking, and not unreasonably, for some further information of the kind already furnished by the Government. It was natural enough that having already information about the boroughs, Hon. Members should desire to have similar information about the counties. This consideration was pressed upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer by several Hon. Gentlemen, and he said, “You shall have no more statistics. Throw figures to the dogs. I’ll none of them. Here you are speaking, measuring, calculating as if the working classes were an invading army. Are they not your fellow-creatures? Are they not fathers of families? Are they not taxpayers? Are they not your flesh and blood? And do you capitulate and do you palter with them? Here are statistics enough. Take that thine is and go thy way.” I do not think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was very polite to my Noble Friend, who, however, is well able to take care of himself, or very respectful to the House. The Government having furnished us this statistical information ought certainly to be willing to listen to our demands, because there is no possible reason why the machinery by which the component parts of constituencies above £10 were determined should not also be employed to discover those below that figure. This conduct throws light on the question of the principle of the Bill, and appears to me to evince a foregone conclusion on the part of the Government—a determination that the thing was to be done at any hazard, and a belief that the results were of no consequence whatever. Then, again, it was not to us that the Chancellor of the Exchequer imparted his first impressions upon this matter. He went to Liverpool, and to an audience of a very different character delivered those reasons for bringing in this Bill which ought to have been laid before the House on its first reading, in reply, or on the motion for its second reading. My Right Hon. Friend should have laid his reasons first of all before this House instead of imparting them to a select circle of friends assembled in that most inappropriately named Philharmonic Hall at Liverpool. And then the Right Hon. Gentleman and other members of the Government between the first and second reading, and before the course which Parliament would adopt with reference to the Bill was known, set on foot a sort of ministerial agitation. It is absurd to pretend that the influence of agitation was not resorted to, and it is not the fault of some of those who took part in that agitation that it did not develope into an influence of terrorism. Well, after these things were over, the Chancellor of the Exchequer came back to the House and favoured us with a languid *rechauffé* of the arguments he had already employed at Liverpool, and thus the baked meats of the Philharmonic Hall did coldly furnish forth the tables of the House of Commons. Well, Sir, I maintain that from first to last, from the introduction of this measure to the present moment, the treatment we have received can only be regarded as an attempt to degrade and lower the character of the House of Commons. No doubt there are some gentlemen who do not view the matter in this light. They are probably accustomed to measures so much more drastic and more stringent that they regard as matters of small consequence those lesser indignities which, nevertheless, do touch gentlemen and men of honour. I admit the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not written a letter asking

the people to come down to this House, to fill the streets, and to hoot the Members who are opposed to this Bill. I admit that he has not done ; great many things of this kind, and therefore I would say with the Hon Member for Westminster :—

“ ——— Habes pretium ———
 “ ——— non pascas in cruce corvos,”

which I much prefer to

“ Cruci non figeris.”

Now, let us turn to the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am in an unfortunate position. I am perfectly unable to argue the case with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because when I try to argue with a man I seek for a common ground, and in the case of the Chancellor of the Exchequer I can find none. He argues in this way. Some people demand what fault is to be found in the existing state of things that it should be altered and destroyed. His reply is, “I am not bound to produce an indictment.” He does not say that any fault is to be found ; all he wishes to do is to make the House of Commons better, and to strengthen our institutions. But then he fails to show that the course he adopts will have that effect, nor has he, indeed, attempted at any time to prove anything of the kind. I drew out for him on a small scale, and according to the best of my humble abilities, an estimate of the House of Commons, of its good and its bad qualities, and I challenged him to show how his proposed measure would diminish the evil and increase the good. The Right Hon. Gentlemen has taken no notice of that challenge, nor indeed has anybody attempted to meet it. He dare not, will not, put the matter upon this ground. I think the Right Hon. Gentleman deliberately averted his eyes from the results in this matter, and, like the Hon. Member for Birmingham, has determined to regard the question as a matter of justice, with which expediency, the good of the State, and the destiny of future ages have nothing whatever to do. The Right Hon. Gentleman says :—“I am not bound to produce an indictment. People who say that a fault should be found before a remedy is applied assume that the franchise is an evil, while I believe it is a good in itself.” This brings me back to the first of the two principles to which I have alluded, and I do not think that I am wrong in identifying the Chancellor of the Exchequer with it. You will find that the same train of argument pervades the whole of his speech. The Right Hon. Gentleman says that we ought to give the franchise to the 204,000 persons who will be affected by this Bill because they are our fellow Christians. But is that an argument for admitting them ? Why, Sir, who are the people in this country who do not profess and call themselves Christians ? It is an argument, if anything, for the admission of the whole of the male, and perhaps the female, population, but it is no argument whatever for admitting the 204,000 more than anybody else. So, in the same way, with the fathers of families, who are by no means peculiar to the British nation. Then, again, with regard to the taxpayers, or, as I should prefer to call them, consumers of taxable commodities, which is a very different thing. This class would include the whole of our criminals, paupers, idiots, lunatics, children, and, in fact, everybody else, and does not consist only of the

204,000 to whom this Bill refers. The argument from flesh and blood applies not only to the human race, but extends also to the animal kingdom, and if this principle were allowed we might have another "Beasts' Parliament, proposed after the pattern of the assembly commemorated in the old epic of *Reynard the Fox*. The Right Hon. Gentleman then maintains that it is a monstrous thing to exclude the working classes, because their income amounts to £250,000,000. But who are the people who enjoy the income of £250,000,000? Are they the 204,000 who are to receive the franchise? If so, each of these men would have £1,200 a year, and such an income would effectually disqualify them from sharing in the sympathy of the Right Hon. Gentleman, because they could then scarcely be regarded as belonging to the working classes. What he means is that these £250,000,000 constitute the income of the whole of the working classes; but he doesn't propose to admit the whole of the working classes. What I wish to show, therefore, is that this argument is good for nothing at all, or it is good for extending the franchise to the whole of the people of the country. My Right Hon. Friend's argument about the contributions to the revenue may be regarded in the same light. He says that the working classes contribute one third or more of the revenue of this country; but who contribute it? Then, again, the revenue obtained from the working classes is chiefly derived from the duties on tea and sugar, and on stimulants—beer, spirits, and tobacco—and the revenue from the latter source alone has of late years increased to the enormous amount of £20,000,000. But these £20,000,000 are not contributed by the proposed 204,000 new voters. And so the thing comes round again. It may possibly be quite right that the class that only spends £1,260,000 in £10 houses while the duty on its expenditure on exciseable articles amounts to a large part of £20,000,000 should receive the franchise. But then, it is an argument for the admission of the whole class, and not of any particular portion. The House will, I think, see that I am not wasting their time in referring to these matters. I want to show that this measure is not founded upon any calculation of results, but upon broad sweeping principles, having their rise in the assumed rights of man and other figments of that kind, which, if admitted, do not prove that the present measure is a good one, but that what is needed is universal suffrage. And that is a point of view in which, being denied the information we ought to have, we are bound, in duty to ourselves and to our country, to regard it. We have been asked whether it is to be believed that the political limit of £10 is to exist for ever, and, I ask, whether the same thing cannot be said for the £7 figure as well as for the other? We had from the Hon. Member for Birmingham on the first reading of this Bill a specimen of the ruinous logic by which these things are to be accomplished. He took his stand upon the fact of some Right Hon. Gentlemen opposite having been once in favour of an £8 franchise, and he said, "We want a £7 franchise, so that there is only a pound between us, and you won't fall out with me for a pound." So the Constitution is knocked down to the lowest bidder. I won't fall out with the Hon. Member for Birmingham. I would give him a pound out of my own pocket if he wanted it; but his pound is no joke. The Hon. Member for Birmingham's pound means 100,000 men, and 100,000 men of whom he may know a great deal, but

of whom we—instructed in the matter only from what we learn by public documents—know nothing at all. Parenthetically I may observe that I should be very much obliged to the Hon. Member for Birmingham if he would make his soliloquies a little less dramatic. The Chancellor of the Exchequer asks, “Is it to be tolerated that in this country we are to have a narrow precinct called the Constitution, within which we have gathered some million, or 1,200,000 or 1,300,000, while outside of it we have some four-and-a-half millions?” But I want to know whether, after we have admitted within the precinct some 200,000 or 300,000 of these outsiders, the proportion of numbers upon which the Right Hon. Gentleman bases his argument is in any sensible degree diminished. If the argument is good for anything, it goes in not for the few hundred thousand only, but for the 4,500,000. There might have been some answer to this if the Right Hon. Gentleman had shown us in the speeches which he has delivered, either in the House or to the people at Liverpool, the least qualification for this principle, what limit he puts upon it, or why £7, or any other limit, should be thought of, or how he reconciles it, or how he thinks the thing will fit in with the state of our society. But he has done nothing of the kind. It is a principle the most dangerous, the most sweeping, the most democratic, that has ever been set forth by any minister in this House. He has taken it without modification and without qualification—not to work upon our minds—for I trust there are very few educated gentlemen upon whom such views as these would make any impression whatever, but to work upon the minds of the people at large who have not had the advantage of the culture which we have enjoyed. Then there is another point. We have been, it seems, during the last few years doing something for the working classes—and here the Right Hon. Gentleman is exceedingly patronising—we have done a good deal for their education, the clergy have done a great deal for their morals, and something has been done for them in sanitary matters;—is it to be supposed that, after all this has been done, the franchise should not be extended to them? The Right Hon. Gentleman does not point to any tangible result from all this, to show that there is any reason in point of fitness for admitting them to the franchise by lowering it. He merely asserts, “You have done all this for them; it must have produced a result;” he assumes that the result was good and sufficient, and he calls on you to lower the franchise accordingly. I say if he proved that the result was good and sufficient, which he does not pretend to do, it would not be an argument for lowering the franchise unless he could also show that the lowering of the franchise was on the whole likely to work for the good of society. He does not even satisfy his own condition; for he asks us to admit people of whom he knows nothing except that they contribute to the revenue, have a large aggregate income, and have had a good deal of money spent upon them by the Government in order to improve their condition; and then, speaking in a patronising manner, he says, “We have done a good deal for them, so now, let us make them our masters.” With affected ignorance, the Right Hon. Gentleman says, “if democracy be liberty, we have no occasion to be afraid; but if democracy be vice and ignorance, then this Government is not democratic.” Who ever said it was? The question is not whether this Government is

democratic, but whether the Government he asks us to make must not necessarily be democratic. Does not the Right Hon. Gentleman know what democracy is? Whatever we learnt at Oxford, we learnt that democracy was a form of Government in which the poor, being many, governed the whole country, including the rich, who were few, and for the benefit of the poor. The question is—Is not that the form of Government which the Right Hon. Gentleman is seeking to introduce? It is not, then, liberty or vice; it is the government of the rich by the poor. Why shouldn't we call it by its right name at once? That is a very short, but for my purpose a sufficient, analysis of the argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer at Liverpool, because I don't pretend in the least to answer it. I simply deny that justice has anything to do with the matter; it is purely a question of State policy. We are told that we are bound to forge our own fetters, while we shut our eyes to the consequences of what we do; but the essence of my theory is that you are bound to look most strictly to the results we may reasonably anticipate. From the sweeping nature of this Bill when carefully looked at, from the manner in which it has been forced upon the House, and from the arguments by which it has been supported by the Right Hon. Gentleman, I maintain that it is founded upon the principles I have mentioned, and I may state that not one person who has spoken on it in connexion with the Government has taken a view of it different from his, or has endeavoured in the least to qualify the principle upon which it is based; and that is that the franchise is due to everyone whom you cannot show to be unfit. But that principle followed up leads straight to ruin; it asserts that the franchise is a thing we are bound to pay; and so clear is our obligation that we are desired to shut our eyes and disregard all expediency, and to leave the constituencies so created to take care of us and of themselves. We are told that we are under no more obligation to see what use they would make of the franchise than we are to inquire what use a creditor would make of a payment of money justly due to him. Anything more dangerous, more utterly subversive, I cannot conceive. We must also keep in sight the democratic influence of the redistribution of seats, whatever it may be.

If the House will bear with me, I will call attention to another matter. My Hon. Friend the Member for Westminster has come out in a new character. I do not speak of the excellent speech which he has made, because, having known him for many years, I was quite sure that when he took the trouble to give us his best thoughts, instead of dealing in impromptus, those great abilities which are acknowledged to be his would be apparent. But my Hon. Friend has taken a new stand. He has taken many positions with regard to this subject, as those who are acquainted with his works well know; but he has now come forward in the capacity of the advocate of my second principle, the doctrine of class representation. He demands the franchise for the working classes, because he says they are not sufficiently represented now, although they have a fourth of the votes in boroughs. He offers no argument in support of his assertion; I therefore pass it by, as I wish to deal with arguments and not assertions. My Hon. Friend does say, however, that the working class have not so much influence as they might be supposed to have, because they are

so distributed that they are usually out-voted; and thus they are in a position little better than if they had no votes at all. He regrets on their behalf that some law is not in force for giving to minorities representation. I believe that is a fair statement of my Hon. Friend's argument. [Mr. Mill was understood to assent.] Now, I think my Hon. Friend ought in passing to have adverted to the argument which I have so frequently insisted upon in this House—namely, that if the working classes have only 128,000 in the present constituencies, it is very much their own fault, because many more of them have the means if they choose to live in £10 houses. The law, therefore, is not to blame in this respect. He might have adverted to a case which I may mention as the type of many others. The Southwick glass manufactory at Sunderland is a large establishment where many workmen are employed, earning from £4 to £5 a week. It is complained that none of these persons had the franchise. But whose fault is that? These workmen are earning some £200, and some £250 a year, and yet they live in houses under £10 a year in value. Is it the fault of the law? Of course, I must not say whose fault it is. Every gentleman is free to say anything that is complimentary of the working classes in general and his own constituency in particular; but any gentleman who says anything in the slightest degree not pleasing to them is thought to have grossly misconducted himself. But now, having adopted the theory of classes, we cannot, as my Hon. Friend was inclined to do, take it up in order to make an argument in favour of the working classes, and lay it down when it makes against them. His logical mind will tell him that he must follow the principle out to its legitimate conclusions, and so he is bound to show us that the extension of the franchise which he asks for the working classes, though a wide extension, can be given without injury to the other classes. He must not take the theory up for the working classes alone, but for all classes. Now, he has not condescended to show us how the extension which he approves would influence the position of any other class except the working class, or rather the poor class, for I view this question not as one between working classes and those who employ them, but between those who have property and those who have not. Now, Sir, I would refer my Hon. Friend and the House to the preface of the third edition of his work on Political Economy. It was published in 1852, so that my Hon. Friend has had time to change his mind since, and he is entitled to do it. This is what he said. I am very glad that I didn't:—

“The only objection to which any great importance will be found to be attached, in the present edition, is the unprepared state of mankind in general, and of the labouring classes in particular; their extreme unfitness at present for any order of things which would make any considerable demand on either their intellect or their virtue.”

That was in 1852, but we have the opinion of my Hon. Friend in 1861. In his work on “Representative Government,” he says:—

“I regard it as wholly inadmissible that any person should participate in the suffrage without being able to read, write, and, I will add, perform the common operations of arithmetic. Universal teaching must precede universal enfranchisement. No one but those in whom an *à priori* theory has silenced common sense will maintain that power over others, over the

whole community, should be given to people who have not acquired the commonest and most essential requisites for taking care of themselves."

My Hon. Friend himself cheers those remarks. I hope he will take some opportunity of telling us what is the process of investigation he entered on for the purpose of satisfying himself that the electors in £7 houses will be found prepared for the exercise of the franchise. I hope he will tell us what evidence he has to produce of their intellect and their virtue. I hope he will satisfy us, if has satisfied himself, of their being able to read and write and to perform all the common operations of arithmetic, including, I suppose—though he did not state it in that passage—the rule of three. I hope he has satisfied himself that universal teaching has preceded universal enfranchisement. Of course the word "universal" might be struck out and the sense would remain the same—namely, that instruction must precede enfranchisement. I hope he will show us how he has satisfied himself that those persons whom he proposes to enfranchise—to whom he would intrust the interests of others—are persons who have acquired the commonest and most essential requisites for taking care of themselves. If not, how can he reconcile his present position with any principle, but that *à priori* theory of which he speaks? I don't say my Hon. Friend can't do it. He can do most things, and perhaps he can do this; but I only say as things stand he has not done it, and that his own writings are against the principle, which he now supports by his speech. My Hon. Friend half took up the challenge which I threw out when I asked in what this Parliament—which has only just come into existence, and which was condemned before it was born—has been found wanting. He pointed out our old friend the cattle plague. I am not going to argue that question over again; but my Hon. Friend said that if the working classes had been represented here they might have objected to persons being twice compensated for their cattle. Now, Sir, I cannot persuade my Hon. Friend, but I think if I had the working men here I could show them that the persons to whom the Hon. Member for Westminster alludes will not be compensated twice. Suppose a farmer has 100 head of cattle, which are killed to prevent the spread of the disease. He is compensated at less than their value, and then it becomes necessary for agricultural purposes that he should go into the market and buy another 100 head of cattle. The loss which he sustains is not only the difference between the value of his former cattle and the compensation which he got for them, but also the amount by which the price of cattle has been enhanced by the disease, and enhanced in some degree by the slaughter. I cannot persuade my Hon. Friend, because he is a philosopher, but I think I could persuade the working men whom he seeks to bring among us that so far from being paid twice over, the farmer in that case has never been paid once. You can put a case which will be the other way. If a man has a large herd of cattle and is compensated for a few of them, he may be paid over again by the enhanced prices of the remainder. You can put the case both ways; but what I complain of is the narrowness and illiberality of saying that this is a matter which cannot admit of two aspects—that those who differ from my Hon. Friend must be wrong, and that if it were not for the faulty constitution of this House we should see and judge things in the same manner as he does.

Mr. MILL said—I wish to correct the last assertion of my Right Hon. Friend. I never imputed to Hon. Gentlemen in this House, or to the landed interest, that they were wilfully wrong.

Mr. LOWE.—I may remark that I suppose no one in this House would have any objection to working men coming here if the constituencies wished to send them. They can do so now if they like, and, therefore, we need not take up time in arguing the point, because I am sure that whenever the constituencies may think proper to send working men here, we shall receive those representatives properly, and listen to them with respect. But my Hon. Friend told us of the subjects which the working classes might wish to debate here. He referred to “the right of labour.” That sounds very like the right “to” labour of which we heard in 1848. Are we to have the doctrines of Fourier and St. Simon discussed here? We are told that in so doing we shall educate the working man. I protest against this. We are here to legislate for this country, and if we look after the Executive Government pretty sharply—if we take care of our finance—and if we watch the Foreign-office, we shall be doing better than we should do by converting this House into an academy or a gymnasium for the instruction even of the *élite* of the working classes. My Hon. Friend said that if the working classes were here they would establish a school in every parish in a very few years. Well, that is a subject on which I ought to know something; and I may say that the main object I had in view in the changes which I proposed on the part of the Government in the education system was to benefit the working classes. Under the old system the poor children were not properly taught. The upper children, the children of richer parents, were examined, and the money was paid; but the lower and poorer children were neglected. The upper children had generally had some education at home; but the poor children had received no education at home, and they were not done justice to in the schools. The object of the Revised Code was to insure that education should be given to the poor just as much as to the rich; so that the object was one mainly—indeed, entirely—for the working classes. But in that object I never received the slightest assistance in any way from the working classes. The opposition to it was very much from the members for the large towns in which the working classes form a considerable portion of the constituencies; but the working classes themselves never interfered in the matter. They did not care about it. The schoolmasters interfered, and got Members of Parliament to oppose the code; but the working classes never entered into the matter at all. How, therefore, my Hon. Friend can think that working men will deal with this question, in which they have never shown any interest, and which is very intricate and difficult, I cannot understand. Again, my Hon. Friend ought to be prepared to show how he means to resist the course of what he calls false democracy. If the working classes, in addition to being a majority in the boroughs, get a redistribution of the seats in their favour, it will follow that their influence will be enormously increased. They will then urge the House of Commons to pass another Franchise Bill, and another Redistribution Bill to follow it. Not satisfied with these, yet another Franchise Bill and another redistribution of seats will, perhaps, follow. It

will be a ruinous game of see-saw. No one can tell where it will stop, and it will not be likely to stop until we get equal electoral districts and a qualification so low that it will keep out nobody.

There is another matter with which my Hon. Friend has not dealt. I mean the point of combination among the working classes. To many persons there appears great danger that the machinery which at present exists for strikes and trade unions may be used for political purposes. And that this use of such machinery has not escaped the attention of thinking men, I will show you from a speech made by the Hon. Member for Birmingham, in January, 1860. In that speech he said:—

“Working men have associations; they can get up formidable strikes against capital—sometimes for things that are just, sometimes for things that are impossible. They have associations, trade societies, organizations, and I want to ask them why it is that all these various organizations throughout the country could not be made use of for the purpose of obtaining their political rights.”

Why is it that those various organizations have not been so made use of? The Hon. Gentleman asked that question in 1860, and I admit that hitherto he has received no answer. Why? I will tell you why. The working classes, to use his own expression, are the lever. But they must have a fulcrum before they can act. They have not got it. Give them the majority of the voters in a number of boroughs, and it is supplied to them. It is not by passing resolutions and making speeches they coerce their masters. They watch their opportunity—they wait for the time when large orders are in, and they refuse to work. That is the fulcrum they work on. Give them the majority of voters—that will be their political fulcrum; and if the Hon. Gentleman repeats his advice, no doubt they will use it with avidity. I want to call the attention of the House in a few words to the condition of the trade unions, because we are all anxious to discover, if we can, the future of that democracy which, I believe, this Bill will be the first means of establishing. I take one class—the operative stonemasons, a very influential association, numbering 80,000 members, and having a large capital. Last year, after a strike of 19 weeks, this body of masons beat the masters. Let me call the attention of the House to a letter which they sent to the employers:—

“We present you with the wishes of our trade union, requesting a reply on or before Saturday next:—Mr. Thomas and all non-society plasterers to be discharged; all non-society carpenters and improvers to be discharged; piecework to be abolished, &c. On behalf of the United Building Trades, JOHN BRAY, Chairman.”

Mark what that is. See the power unions have of drawing men within their own circle. You say if they become political bodies, men who want to have nothing to do with politics will have nothing to do with them. Can they help themselves? They will be overborne, overawed, they are like men contending with a maelstrom into which, struggle as they may, eventually they will be sucked. This is a paragraph which I have taken from an Edinburgh paper:—

“The tailors’ strike may now be considered at an end, the men having agreed to accept the London ‘log,’ with payment at the rate of 5½d. an hour, as offered by the masters. These terms the men seem to consider

as highly satisfactory, entailing, as they will, an increase of from 15 to 25 per cent. on their wages. We have been informed that the men have made it a condition with the masters that the 'black sheep,' or those who have continued working during the lock-out, shall not obtain employment until they become members of the society, besides paying a fine of 10s. each."

You will say these men do not want to join these societies—I dare say they don't; but what choice have they? The truth is—and of this I want to convince the House—that these trades' unions are far more unions against the best, the most skilful, the most industrious, and most capable of the labourers themselves, than they are against their masters. Listen to another rule which is taken from the printed book of the co-operative society of masons:—

"Working overtime, tending to our general injury by keeping members out of employment, shall be abolished, excepting in case of accident or necessity."

This is your future political organization. Again:—

"It is also requested that lodges harassed by piecework or sub-contracting, do apply at a reasonable time for a grant to abolish it."

That is to say, men are first to be driven into these unions, by pressure such as I have explained to the House, and then, once they are got within the limits, whatever their necessities, whatever the pressure of their families, they are not to be allowed to eke out their income by working overtime. To do so might enable a man, a poor man, to raise himself out of that sphere of life, and furnish him with some still better occupation. But although his good conduct may have invited the confidence and attracted the notice of his master, he is not to be allowed to take a sub-contract, to make a little money in that way. The object of all these proceedings is obvious. It is to enclose as many men as can be got into these societies, and then to apply to them the strictest democratic principle, and that is to make war against all superiority, to keep down skill, industry, and capacity, and make them the slaves of clumsiness, idleness, and ignorance. One extract more, and I have done:—

"In localities where that most obnoxious and destructive system generally known as 'chasing' is persisted in, lodges should use every effort to put it down. Not to take less time than that taken by an average mason in the execution of the first portion of each description of work is the practice that should be adopted among us as much as possible; and where it is plainly visible that any member or other individual is striving to overwork or 'chase' his fellow-workmen, thereby acting in a manner calculated to lead to the discharge of members, or a reduction of their wages, the party so acting shall be summoned before the lodge, and if the charge be satisfactorily proved, a fine shall be inflicted on the party implicated."

That is to say, when a poor workman, naturally quicker and more skilful than those about him, and with a wish to distinguish himself, shows his capacity, so as to oblige his fellow-workmen to exert themselves more than goes to what they please to call the time taken by an average mason in the execution of his work, he is to be fined and put down. Add to this—what does not appear in any of the rules and regulations, but what we know well—the system of terrorism that lurks behind these trades' unions, and

makes the lives of the "knobsticks" and "black sheep" miserable till they are driven into them. And then look at this tremendous machinery; if you only arm it with the one thing it wants—the Parliamentary vote!

It remains for us to consider—and I am sure the House will be glad to hear that this is the last branch of the subject which I shall have to treat—the results of the step that you are invited to take. I assume that this is really a very large and sweeping change in the Democratic direction, giving, as I believe, the majority of votes in boroughs to the working classes. On that point we are compelled to differ, because the Government will not give us the materials necessary for making an accurate calculation. This change is to be followed by a further and very large change in the redistribution of seats. It does not depend upon any Government, upon any Minister, perhaps upon any House of Commons to say where those changes will stop. One Hon. Member speaks of this as a change that will last 50 years. He has put the matter as entirely out of his power as a man who, rolling a stone down the side of a mountain, fixes beforehand in his own mind the time it will take to reach the bottom. We have had this matter put before us from one very peculiar and invidious point of view. It seems to have been thought that the manner to discuss the probable result of a great democratic change in this country was, on the one side, to praise the working men, especially those among our own constituents, and, on the other, to remain silent, because nothing except praise, it is presumed, would be borne. I think that is not the way to approach this question. There is considerable risk that in this way the basis of our institutions may be complimented away. We are rich in experience on this subject. We have the experience of our own state and condition, which, compared with that of other countries, may be called a stationary state; we have the experience of our colonies all over the world, which may be described as in a transition state; and we have the experience of those two great democracies, France and America, where democracy may be said to have run its course and arrived at something like its ultimate limits. It is inexcusable in us if we do not apply our minds to the consideration of this subject, and draw from this rich field of observation conclusions more trustworthy and more reliable than those to be gained from our own isolated experience, particularly as this is so often contradictory. The Hon. Gentleman the Under-Secretary for the Colonies began his speech the other night by telling us that if the working men had a fault in the world it was their too great reverence for authority, and then he went on to tell us that if we did not accede to their present moderate requests, it would be a question, not of how much we should give, but of how much they would take. That was the sum of the Hon. Gentleman's remarks; he told us that the burden of proof would be effectually shifted, and he said, what we all understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say before he wrote his preface and made his two speeches to explain away his meaning. The working men entered the Hon. Gentleman the Under-Secretary's speech like lambs, and they left it as lions; and so his estimate of them may be taken to answer itself. The question of peace or war has been a good deal touched upon in this debate. The Chancellor of the Exchequer at Liverpool, was very much struck with the magnificent spectacle of the strength put forth by

democracy in the recent war. I would rather he had commended it for something which it had done in peace. I never doubted that democracy was a terrible warlike power. It is not the educated and reflective who are influenced by ideas, but the half educated and the unreflective; and if you show to the ignorant and poor and half educated wrong, injustice, and wickedness anywhere, their generous instincts rise within them, and nothing is easier than to get up a cry for the redress of those grievances. We feel the injustice, too; but we look not merely at the injustice itself, we look before and after, we look at the collateral circumstances, at what must happen to trade, revenue, and our own position in the world, and we look also at what must happen to those very poor persons themselves before we commit ourselves to a decided course. Persons, also, have who something to lose are less anxious to lose it than those who have little at stake often, even though these last may by the loss be reduced to absolute poverty. At the time of the Crimean war we actually got up an enthusiasm on behalf of that most abominable and decrepit despotism—the Turkish empire. Nothing would have been more popular in England than a war on behalf of Hungary in 1849, or one lately on behalf of Poland. Wherever cruelty or injustice exists, the feelings of the humbler class of Englishmen—to their honour be it said—revolt against it, and not possessing the quality of circumspection their impulse is to go straight at the wrong and redress it, without regard to ulterior consequences. Therefore, to suggest that in making the institutions of the country more democratic we have any security from war, that we do not greatly increase the risk of war, seems to me supremely ridiculous. What is taking place in the Australian colonies? Victoria and New South Wales are both governed by universal suffrage, and it is as much as we can do to prevent their going to war with each other. Look at America. A section of the American democracy revolted and broke up the Union, the rest fought to preserve it; the war was fought out to the bitter end, and now that the war is concluded they are almost ready to go to war again to prevent the doing of that which they took up arms to accomplish. Look at free trade. If we have a precious jewel in the world, it is our free trade policy. It has been everything to us. With what eyes do democracies look at it? Let us turn to history, and not enter into particular cases of particular working men. Take the facts. Canada has raised her duties enormously, and justified them upon protectionist principles. The Prime Minister of New South Wales, at this moment is a strong protectionist. The Ministry in Victoria were freetraders, but by the will of the people they have been converted, and have become protectionists. So vigorously has the question been fought that destruction is threatened to the second branch of the Legislature, though equal in power to the other, in defiance of the laws of the country, and all to carry out a policy of protection. Then we come to America. America out-protects protection—there never was anything like the zeal for protection in America. With a revenue that needs recruiting by every means in their power they persist in sacrificing the most valuable resources; with a frontier that bids defiance to any effectual attempts to guard it, they persist in maintaining duties that provoke to wholesale smuggling rather than reduce them by a single penny. And as if anxious at once to illustrate the freetrade and peace proclivities of democracy they

terminate the treaty with Canada, which was a step in the direction of freetrade, and then seek to enforce by violence the very rights which the treaty they have put an end to secured. I will add one word as to Communism. The Hon. Member for Lambeth has certainly furnished us with a very good argument in favour of the proposition of having working men to represent themselves. He has drawn such a picture of them as they would scarcely have given of themselves. What does he say? He says, in the first place, that, they are entirely unable to understand that wages depend on the laws of supply and demand; that, he says, is entirely out of their conception. Then he tells us that they have no conception of any difference between the remuneration of the labour of the strong and the weak; the strong are to work for the weak, and all are to be paid alike. Then, as far as Government is concerned, the working men—so far from having a horror of a paternal and interfering Government—want us to prevent their going to public houses, and this in the name of universal liberty, equality, and fraternity! Not only so, but they insist that the money of their fellow taxpayers ought to be spent in building houses for them to live in, because it is not for them, forsooth, to appropriate a sufficient proportion of their own incomes to pay the amount of rent required to accomplish this object on commercial principles.

I come now to the question of the representatives of the working classes. It is an old observation that every democracy is in some respect similar to a despotism. As courtiers and flatterers are worse than despots themselves, so those who flatter and fawn upon the people are generally very inferior to the people the objects of their flattery and adulation. We see in America, where the people have undisputed power, that they do not send honest, hard-working men to represent them in Congress, but traffickers in office, bankrupts, men who have lost their character and been driven from every respectable way of life, and who take up politics as a last resource. There is one subject of immense importance to a constitutional House—viz., the expenses of elections. The Member for Westminster thinks this Bill will abridge the influence of wealth. Will it do so? Let us see. Those expenses are of two kinds,—legitimate and illegitimate. The Bill now before the House will enormously increase the electoral districts, and in many it will double and in some treble the legitimate expense of elections. I am speaking among people who are thoroughly acquainted with this subject, and they know too well that the expenses of elections depend as much on the illegitimate as on the legitimate agencies employed. Can it be argued then, that by admitting occupiers of houses between £10 and £7, you will diminish the illegitimate expenses of elections? Yes, it can, for it has been thus argued by the Right Hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade. The Right Hon. Gentleman—and I am happy to have his authority—says—mind, I do not—that the people in a great many of the boroughs are very corrupt.

Mr. MILNER GIBSON.—I said “some voters.”

Mr. LOWE.—Well, some voters in some boroughs. I wish to be cautious. Some of these voters have political opinions, but their minds are so sluggish that they cannot be influenced without a certain *lene tormentum* or reminder in the shape of a £5-note; while others, who have no political opinions, are slow and procrastinating, being never able to make up their minds

until about 3 o'clock on the day of the poll, when by some inscrutable influence they are urged on to a little activity. Other are judicial and cannot decide till they have been paid on both sides. It is said, here's a disease, cure it, dilute its poison by admitting a large number to the franchise. Well, that would be a very good argument if health was catching as well as disease. If I had half-a-dozen diseased cattle, and I turned one hundred sound cattle among them, I might infect the new ones but I do not think that I should do much good to the sick ones. And now let me say that I have never been answered as to the effect which the lowering of the franchise would have upon this House, and I suppose that I never shall be. One great mistake is made—it is almost a childish oversight—and that is to speak of this House as if it were merely a legislative body. The Members of this House have a position, a consideration, and a weight in this country such as no legislative body ever had in any country in the world. This is not because of any extraordinary skill in legislation; we have other functions. The House is the administrator of the public funds, but besides that it is a main part of the Executive Government of the country. It can unmake the Executive and it can go a long way to make it. It is, therefore, well to consider that you are dealing with a Legislature entirely different from either the Assembly of France or the Congress of America. We all know that while our legislation has been more vigorous and better since the Reform Bill, the Executive Government has shown weakness and languor. If you exaggerate, if you intensify the causes already at work, you will find it necessary to do what has been done elsewhere—to separate the functions of the Executive Government from the House of Commons altogether, to break up that most salutary union which exists between them, and to have a Government which shall not depend for its existence upon a majority in this House. Now, that is a consideration the seriousness of which it is perfectly impossible to exaggerate. In the colonies they have got Democratic Assemblies. And what is the result? Why, responsible government becomes a curse, instead of a blessing. In Australia there is no greater evil to the stability of society, to industry, to property, and to the well being of the country, than the constant change which is taking place in the Government, and the uncertainty that it creates and the pitting of rival factions against each other. The same thing, I think, is wonderfully exemplified in Victoria, where you have a Government which is now under the influence of universal suffrage, and which is at war at once with the judicial authorities and the Upper Chamber, because neither will yield to its illegal exactions. The Supreme Court decides against the levy of Taxes by resolutions of the Assembly, and the Government dissolves Parliament and appeals to universal suffrage against the decision of the Supreme Court. What does this tend to? It tends to anarchy, and from that anarchy these colonies must be relieved. They can, however, only be relieved by depriving them of that boon which in an unfortunate hour they received—that of responsible Government coupled with universal suffrage—and by placing their Government in some permanent hands, so that the Executive shall not be in a perpetual state of change. Look a little further, and see what happened in France, where there was a limited constituency in the time of Louis Philippe, and Parliamentary government until the revolution of

1848. Then came the Assembly elected by universal suffrage, and still with a responsible Government. But that responsible Government became weaker every day until the *Coup d'Etat*, and I doubt if there are many gentlemen here who could tell me the name of the nominal Premier under whom the liberties of France were overthrown. The great men who founded the Constitution of America foresaw this, and they took means to obviate the difficulty. They knew perfectly well in what the enormous advantage of our system of government consisted. They knew that democracy required checks, and they sought to check it by various means. They, in fact, checked democracy with democracy, and elected a President. They added, too, what we have not got—the principal of federalism, which resisted the downward tendency of democracy by a lateral pressure. To use a familiar illustration, they held a piece of coal up by a pair of tongs. That has been the course adopted in America. And now let us see what has come of it. They have fought out a Civil War, and gained a great victory. But we must remember that men's opinions were divided. One side wanted to prevent the South from regaining the power it possessed before the Civil War, and the other to reconstruct the Union on the principle of state rights. In this country the question would be decided by a vote displacing or retaining the government; and those who were displaced would carry into the Wilderness their offences, as the scapegoat carried off the offences of the people of Israel. But, mark what happens in America. You cannot get rid of the President, who sits for four years; nor the Congress, which sits for two years. Therefore, you have an internecine duel, and those who ought to combine and coalesce for the good of the country are in factious opposition. The whole frame of the Constitution is thus stretched till it cracks—to try, not who shall hold the supreme power, but which of the two rival institutions shall gain the victory over the other. You have seen senators expelled in order to secure a majority of two-thirds, and things have arrived at such a pitch that no man need be surprised at seeing a second civil war from the inability of the Constitution to solve the difficulty in which the first civil war had placed the country. Let us apply this to our own country. We have in our government an invaluable institution, and let us not rashly or foolishly put it in peril. I do not know whether Hon. Gentlemen have read the report of the debate which took place the other day in the French Chamber between M. Thiers and M. Rouher on the subject of the introduction into France of a responsible Government. Though my sympathies as an Englishman are with M. Thiers, I confess that in my opinion the argument of M. Rouher was unanswerable, for the question was whether responsible Government could co-exist with universal suffrage? If you were to have responsible Government back, said M. Rouher, you must also have back the *pays legal*, the old constituencies containing 200 thousand voters, for, without that, he argued, M. Thiers was asking for a thing without being prepared to realize the only conditions under which it could exist.

Now, Sir, democracy has yet another tendency, which it is worth while to study at the present moment. It is singularly prone to the concentration of power. Under it individual men are small, and the Government is great. That must be the character of a Government which represents the majority, and which absolutely tramples down and equalizes everything

except itself. And democracy has another strong peculiarity. It looks with the utmost hostility on all institutions not of immediate popular origin, which intervene between the people and the sovereign power which the people have set up. To use the words of the Right Hon, Gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, it likes to have everything as representative as possible, and that which is not representative it likes to have swept away. Now, look what was done in France. Democracy has left nothing in that country between the people and the Emperor except a bureaucracy which the Emperor himself has created. In America it has done almost the same thing. You have there nothing to break the shock between the two great powers of the State. The wise men who framed the Constitution tried to provide a remedy by dividing functions as much as possible. They assigned one function to the President, another to the Senate, a third to the Congress, and a fourth to the different States. But all their efforts have been in vain, and you see how two hostile camps have arisen, and the terrible duel which is now taking place between them. Now, apply that to England, which above all countries in the world is the country of intermediate institutions. There are between the people and the Throne a vast number of institutions which our ancestors have created. Their principle in creating them seems to have been this—that they looked a great deal to liberty and very little to equality. If there were something to be done, they sought for some existing institution which was able to do it. If some change were required, they altered things as little as they could, and were content to go on in that manner. This is a country of privileges above all other countries, but the privileges have been given, not as in other countries—as in France before the Revolution, for instance—for the benefit of the privileged classes, but because our ancestors, in all moderation, believed this to be the best way to insure order, and good government and stability. It may be difficult to prove upon theory how all this should be, because ancient governments, as Burke finely remarks, are seldom based on abstract principles, but rather are the materials from which abstract principles are drawn. I think we should act more wisely and more worthily to the country if we were to ascertain what lessons of wisdom may be drawn from the signal success of our own Government, instead of trying to borrow from the people of America notions which lead to such results as I have been endeavouring to depict. But, Sir, have we succeeded? I will quote, not my own words, but an unexceptionable witness. “It has been our privilege,” says the speaker whom I quote, “to see a process going forward in which the Throne has acquired broader and deeper foundations in the affections of the country; in which the law has commended itself more and more to the respect and attachment of the people; in which the various classes of the community have come into close communion the one with the other; in which the great masses of our labouring fellow-countrymen have come to be better supplied than they were in the time of their immediate forefathers, and in which upon the whole, a man desirous of the welfare of his kind, looking out on the broad surface of society, may thank his God, and say, ‘Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!’” Well, those eloquent words were the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and they were spoken on the 14th of September last, just two

months before he began the concoction of the Bill, which has been so very successful in illustrating the manner in which brethren dwell together in unity. Now, let us suppose democracy to be established in a greater or less degree in this country. With what eyes would it look upon the institutions which I have alluded to? What would be the relation of this House with the House of Peers? I will call a witness. Eight years ago the Hon. Member for Birmingham inverted his present process. He is now anxious to secure means; he was then proclaiming ends. He said then, "See what I will do for you if you will only give me Reform;" but now he says, "Give me Reform, and be assured that I will do nothing." But the Bill does not say that. The words he uttered eight years ago remain. They have never been retracted, and I have no reason to suppose that the Hon. Gentleman wishes to retract, or is ashamed of any one of them. The Hon. Gentleman said on one occasion—I am speaking from memory, but, though I am not sure about the words, I am about the meaning which the Hon. Gentleman intended to convey—that, as far as the House of Peers was concerned, he did not believe that even the Peers themselves could suppose that they were a permanent institution in this country. What do you suppose would become of a House of Peers in America. What has become of the House of Peers in France? The name alone remains, but where is the power of that brilliant aristocracy which surrounded the Throne of the Louis's and gave a glitter even to their vices? Then, what shall we say of the Church? I am speaking of it merely from a secular point of view, as a large and wealthy institution, not exactly of popular origin, nor looked upon with particular affection by persons who stand well with the masses. I call a witness again. What does the Hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham say? He speaks of "that portion of the public estate which is for a time permitted to remain in the hands of the Church of England." What would be the position of the Judges? Looking at the differences in this respect between the two countries, it will be seen that we have fenced round our Judges with every safeguard, and given them more and more power, until we have made them practically an irresponsible class in the country. We have been content to witness the melancholy sight of a person actually blind, and we still have a man of ninety years of age, sitting upon the judicial bench. We submit to this, not because we think it right in itself, but because we think it better to err to a small extent than to give rise to the slightest suspicion that the position of a Judge has been influenced in the least way by this House. Now what state of things exists in America? In the great State of New York the Judges are appointed for six years only, and further west the term decreases, until in Mississippi two years is the *maximum*. And why? In order that they may be able to administer the law not in accordance with the law, but in accordance with the popular sentiment. That we should continue to have Judges I do not doubt, but do you think they would occupy such a position as they occupy now, and be so utterly independent of popular power?

And now let us come to ourselves. Our position, as I have remarked already, is much more honourable than that of the members of any other Legislative Assembly in the world. Do you think democracy would look with a favourable eye upon that? Would it not judge by analogy that

such a state of things ought in some degree to be altered, and that we should be made to approach nearer to the level of our constituents? Now we have a privileged class of electors who hold houses above £10. That class is a humble one, but it has discharged its duty up to the present time in a manner which almost defies criticism. But now, without any reason, but merely on account of an abstract principle of right, we have an attempt made to sweep that class away and swamp it in the class below it. Without enlarging upon this topic, I must say it is manifest to me that if the House of Commons is democratized it will not rest under such modified circumstances until it has swept away those institutions which at present stand between the people and the Throne, and has supplied the place of them, as far as it can, by institutions deriving their origin directly from the people, being, as the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster said, as representative as possible, and not having the *quasi* independence which the present privileged institutions and corporations possess. You will then have face to face, with no longer anything to break the shock between them, the Monarch of the time and a great Democratic Assembly. Now, history has taught us little if we are to suppose that these two Powers would go on harmoniously, and that things would continue to work as they do now. The event no one can predict. We saw what a duel there was in France in 1851, when the President and the Assembly were each grasping at the sword and endeavouring to exterminate the other. The Emperor conquered, and Cæsarianism followed. Had the Emperor failed, France would have had the very worst possible form of Government—namely, a Convention, a deliberative Assembly attempting through its committees to exercise executive power, and endeavouring to do that which ought to be done through responsible Ministers; and such a Government would only last for a time, to be destroyed by some Cromwell or Napoleon, or to dissolve by its own vices and weakness. Look, again, on the state of things in America, where the President wields the Executive power, and where an opposition to him is raised in Congress. And then see how Congress works. It works through Committees, and every officer in the Government has a corresponding Committee in Congress to thwart and to overrule him. But I need follow that question no further. Probably many gentlemen may even think that I have endeavoured to look too far into futurity. At all events I do not base my case on mere vague conjecture. I base it upon history and experience. The Right Hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has told us that England is a country totally different from America or Australia, and that no argument could be drawn from either of the two latter applicable to the position in which we stand. Well, Sir, there is, of course, no doubt that England is a country entirely different from America or Australia, but the difference is in their favour as regards the working of a democracy. They possess boundless tracts of land. In America land acts as a sedative to political passion; in England it operates as an irritant. Here land is held up by democratic leaders to their followers as a thing to be desired and secured, as the spoils in fact of political warfare; in America it is comparatively speaking of no value, it is easily obtained, and much inflammable matter is in consequence removed which would, under other circumstances, prove dangerous to the system. Everybody knows that if America was altogether governed by

the great towns the result would be most disastrous, and that it is the cultivators of the land who moderate their influence, and prevent them from rushing on to their destruction. Upon this point I should like to quote the words of Lord Macaulay, one of the most able of the advocates of the principle of the Reform Bill of 1832, from which he never went back a hair's breadth. He, in replying to an American gentleman who sent him a *Life of Jefferson*, says, speaking of this country:—

“In bad years there is plenty of grumbling here, and sometimes a little rioting; but it matters little, for here the sufferers are not the rulers. The supreme power is in the hands of a class, numerous indeed, but select—of an educated class—of a class which is and knows itself to be deeply interested in the security of property and the maintenance of order.”

Then he writes as follows:—

“It is quite plain that your Government will never be able to restrain a distressed and discontented majority, for with you the majority is the Government, and has the rich, who are always a minority, absolutely at its mercy. The day will come when, in the State of New York, a multitude of people, not one of whom has had more than half a breakfast, or expects to have more than half a dinner, will choose a Legislature.”

He adds:—

“Is it possible to doubt what sort of Legislature will be chosen? On one side is a statesman preaching patience, respect for vested rights, strict observance of public faith. On the other is a demagogue ranting about the tyranny of capitalists and usurers, and asking why anybody should be permitted to drink champagne and to ride in a carriage, while thousands of honest folks are in want of necessaries. Which of the two candidates is likely to be preferred by the working man who hears his children crying for more bread? I seriously apprehend that you will, in some such season of adversity as I have described, do things which will prevent prosperity from returning. Either some Cæsar or Napoleon will seize the reins of government with a strong hand, or your Republic will be as fearfully plundered and laid waste by barbarians in the 20th century as the Roman Empire was in the fifth; with this difference, that the Huns and Vandals who ravaged the Roman Empire came from without, and that your Huns and Vandals will have been engendered within your own country and by your own institutions.”

Now, observe the argument of Lord Macaulay. It is this, “You have a democracy in America, but you have there, also, plenty of elbow-room and abundant means of subsistence for its whole population; but when this state of things comes to an end, then the institutions of the country will be tried, and a crash may follow.” In England we have not a democracy, but we have a state of society in which, in the event of pressure, distress and misery must to a great extent prevail. Now, if we add here, with our hands, democracy to population, as the course of time may in America add population to democracy, we shall have done all in our power to bring about exactly the state of things which Lord Macaulay describes, and we may expect that something like the same consequences will be the result.

Sir, it appears to me we have more and more reason every day we live to regret the loss of Lord Palmerston. The remaining members

of his Government would seem, by way of a mortuary contribution, to have buried in his grave all their prudence, statesmanship, and moderation. He was scarcely withdrawn from the scene before they set to work to contravene and contradict his policy. That policy, acted upon by a statesman who perfectly understood the wants of the English people, had been crowned with unexampled success, and they, I suppose, must have thought that the best way to secure a continuance of that success was to aim at doing that which he above all other things disapproved. The Noble Lord at the head of the Government, and the Right Hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, have performed a great feat: they have taken the great mass of their supporters, who are, I believe, men of moderate views and moderate opinions, and laid them at the feet of the Hon. Member for Birmingham. They have thus brought them into contact with men and with principles from which but six short months ago they would have recoiled. That is what has happened to a portion of those who sit upon these benches. As to the rest of us, we are left like sheep in the wilderness, and after the success of this extraordinary combination—to use no harsher word—we who remain precisely what we have been are charged with inconsistency, while the bonds of political allegiance are being strained until they are ready to crack for the purpose of keeping the Liberal party together. We are told that we are bound by every tie which ought to bind mankind to act in accordance with the policy of Earl Russell; but I, for one, Sir, dispute the justice of that proposition. I have never served under that Noble Lord. I have served under two Prime Ministers for a period—I am sorry to say—of little less than ten years. The one was Lord Aberdeen, the other Lord Palmerston. Earl Russell joined the Government of each of those Ministers; both Governments he abandoned, both he assisted to destroy. I owe the Noble Lord no allegiance. I am not afraid of the people of this country. They have displayed a good sense which is remarkable, indeed, when contrasted with the harangues which have been addressed to them. But if I am not afraid of the people, neither do I agree with the Right Hon. Gentleman the member for Huntingdon in fearing those by whom they are led. Demagogues are the commonplace of history. They are to be found wherever popular commotion has prevailed, and they all bear to one another a strong family likeness. Their names float lightly on the stream of time; they are in some way handed down to us, but then they are as little regarded as is the foam which rides on the crest of the stormy wave and bespatters the rock which it cannot shake. Such men, Sir, I do not fear, but I have, I confess, some misgivings when I see a number of gentlemen of rank, of character, of property, and intelligence carried away, without being convinced or even over-persuaded, in the support of a policy which many of them in their inmost hearts detest and abhor. Monarchies exist by loyalty, aristocracies by honour, popular assemblies by political virtue and patriotism, and it is in the loss of those things, and not in comets and eclipses, that we are to look for the portents that herald the fall of States.

I have said that I am utterly unable to reason with the Chancellor of the Exchequer for want of a common principle to start from, but there is happily one common ground left to us, and that is the second book of the *Æneid* of Virgil. My Right Hon. Friend, like the moth which

has singed its wings in the candle, has returned again to the poor old Trojan horse, and I shall, with the permission of the House, give them one more excerpt from the history of that noble beast, first promising that I shall then turn him out to grass, at all events for the remainder of the Session. The passage which I am about to quote is one which is, I think, worthy the attention of the House, because it contains a description not only of the invading army of which we have heard so much, but also a slight sketch of its general:—

“ Arduus armatos mediis in mœnibus adstans
Fundit equus, victorque Sinon incendia miscet
Insultans : portis alii bipatentibus adsunt,
Millia quot magnis nunquam venère Mycenis.”

In other words:—

“ The fatal horse pours forth the human tide,
Insulting Sinon flings his firebrands wide,
The gates are burst ; the ancient rampart falls,
And swarming millions climb its crumbling walls.”

I have now, Sir, traced as well as I can what I believe will be the natural results of a measure which, it seems to my poor imagination, is calculated, if it should pass into law, to destroy one after another those institutions which have secured for England an amount of happiness and prosperity which no country has ever reached, or is ever likely to attain. Surely the heroic work of so many centuries, the matchless achievements of so many wise heads and strong hands, deserve a nobler consummation than to be sacrificed at the shrine of revolutionary passion or the maudlin enthusiasm of humanity? But if we do fall, we shall fall deservedly. Uncoerced by any external force, not borne down by any internal calamity, but in the full plethora of our wealth and the surfeit of our too exuberant prosperity, with our own rash and inconsiderate hands, we are about to pluck down on our own heads the venerable temple of our liberty and our glory. History may tell of other acts as signally disastrous, but of none more wanton, none more disgraceful.

THE END.

S P E E C H

OF THE

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

ON THE

BILL FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE
SUFFRAGE IN TOWNS.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN this Speech will be found the expression of an opinion that the Legislature should exclude from the franchise on two grounds only. First, it should exclude those who are, presumably, in themselves unfitted to exercise it with intelligence and integrity. Secondly, it should exclude those with respect to whom it might appear that, though no personal unfitness can be alleged against them, yet political danger might arise from their admission; as, for example, through the disturbance of the equilibrium of the constituent body, or through virtual monopoly of power in a single class.

General statements of principle, advanced in debate, if they are such as, in the view of candid minds, to require explanation, ought to find it in the context of the Speech which contains them.

Objection has been taken, and even alarm expressed, with respect to the breadth of the particular statement now in question. I cannot make any other reply than to publish it, as it was delivered, together with its context, and to leave it, subject only to equitable allowance for faults of hasty expression, to the discerning consideration of the reader.

Another objection I could more readily have conceived; namely this: that a proposition, apparently of wide scope, is reduced by large and scarcely definable exceptions within rather narrow limits. Still, the exceptions appeared along with the proposition, and formed part of it.

If, indeed, I am asked whether it was a deliberate and studied announcement, I reply that it was not: it was drawn forth on the moment by a course of argument from the opponents of the measure, which appeared to assume that the present limitations

of the franchise, disavowed as they have been by such an accumulation of authority, required no defence from their newly-risen advocates, and were to be accepted without inquiry, as in themselves, at least presumptively, good and normal. But I am aware that this circumstance, if the opinion be blameable, will afford no apology.

Further, I spoke with reference to the present, or rather indeed with a view to retrieving arrears of the past; and neither time, nor as I think reason, permitted me to attempt the solution of problems of real intricacy, which belong wholly to the future, and which are little likely to become practical except for another generation.

If I regret the manner in which my declaration has been interpreted, it is chiefly because of its tendency to produce in other quarters an exaggerated estimate; likely, when brought down to the dimensions of fact, to cause disappointment.

The question is, whether the statement be a gratuitous and startling novelty, or whether it is rather the practical revival of a strain which, five years ago, was usual and familiar; which had then derived abundant countenance from the very highest organs of political articulation, and which now only sounds strange because within that period it has fallen into desuetude.

As the opinion of an individual, the whole matter is of trifling consequence. But the consistency of parties and of Parliaments is a subject of weight and moment; for upon this depends that store of public confidence, which is of such inexorable necessity, and of such inestimable value, for the maintenance of our free and happy Government.

S P E E C H.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.—I must begin, Sir, by observing, that the speech of the honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. Carr), in my opinion, went far beyond the scope of the motion which he has submitted to the House. For it was really a speech against all extension of the franchise in the direction of the working classes, and it did not refer merely to the subject of that particular franchise, which we have to adopt or reject in connection with the present Bill. However, it may be said with truth, that it is not the speech in question, but the motion of my hon. friend on the one side and the amendment of the hon. member opposite on the other, with which we have principally to deal. Let us, then, consider what is the practical issue raised for our present decision.

There are two points bearing upon this question, the one a matter of fact, and the other a matter of judgment, upon which it may be reasonably supposed there will be a general concurrence of opinion. With regard to the matter of fact, there is no doubt that those, who sit on the other side, may be said to be unanimous in deprecating at the present time—and certainly, as far as the argument of the honourable gentleman, and the reception of that argument, afforded an indication, at any time—the extension of the franchise. I do not attempt to conceal or deny, on the other hand, that the other great party in the country is not unanimous on the subject. No small number of those, who profess liberal opinions, are indifferent, some may be even averse,

to any change such as is proposed by the Bill, from a ten pound to a six pound franchise in towns. The second point, upon which I think all parties are agreed, is this; that at the present period, and in a state of opinion such as now subsists, it would not be advisable, I might even say it would not be justifiable, for the Government of the Queen, however it might be composed, to submit a measure on this subject to Parliament. Under these circumstances, and with these admissions freely made, the question we have before us for to-day is this; What course ought we to take on the motion of my honourable friend, having regard to the amendment which has been moved in favour of postponement? My honourable friend, without communication with the Government, and acting, as far as I am aware, entirely in the exercise of his own discretion, has brought his proposal before us as a subject for discussion. I treat this, without praise or censure, merely as a fact. And now I admit it may be said that the motion of the honourable gentleman opposite, which is a motion for time, does, in fact, no more than embody the admissions I have myself made, namely, that this is not a period for a Government to deal with this question, and that even the party which represents the liberal opinions of the country is not unanimous on the subject. Why, then, do I vote against the honourable gentleman's motion? It is because, even when taken apart from his speech, although much more if taken in connection with the speech, it appears to me to support, to justify, and to confirm a state of facts and opinions, which I deeply deprecate and deplore. Admitting the existence of those opinions within the limits I have described—and it is useless to shut our eyes to their existence—I must say that I deeply deplore them. I will not go the whole length of my hon. friend in respect to the precise terms he used as to the broken pledges of Governments and parties, but I will not scruple to admit that, at least as it appears to me, so much of our Parliamentary history during the last thirteen years—I mean during the years since the vote on Mr. Locke King's Bill in 1851—as touches Parliamentary Reform, is a most un-

satisfactory chapter in that history; and has added nothing to the honour of Parliament, or to the safety and well-being of the country. Now I cannot expect any sudden change for the better as likely to arise from any debate or decision on the present Bill. Yet I am convinced that the discussion of the question in the House of Commons must, through the gentle process by which Parliamentary debates act on the public mind, gradually help to bring home the conviction that we have not been so keenly alive to our duties in this matter as we ought to have been; that it is for the interests of the country that this matter should be entertained; and that it ought, if we are wise, to be brought to an early settlement. The conditions requisite for dealing with it can only be supplied by a favourable state of the public mind: but the public mind is itself guided, and opinion modified, in no small degree, by the debates of Parliament.

One especial advantage attends to-day the discussion of this question, that, at present, at all events, it is not to be held strictly a party question. I am afraid, indeed, if I take as a criterion the cheers with which the speech of the hon. gentleman opposite was received, and the quarter from which they proceeded, that the time may come when this may, and will, once more become a party question. For the present, however, we may discuss it without exclusive reference to party associations; and I may take the opportunity of saying that for this reason I am glad—though for others I am not so—that my honourable friend the member for Salisbury has stepped into the arena on this occasion; because the circumstance enables us the more easily to find our way into the discussion of the question without the apprehension that we are irritating and exciting those passions and party sentiments, which necessarily enter into our debates when party interests are concerned, and which might help to obscure the true merits of the case. I will address myself, then, to the question actually before us, admitting again that if I deeply deplore the state of opinion opposite,

I am far from being satisfied with the state of opinion on this side of the House.

My honourable friend the member for Salisbury appears to think that he has made out his case when he has advanced three propositions: one of them, that nobody desires, nobody petitions for, the Bill; the next, that to propose the extension of the franchise downwards is to propose also the encouragement of bribery; and the third, that the working classes have their interests well attended to by the House of Commons as it is at present constituted. Now, Sir, I decline altogether to follow my honourable friend into an argument upon the question whether or not the extension of the franchise downwards would really lead to the encouragement of bribery. I would simply record my emphatic dissent from that statement. Again, with respect to the allegation that the working classes have their interests well cared for by this House, far be it from me to deny that this House has a strong feeling of sympathy with the working classes; but permit me to say that that sympathy is not the least strongly felt, and that its practical exhibition has certainly not been least remarkable, among those also who are the immediate promoters and supporters of this Bill. And next I come to the assertion that nobody desires a measure of this sort. But before otherwise dealing with this assertion, I want to know where, in a discussion such as is now before us, lies the burden of proof? Is the *onus probandi* upon those who maintain that the present state of the representation ought not to be touched, or upon those who say it ought to be amended? The honourable member for Shoreham says the case of the British constitution, after a Bill of this sort, will be like the case of the man over whom was written the epitaph, "I was well; I would be better; here I am;" and he told us again that to venture on a change such as is presented in this Bill was to enter on a "domestic revolution." Sir, I entirely deprecate the application of language of such a kind to the present Bill. I will not now enter into the question whether the precise form of franchise, and the precise

figure, which my hon. friend has indicated, may or may not be that which, upon full deliberation, we ought to choose; I will not now inquire whether the franchise should be founded on rate-paying or on occupation; neither will I consider whether or not there should be a lodger's franchise; I put aside every question except the very simple one which I take to be at issue, and on this I will endeavour not to be misunderstood. I apprehend my honourable friend's Bill to mean (and if such be the meaning I give my cordial concurrence to the proposition), that there ought to be, not a wholesale, nor an excessive, but a sensible and considerable addition to that portion of the working classes—at present almost infinitesimal—which is in possession of the franchise.

Now, Sir, if I am asked what I mean by a “sensible and considerable addition,” I reply that I mean such an addition as I think, and as we at the time contended in argument,* would have been made by the Bill which the present Government submitted to the House in 1860. Does then the *onus* of proof that there is a necessity for such a measure lie with us? Has the honourable member wholly forgotten, or does he set wholly at nought, all the formal and solemn declarations of the years from 1851 to 1860? What, again, is the present state of the constituency, any departure from which the hon. gentleman deprecates and stigmatises as a “domestic revolution”? At present we have, speaking generally, a constituency of which between one-tenth and one-twentieth—certainly less than one-tenth

* “You have got already a borough constituency of 450,000: you are going to add 150,000, or at the most extravagant estimate 200,000. . . . The labouring classes might be 200,000, in a borough constituency of 650,000: that is, they would be less than one-third of the whole borough constituency, and only in about one-half of the boroughs, or one-third part of the seats, returning members for England and Wales, would thus amount to such numbers as to act with any sensible or appreciable force. Now, Sir, is that the lion's share? and does that justify the appeals which have been made, and the lecture we have received to-night on American institutions?”—Speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Bill for Amending the Representation of the People, May 3, 1860. Hansard, vol. 158, pp. 461, 2. The report is not a corrected one: and in the extract here given I have corrected an error by altering 410,000 into 450,000.

—consists of working men. And what proportion does that fraction of the working classes, who are in possession of the franchise, bear to the whole body of the working classes? I apprehend I am correct in saying that those, who possess the franchise, are less than one-fiftieth of the whole number of the working classes. Is that a state of things which we cannot venture to touch or modify? Is there no choice between excluding forty-nine out of every fifty working men on the one hand, and on the other “a domestic revolution”? I contend, then, that it is on the honourable gentleman that the burden of proof must be held principally to lie; that it is on those who say it is necessary to exclude forty-nine-fiftieths that the burden of proof rests; that it is for them to show the unworthiness, the incapacity, and the misconduct of the working classes, in order to make good their argument that no larger portion of them than this should be admitted to the suffrage. (Oh, oh!) I am sorry to find that it is anywhere thought necessary to treat this question by what, perhaps, to use a mild phrase, I may call “inarticulate reasoning;” and I will endeavour not to provoke more of it from a certain quarter of the House than I can help. But it is an opinion which I entertain that if forty-nine-fiftieths of the working classes are to be excluded from the franchise, it is certainly with those who maintain that exclusion that it rests to show its necessity. On the other hand, my hon. friend indicates that kind of extension of the suffrage which would make the working classes a sensible fraction of the borough constituency; an important fraction, but still a decided minority as compared with the other portion of it. That is the proposition, which we have before us for our present consideration.

We are told that the working classes do not agitate for an extension of the franchise; but is it desirable that we should wait until they do agitate? In my opinion, agitation by the working classes, upon any political subject whatever, is a thing not to be waited for, not to be made a condition previous to any Parliamentary movement; but, on the contrary, it is a thing to

be deprecated, and, if possible, anticipated and prevented by wise and provident measures. An agitation by the working classes is not like an agitation by the classes above them, the classes possessed of leisure. The agitation of the classes having leisure is easily conducted. It is not with them that every hour of time has a money value; their wives and children are not dependent on the strictly reckoned results of those hours of labour. When a working man finds himself in such a condition that he must abandon that daily labour on which he is strictly dependent for his daily bread, when he gives up the profitable application of his time, it is then that, in railway language, "the danger signal is turned on;" for he does it only because he feels a strong necessity for action, and a distrust in the rulers who, as he thinks, have driven him to that necessity. The present state of things, I rejoice to say, does not indicate that distrust; but if we admit this as matter of fact, we must not along with the admission allege the absence of agitation on the part of the working classes as a sufficient reason why the Parliament of England, and the public mind of England, should be indisposed to entertain the discussion of this question.

I may presume, Sir, to mention that I happen to have had a recent opportunity of obtaining some information respecting the views of the working classes on this subject. It arose incidentally; but I thought it worth attention at the time, and I still think it may be worth the attention of the House. It was in connexion with the discussions on the Government Annuities Bill, when a deputation, representing the most extensive among all the existing combinations of the working classes of Liverpool, came to me, and expressed their own sentiments and those of their fellows with respect to that Bill.

MR. HORSFALL:—It was not a deputation from Liverpool, but from London. (Hear, hear.)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER:—I am not aware of having said Liverpool. ("Yes, yes.") I beg pardon, then, I meant London; and I thank my honourable friend for the cor-

rection he has supplied, as it enables me to report the views of a body of men perhaps some six or eight times larger than any corresponding body in Liverpool. After disavowing opposition to that measure, they proceeded to hold language such as this: "If there has been any suspicion or disinclination to this Bill on the part of the working classes, it is owing in a great measure to their dissatisfaction with the conduct of Parliament during recent years in reference to the extension of the suffrage." Part of my answer to them was, "If you complain of the conduct of Parliament, depend upon it the conduct of Parliament has been connected in no small degree with the apparent inaction, and alleged indifference, of the working classes themselves with respect to the suffrage." The reply which they then returned was one, which made a deep impression on my mind. They used language to the following effect: "It is true that, since the abolition of the corn-laws, we have given up political agitation; we have begun from that time to feel that we might place confidence in Parliament; that we might look to Parliament to pass beneficial measures without agitation. We were told then to abandon those habits of political action which had so much interfered with the ordinary occupations of our lives; and we have endeavoured to substitute for them the employment of our evenings in the improvement of our minds." I do not hesitate to confess that I was greatly struck by that answer. And, after hearing it, I for one am more than ever unable to turn round on the working classes and say, that it is plain they do not care for the extension of the franchise, because they do not agitate in order to obtain it.

The objection made by the honourable gentleman opposite and by many others is, that the working classes, if admitted even in limited numbers, or at all events so as to form any considerable proportion of a constituency, will go together as a class, and wholly separate themselves from other classes. I do not wish to use harsh language, and therefore I will not say that that is a libel; but I believe it to be a statement altogether

unjustified by reference to facts. It is not a fact, as I believe, that the working men, who are now invested with the franchise, act together as a class; and there is not the slightest reason to suppose that they would so act together if there were a moderate and fair extension of the suffrage. If, indeed, we were to adopt a sudden and sweeping measure, a measure which might deserve the epithet of revolutionary; if we were to do anything which would give a monopoly of power to the working classes; if, for example, instead of adopting a measure which would raise the proportion of working men in the town constituencies to one-third, you gave the franchise to two-thirds, there would be some colour for the anticipation, and some justification for the language so lightly used; there might then be some temptation to set up class interests on the part of those, who might thus have the means of obtaining, or at least a temptation to grasp at, a monopoly of power, and it would, under these circumstances, be for us to show, if we could, that no danger would arise. But I appeal to the evidence of all, who know anything of the facts, to say whether we have not seen the working classes, in places where they possessed the franchise, instead of being disposed to go together as a class, rather inclined, as a general rule, and under all ordinary circumstances, to follow their superiors, to confide in them, to trust them, and to hold them in high esteem. Their landlords in the country, their employers in the town, their neighbours, and those whose personal characters they respect—these are the men whom the working classes commonly elect to follow; and, for my part, I believe, if there is anything which will induce them to alter their conduct, and to make it their rule to band together as a class, it will be resentment at exclusion, and a sense of injustice. Whatever tends to denote them as persons open to the influence of bribery—as persons whose admission within the pale of the constitution constitutes “a domestic revolution,”—whatever tends to mark them as unworthy of confidence and respect, is calculated to drive them back to the use of their natural means of self-defence, and might, possibly,

in times and circumstances which we can conceive, become the motive cause of an union among the working-classes, which would be adverse to other classes of the community.

It would, Sir, be worse than idle, after the able and luminous speech of my honourable friend (Mr. Baines) to detain the House with the statistics of the question. But I take my stand, in the first place, on a great legislative fact; on the Reform Bill of 1832. Before 1832—the epoch of the Reform Act—although the working-classes were not supposed to be represented in this House, yet we had among the constituencies some of an important character which were in an entirely preponderating proportion working-class constituencies. I myself was elected by a scot and lot borough, the borough of Newark. At the time that I was first returned for that borough, in December, 1832, the constituency was close upon 1600. That same constituency is now a little more than 700; nor has it yet, I believe, reached its minimum; in fact, it is in progress of regular decay, until it reaches the limit fixed by the number of ten pound houses. That borough was enfranchised in the time of Charles II., when the Crown did not fear to issue writs calling for the return, in certain cases, of members by constituencies that consisted of all inhabitants who paid scot and lot. But, since the Act of 1832, there has been a large deduction made from the number of working men in the possession of the franchise by the changes which have taken place in the condition of the boroughs called pot-walloping boroughs, scot and lot boroughs, and by other denominations. I greatly doubt whether, even after making fair allowance for the bettered circumstances of working men, as large a proportion of the entire body hold the suffrage now as held it in December, 1832. If that is so, is it fair and proper that, in the thirty-two years which have since elapsed, a reduction should have taken place in the proportion which they bear to the rest of the constituency? Have their condition and character retrograded in a manner to justify this retrogression of numbers? Have they no claims to an extension of the suffrage? I think the

facts are clear, and I think my honourable friend has shown that a great portion of the facts are reducible to figures, and are capable of being represented in a form and with a force almost mathematical, with reference to education and to the state of the press. Let me, then, refer to one or two points which are not reducible to figures. We are told, for instance, that the working classes are given to the practice of strikes. I believe it is the experience of the employers of labour that these strikes are more and more losing the character of violence and compulsory interference with the free will of their own comrades and fellow-workmen, and are assuming that legal and, under certain circumstances, legitimate character, which they possess as the only means by which, in the last resort, labour can fairly assert itself against capital in the peaceful strife of the labour market. Let us take, too, that which in former times I believe to have been the besetting sin of labour,—the disposition of the majority not to recognise the right of the minority, and, indeed, of every single individual, to sell his labour for what he thinks fit. On behalf of the labouring classes, I must, in passing, say that this doctrine is much harder for them to practise than for us to preach. In our condition of life and feeling, we have nothing analogous to that which the working man cannot but feel when he sees his labour being, as he thinks, undersold. Yet still it is our duty to assert in the most rigid terms, and to carry high the doctrine of the right of every labouring man, whether with or against the approval of his class, to sell his labour as high or as low as he pleases. But with respect to this point, which has certainly been in other times, and which I fear still is in certain cases, a point of weakness, I appeal to those who have experience of the working-classes, whether there is not reason to believe that the progress of knowledge, and the experience of good government, and the designs of philanthropy and religion, have borne their fruit? Has not the time come when large portions, at the least, of working men admit the right of freedom

of labour, as fully as it could possibly be asserted in this House?

Again, Sir, let us look for a few moments at the altered, the happily altered, relations of the working-classes to the government, the laws, the institutions, and, above all, to the throne of this country. Let us go back—it is no long period in the history of a nation—to an epoch not very many years before the passing of the Reform Bill, and consider what was the state of things at a time when many of us were unborn, and when most of us were children;—I mean, to the years which immediately succeeded the peace of 1815. We all know the history of those times; most of us recollect the atmosphere and the ideas, under the influence of which we were brought up. They were not ideas which belonged to the old current of English history; nor were they in conformity with the liberal sentiments which pervaded, at its best periods, the politics of the country, and which harmonised with the spirit of the old British Constitution. They were, on the contrary, ideas referable to those lamentable excesses of the first French Revolution, which produced here a terrible reaction, and went far to establish the doctrine that the masses of every community were in permanent antagonism with the laws under which they lived, and were disposed to regard those laws, and the persons by whom the laws were made and administered, as their natural enemies. Unhappily, there are but too many indications to prove that this is no vague or imaginary description. The time, to which I now refer, was a time when deficiencies in the harvest were followed by riots, and when rioters did not hold sacred even the person of Majesty itself. In 1817, when the Prince Regent came down to open Parliament, his carriage was assailed by the populace of London: and what was the remedy provided for this state of things? Why, the remedy was sought in the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act; or in the limitation of the action of the press, already restricted; or in the employment of spies and the deliberate defence of their employment, who,

for the supposed security of the Government, were sent throughout the country to dog the course of private life, and to arrest persons, or to check them, in the formation of conspiracies real or supposed. And what, let me ask, is the state of things now? With truth, Sir, it may be said that the epoch I have named, removed from us, in mere chronological reckoning, by less than half a century, is in the political sphere separated from us by a distance almost immeasurable. For now it may be fearlessly asserted that the fixed traditional sentiment of the working man has begun to be confidence in the law, in Parliament, and even in the executive Government. Of this gratifying state of things it fell to my lot to receive a single, indeed, but a significant proof no later than yesterday. (Cries of "No, no," and laughter.) The quick-witted character of hon. gentlemen opposite outstrips, I am afraid, the tardy movement of my observations. Let them only have a very little patience, and they will, I believe, see cause for listening to what I shall say.* I was about to proceed to say, in illustration of my argument, that only yesterday I had the satisfaction of receiving a deputation of working men from the Society of Amalgamated Engineers. That society consists of very large numbers of highly-skilled workmen, and has two hundred and sixty branches; it is a society representing the very class, in which we should most be inclined to look for a spirit of even jealous independence of all direct relations with the Government. But the deputation came to state to me that the society had large balances of money open for investment, and that many of its members could not feel satisfied unless they were allowed to place their funds in the hands of the Government, by means of a modification in the rules of the Post-office Savings-banks. Now, that, I think I may say, without being liable to any expression of adverse feeling on the part of honourable gentlemen opposite, was a very small but yet significant indication, among thousands of others, of the altered temper to which I have referred. Instead,

* The interruption was understood to refer to another deputation received on the same day, with reference to the subject of the departure of General Garibaldi.

however, of uttering on the point my own opinions, I should like to use the words of the working classes themselves. In an address which, in company with my right honourable friend the member for Staffordshire, I heard read at a meeting which was held in the Potteries last autumn, they say, of their own spontaneous motion, uninfluenced by the action of their employers, in relation to the legislation of late years:—

“The great measures that have been passed during the last twenty years by the British Legislature have conferred incalculable blessings on the whole community, and particularly on the working classes, by unfettering the trade and commerce of the country, cheapening the essentials of our daily sustenance, placing a large proportion of the comforts and luxuries of life within our reach, and rendering the obtainment of knowledge comparatively easy among the great mass of the sons of toil.”

And this is the mode in which they then proceed to describe their view of the conduct of the upper classes towards them:—

“Pardon us for alluding to the kindly conduct now so commonly evinced by the wealthier portions of the community to assist in the physical and moral improvement of the working classes. The well-being of the toiling mass is now generally admitted to be an essential to the national weal. This forms a pleasing contrast to the opinions cherished half a century ago. The humbler classes also are duly mindful of the happy change, and, without any abatement of manly independence, fully appreciate the benefits resulting therefrom, contentedly fostering a hopeful expectation of the future. May Heaven favour and promote this happy mutuality! as we feel confident that all such kindly interchange materially contributes to the general good.”

Now, such language does, in my opinion, the greatest credit to the parties from whom it proceeds. This is a point on which no difference of opinion can prevail. I think I may go a step further, and consider these statements as indicating not only the sentiments of a particular body at the particular place from

which they proceeded, but the general sentiments of the best-conducted and most enlightened working men of the country. It may, however, be said that such statements prove the existing state of things to be satisfactory. But surely this is no sufficient answer. Is it right, I ask, that in the face of such dispositions, the present law of almost entire exclusion should continue to prevail? Again I call upon the adversary to show cause. And I venture to say that every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or of political danger is morally entitled to come within the pale of the Constitution. Of course, in giving utterance to such a proposition, I do not recede from the protest I have previously made against sudden, or violent, or excessive, or intoxicating change; but I apply it with confidence to this effect, that fitness for the franchise, when it is shown to exist—as I say it is shown to exist in the case of a select portion of the working class—is not repelled on sufficient grounds from the portals of the Constitution by the allegation that things are well as they are. I contend, moreover, that persons who have prompted the expression of such sentiments as those to which I have referred, and whom I know to have been members of the working class, are to be presumed worthy and fit to discharge the duties of citizenship, and that to admission to the discharge of those duties they are well and justly entitled.

The present franchise, I may add, on the whole—subject, of course, to some exceptions—draws the line between the lower middle class and the upper order of the working class. As a general rule, the lower stratum of the middle class is admitted to the exercise of the franchise, while the upper stratum of the working class is excluded. That I believe to be a fair general description of the present formation of the constituencies in boroughs and towns. Is it a state of things, I would ask, recommended by clear principles of reason? Is the upper portion of the working classes inferior to the lowest portion of the middle? That is a question I should wish to be considered on both sides

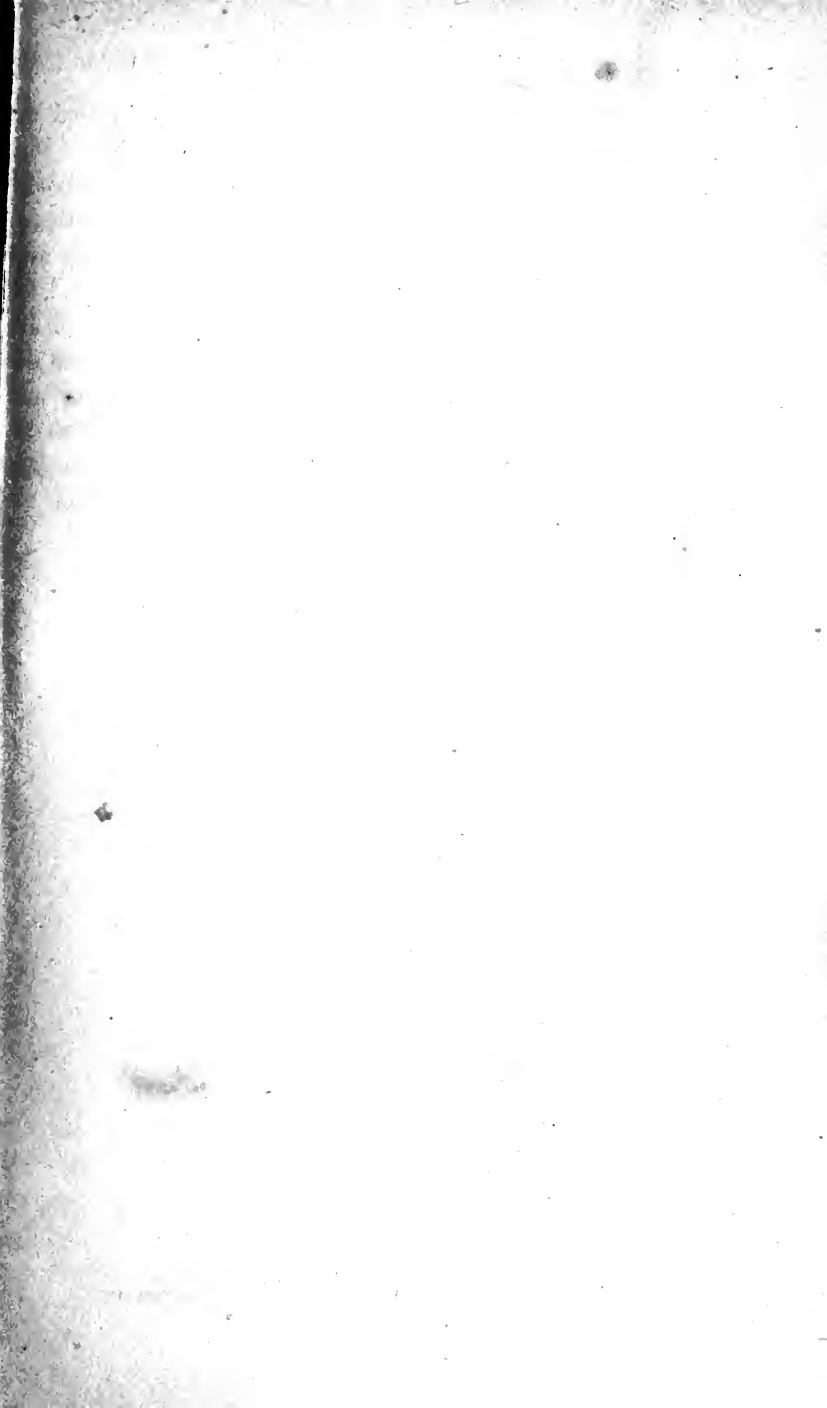
of the House. For my own part, it appears to me that the negative of the proposition may be held with the greatest confidence. Whenever this question comes to be discussed, with the view to an immediate issue, the conduct of the general body of the operatives of Lancashire cannot be forgotten. What are the qualities which fit a man for the exercise of a privilege such as the franchise? Self-command, self-control, respect for order, patience under suffering, confidence in the law, regard for superiors? and when, I should like to ask, were all these great qualities exhibited in a manner more signal, I would even say more illustrious, than under the profound affliction of the winter of 1862? I admit the danger of dealing with enormous masses of men; but I am now speaking only of a limited portion of the working class, and I for one cannot admit that there is that special virtue in the nature of the middle class which ought to lead to our drawing a marked distinction, a distinction almost purporting to be one of principle, between them and a select portion of the working classes, so far as relates to the exercise of the franchise.

But, Sir, this question has received a very remarkable illustration from the experience of the last few years. So far as Lancashire is concerned, we have the most extraordinary evidence—evidence amounting almost to mathematical demonstration—of the competency of the working man to discharge those duties of retail trade and the distribution of commodities, which are commonly intrusted to the lower part of the middle class. I allude to the evidence afforded by the marvellous success in that particular county (and I hope the example of that county may not be too eagerly followed elsewhere,) of the co-operative system. For my own part, I am not ashamed to say that, if twenty or ten years ago anybody had prophesied to me the success of that system, as it has recently been exhibited in Rochdale and other towns in the north—if I had been told that labouring men would so associate together with mutual advantage, to the exclusion of the retail dealer,

who comes between the producer and the consumer of commodities, I should have regarded the prediction as absurd. There is, in my opinion, no greater social marvel at the present day than the manner in which these societies flourish in Lancashire, combined with a consideration of the apparent soundness of the financial basis on which they are built; for the bodies of men who have had recourse to the co-operative system have been, as it would appear, those who have stood out with the most manly resolution against the storms of adversity, who have been the last to throw themselves on the charity of their neighbours, and who have proved themselves to be best qualified for the discharge of the duties of independent citizens. And when we have before us considerable numbers of men answering to this description, it is, I think, well worth our while to consider what is the title which they advance to the generous notice of Parliament in regard to their appeal to be admitted, in such measure as may upon consideration seem fit, to the exercise of the franchise. I, for myself, confess that I think the investigation will be far better conducted if we approach the question at an early date, in a calm frame of mind, and without having our doors besieged by crowds, or our table loaded with petitions; rather than if we postpone entering upon it until a great agitation has arisen.

And now, Sir, one word in conclusion. I believe that it has been given to us of this generation to witness, advancing as it were under our very eyes from day to day, the most blessed of all social processes; I mean the process which unites together not the interests only but the feelings of all the several classes of the community, and which throws back into the shadows of oblivion those discords by which they were kept apart from one another. I know of nothing which can contribute, in any degree comparable to that union, to the welfare of the commonwealth. It is well, Sir, that we should be suitably provided with armies, and fleets, and fortifications; it is well too that all these should rest upon and be sustained, as they ought to be, by a

sound system of finance, and out of a revenue not wasted by a careless Parliament, or by a profligate Administration. But that which is better and more weighty still is that hearts should be bound together by a reasonable extension, at fitting times, and among selected portions of the people, of every benefit and every privilege that can justly be conferred upon them ; and, for one, I am prepared to give my support to the motion now made by my honourable friend (Mr. Baines), because I believe and am persuaded that it will powerfully tend to that binding and blending and knitting of hearts together, and thus to the infusion of new vigour into the old, but in the best sense still young, and flourishing, and undecaying British Constitution.





SPEECH

OF THE

RIGHT HON. ROBERT LOWE, M.P.,

ON THE

IRISH TENANT-RIGHT BILL;

AND

A LETTER OF LORD ORANMORE'S TO 'THE TIMES.'

REPRINTED AT THE EXPENSE OF AN IRISHMAN.

"The miseries of Ireland are caused by her own children, by their weakness, their prejudices, their narrow views, and their hostility one towards the other."—Mr. ROEBUCK, M.P.

LONDON:

TRÜBNER AND CO., 60, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1866.

The first part of the document
 discusses the general principles
 of the proposed system.
 It is intended to provide
 a clear and concise
 summary of the main
 objectives and scope of
 the project. The following
 sections will describe the
 detailed methodology and
 the results of the study.

The second part of the document
 describes the methodology used
 in the study. This includes
 a detailed description of the
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PREFACE.

MEMBERS of the House of Commons,—

The Attorney-General for Ireland has stated that the only effect of the Irish Land Bill will be to prevent a bad landlord from doing that which no good landlord would ever think of doing.

Mr. Dillon, M.P., has stated that the Irish landlords as a body are disposed to act fairly, and that legislation is required, not for the honest majority, but for the dishonest minority. Now think of what the Government asks you to do. It asks you to deprive the landlords of Ireland of a right which the landlords of England and Scotland are still to keep, namely, that they shall not be charged, in the absence of any contract, with improvements made by their tenants, unless they have consented to those improvements. It asks you to pass a measure which will give Mr. Dillon's dishonest minority an excellent pretext for getting rid of their tenants as speedily as they can; while the honest majority, who do not require legislation to keep them straight, are rendered suspicious thereby, immediately begin to mis-

trust their tenants, and to consult their lawyers as to the construction of agreements whereby their rights may be secured to them; and thus any confidence which now exists between landlord and tenant, will receive its death-blow.

If agreements are necessary, and no land should be let without them, the honest course is to pass a direct measure to make them so, and not to bring them in by a side-wind. Smile pleasantly on those who babble to you of natural justice, abstract and natural title to property in land, and the blessed effects of peasant ownership, and, with a *nolumus leges Angliæ mutari*, throw out this Bill, which is not to the true advantage of either landlord or tenant in Ireland.

AN IRISHMAN.

SPEECH

OF

THE RIGHT HON. ROBERT LOWE, M.P.

As one of those who joined in the resolution of the Committee to which the right hon. and learned gentleman alluded,—the resolution, namely, which declared that no compensation for improvements ought to be got except where the landlord had consented to the improvements,—I heard, with most unfeigned astonishment, that this Bill was in accordance with it. Because, let the House consider what the state of the law is just now. The Bill of 1860, which was passed when the right hon. gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies was Secretary for Ireland, gave a most elaborate machinery for the assessment of the value of improvements; only in the 38th and 40th clauses it provided that this compensation should not be paid unless the consent of the landlord had been obtained. That Bill had been in force four years; and now the Government bring forward a Bill which contains a schedule for the repeal of these clauses, which rendered necessary the consent of the landlord before he could be charged with improvements. Not only so, but my right hon. friend the Secretary for

Ireland, in introducing this Bill, made use of this language. He said, speaking of the Bill of 1860:—

“There was the very great obstacle that in every instance, before the improvement could be made, notice had to be given by the tenant to the landlord, which would, of course, act as an invitation to dissent on his part, and which, in the unanimous opinion of all acquainted with Irish tenant farmers, had operated and would operate as a total bar to the success of the Act.”

The object, therefore, of this Bill is to get rid of that bar to the success of that Act. But what was that bar? Why, that the landlord was to be told by the tenant, and was to consent to improvements before he was charged with them. The right hon. and learned gentleman says that is contrary to natural justice. He says in substance that the Legislature should withhold from the landlord all the means of knowledge which the Bill of 1860 provided for him. That is the only ground on which the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant based his Bill; yet the landlord, after this knowledge has been studiously withheld from him by the act of the Legislature, after all we could do has been done to keep him in ignorance of the fact of these improvements going on, is to be taken as consenting by implication of law and the principles of natural justice to the very thing we take every means to prevent him from knowing. That is not my notion of natural justice. If it is naturally just that a landlord should only be charged with improvements when he has knowledge of them, is it not a just law that provides that he shall have that knowledge? And is it not an unjust law which provides, as far as it can, that he shall not have that knowledge? Well, but to mount a little higher, we are told by the right hon. and learned gentleman that this Bill rests on the principles of natural justice. Now, that is a very important statement, and one which

I wish the House carefully to attend to. Because look at the facts: at the present moment the landlords of England, Scotland, and Ireland enjoy this right, that they shall not be charged, in the absence of any contract, with improvements made by their tenants unless they have consented to those improvements. It is proposed by this Bill to deprive the landlords of Ireland of this right; but it is proposed to leave that right to the landlords of England and of Scotland. It becomes, therefore, exceedingly important to ascertain on what ground this deprivation is advocated. If it is a ground peculiar to Ireland, I can understand it. It has its own importance. But if the ground is that of natural justice and right, it is not peculiar to one side of the Channel or another, and we are asked to assent to a principle which, resting on such grounds, may be used on another occasion with crushing and invincible force against us. What, then, is this principle of natural justice? I have always understood that natural justice between landlord and tenant consisted in the observance on both sides of contracts into which they had entered, and out of which their rights arose. I hold it a retrograde notion to pass laws to limit the power of free contract between landlord and tenant. I hold this introduction of a compulsory term into voluntary contracts to be a blunder,—a solecism in the very nature of things. Because it must come to this,—when you introduce a compulsory term into a voluntary contract, either both parties know it or they do not. If they know of that compulsory term, provision is made for it in the contract, and so the provision is nugatory; if they don't both know, a fraud is committed on the one who does not. This, therefore, is a thoroughly unsound principle on which to base any piece of legislation. I think the true principle on this matter is that as this relation arises only out of contract we should leave the contract to determine itself, having reference to

custom which is in the minds of both parties. I think, if you go beyond that, you get into dangerous and mischievous perplexities, from which you will be unable to rescue yourselves. The truth is, this is a matter of what moralists call imperfect obligation. All jurists distinguish between perfect and imperfect obligations; and the fallacy of the Attorney-General for Ireland is that he is seeking to enforce by law gratitude and charity, for instance, which we would all wish to prevail, as matters of justice and equity, which spring out of contract, and should be left to be determined by contract. But look a little further into this doctrine of natural justice. A tenant takes land for a specific purpose—cultivation or pasture. He should have over it just as much power and dominion as he contracts for; and if he assumes to deal with it as if he were the permanent owner, and goes beyond his mere possession as the hirer or holder, is he not going beyond the domain of natural justice, inasmuch as he avails himself of a contract entered into with him for one purpose to extend it to another not in the contemplation of the other party? *Suum cuique tributo*. That is natural justice. If the tenant chooses to improve the land, unless he takes the precaution to obtain the consent of the landlord—whether he increases the value of the property or not—he has no business to meddle with it. It is in the nature of a deposit in his hands, and he ought to return it as he received it. He receives it for a particular purpose, and for that purpose only he ought to use it. If he uses it for another purpose—to build a house on it, for instance,—it may be a great improvement, but he has no right to do it. It is beyond the contract he entered into; and if there be no agreement in natural justice, he has no right to compensation. If you go beyond this principle, you involve yourselves, as the framers of this Bill have done, in endless difficul-

ties. Look at what this Bill does. The Attorney-General says it has been framed with the utmost care and solicitude; and no doubt the 28th clause, which gives this power of compensation, is perfectly clear and explicit—"Any tenant of lands may make such improvements therein as are mentioned in the 37th section of the Landed Property (Ireland) Improvement Act, 1860; and upon the determination of the tenancy by effluxion of time, or by the act of the owner, the tenant shall be entitled, save as hereinafter excepted, by way of compensation for his outlay, to a sum of money," etc. That is quite clear; but now comes the 29th clause, and I hope some one who speaks on the part of the Government will tell us what it means. I have read it over and over again, but it entirely baffles my powers of construction. Literally and grammatically understood, it would simply repeal the 28th clause altogether. The clause says, "No tenant shall be entitled to compensation under this Act in respect of any improvements which the owner might have compelled him to make or restrained him from making in pursuance of any contract in writing regulating the terms of the tenancy." It would come to this, that in order to ascertain whether a tenant was able to recover for improvements or not, you must examine whether they could have been included in any contract in writing; and if they could have been included, then he would not be entitled. I know that is not the meaning; but what the meaning is I confess passes my comprehension. Had I not been told the Attorney-General for Ireland had paid great care and attention to the framing of this Bill I should have said this clause was a slip of the pen. I hope the meaning of it will be explained. [An Hon. Member observed that it was matter for consideration in committee.] Yes, but unfortunately the principle of the whole Bill is in it. The Bill, in the most explicit lan-

guage, saddled the landlords of Ireland with the necessity of paying for these improvements, and this is the clause relaxing the obligation, and therefore it is important to know what is the meaning of it. No one can have read the Irish newspapers, or attended to what has passed at public meetings in Ireland, without being aware that the most different constructions are put on it. With the view of ascertaining what the Government themselves say on the subject, I turn to the speech of the Chief Secretary of the Lord-Lieutenant, and he says:—

“At the same time it was proposed to interfere in no way with the perfect freedom of contract between landlord and tenant; but the Act provided that, in the absence of any written contract to the contrary, the tenant shall, by the general rule of law, have a general beneficial interest in the permanent improvements executed at his cost.”

Then the right hon. gentleman goes on to say:—

“While they left the landlord and tenant at perfect liberty to regulate their own affairs by written contract, they yet proposed to place the law of the country on the side of natural equity and justice.”

Now, I ask the House could any man, reading those two passages, fail to come to the conclusion that it was perfectly open to the landlord and tenant to contract as to whether these improvements should be made or not; but the Attorney-General for Ireland has told you that is not open, though certain specific improvements can be contracted for. The whole of the improvements, however, cannot be contracted for; and that is the position in which it is proposed to place Irish landlords, and on such a state of law every man is to be told to regulate his transactions. It is such a proposed enactment as this, which allows a man to do a great deal, but not all, and which does not draw the line between what he may and may not do, which has

been described as having been carefully prepared, as calculated to allay angry passions, to do away with mistrust, and to establish peace and confidence between Irish tenants and landlords. Why is this Bill introduced? On looking to the speech of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, I find that he stated in the most glowing manner the wonderful improvements which had been made in Ireland since 1841; how 2,000,000 acres of wild land had been brought into cultivation, and what an enormous quantity of good of different kinds had been done. The right hon. gentleman seemed to look with wonder and astonishment on what had been effected; and therefore it could not be that this Bill has been introduced because the present state of the law prevents improvements. Well, I expected that the right hon. gentleman would show that the existing law was calculated to prevent future improvements, but there was not a syllable in his speech to that effect. Then, if the law has not prevented improvements in the past, and if improvements were likely to go on in the future, I thought he would have shown that Irish landlords in general were taking advantage of the state of the law, and grossly oppressing their tenants; but the right hon. gentleman never alluded to that subject. He seemed to think, because improvements were going on very fast in Ireland, that that was a reason for altering the state of the law. The Attorney-General for Ireland disclaimed the idea of basing the Bill on the ground of oppressive conduct on the part of the Irish landlords. He said that "flagrant instances of injustice on the part of Irish landlords where now and then brought to light, but these, he honestly believed, were the exception and not the rule." Well, the same thing may be said in respect to England. But what are you going to do? You are going to introduce a principle which is to be

applied to Ireland, but not to England and Scotland, and that is to meet an exception and not the rule. If this be so, what ground is there for the Bill? The Attorney-General for Ireland had referred to Lord Devon's commission in 1845, but we have not been asleep since then. Enormous improvements have been made in Ireland, and have gone on, and yet you now propose to make this important change, which cuts deep into the principles on which property is based. No attempt has been made to show that there is any case of practical grievance, or of serious inconvenience. In the Select Committee of last year we had two witnesses of practical experience, Mr. Curling and Lord Dufferin, and they both gave evidence against the notion that any practical grievance existed. When you tamper with a landlord's rights by such crude provisions as are embodied in the present Bill, you are taking away a law which has existed since this country has existed, and where do you think that this kind of thing is to stop? We know the history of this question, and what it implies. I do not believe that there is any really serious demand on the part of the tenantry of Ireland for this measure. I did not find that there was, after hearing the evidence of a great number of gentlemen who came forward to make out a case; but I found that there was in Ireland a very great wish to maintain the present subdivided state of land occupations there; and a Bill like the present is desired in many quarters, not to protect the tenant from ill-treatment on the part of the landlord, but to prevent the aggregation of farms together; because a tenant might make improvements which, in his opinion, were good improvements, though in the landlord's point of view, and on the plan he has for managing the estate, of which the tenant knows nothing, they may be no improvements, but encumbrances only. It is by facilitating the creation of these

so-called improvements under this Bill, not only without the consent, but against the consent of the landlord, unless he put the matter in writing, that you will retard that which most persons wish to see done, who look at the question with a view to the good of the country, namely, the putting an end to very small holdings and aggregating them into large farms. We must remember that there is a great wish on the part of a powerful body in Ireland to maintain the subdivision of land. It is the interest of the priesthood to have the land subdivided. They have to make out their existence from the benevolence of their congregations, and they believe that they have an interest in keeping up the subdivision of land, and in the existence of a numerous body of holders. There is another consideration which should never be lost sight of. Why is it that the tenant does not make terms with the landlord for the improvements he wants to make? The fact is, that the demand for these farms is so infinitely greater than the supply, and one man is so pressing upon another, that the tenant does not propose anything which would imperil his holding. That is a thing which legislation cannot remedy; it must be dealt with by other means, and it is being dealt with by emigration, which is gradually reducing the population, and will continue to reduce it until landlord and tenant will be able to negotiate with each other on terms of perfect equality. If you give to the tenant the power of securing compensation for the improvements he may make, it will be subtracted from him in a very disadvantageous form. Do you think that by driving the landlord to contract with his tenant you will do a wise thing? Do you think that by imposing penalties upon persons who will not enter into those things you will advance the interests of Ireland? That is not by any means so plain. This question seems to

me to be two-sided. The condition in which the landlord will be placed has probably not escaped the thoughts of those who drew up this Bill. The Attorney-General has told us that it will be illegal to make a contract against the obligation to give compensation to the tenant; and this, undoubtedly, will be very unpopular, and we all know what unpopularity in Ireland means. You are going to force the landlord to enter into written contracts, by which his liberty will be circumscribed beforehand; and the effect will be that the landlord will say, "In for a penny, in for a pound. Eviction is better than ruin; I will get rid of these small farms and aggregate them to others." By such a course you will probably lay the foundation for what you want to avoid. There will be a tendency to get rid of the small holdings, and the consequence will be greater hardship than any that could be removed by the present Bill. Then you are to abolish the law of distress, except in cases of a written contract; but do you think you are benefiting the poor tenant by such a provision? The landlords, I humbly submit, are better judges in the matter of granting leases than this House can possibly be; and do you think that you are benefiting the poor tenant by compelling the landlord, unless he grant a lease, to bring a civil action against his tenant, perhaps witnessing the disposal of his property, his cattle, his beasts, everything, while the action against him for rent is going its slow course towards judgment? At a future time such a law may be beneficial to the country; but its operation will be exceedingly harsh during the exodus which is now going on. It will hurry on the process of evictions, and make it necessary for a landlord, for his own preservation, to turn out any tenant whom he cannot trust. Look, again, at the relation of landlord and tenant. It ought to be determined purely by contract, but there is no

doubt that in Ireland it is simply the relation of the superior to the inferior, and the richer to the poorer. The latter has frequently to look to the benevolence, the generosity, the kindness, and the forbearance of his superior; but the effect of the compulsory powers proposed by the present Bill will be largely to prevent the exercise of those qualities. It is of no use whatever to expect to meet the case by forcing upon the landlord to do that to which, in the management of his property, he is averse. By such a proceeding are you not putting a weapon into the people's hands, which, if used, is sure to recoil with tenfold force against their own breasts? Do you think you are acting wisely in encouraging the inferior to deal with the superior in a strict, it may be harsh and coercive manner, by means of the proposed compulsory powers, and that the landlord will come out the worst in the contest? If you insist on bringing the pot of clay into contact with the pot of iron, do you think the pot of iron will go to pieces? In all these attempts against nature, against the law of political economy, and against that natural law which binds men by the contracts they make, it is the nature of things that they should recoil; and the person whom you mean to benefit is injured by them. In this way you furnish excuses and provocation to the stronger to take vengeance against the weaker. Then there is another point which has been touched on before, to which I will briefly advert. We all know that there are dreams in Ireland of an extraordinary character. The tenants may say, "We must have compensation for our improvements;" but then they will add, "What is the good of compensation for improvements when the first notice of our intention to make them is met by a corresponding notice to quit the farm altogether?" It will be useless to give them the power of exacting compensation for improvements unless accompanied by fixity of tenure.

Then, however, when fixity of tenure is given, you get a position in which the substance of ownership departs from the landlord, and the shadow only remains. He is reduced, like the Government of India in the Presidency of Bengal, to the receipt of a permanent rent which cannot be raised, and the country becomes a country of ryots, with nothing left but the landlords and the tillers of the soil. The Government should take into its own hand the collection of the rent, which could be easily managed, I have no doubt, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who would make a fine financial operation of it by means of terminable annuities, and explain how we could pay off the National Debt. To show you something of the character of the dreams which prevail among the Irish people, I will just state to the House what I read the other day. Two men in a certain part of Ireland entered into a dreadful combat with each other, in which both were severely wounded. A benevolent lady undertook to nurse one of these men, and at last asked him the cause of the combat. The cause was that each of them had cast his eye upon a particular portion of the estate of the husband of the lady who had so kindly attended to him, and each had claims, derived, no doubt, from the times of Malachi, when he "wore his collar of gold," and each had settled that a particular portion should belong to him. There being no court of law yet appointed to try such titles as would arise under those peculiar circumstances, in case the Fenian conspiracy were successful, they determined to try it by the ordeal of battle, and almost killed themselves. Now, when you have people with such ideas in their heads, is it wise to encourage them by breaking down in their favour those laws of property which regulate tenancy, and which obtain in the rest of the United Kingdom? Is it wise to use the language we perpetually hear,—that what is good sense

and sound law on this side of the Channel is not so on the other? Are we to defer to Irish opinion, and let sound principles and the elementary rules of jurisprudence cease to have their efficacy? I know that is the fashionable theory now about Ireland; and though I wish to say nothing disagreeable, I am bound to say it seems to me to be the predominant principle which actuates the policy of the Government. I think any person who looks at these things with calmness and impartiality will see that there are not two truths in these matters. If there is a right and wrong, a wise and a foolish course, it cannot be altered by circumstances. Prejudices and old animosities make certain persons in certain parts of the country take different views of these circumstances. I have no doubt myself that in Ireland, more than anywhere else, it is necessary our legislation should be founded on principles perfectly broad, perfectly well ascertained, perfectly defensible upon the most abstract philosophical grounds. I say in Ireland especially, because in the turgid vortex of Irish opinion and discord we have nothing else but abstract principle to rely upon. You cannot give up principle without encouraging those dreams of reconquering land which has been taken from them. You cannot give up all that is asked by the Ultramontane Episcopate without encouraging them in dreams equally fatal to the welfare of the people and the country. You must take your stand upon something; that something ought to be truth, honesty, and sound principle. If it is necessary to maintain them in England, it is ten times more necessary to adhere to them with punctilious accuracy in Ireland. Our wisdom is, when we have got existing institutions, whether they be land laws, colleges, or schools, founded on the best principles we can find out for our own use in this country, and when we find them existing in Ireland, to stand by them and maintain them

firmly, yielding to no clamour, seeking no momentary popularity, but doing our duty as far as we know with reference to what is true and just, and not with any idea of momentary expediency. If I were to describe what our policy with regard to Ireland ought to be in a few words, I should say it consisted in patience, forbearance, firmness, and impartiality.

IRISH LAND TENURE.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE TIMES.'

SIR,—As Irish representatives cannot, without considerable rashness, speak plainly on a subject so undoubtedly popular as fixity of tenure, perhaps you will afford space for a few remarks, to one who, from having managed his own property for eleven years, can speak with practical experience. Mr. Mill, while he philosophized on natural rights, declined entering on the consideration of the real matter before the House,—viz. Is it desirable, either for the good of the community, or for the well-being of the people themselves, that fixity of tenure should be given to the peasant farmer of Ireland? I am sorry to say there are still in Ireland 445,231 tenants whose holdings only average twelve acres of land. The large majority of these small holdings originated by subdivisions, which were made when held under leases, which losing their value in the famine, the tenants were ejected or surrendered. This unwholesome state of things having resulted from long leases, I think it is but reasonable to assume that they have been tried and found wanting; but it may be said the tenants know better now; they see the evil of subdivision, or subdivision can be prevented by the conditions of the lease. I can at once reply to the first suggestion by stating, of my own knowledge, that when

not closely watched they will, and do still, subdivide their holdings; and as to conditions, the expense of enforcing them would be so great, where there are so many tenants to deal with, that no one wishing for any income from his estate would attempt to do so. For example, I know one estate with an income of above £22,000 a year paid by upwards of 5000 tenants! It does seem strange that it should be necessary to discuss the advisability of encouraging and confirming such a state of things! Again, I can state, without fear of contradiction, that in the west of Ireland I have never seen a single holding of the class I refer to well drained, fenced, and cultivated; and for this I in nowise blame the tenant, for any one acquainted with draining knows that to do it effectually requires great care, skill, and capital, and that no return for the latter can be expected for at least a couple of years. How can a poor man wait for this? I could give instances without number to show how many are the difficulties attending any attempt to improve where holdings are so small, and where there are so many rights and interests to deal with. Take one example.—There are, say, some twenty tenants living on each side of a small stream; this cannot be deepened without the consent of all; and, independently of the difficulty of obtaining this consent, few are willing to work for their neighbours. I know two instances in which, at considerable expense, the landlords deepened such a stream, charging the tenants nothing. In neither case could they be got to keep the drain cleaned; and in one instance a tenant, having a lease, brought an action against the landlord for intruding on his land! But why don't landlords build decent cottages and small barns? A slated cottage and suitable offices for twelve acres of land could not be built under £200,—a sum equal, in many cases, to the fee-simple of the holding; and if the holding were

enlarged, the buildings would become an encumbrance. Supposing, under the proposed law, the tenant were to lay out £60 on building, would this be a beneficial improvement to be repaid by the landlord?

Again, the wetness of the climate very generally narrows the time both of sowing and reaping; to get the crop into the ground early, or to gather it in a good state, requires the command of every facility in the shape of horses, machinery, etc. The small tenant has none of these, and his crop suffers accordingly.

Let us now look to the social habits attending this system. Young people marry almost as soon as they arrive at man's estate, and so are immediately burdened with the support of a young family, for whom there is no employment; then, as soon as daughters grow up, it is the invariable habit to give them fortunes on their getting married; so, if by middle life a small tenant has saved a little money, it is thus disposed of, and he has only to look to the land to recoup him; then, if there be a pig, calf, cow, oats, etc., to buy or sell (independent of the fair or market being the place of recreation), he occupies as much, or more, time in disposing of them as it would take to dispose of a number of cattle, or a large quantity of grain. I think I have shown that the size of small holdings is alone a sufficient reason for the landlord not building or making improvements on them; and the experience of a century supports my view, that from the habits, circumstances, and want of necessary skill and capital, small tenants are unable so to cultivate the land to get from it a fair return. It appears, then, to me as that the only other important question that arises is this,—though the community suffer from loss of produce, and the landlord from necessarily lower rents, is the tenant so prosperous that what is lost on the one hand is more than gained on the other by the comfort and contentment which

result to him from this system? Would it were so, and then assuredly I, for one, should be too glad to see it confirmed and encouraged. But, instead of this, the Irish peasant is the worst fed, worst-clothed, worst-housed human being in Europe, living in a hut which commonly is shared by his pig, fowl, and cattle,—in Ireland, a mere slave of priest or landlord; in England, a hewer of wood and a drawer of water; and, consequently, he is now, and under this system must continue, a discontented, dissatisfied member of society.

I cannot see that it requires any deep philosophy, or any great knowledge of political economy, to arrive at the conclusion that exceptional legislation is nowise justifiable for the purpose of supporting a system which has resulted so disastrously. The failure of the potato in 1846 and the following years, showed the extreme misery that may result from it. Almost simultaneously emigration, the natural remedy for the evil, was much facilitated; and now the people go willingly to a country where they rejoin those of their friends and family who have gone before; and where not only is plenty to be had for the earning, but, with reasonable prudence during youth, independence, such as they never could obtain in Ireland, is theirs by middle age. Surely, if the Government truly desires the well-being of the Irish people, it will facilitate this natural egress from an over-populated country, rather than for party ends confiscate the landed property of Ireland solely to increase and perpetuate one of the principal and natural causes of Irish poverty and discontent.

I am, your very obedient servant,

ORANMORE AND BROWNE.

Clarendon Hotel, May 26.



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WHAT DOES IT PROFIT A MAN?

“Guarda com’ entri, e di cui tu ti fide.”

Inferno, canto v.

I AM anonymous, because I propose to represent a tradition, not merely an individual—a tradition handed down to us by our fathers, in face of the ruin of their dearest and the confiscation of their best. They did not bear “the labours and heats of the day” in vain; but, standing steadfast under a mighty tribulation, they calmly, though in agony, gave into our safe keeping a treasure, to them far dearer than “house, or brethren, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands,” as it should also be to us:

“Their spirits seemed seated on a throne,
Apart from the surrounding world, and strong
In their own strength.”

I cannot bring my mind to look back into the past, and think upon them, and then take a survey of the present and our actual position, without being conscious of very serious fears and misgivings. They were so true, so manly, so upright; they were so ready, so generous, and so strong. Their minds (many of them) appear to have been moulded in such high, supernatural

principles, that, upon taking our eyes from them and directing them upon ourselves, we find but few reasons for elation, though many reasons for shame. It is in no high or boastful spirit that I refer to those strong men in their generation ; if I am tempted to pride in looking upon them, I am quickly read a lesson of humility on reverting to myself. I would point to them in their day as models for us in ours. They lived in bitter times ; they had to witness heartrending scenes, and to be actors in tragedies which had better be consigned to the oblivion of the past ; they had to carry strong hearts in their breasts, and calmly, patiently, firmly, and silently weather out the storm that raged around them, holding fast to that grand old tradition of their fathers as, after all, the only treasure the loss of which could completely break their spirit. As long as the old Catholic tradition—the religion of the past—with all its truth and its tenderness, lit up with joy the chambers of their hearts, and dwelt and was enthroned in the temple of their souls, though the world without was dark, though the old places of their youth, the hereditary lands, the prospects of the sons, the whole future, was hopeless indeed, they could still bear up, keep steadfast, and in their great sorrow bless the hand that smote. They led the lives, not few of them, of confessors ; they died the death, many of them, of martyrs : but they themselves were not conscious of any great deed, any act of heroism ; they merely, they would think within themselves, loved the old traditions best, and would not part with them. They felt that those were dark days ; but their lot was cast with them, and it was not for them to shrink or to repine.

The gulf between Protestant and Catholic was wide

indeed in those days. It was the oppressor and the oppressed—the new tradition attempting to strangle the old. The new tradition, full of new life, fiery blood, and power, expanding with the fresh energy of a new creation, thought to master, heave to the earth, tread upon, and stamp into the ground, the old antagonistic tradition it had dispossessed. It went searching in country and in town, in private dwellings, in cellars, up garrets, in holes and in the corners of the land, for any exponent of the old tradition, that it might unearth him, drag him into day, and trample out his life. In those days, when men were so struck down, there was no clinging like ivy to the ruling powers, no basking in the sunshine of the great and powerful, no plucking the ripe and tempting fruit of knowledge from that tree which had been planted and had grown up out of the ashes of the past. It was “war to the knife” in those dismal days, and the knife was in the hand of the strongest, and the war all on the side of the knife. Principles and beliefs stood over against each other, like Scylla and Charybdis. They were too widely different ever for an instant to be mistaken for each other ; each was built, and stood in its full antagonism, upon its own foundation, resting upon its own merits and its own inherent force to stand, to endure, to oppose. There was no smiling into a Protestant university then, and drinking down the new tradition, acquiring an Oxford tone, and receiving a high tincture of letters, a polished education, from that living Protestantizing intelligence which animates and informs the intellectual body in the country from end to end. The Catholic element stood in no danger, as appears to be the case at present, of being absorbed into the

dominant principle, and assimilated to the Protestant life; it was rather thrown off like some virulent malady by the strong drug of the Reformation, besides containing in itself a natural recoil from the very presence of that living and warring antagonism which had flourished on its decay.

But times have greatly changed. The scavenger's daughter, the rack, and the thumbscrew are rusty now for want of use, and are merely preserved in the museums and in the libraries of the country as so many national curiosities illustrating the manners of a rougher age, and a policy which has been long put to sleep. Deeds of confiscation of property; the laws that affected recusants; the sites of the holes and the corners of the earth where Mass used to be said at the peril of life, and the spiritual was gained by a sacrifice of the temporal; the history of the vicissitudes of old Catholic families,—how they dwindled away; how their estates were preserved, or filched out of their possession; how boys crossed the seas to learn their Latin and Greek, and crossed back again to say Mass and be martyred;—all this is of interest to the historian, the antiquarian, or the lover of romance, but has as little to do with the temper of the days in which we live as the history (if it be such) of Hengist and Horsa. Men may now enter the army or navy with hope of further promotion; they can take to the bar; they can sit on the bench; they can labour, and strive, and push their way in the world; they become Members of Parliament; they get back their old titles; they are presented at court,—in a word, the irons are off them, and their members are free. Like young birds, they must try their new powers; like young birds, they are clumsy at first. The past gene-

ration, though it lived to see emancipation, had not time to learn to use it. They were like men but now out of prison, with the marks of the fetters reddening on their ankles and on their wrists, and the stiffness of the four narrow, dark prison-walls within their joints. They were fearful and timid, and could not all at once practically realize the newly acquired freedom and position they enjoyed. They had suddenly come from darkness to light; and the suddenness of the contrast was a pain and a partial bewilderment to their eyes. But a few years, and the lesson has been fully learned. The old stiffness has worn away, the old gap has been stopped up, the ancient rent has been sewed together, and the old and the new garment seems, at least to the superficial observer, all of one piece. In the place of a seizure perforce, and a carrying off to the prison or the stake, it is an invitation to dinner. For example: the gentleman who has the good fortune to possess, through no fault of his, a large tract of one's ancestral property, now dines at one's father's table, sips one's father's wines, tells his amusing stories, and laughs and jokes with the little children, and makes himself loved by all through his unaffected, frank, and gentlemanly manner, and is declared, after he has driven off late at night, "a really very nice, genial, gentlemanly fellow." Indeed, how often is it not the case, that the very clergyman of the Protestant church on the estate—who is supported out of the ancient revenues of the family—becomes a friend and a welcome guest, and, with his clean and careful white neckcloth, his somewhat starched and educated manner, his peculiar and, to us of the ruder sort, rather affected intonation, proclaims himself the clergyman of the new tradition. Topics which are *painful*, through

good breeding, are avoided ; and all runs on smoothly, cheerfully, and sweetly, like the essence of every thing that is harmonious and happy. So far from ill-feeling for the past, the past appears to be absolutely forgotten, or, if remembered, it seems to be thought of in such a way as though it had no connection with the present. Have we not as children, with that vague awe and mystery of mind which a dark, unexplored corner of the house creates in the child's fantasy, ourselves taken the exponent of the new tradition to see the old priests' hiding-places, pointed out the corner where Mass was said in days gone by, where the family assembled to offer to God the sacrifice of what of earthly was nearest to their hearts, and where the priest had good reason earnestly to pray for fortitude against the worst that might befall him ? But how little did we realize our position—bringing up the exponent of the new tradition to meditate over the emblems of a cruel and relentless domination ! And, indeed, how little would he think of it himself!—at most, perhaps, wondering if that old priest really believed in Transubstantiation, and those other strange superstitions of an ignorant age. Yes, the past is practically a dead letter now ; the old wound has been patched up, cicatrized, and of course looks hardly pretty when inspected closely. But why need ugly things be looked upon at all ? I would fain not have alluded, even in innuendo, to the past ; but a weighty motive has been urging me : I must give a full explanation of the present. When that has been done as briefly as I can, it shall slip back into the oblivion whence I drew it ; for it is the motto of every kind and generous heart to “let bygones be bygones.”

These, indeed, are brighter times,—times more

human, and more Christian. But while I feel intensely grateful for the change, I cannot close my eyes to the many and novel dangers—dangers with which we have as yet to learn to deal—which open upon us at every turn. The old enemies—spoliation, confiscation, the prison, the rack, and the gibbet—have, through the more enlightened policy of the new tradition, fallen into dust; but out of that dust new dangers of quite a different nature have been ushered into life,—dangers far less tangible and terrible in form, far more subtle and ensnaring, far more delusive and constraining, infinitely more corrupting and seducing, than could have been possibly imagined by the rude inventors of the thumb-screw and the maiden. So that, though I bless our present sunshine, I still have some reason to exclaim, with the old Spanish proverb,—

“De l’agua mansa me libre Dios;”

or to bear in mind the Italian one :

“Chi ti fa più carezze che non suole,
O t’ha ingannato, o ingannar ti vuole.”

In fact, the lubricity of our present position must cause thoughtful men to cast about them for light to see their way, for principles to guide them, and for a rule of conduct upon which to mould their actions in the new social life which is daily expanding before their eyes, with its dangers, temptations, seductions, prizes, advantages, and drawbacks. Not that I would for a moment suspect that any gentleman, whatever were his creed, would willingly deceive us. But do we not deceive ourselves? Does not the very honesty and earnestness of the exponents of the new tradition lead the way towards deception? Do not their convictions—by slow degrees

indeed, yet by degrees—become in a measure ours, and that on points that touch the full flower and perfect bloom of Roman Catholic thought? I do not allude to matters of faith, but to that which we love next best to faith—its fulness. Has our easy converse with the educated, refined, highly polished, versatile Protestantism of this country, which exerts so constraining an influence on the natural man, imparted a tincture, however faint, to our thoughts, our views, our principles? For, as I have remarked, the world has opened to us the repository of her most precious treasures. The old oppressor has thrown away his terrors, and has affected the smiling, the courteous, the benignant, the radiant philanthropist. He fain would draw us forth from our outer darkness; he takes a lively interest in our case; he would have us assume our real position in the scale of beings; he would educate us, and expand and fill our minds, and put a polish on our manners, and fit us for the great battle of public life. “For, look,” he would say, “how are you ever to succeed, situated as you are? You simply stagnate on the outskirts of the great world of men; you require a thorough education, for you have become almost a parable of ignorance, of narrowness, of coarseness of manner and of mind. You are neither good men of business, nor good men of the world; you vegetate away your lives, and, at the rate you are going, will never leave any mark behind you to show posterity that you ever had a being. Perhaps it may be too late for *you*; but are your children to be brought up in the same hopeless, antiquated fashion? Are they to continue awkward, overgrown boys all their lives? Will you mark it out for them as the summit of their ambition to put on a red coat

and ride after the hounds, or preside over a score of yeomen at a country ordinary ? Remember," would the comforters of Job continue,—“remember that every day makes the distance greater which separates us. As we gain, you lose ; as we advance, you recede. If you are not content that your children sink down into mere farming-gents in their old rattletrap homes down the country, away off the high-road of the world, give them a chance. Bring them up to their work. Throw them into the great stream of men, and let them make essay of their strength. Fit them for the world which they must live in, must struggle with,—give them *an Education.*”

Now, I would specially call the attention of the reader to this : that it is the very same tradition that gives utterance to the above hard truths, as formerly made use of a method of reasoning which might be called the physico-syllogistic of animal force. The principles, the views, the tendencies, the ultimate object, the drift, are identical. The new tradition has merely changed its method of warfare ; it has adopted a more modern system of tactics. Formerly it put on the screw ; it watched what harsh treatment was able to effect, and it witnessed the result. Now it would employ kindness, and tenderness, and solicitude, and a large, embracing, world-wide philanthropy, and an open-handed readiness, and a large generosity, and a toleration essentially new, to effect a purpose which is essentially old. The new tradition, in her many-coloured relations to the old,—in anger, in reproach, in fury, in torture, in tenderness, in love,—has ever kept steadily before the eye of her consciousness one darling design : “*Pull down, pull down the old tradition ; away with her, away with her, and let her blood be upon us and upon our children !*” It

must be so from the nature of the case : principles work and effect by their own essential laws, and energize in the human spirit, not according as we may wish, but according to the *norma* of their being. Boreas has thundered in his blasts, and has thundered out again ; the clouds have broken, and, rolling apart, reveal the warm, genial brightness of the sun. In the rough weather we doubled our cloak (of the old tradition) around us,—all the tighter and closer for the very roughness,—and went our way ; but in these days of calm and of sunshine we may be apt to throw it off, and to forget the moral of the proverb : “ Nam etsi tu fortis es, est forsitan alius te fortior : aut si non fortior, certè callidior : ut consilio suo tuum vincat robur.”

And here I would put in a *caveat* to ward off misunderstanding, and at the same time bring me into the very heart of my subject. When I speak, then, of the “oppressor” and the “philanthropist,” I do not refer, even in thought, to any individual : my meaning has a far higher significance than that ; it concerns a huge, wide-spread, energizing *principle*. Individuals (comparatively) are mere isolated units, who live their short span, and then die out ; but the principle which is at the bottom of my thought was ushered into life with the break up of the old religion, and, in different forms and manifestations, has coloured, toned, directed, and absorbed into itself, the intellectual strength and power of thought throughout the land. To make my meaning more clear by an example :

There are a certain class of philosophers who maintain that *nature* is one simple substance or energy ; that our knowledge of it is entirely derived through experience of its various manifestations ; that these modes,

manifestations, phenomenal appearances, are indefinite in form and in variety ; but that at the bottom of them all there is but one power, one mainspring, one simple principle or *vis*, which keeps the huge organisation quivering in the fulness of its multifarious life. The crust of the earth ; the various strata ; the land ; the sea ; the varieties of fish, of birds, of animals, of reptiles ; the various orders of plants ; the endless variety of trees ; the very atmosphere which surrounds us ; the minute infusoria which we inhale in thousands at every breath, and swallow in every glass of water ;—all these astonishing varieties of visible and invisible being are at the root but one simple *vis*, expanding and collapsing, and energizing, and modelling and remodelling, and generating and corrupting, according to the fundamental law of its action. It is but one simple power—call it *nature*, if you will—striving blindly after unity, and, when on the very point of its attainment, falling down into the multiplicity of decay. The animal is but nature striving after consciousness through a more perfect organisation, but ever frustrated of its end. The fluids in the atmosphere are ever working towards a unity, and almost at the moment when success seems to be nearest, they explode, and are divided into as great a multiplicity as before. This work of generation and corruption is ever going on, like some huge fermentation, in the phenomenal world in which we live, springing out of, and informed by, one simple, vivifying energy.

Now let me ask, What was at the bottom of that wild manifestation of human cruelty and wrath in days gone by ? and what is at the root of the more enlightened policy of the present ? I say, it is one and the same huge, energizing principle ; and it throws

itself under our eyes in ten thousand variegated forms. The human intelligence, in which it dwells, would fain create a unity ; but its very first and rudimental efforts issue in the multiplicity of a principle too strong for it to master ; or if it seem for a time to be succeeding in its efforts, the time inevitably comes when the fond delusion is dashed into a thousand fragments, or melts away into the air,—

“ Like the long-buried body of the king,
 Found lying with his urns and ornaments,
 Which at the touch of light, or air of heaven,
 Slipt into ashes, and was found no more.”

And this huge, energizing principle, in its thousand and one manifestations, in its multitudinous life, in its teeming varieties, I must, for want of a better name, call *Protestantism*. Yet I do not mean any thing half so narrow as what is generally understood by that term. The Church of England in its various phases, and its startling variety,—the Low Church and the High Church, from Dean Close to Mr. Lyne, from Colenso to Dr. Pusey, from the *Essays and Reviews* to the Bishop of Oxford,—in short, the complexity of the various manifestations of the great principle of repulsion, which rise above the surface, and, in the very act of striving after unity, manifest most punctually the principle of decay,—all these are but so many coloured bubbles, swimming for a time down the great stream of human activity, which expand and contract, and burst and collapse, and fall back, as the case may be, into that

“ Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum,”
 from which they rose up. But these churchmen and their following are not even a tithe of that great variety

of modes in which this one principle manifests itself. It would be about as correct to sum up, as a complete and exhaustive summary of the *mammalia*, the rabbits and hares of the island, as to imagine that the only development of the Protestant principle is to be found in the curious combinations of colours found on looking into the kaleidoscope of the Protestant Church. Yes ; we must take a wider range than that. Look across the length and breadth of the country ; look at the varieties of unhealthy sects and denominations that spring up, and grow rank like clusters of fungi that revel in an undrained coppice, and render no other service than proclaim the nature of the soil. Read the light literature of the day, from Tennyson's *Vivien* or *Enoch Arden*, to the penny sporting paper, with its notices of pugilistic encounters and dog-fights, and with its still more foul advertisements. Cast your eyes upon the book-stalls in our crowded railway-stations,—one broad mass of yellow-ochre, so covered are they with exciting, sensational, and, to say the very best of it, most dubious morality. See the teeming press ; mark its tone ; read its leading articles ; note its favourite topics ; observe its hatred, its fear, of the only really antagonistic power to itself, which,—though but little prominent in this country,—if it appear even in the shape of poverty and rags, it can unearth, and get wind of, and start ; and, with a whoop and a halloa, and a clever pack of Whalleys, and Newdegates, and Kingsleys, and Seymours, and Murphys, and Venns, and Smees, and Brockmans, and Selfes, which, yelping and barking, over bush and through brake, o'er field and o'er fallow, run it down and worry it, as far as "*hault courage*" and "*strict honour*" will allow. Read the *Times*, the exponent of the hour, the exponent

of the special modifications of the great ruling principle of the day ; open the endless variety of periodicals that, weekly and monthly and quarterly, break into flower ; all growing out of the same earth, all manifesting one identical principle, and yet all declaring and witnessing, one against the other, that they are not the children of absolute truth. Study the political principles of Lord Palmerston, the peculiar Christianity of Lord Brougham, the tendencies of our Houses of Representation, the *ton* in the society of the upper ten thousand ; gauge the practical religion of the million, their code of morality ; look into that beautiful and pure lily, the Court of Divorce, —and you will find that in this great Babel and bewilderment ; in this endless and dizzying metamorphosis and change ; in this mutability of voice, and of gesture, and of tone, and of principle, and of thought ; in this external manifestation of an internal, energizing life,—this much is certain,—viz. that though, indeed, the manifestations are different,—as the oak differs from the fragile anemone that grows under it,—still, they are all voices of the same great reality, and are but variegated signs of the one great, pervading, energizing, Protestant principle that is, *forma corporis*, the animating spirit of the variety of movements we observe. They are, after all, one consistent whole,—differing indeed, yet receiving their being, their vitality, their force from, knit and dove-tailed and jointed together by, that all-pervading principle which has taken possession of the mind of this country, at least, since the days of the twenty-fourth of Henry VIII.

And it may be well here to ask, How does this great organism keep together ? whence comes the power, the food, which renews it with constant life ? whence comes

its appalling energy and vigour? and why should it breathe so freely in this nineteenth century? I answer, in short: Its tongue is the *Times*, and it maintains its life in "the University." It is there this great monster principally feeds, and takes in and masticates, and digests, and converts into blood and bone and muscle and sinew, the food which has been carefully prepared to his English palate at the great *proscholia* or grammar-schools of the kingdom,—at Eton and Harrow, and Rugby and Winchester, and Westminster and Shrewsbury, and Marlborough and Wellington, and Merchant Taylors' and Cowbridge, and the Charterhouse and St. Paul's. Indeed, from the first dawn of intelligence, the young mind finds itself under the control of that very same principle which at Oxford and Cambridge manifests itself in its fullest perfection. The boy's father, for instance, is an Oxford man. He looks back to his College, his University days, as the palmiest, the brightest, the most uncheckered of his life. He is full of the traditions of the past; and the son goes to Eton, full to the brim of these sacred, these dear-loved traditions; for on this point, if on no other, the parent has felt it a

"Delightful task to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot."

There at once the world of public-school life opens upon the boy—Tom Brown's school-days have begun. The great Protestant principle takes possession of the ground while it is yet young and virgin. In an atmosphere, more or less dense, of "roughness and tyranny and license," he learns to row and to bat, to swim and to fight, to fag and to hold his own, to give and to take; he develops "vigour and manliness of character,

and capacity to govern ;” and were he “ seriously disposed,” he really might be tempted to say his prayers, “ if an idea of false shame did not prevent him saying them.” As to culture, he stands a *great* chance of acquiring “ idle habits, and an empty and uncultivated mind.”*

Thus he is seasoned for the University ; he goes prepared for its impressions. His education is of a piece with those rudiments he had received at home, and their more full development at school ; and he is *thrown into the great Oxford digester*, to be perfectly moulded and turned and fashioned, while ‘ the diapason is ending full in man.’ It is not for me to declare, with Lord Macaulay, of the leading University, that “ the glory of being farther behind the age than any other portion of the British people is one which that learned body acquired early, and have never lost ;”† or to develop this opinion of the celebrated and shrewd Sidney Smith, expressed to Mrs. Meynell in the following sweeping expression : “ I feel for — about her son at Oxford,” he says, “ knowing, as I do, that the *only consequences* of a University education are growth in vice and waste of money.” Those are partial views, I do not doubt. Indeed, it is not my present object to refer to actual immorality,—men can be immoral any where ; and that there is a frightful opening to sin and temptation to vice at a Protestant University, I do not feel a shadow of doubt. But of that it is not my present intent to speak ; I wish to keep before me the great Protestant principle : its adjuncts and consequences, its corollaries and manifestations, are merely parts of the main ques-

* See *Public School Commission General Report*, pp. 55, 56, &c.

† *Essays*, vol ii. p. 249.

tion which is now before me. Oxford may teach extravagance or parsimony, purity or immorality. However that may be, its real, genuine *vocation*, its steady and persevering object, is to inform the minds of men with that great Protestantizing principle which is the centre life of the thorough-going Englishman of the present day. As sure as the food which is thrown into the human system, and comes in contact with the different dissolvent animal juices, is resolved into chyme, and then passes into the blood and into the bone, and becomes a portion of the living, breathing man, so surely will the human intelligence sent up to Oxford, and thrown into contact with its system, its method, its influences, its talent, and its atmosphere, be at last—however averse to it at starting, however indigestible the food—reduced into the consistency of a pulp, and assimilated and absorbed into the great monster system, composed of the most deep, the most subtle, the most powerful, the most learned and masterly intelligences, of the land. That any human intellect or moral nature—except through an interposition which we have no right to expect—could hold its own, and bear up against the enthralling, the fascinating, the constraining, the overpowering pressure brought to bear at that focus of intellectual power, appears on the very face of it a moral impossibility:

“La faccia sua era faccia d’ uom giusto ;
 Tanto benigna avea di fuor la pelle ;
 E d’ un serpente tutto l’ altro fusto.”*

How much more glaringly patent, then, must it not

* *Inferno*, canto xvii.

be, that a young man with all his notions to form, or at least to consolidate and to fix, who is sent to the University for the express purpose of being educated, will naturally and necessarily melt down into that form which is in keeping with the genius of the place ; and though he may not know it, and even be unwilling to admit the fact, will be assimilated with the companions with whom he lives to the great principle working within him, and end as a necessary consequence in becoming part and parcel of that great tradition which once handled the fire and the fagot, but which now, with a more humane policy, professes civil and religious toleration.

I said at starting that I cannot look back upon the past without being sensible of serious misgivings for the future. Possibly the reason may already have dawned upon the reader. There are those amongst us who appear to have lost that vivid appreciation which our fathers had of the essential antagonism between the Protestant principle and the old Catholic tradition ; who see less clearly the corroding influence and absorbing nature of the new tradition, not merely as manifested in the great world around them, but as a powerful digesting organ in the places of national education. Those Universities profess, *ex cathedrâ*, to digest and assimilate to themselves the intelligences of men. What means an "Oxford man," save an intelligence redolent of the new tradition, which overflows into his very carriage and voice and gesture, which tones his *u*'s and his *o*'s into a University key, and turns him out, like a piece of upholstery, with a University finish ?—what means it, save a raw material, which, by a complex and subtle process of mental influence and social converse, has

been manipulated into a clear, a definite, and special shape ?

“ So watchful Bruin forms with plastic care
Each glowing lump, and brings it to a bear.”

The vulgar notion that the bear licks its cub into shape with its saliva and its tongue is not half so near the truth as the application I suggest. You may just as well expect that a piece of clay, which you have modelled and formed with your fingers into a design of your own, will maintain its figure after being thrust, soft as it is, into a patent brick-making machine, as suppose that a youth, however good his will, will be capable of maintaining your ideas in the face of an assimilating process which, without his being fully aware of its influence, will be in constant work upon him. It will be as natural a process to him, and create as little surprise in his mind, as the grub may be supposed to feel when, out of the chrysalis, it is transformed into the variegated beauties of the butterfly. The young man may, like that brilliant insect, become elegant and delicate and refined ; he may learn how to display the variegated colours of a many-sided learning, and even to be a living ornament to the flower on which he rests ; but when he rises from it—when he has to leave it, as God knows he will have one day—he will at best go lobbing along to *His Supreme Good*, with his clumsy, painted wings !

The Holy See can view with clearer eyes than we can the dangers of our age. She knows what are our interests in the long-run—our *true* interests—far better than we can get to know them ; and in the face of the world, with a sublime contempt of the opinions, prejudices,

views, and wisdom of the Protestant principle, gives forth her utterances with a clear, decisive, articulate, authoritative, and unmistakable voice. The Catholic principle of the wide-spread world has stood face to face with the Protestant principle of this island. If you would read the programme of the former, peruse the Encyclical and the Syllabus ; if you would read that of the latter, open the volume called *Essays and Reviews*. In which direction are the children of our fathers to go ? Will they gain a *tendency* to assimilate the Encyclical at Oxford ? will they learn to treat with a respectful spirit the eighty condemnations there ?

It would be unjust in me—nay, even foolish—to insinuate, or even to imagine, that there are Catholic fathers who would be willing to do that which they did not think would turn out to the advantage of their children. I do not, I could not, suppose for a moment, that with their eyes open they would run counter to the tendency, the tenor, the spirit, the drift of the Holy See. History alone would have shown them long ago the foolhardiness of that. They must feel, as an historic fact, that Rome is sure to be found in the right. The Catholic principle, which has its Oxford in the Eternal City, can answer, with a clear utterance, however dark it may be, to the question, “ Watchman, what of the night ? ”—If we abide by the tradition of our fathers, we are safe ; but if we think to “ renew our life ” by drinking in the great Protestant principle, we are assuredly lost : we shall at length be swallowed up by it, and become either poor, unprincipled drivellers,

“ Mongrel, puppy, whelp, or hound,
Or cur of low degree ; ”

or, losing our faith altogether, go over to swell the number of those who represent the great Protestant principle of the country.

But the fact of my belief in the thorough honesty of purpose of certain gentlemen only increases my apprehension that they have not considered, in all their bearings, the arguments affecting this momentous question of education. Of course it will be understood at once that I refer principally to those who have signed the "Memorial" circulated by Lord Castlerosse, and addressed to the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda. Many of them, it appears, are converts—persons for whom I have unfeigned admiration and tenderest respect—but who, perhaps, cannot in its fulness be expected to appreciate the dangers of the situation; others are kind and amiable old Catholic Bachelors, whose signatures, I may suppose, are intended to give a spice of humour to the Memorial, by their formal declaration of how "conscious they are of the serious responsibility of parents with regard to the faith and morals of their sons." The rest can hardly be fairly considered, or can consider themselves, to represent the Catholic feeling in the country; they appear to me, indeed, as persons who have kindly volunteered to place their names on record, that we may be able to rejoice, with a feeling of security, that there is so small an exception to the general rule. I tender them my thanks. Their sentiments are forced into the following words :

"The undersigned laymen, having heard that the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda is about to consider the question whether Catholics should be still permitted to frequent the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, venture respectfully to hope that the Sacred

Congregation will not think its active interference necessary."

"They do not wish to offer any opinion as to the tendencies of the Universities in past times, nor as to any possible future contingencies. Conscious, however, of the serious responsibility of parents with regard to the faith and morals of their sons, they beg leave humbly to express their conviction, that in the case of Catholic students at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, these all-important interests can be adequately protected by the safeguards which the Church possesses."

Such is the wording of the Memorial. In the first place, the Memorialists tell the Holy See that they would wish to do without her interference; and secondly, they very plainly state the reason: they are *convinced*, they say, that the faith and morals of Catholic students at the Universities can be adequately protected by the safeguards which the Church possesses. I will not criticise the tone or propriety of the Memorial, or decide whether it be or not good taste thus to speak to the Propaganda. But an analysis of the feelings and state of mind which it clearly manifests, and of which it is undoubtedly the exponent, will throw a light upon, and give a practical reality to, what I am about to say. A parallel case will bring out all my meaning. A man has an abscess in his foot, and there is a question whether or not the foot should be amputated. The patient is in great suspense. He has already heard that there is to be a consultation on the point; and at once, without delay, he writes off to the doctor who attends him to this effect: "Having heard that a consultation of physicians is about to consider the question whether my foot had better be amputated or not, I venture respect-

fully to hope that the assemblage of physicians will not think active interference with the knife necessary."

"I do not wish to offer any opinion as to the tendencies of the abscess in past times, nor as to any possible future contingency. Conscious, however, of the serious responsibility of human beings with regard to the preservation of their lives, I beg leave to express the conviction, that in the case of gentlemen suffering from abscess in the foot, that all-important interest can be adequately protected by the safeguards which the faculty possess."

What would be the impression made on the doctor's mind by this letter? Simply this: 'Poor fellow! natural enough; he is most anxious about his foot. Drowning men will always catch at a straw. He has made up his mind; he is convinced that we can save his foot by our medical skill. He does not wait for the result of our consultation: he *fears* it. He has made up his mind beforehand against it, because he has an impression haunting like a nightmare that, after all, his foot must come off. And what could possibly be imagined more natural than this! Who would like to be a cripple if he could help it? And who is there who would not cling to any delusion that might dull the horrible idea of an amputation?'

The Memorialists are nervously anxious that an amputation be not determined upon. They are certain it is not necessary. The Church can protect their children, they are *convinced*, whatever the result of the serious and delicate consultation of those who are unprejudiced in the matter may be. They do not wait for the result of the consultation. Their minds are already made up; and their real anxiety now is, not that the decision may be what is objectively the best, but that it be in accordance with their profound convictions.

Now, it cannot be denied that there is some very strong motive-power at the bottom of all this fear and anxiety, and special pleading and nervous weakness. We can well comprehend the trouble and care of the man with the abscess. What is the energizing power in the Memorialists? They wish for the best; so does the man with the foot. They are perfectly sincere; so also is he. But the doctor will say, "My good man, you are no judge in your own case. Leave it to those who have studied the matter, who have your interest at heart, and do not be carried away by one side of the question: 'Qui pauca considerat, facile determinat.' You want to save your foot, and so you cannot morally see the reason why it should be cut off." These gentlemen have made up their minds that it were better their sons go to the University, and they are unable to see reasons to the contrary.

Just as the sick man, with a failing hope, grasps at a generality in the skill of the faculty, and yet fears its application after consultation, so these gentlemen think that their sons can be placed within the influence of the great Protestant tradition, and can be moulded and formed by it, and still maintain the antagonistic Catholic principle within them by reason of the safeguards which the Church possesses, but which they so much dread the Propaganda to apply. Far be it from me to pretend to limit God's power through the Church; but it is not so much a question of *can* such a power be exerted, as *will* it be exerted? And have we a reasonable motive to hope that it will? I, for one, though I believe that the Almighty can do all things, still I am equally satisfied that "they who love the danger will perish in it," and that those who *tempt* Providence are

not generally amongst his most favoured children. Were I to make up my mind at this moment to throw myself over a precipice, I should feel that God *could* protect me in my rashness; but would He do so? God protected Daniel in the den of the lions, and the children in the fiery furnace; but would He have preserved them there, had they merely desired some worldly gain, and wrought in themselves the conviction that they could be adequately protected by the safeguards which He possesses? However it may be, this is certain—that the Memorialists have grave and weighty reasons for sending their sons to the University, and that these reasons are so powerful as to drive them a little too fast, and render them incapable of calmly, coolly, and dispassionately weighing both sides of the question. And what are, then, their reasons? I will try to state them as clearly as I can.

When boys have grown into men, we have no University to send them to. We have schools and colleges; and though they are deficient in many points, we can content ourselves with them. But at that very period at which the mind is most capable of receiving impressions, and at which the character is fashioned and stamped for life, when the energies and powers of the intelligence are most keen, and are open to the greatest peril, and we look around for a place to send our boy to be educated in the real sense of the word, and formed into a man, nothing but blankness presents itself to us. To keep him at home is far more dangerous than to send him to work even at a Protestant University. Universities of our own we have none. Is he to remain at home, eating the bread of idleness, and exposing himself to the awful dangers of doing nothing?

Am I to consider it my duty to deprive my son of an opportunity of making his way in the world, and of preparing himself for an honourable career, in which he would probably not only be a blessing to his kind, but also an honour to his religion? Am I really under the necessity of having a family of children behind the age, treated with partial contempt, and looked down upon as poor, ignorant, uncultured Catholics? Is the name 'Catholic' to become a byword for weakness, impotence, and vulgarity? Are we gradually to sink down in the social scale, or, at all events, have to feel at every turn our inferiority, and, merely because we are Catholics, keep behind every body else? Our greatest thinker himself says, "that there is such a thing as legitimate ambition, a reasonable desire in the minds of those who are called into the world's conflict to make the most of their powers, to secure for them a field of action where they can be brought into the fullest play for the greater glory of God and the advantage of their fellow-men,—this, we suppose, will not be denied by any just thinker." He tells parents, that "if they want their children to have a chance of winning the great prizes, of running a real career at the bar, in parliament, in diplomacy, or any other of the commanding departments of civil life, they will work at an enormous disadvantage without University education; and in contending with others who have it, they will be like untrained persons fighting with pugilists—like the scattered mob contending with disciplined troops. Shrewdness, boldness, a good strong *physique*, go a long way, but will not make up for the development of mind, the breadth, the insight, the efficiency, the capacity of further growth, which is obtained by the discipline of a wisely constituted Uni-

versity.”* It is evident, therefore, that this writer does not wish us to content ourselves with the back-slums of the world, and, for fear of a little danger and risk, keep our children, equal in natural ability with any in the land, moping about on the outsides of society, like poor men hovering and shivering around a rich man’s door, enticed there by the rich smells reeking up from the area into the streets—giving him full notice of the luxurious viands, the *recherché* side-dishes, the brilliant lights, the well-stocked sideboard, the silver plate, the ingenious devices of flowers, and the ringing, happy, thoughtless, cultivated laugh, and the brilliant company of honourable, educated men, who are assembled in the dining-room to do justice to the amiable host’s hospitality. How eagerly does not the poor man pass slowly the window, and try to drink it all in through a pane of glass; and then walk sullenly, sorrowfully away, to beg, where men are less busy and gay, for a crust of bread! Besides (a Memorialist might continue), it is not merely a question of what our children have not, but, moreover, of what they could have, and absolutely lose. The Oxford education, the University training, turns the boy into the man, fills his mind with the intellectual coin that is current in the realm, puts him on an equal footing with other young gentlemen of the country, and refines, tones, polishes, and corrects his manners. But it has another advantage over and above this. He is placed at the terminus, as it were, to which all the great lines of railway concentrate from all quarters of the country. He is thrown on the great high-road of the English world, into the great gulf-stream of human society,—society of educated, high-minded gentlemen, of the sons

* *The Catholic University Gazette*, p. 497.

of the pure and the noble of the land, who are honourable, chivalrous, and manly from the inherent instinct of their nature. He lives with them, converses with them, is acted on by them, by that unobserved and subtle process, which is no less real because it is quiet and unseen, and no less certain in its action because it is principally in operation in hours of simple amusement or half-idleness. Here youths, full of the open-heartedness, frankness, and affection which is special to their age, fall into society which is an opening, and a happiness, and an advantage to them in after-life. Here friendships are made which gather strength by age, and which often are stepping-stones to fortune, if not to fame, in some future career. Here the youth drinks in the old traditions of the place, becomes proud of being an Oxford man, gets into a new set altogether, and runs off at score, ahead of the poor, good fellow at home, who thinks it his highest delight and greatest privilege to be toadied by half a dozen yeomen, and his most lamentable misfortune to have to make a speech. In a word, the way into the world—to its wealth and to its knowledge, to its prizes and to its fame, to its refinement and to its charm and brilliancy—is through the door of the University.

Can we now be surprised that the patient deceived himself most honestly, and showed a morbid anxiety to deceive the doctors too? Can we be surprised that his *unum necessarium* was, "Do any thing you like, only don't amputate my foot"? Is it surprising that, after bringing so many and such grave arguments to prove what a poor, maimed, hobbling creature—unable to keep up with any body who had two feet—he would be after the operation, and what great things the foot

would be able to do, were it only left peacefully alone,—after showing so clearly, so forcibly, all this, I say, is it at all surprising that the patient felt convinced that, whatever the physicians might say, they could, if they liked, preserve to him his limb? To me such a conviction is no matter of surprise. Nature and interest are on the side of keeping the foot.

But before I set about showing the arguments on the other side, let me clear the ground a little.

The Memorialists, and those who think with them, ardently desire their sons to be educated at Oxford and Cambridge. Why? What is the immediate and direct motive, as far as can be gathered from “the Memorial”? Is it for spiritual or temporal advantage—for earth or heaven? This point must be clearly understood and settled, or we shall be dealing with too many things at once. Spiritual advantage, for the sake of clearness, may be summed up under the two wide terms of faith and morals. The boys are supposed, I believe, to take up to the University a certain stock of those two commodities. Do they go to the University to *increase* their store? is that,—I will not say *the* object,—but does it come amongst the objects proposed to themselves by these anxious parents? The very Memorial itself clearly conveys their opinion on this point. It is not the immediate spirituality, but the *temporal* advantages that they send up their sons to Oxford to acquire. More than this, they unmistakably convey another opinion, of gravest import,—that, so far from spiritual gain, their sons will stand the chance of spiritual loss; and they feel so strong an impression that the Holy See will look upon the step as too dangerous to faith to be permitted, that they get up a hurried Memorial, begging Propa-

ganda not to interfere with those temporal gains, as they are convinced that those *all-important* interests (of religion)—which certainly they practically seem willing to risk, for the sake of what they hold to be *not* all-important—can be adequately protected by the safeguards which the Church possesses! Here the beautiful old Catholic principle struggles into light. They have been taught from their childhood, or by a special mercy, that, after all, religion is the *unum necessarium*—the all-important thing. And though their practical intellect strikes the balance in favour of the temporal advantage, their theoretical judgment breaks out into utterance in the very process,—like some pious man, who had been accustomed to ejaculations in his youth, in the semi-consciousness of sickness breaks out at intervals into most holy aspirations, the full import and tenderness of which are not present to his mind.

Catholic youths, then, are to be sent to the Protestant Universities, that they may be the possessors of certain temporal advantages; and in the mean time the Church is to hedge them round about with “safeguards,” lest haply, whilst imbibing and drinking down the Protestant tradition, and fascinated by the magic of Protestant manners and mind, their morality be broken to pieces like a potsherd, and their faith slip from out of their hands. If such were the case, what advantage would it be to them to be able to look back to their University days with human elation, and point out the old college where they were taught the great *ben dell' intelletto*, saying perhaps, in the words of the poet :

“Tu se' lo mio maestro e 'l mio autore;
 Tu se solo colui da cui io tolsi
 Lo bello stile che m' ha fatto onore”?

An utter misery indeed ! a wretched degradation ! That we may be preserved, one and all, from so horrible a fate, is a wish that penetrates my being *usque ad abdita spiramenta animæ*.

But have these gentlemen taken a fair view of the question ? Have they looked upon it as a whole ? Have they not overlooked the importance of this : that religion should progress *pari passu* with the cultivation and sharpening of that dangerous implement the intellect ? that faith should be of different stuff from those Bristol train-bands, who had to be put under lock and key, who had to be protected by special "safeguards," lest they should be torn to pieces by the populace ? that faith and morality should not be put under arrest, or, as it were, hermetically sealed up, lest they might escape in the wear and tear, and excitements and interests, and pleasures and ambitions, of a Protestant University ; but that they should grow, expand, develop, with the growth and expansion of the man, and should be at the bottom of his soul, toning and tempering and Christianizing the raw thoughts and desires of the old Adam, which wells up from the centre of every human being, and that in spite of himself ? Do they remember that if a man, who has not been educated at the University, starts under an "enormous disadvantage" when commencing his struggle with the world, that a raw College lad, sent up to the great emporium of Protestantism, starts under a far more "enormous disadvantage," in the impossible undertaking, it would appear, of drinking in the traditions of the place—which are absolutely opposed to the rudiments of his faith—while at the same time encouraging a tendency of mind towards loving the dogma of the Imma-

culate Conception, feeling it a loss not to hear Mass, and keeping the heart pure and clean by Confession and Communion, and living a *supernatural* life? Have they measured the spirit of the times, the freedom of thought, the irreverence of intellect, the mental pride, the impatience of authority, the independence of judgment in things the most sacred and august, the poison that exudes from every pore of the monster University, mixing itself in science, in literature, in society, pouring itself into the minds and the hearts, by its tenderness, its delicacy, its sensitiveness, its refinement, by its gentleness of manner, its charming address, its convincing, reasoning, and embellished style—

“*Impia sub dulci melle venena latent*” ?

Does it require very great sagacity to perceive the leaven that is working in our own Catholic society? how men could be pointed out—nay, even boys—who, in the peaceful harbour of their homes, have been swayed about and heaved, gently though it might be, by the strong tide of human, restless thought generated at the Universities, and swelling and flowing, and lifting and falling, and affecting whatever rests upon the unstable, ever-changing, many-coloured waters of human opinion? Has not the tide, I say, run into our very harbours? and do we not know the savor of the waters? Have we not witnessed it breaking in the distance, and casting its feathered foam against the rock—which is CHRIST—in Dr. Colenso, in the *Essays and Reviews*, in those multitudinous waves of rationalism which gather themselves up for a moment, and then sink into the running trough of the sea, to appear again in other forms, in other places, and to meet over and over again the same fate as before?

I do not mean to say that men are without religion, natural virtue, as a whole. But there is hardly any, if any, dogmatic belief in the great intellectual world that surrounds us. What there is, is indeed admirable and beautiful ; but it has no more power to steady the heaving and turmoil of the waters than

“ Moonlight on a troubled sea,
Brightening the storm it cannot calm.”

Each fresh wave sweeps away another landmark, and we are bringing every thing down to the dead level of the natural man.

And yet, with all these tokens around them, parents would send their children to the Universities—to the two great Protestant digesters, which I have, I hope, shown to be essentially antagonistic to the principles and temper of the Catholic tradition! Have these parents a clear idea of what a Catholic gentleman should be? Have they the type before their minds? Have they kept steadily before themselves the idea of that living, thinking, energizing *ego* which is to be formed, not simply for living an educated life, and manifesting a noble bearing, and developing an Oxford tone for a few years in England, but for existing through a holy and supernatural life with the GOD, so Pure, so Holy, who created him? Has the measure fallen short upon the grave, and not been carried out to that eternity which reflects its light upon our mortal course, and gives a new meaning and a real value and significance to every action of our lives? For, what is the Catholic gentleman? He is the incarnation of the Catholic tradition, just as the Protestant is the expression of the Protestant tradition in its dominant manifestation. I

have done my best to show what that tradition is, and its complete antagonism to the Church ; and I greatly wish I had the ability to draw a full picture of the really Catholic gentleman. But he is so great, so noble, so *supernatural*, that, knowing my deficiency, I have not courage to undertake the task. However, I will try to show some of his *tendencies*. He is built, then, upon the foundation of submission (at starting) to an authority, living, infallible, and divine. His mind is exercised from its earliest dawn to bow itself down to the obedience of faith. He is taught that there is a greater One than he upon the earth, speaking through His Church, and that the dictates of the wise, the (supposed) discoveries of science, the conclusions of the human intelligence—in one word, all the efforts and results of the most profound and versatile learning of any University in the world—are as a shadow of smoke when opposed to the utterances of the oracle of God speaking from the chair of St. Peter. It is his tendency to exalt faith, and to keep reason in check. He knows that he is not altogether divested of the old Adam, and in his vivid consciousness of the effects of original sin upon mankind, and upon his own intelligence and will, can see far more deep meaning in these words of the pagan Cicero, than Cicero could see himself: “ Simul atque in luce editi et suscepti sumus, in omni continuo pravitate et in summa opinionum perversitate versamur, ut pene cum lacte nutricis errorem suxisse videamur ;” and, from this very appreciation of his fallen condition, is ever on his guard against himself, and places mere human, secular knowledge in a subordinate position to the dictates of faith and the manifestations of the will of God through His speaking authority. It is this temper

of Christian faith—this sinking of self and belief in another—that permeates the whole range of his thoughts, and gives its own special colouring to his views of men, of the world, of science, of literature, and of religion. It is the sense of this abiding Presence—of God watching and guarding and guiding the ways of men through a visible, present, and sensible authority—that makes him careful in his speech, as an ignorant man speaking in the presence of a man of letters, cautious in his judgments, and guarded in his very thoughts, and gives him a discretion, nay a wisdom, that is unknown to the outspoken frankness of a mind which has no authority save itself to keep it in check. Yet he does not despise nor look down upon the power of the intelligence, nor the cultivation of the mind. He honours the two-edged sword of the intellect and will of the human soul. He knows its power, he feels its danger : that the sharper, the more pointed, the more highly tempered, the steel, the better is the weapon ; but also the more deadly and dangerous when in the hands of unskilful men, who do not understand it, or who do not keep it properly in hand, and use it as a servant for defence. He feels that this sword has its laws and its limits, and that they cannot be transgressed without grave injury and injustice to some branch of knowledge, or of faith, or of morality. He feels convinced that it is morally impossible, without the grace of God and humility of mind, for him to exercise that weapon to advantage ; indeed, to so wield it that it do not become a sword against himself, maiming and disfiguring him, and at length striking him in some vital part. The arm that once was sure and steady, which could use that dangerous implement at pleasure, with comparatively no danger to the user, was in a measure

shaken in the fall of the first parents, and the shock struck through all the human generations ; and its effect will not be wanting in the last man that will exist at the end of time. It struck through from end to end ; and we have to bear and inherit the penalties of our parents. He deeply feels the consequence : that if the arm which has been weakened, which has not the steadiness of old, be not strengthened, nerved, and rectified by, not the mere natural man, but by the supernatural principle of faith ; that if, while developing his intelligence, and storing the chambers of his mind with knowledge, sharpening his instrument, and polishing and burnishing it up to its perfection, he does not equally practice his ability in using it, by developing equally the more humbling elements of supernatural faith and holiness, which will tend to subdue the risings of pride and high-mindedness—in one word, if before GOD he be not simple, humble, as “ a little child,” though he be, to the eyes of the world below, a man

“ Of piercing wit and pregnant thought,
 Endowed by nature, and by learning taught
 To move assemblies,”—

it would be better that his learning were taken from him ; that he should not possess the talent which he did not know wisely how to use, but which he rather converted into the instrument of his own destruction. He would often prove himself—put himself to the test— anxious to discover whether his mental *status* were getting out of *tune* with the temper and tone and the spirit of the Church. He would test his own feeling on the Pope, veneration of relics and the Saints, devotion to the Mother of GOD, to his Guardian Angel, to the Blessed Sacrament, to the Liturgy, the ceremonies made

venerable by the use of ages ; he would fear for himself if, while gaining secular knowledge, he should fall off ever so little from submission to authority, respect for the priests of GOD, and their admonitions on the spiritual life. He would be sensible of great misgivings, if, together with a polished manner and a greater familiarity with the light reading of the day, he found that a critical, unkind, dissatisfied spirit were getting the better of him, or that high-mindedness and that special order of intellectual conceit, which threatened to display itself in maintaining the *lax* side in all religious questions, were gradually creeping upon him. He would feel grieved and impatient with himself if he should by chance discover that the uncompromising voice of authority—which so often checks us and pulls us up short—in any way

“ Rankled in him, and ruffled all his heart,
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long
A little bitter pool about a stone
On the bare coast.”

He would look upon morality as one of the greatest preservatives of faith, and would not fail in his musings to observe that a Catholic who led a strictly pure and moral life, who kept his passions, cravings, and nature under the rule of faith, kept that faith bright too. But, on the other hand, where nature had been allowed to encroach, where the passions were permitted to darken the eye of faith, where the man was carnal, his thoughts, his desires, his tendencies, would become carnal also. He would slowly, perhaps, but quietly and steadily, become alien to the Church, the pure Spouse of CHRIST ; he would cease to sympathize with her in her sufferings ; he would begin to scrutinize with a

curious eye her misfortunes or the miseries of the human element around her, and that with a certain interior joy of mind ; till at last he would stand at a distance, a cold, carping, and splenetic man, part friend, part foe—claimed by one side, claimed by the other, yet belonging to neither. In a word, the Catholic tradition is a salt that penetrates into every pore and nerve and joint ; as a furnace will penetrate the iron with its heat, until the iron itself partakes of the consistency of fire, so does the true Catholic principle give its heat and its colour and its light to the complicated being that it informs. The Catholic principle is capable of giving a more perfect finish, of turning out a more thorough gentleman, of displaying a more balanced mind, of taking a more grasping and universal and scientific view, than any other. It is a grand, a noble informing power ! It alone knows how to constitute nature in its proper order, to arrange the units of the earth according to their objective value and their intrinsic usefulness, and to keep faith bright and radiant by the side of science, and develop the one without warping the other.

Just as the Protestant tradition is one vast organism pervading the country, one grand system of absorption and assimilation, so, too, is the Catholic tradition—planted on a different basis—a powerful, constraining, organic, and active energy, which has stood the proof of a good eighteen hundred years, a living power amongst us still. Is it to thrive or to die out ? How does the Protestant principle live ?—on what food does it feed ? That we have already seen,—on the young men of the country. Destroy the supplies, starve the system, and it will crumble to bits. Now, what are Catholic parents

thinking of doing ? They, some of them, contemplate removing their children out of the influence of the great Catholic system, which has been forming their minds since the waters of Baptism, and placing them in the very centre and under the immediate influence of the other great system, which turns out men as different in principle, in view, and in tendency, as the systems themselves are antagonistic in every point that may be called fundamental. It is like jumping into a cold bath after being in a warm bath, and every bit as fatal. However warm the body may have been, whatever "safeguards" are applied,—in spite of warmth, in spite of safeguards,—only leave it long enough in soak, and body, blood, and water will be found all of one temperature ; the water will have drawn the body down to its normal number of degrees, and extinction of the vital fire will be the inevitable result.

But there is a still worse result than the destruction of the old Catholic principle in the individual—its destruction throughout the land. If young men are Protestantized within an inch of their Catholic life, if it were possible for them to keep the essentials of religion, having all tarnished save the very centre heart, what will become of the next generation ? If the Memorialists' sons—I mean those who have sons—are sent at eighteen or twenty to Oxford, and are then thrown upon the world, and then marry and settle down, what manner of Catholics will their children be ? Who will care any more for the old Catholic tradition ? What will at length become of those holy beliefs, those pious opinions—nay, even those fundamental truths—which, from one generation to another, the great Catholic family of this kingdom shall have had their ears hardened to hear abused, mocked, spit upon,

as loathsome, sickly, drivelling, priest-ridden idiotcies ? When one generation after another has heard the most learned professors talk of with a smile of contempt, or rather pass over with a sneer of pity, the truths to our hearts dearest—thank GOD!—saying they were fond things of the medieval religion, good in their place, fitting to their time, but gone away with the shadows of the past, and only worthy of record as the follies and mummeries of days of superstition ; when the geologist, the theologian, the Professors of the University, the Tutors, Fellows, the Warden or Provost of the Colleges,—when all, from the most dignified Don to the simplest freshman, shall have, for (say) three generations, openly or covertly, by argument or insinuation, from the chair or in private, in conversation or by letter—in a word, by any of those various methods by which one man can convey his thoughts to another—drummed this on the tympanum of our ears, that Popery is effete, that we adore a wafer, that priests cannot forgive sins, that reason is the rule of faith, that all science is against us, that religion at most is but a probability, that the Bible is not the Word of GOD taken in its integrity, that Baptism is an open question, that the supernatural is a delusion, and that we are a poor handful of dupes to believe in an eternity of torment,—will not these constantly repeated sounds, “familiar to our ears as household words,” through very hammering, sink into the intelligence, take possession of the mind, and become part, at last, of our very natures ? When it shall have been urged upon one generation after another, by the most specious, the most seducing arguments, by the most profound and the most learned men, by the flower of English intelligence, that “nothing can be known for

certain about the unseen world," that "the world has lost two thousand years," that "it is pretty much where it was in the days of Augustus," and that "this is what has come of priests,"—that "the Catholic religion is the bane of philosophy;" when Catholic boys from eighteen to nineteen shall have heard the living voices of deeply read professors declare, with all the coolness and clearness of scientific conviction, year after year, that "religion has nothing to do with secular studies, nor those studies with religion," and have heard them ever "exclaim and cry out, if the Catholic Church presumed herself to handle what they meant to make a weapon against her;" when for (say) three generations the "range of the experimental sciences—viz. history, and psychology, and politics, and the many departments of physics, various both in their subject-matter and their method of research;" when "the great sciences which are the characteristics of this era, and which become the more marvellous the more thoroughly they are understood—astronomy, magnetism, chemistry, geology, comparative anatomy, natural history, ethnology, languages, political geography, antiquities, economics,"*—when all these, I say, shall have been made, for three generations, the "indirect but effectual means of overturning religion," where will be found that childlike faith, that holy reverence for sacred things, that Catholic readiness of submission to a command of an authority which gives—as is often the case—no reason but a *sic volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas*? In one word, would not the rudiments of religion—planted, not scientifically, but, as our boys are taught their faith, by a little catechism, a little oral instruction, and the reading a few good books—suffer, according to human calculation, a complete capsizing? For man is not like the mistletoe: that

* *The Catholic University Gazette*, p. 245.

plant, by nature, is a parasite. It fastens to the oak or apple tree, it drives its roots through the rough bark, it penetrates it, and draws forth its life from the tree, but still retains the perfection of its nature. God has put a law into the plant, that it may only draw that unto itself which takes the law of its growth. Man is a social being: he is formed by action from without; his mind does not grow to its full perfection of itself; it must be trained, like a young tree, or a vine; it must be drawn, as it were, out of the solitude of itself,—it requires education, and it assimilates itself to those around it: men living together for any length of time break off each other's angularities, and get rounded off into the same shape. What, then, I again ask, in a few generations will be the result upon the Catholic body of the tiring, monotonous repetition of "mummery," and of "superstition," and of "priestcraft," and of "Popery"? for mind, at Oxford, while one hand is tearing out the old tradition, the other is busily engaged in sowing the new,—as you weed out Popery, you put in Protestantism, with a strong *soupeçon* of infidelity, just to give it a zest; and what adds indefinitely to the danger is, that to fallen humanity the religion and morality of the world, its obligations and standard of perfection, are far more pleasing and palatable than that code of obligations that reaches to man's inmost and most transient thought, drawn from the consciousness of the Church of the All-seeing EYE, which penetrates into and watches the ways of men. After these considerations, and many more which I shall not put down, it is my firm conviction—and I believe that it would be the conviction of every unprejudiced, cautious, and large-minded philosopher, who looks at the powers of the world as they present themselves—that if the Catholic youth were to

be placed in the Oxford digester, the tradition of our fathers would eventually cease to be a power in the country.

Upon this I can well imagine one of the Memorialists saying to me: "Now, my dear fellow, though you talk so big about the Catholic tradition and the rest, I do really believe that we, after all, are more Catholic than you: at all events, we have more faith; for we are fully convinced that the Church possesses safeguards that can adequately protect the Catholic interests."

I have already said what my opinion is on this point, but I should like still further to enlarge upon it, as, to me, it is a most dangerous conviction to act upon. To my mind it is, in the ordinary workings of grace, morally impossible for a young man to receive what is meant by an Oxford education without suffering taint. It appears to be thought possible that the Catholic youth may swallow the dose of Protestantism, and, by means of some specific administered by "the Church," the poison will be separated from the healthy portion of the nostrum—the former negated or rendered harmless by the "safeguard," the latter strengthening the system, and developing into bone and into the muscle of an athlete. This strength, which otherwise never could have been gained, we shall be told,—and it certainly could not be, under our present circumstances, to the same extent,—will make the young man capable to cope with the strongest, give him a chance of holding his own, and starting fair in the great and arduous race of life; nor will this newly acquired power, almost like a new life, in our old, stagnant, Catholic blood, be thrown away, as regards religion. Whilst the young Catholic "Oxford man" is doing honour to his name, carrying

away prizes, gaining his position, and becoming a centre around which a little world would be set revolving, he would *eo ipso* be furthering the interests of religion, making the Catholic name respected, and her influence felt like a new pulse fresh beating in the country. This, it will be said, is the sensible, indeed the only way to regenerate our failing powers, and to give us any position worthy of the name.

But, alas ! human beings are not so easily dealt with. A human, living being, with his simple, indivisible, spiritual soul manifesting itself in intellect and will, is not to be separated and divided into parts like some complex notion of the mind. In influencing, moving him, you influence and move the whole living intelligence of his being—all goes together, and in one direction, not two different directions at once. If he is led by, trained up in, assimilated to, the great Protestant principle ; if the active energies of the Protestant University, with their enthralling power, their logical consistency, their multifarious method of proof, their marvellously subtle appliances for turning the mind in a certain direction, for tinging it with a certain colour, for salting it with a certain salt, be brought to bear, to concentrate themselves upon that intelligence gaping for knowledge as young birds for food, that intelligence, if it be the intelligence of the being which we call a man, will, if there be such a relation between concrete existences as cause and effect, if there be such an action of mind upon mind as is called education, assimilate itself to the educating mind, and will inevitably be turned in its direction, tinged with its colour, and salted with its salt. If a man's mind were like a cabinet, composed of different compartments, the Encyclical, the Syllabus,

the Immaculate Conception, purgatory, prayers for the dead, love of our Lady, supernatural faith, obedience to authority, submission to the Congregation of the *Index*,—in fact, all “inconvenient” Catholic beliefs and practices,—could be carefully and safely stowed away in their various pigeon-holes, billeted and labelled, and put by. The opinions, principles, and doctrines, the religion of the Oxford world, the manifestation in the flesh of the great Protestant tradition, might have their special location, and be tied up and docketed too. On this supposition, a safeguard would be easily understood. But though we may exclaim, with the poet,

“How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful is man !”

and admit all his apparent contradictions of circumstance and mind, one thing we cannot admit—that, in any sense like the one mentioned, his intelligence is a complexity of compartments, after the fashion of a cabinet. The truths that are poured into his being will not remain separate ; they will meet, they will converse together, they will dispute for the mastery, they will each argue their case, and finally, like a boy who has fought himself into his position at school, settle down into his mind, till another antagonist come to carry off the palm. Each truth or apparent truth gravitates, as it were, into its place, and gives a colouring to his *whole* intelligence, and is assimilated at last, to become a portion of his intellectual life. What are these boasted “safeguards” which will take the stain out of the mind, or prevent the tincture of the Protestant principle—which colours, so to say, whatever of truth, falsehood, or half-truth is imparted by Protestant

professors to Roman Catholic scholars at the national University?—what will prevent, I say, this tincture, belonging to the lesson that is taught, from acting upon a *Catholic* youth as it acts on every other? Is there to be one authority out of the University saying one thing, and another within it saying another? Is the Protestant principle to be neutralized by an infusion of Catholic tradition? But when once the Protestant principle has fallen on the mind, wedged in by the logic of the day, the stain has been contracted—the evil is accomplished. Besides, how can the human mind, which has a natural logic within it which melts down the crudities thrown into it into order and position, suffer itself thus to be treated? How long would the intelligence bear up against such a frightful internal struggle—so horrible a mental indigestion? How long can it bear within it—if it can do so at all—the battle array of two hostile forces, and their ever-and-anon struggle for the mastery? How long would, during this ordeal, scepticism, mere disgust and unbelief, be kept at bay?—indifferentism in religion, on account of the complexity and power of opposing arguments, theories, and opinions? The fact is, I do not believe it possible for both the Protestant and the Catholic principle to exist in *possession* in the same intelligence at one time. They are mutually exclusive of each other. One may remain alongside of the other as a speculation, or a fact of knowledge; but they cannot both at the same time be *convictions*, unless a man is capable of being convinced of the truth of two contradictories, which no philosopher can hold. The Protestant tradition can no more exist in the same mind that is imbued with the Catholic principle, than the old man and old woman of the

antiquated barometer can both be under cover of their pasteboard roof simultaneously. If one is in, the other is sure to be out. If only *one* could be seen, it would suffice for a judgment : if I could see only the old man, and he were disporting himself outside his little recess, I should be abundantly justified in judging that the little old woman was snug under cover. If I see a man full of Catholic tradition, it is sufficient for saying that he is not a Protestant ; and if I see a man thoroughly imbued with the present Oxford tradition, I can safely conclude that he is not a Catholic. At the same rate that the Protestant principle—in as far as it is antagonistic to the Catholic—enters, the Catholic principle departs. What is true of poetry is equally true of the human spirit : there must be a multiplicity of knowledge and conviction ; but it all springs out of, and radiates from, the unity of one simple, consistent intelligence, so that every portion of the multifarious *scibile* goes to form the harmony and symmetry of one complete, organised system of human thought. What is alien to the system is thrown off and cast aside, as not belonging to its nature ; like the strong man, who by the very power of his living organism can, in various shapes, get rid of and eject from his system those elements which, by the instinct of an occult and natural law, are proved unsuited to its wants. The idea of imagining it possible to graft Protestant principles, or a Protestant education, on Catholicity, brings forcibly to my mind those trite but very apt words of the poet :

“Credite, Pisones, isti tabulæ fore librum
 Persimilem, cujus, velut ægri somnia, vanæ
 Fingentur species : ut nec pes nec caput uni
 Reddatur formæ.”

And here I shall be met with an old difficulty. I shall be told : “ Granted what you say is true, what is to become of the education of our children ? Shall it be said of them :

‘ E la lor cieca vita è tanto bassa,
Che invidiosi son d’ ogni altra sorte’ ?

Are they to be samples of that picture which we have already drawn of the shortcomings of our present situation ? Does not the greatest thinker in the country urge a University education ? have we not given his strong language on the point ?” Stop, I say ; that brings me to my answer.

He has ; but he does not urge parents to send their children to a *Protestant* University, but to support and encourage a *Catholic* one. He draws a picture of the shortcomings amongst us, that we may be urged to do something for ourselves,—to put our shoulders to the wheel. I say, then, let us start a University of our own. Let us build ourselves up upon our own tradition. Let us strengthen, and consolidate, and confirm the deposit handed down to us by our fathers. Let us, as I before have said, take them for our models, who lived in grinding times, and yet maintained bright the treasure of a true Catholic heart. We want a basis of operations from which to act, upon which we can fall back. We want a *Catholic digester* ; we must have our own centre and circumference ; and as there is an organised principle of Protestantism in the country, which converts men into Protestants, so let there be a Catholic, intellectual, organised system too, which may mould men into Catholics. For very shame go not over to the enemy’s camp ; leave not as lost the old traditions of our fathers,

so venerable, so sacred, so pure, so holy, so true ! Let it never be said of us, in ever so mitigated a sense :

“In those days there went out of Israel wicked men, and they persuaded many, saying : Let us go and make a covenant with the *Heathens* that are round about us ; for since we departed from them, many evils have befallen us. And the word seemed good to their eyes.”

This is a world of struggle, and of continual combat ; why should we sit down by the wayside with despairing thoughts, or, to save trouble, expense, and risk of failure, think to drink out of the ready-made fountains that belong to others ? It is the striving, resisting, and pushing our own principles and tradition, that is the condition of our life. Cease to resist, and you die. “Vivre c’est résister,” says M. Salevert de Flayolles ; “résister bien et facilement, c’est la santé ; résister mal et difficilement, c’est la maladie ; et ne pas résister du tout, c’est la mort.” “Therefore, I say, let us set up our University ; let us only set it up, and it will teach the world its value by the fact of its existence. What ventures are made, what risks are incurred, by private persons in matters of trade ! what speculations are entered on in the departments of building and engineering ! what boldness in innovation or improvement has been manifested by statesmen during the last twenty years ! Mercantile undertakings, indeed, may be ill-advised, and political measures may be censurable in themselves or fatal in their results,—I am not considering them here in their motive or their object, in their expedience or their justice, but in the manner in which they have been carried out. What largeness, then, of view, what intrepidity, vigour, and resolution, are im-

plied in the Reform Bill, in the Emancipation of the Blacks, in finance changes, in the Useful Knowledge movement, in the organisation of the Free Kirk, in the introduction of the penny postage, and in the railroads! This is an age, if not of great men, at least of great works; are Catholics alone to refuse to act on faith? England has faith in her skill, in her determination, in her resources of war, in the genius of her people." Are the Catholics of this realm alone to fail in nerve, in self-reliance, and in confidence in God? "*Fortes fortuna adjuvat*—so says the proverb. If the chance concurrence of half a dozen sophists, or the embassy of three philosophers, could do so much of old to excite the enthusiasm of the young and to awaken the intellect into activity, is it very presumptuous or very imprudent in us at this time" to make a venture, and start a University for ourselves? "Shall it be said in future times that the work needed nought but good and gallant hearts, and found them not?"* Such were, in short, the words, with but a slight variation, addressed to Catholics by Dr. Newman at the starting of the University of Dublin. Our turn has now come, and they can be applied to us. But it will again be objected, "How can we possibly begin a University? The thing is out of the question—simply impossible!" Not so fast, I say; your objections have been already some years in print, and have been refuted. "When the Catholic University is mentioned," says Dr. Newman, "we hear people saying on all sides of us: 'Impossible! how can you give degrees? What will your degrees be worth? Where are your endowments? Where are your edifices? Where will you find stu-

* *Newman on Universities*, p. 88.

dents? What will Government have to say to you? Who wants you? Who will acknowledge you? What do you expect? What is left for you?" Speaking of the cry of "impossible," this wonderful and admirable Philosopher says: "It sets me marvelling to find some of those very men, who have been heroically achieving impossibilities all their lives long, now beginning to scruple about adding one little sneaking impossibility to the list; and I feel it to be a great escape for the Church that they did not insert the word 'impossible' into their dictionaries and encyclopedias at a somewhat earlier date."* Cannot we, then, combine together in one strong, united effort in so great and sublime a cause? Cannot we sink differences, make sacrifices, sacrifice self, for so noble an undertaking?—building and walling and fortifying the very house of God in the land which was once of Saints! If we succeed, we shall indeed be blessed; if we fail—we cannot fail!—God will help His own, and will preserve to us our inheritance. Our road to utter failure is not by creating a centre of Catholic thought in the country, and consolidating ourselves on the deep, broad, and firm foundations of the venerable Catholic traditions of our fathers, but by shrugging up our shoulders, and packing the Catholic youth quietly off to the centre of an antagonism to all we hold most dear. It were far better to remain in the position in which we find ourselves at present, than to "despise the glory of our fathers, and hold the Grecian glory best;" it were far better to be a little uncouth, unpolished, and slipshod, than to be "the fine gentlemen," moulded upon a Protestant rule. Such a piece of patchwork could never

* *Newman on Universities*, p. 71.

stand : the slightest shock would shake it into pieces, and the old Catholic tradition would fall broken to the ground. But such a course is far from being necessary. Though we cannot do every thing, we can do something. "Half a loaf," they say, "is better than no bread ;" and if we are not able to have an Oxford of our own,—if we cannot rival the great Universities of the land,—we can do this much : we can so far better our present condition as to render the Catholic youth capable of holding their own in the great labour and struggle of life, and of standing by the side of the *Alumni* of the great national Universities, if not with equality, at all events without shame.

And here let me ask, Cannot we content ourselves with some disadvantage in this world? Are we so taken up with the prizes of this life, so craving after them that we do not lose them, that none slip out of our hands, as to lose sight of what, after all, is the only prize worthy of the name? Cannot we, not individually alone, but collectively, be content to endure a little, to bide our time, to be patient, for justice' sake? These considerations ought not to be overlooked by us. We have no right, it would not be fair, to expect the fulness of the faith and the fulness of nature too. If we have God, why should we, after all, be so restive, so uneasy, so fidgety, because we cannot get as large a slice of Mammon as our neighbours have? If my father love me best, I am content to forego the biggest and richest piece of cake. For, after all, save for another, "this is a worthless world to lose or gain." I am, let it be remarked, stating a practical matter of fact, that should have its due weight while considering the University question. Let it not be warded off by being called the subject of a *sermon*.

Sermon or not sermon, what practically bears upon a momentous question like the present should not be discarded from consideration because it happen to have a relation to religion, however near and however immediate. I repeat again, then, that we should be content, and *make up our minds*, to hold the second place in the country. Such a determination will save a world of heartburning and trouble and anxiety, and will even afford us a better chance than we had before of reaching the first place. We have *una margarita*, which outstrips all the rest in value ; one treasure, which should make us, whatever our position, thankful and content :

“ O insensata cura de’ mortali,
 Quanto son difettivi sillogismi
 Quei che ti fanno in basso batter l’ ali !”*

I fully admit that there is a legitimate ambition from a supernatural motive to urge on in the great race of life ; all that I fear is, that it should become too *absorbing* ; that it should steal by the higher principle, which should ever be the first. For we all know how easy it is to be deceived, how seducing it is to see stretched out before us “ all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them,” as we imagine ourselves to be viewing them from the stand-point of “ the mountain apart,” and yearning to have a portion with them for high intents and holy purposes. Man will be weak ; his will will be prone to evil ; he will seek position, fame, precedence, power, influence, reputation ; the world will be strong ; it will offer, with a large hand, the brilliancy, variety, and charm of its treasures, to the end of the chapter. Our danger is, not in being too remiss in

* *Paradiso*, canto xi.

furthering the world's designs upon us, but in too greedily seconding them ; in a thoughtless, worldly, open-mouthed manner, laying ourselves out for social position, equality, intellectual renown or superiority, without weighing carefully the risks, and asking ourselves whether, while the balance of worldly goods is weighed down heavy with its variegated treasures, the side of the *supernatural* life is not swinging idle and empty in the air. After all, is there higher wisdom to be found at Oxford or Cambridge, or any where on earth, than is contained in the simple Gospel question, "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" A Christian answer to this question would, I am convinced, were it kept steadily before the mind, go further towards solving the vexed question of University education than all the deepest speculations of a worldly philosophy.

And now I have said my say ; and I am about to throw this pamphlet into the great sea of human thought that is unsteadily heaving and flowing around me. There are few things, however worthless, that are cast into the ocean, which do not turn out suited to the wants or appetites of one or other of those finny myriads which disport themselves within its bosom. If one of the number pass and repass the food a thousand times with simple or studied unconsciousness, another will swallow it instantly with convulsive impetuosity ; while one would solemnly sail up to it, and then, with a scrupulous maintenance of an identical velocity, as solemnly sail away, another would work his way towards it eagerly from a distance (as if coming up on a matter of business that could not be put off for a minute), touch it with his nose, and then as suddenly as thought, as if struck by an electric

shock, with a splash and a flash, dart off out of sight into the obscurity of the waters ; others, again, would bask alongside of it, still as bees in amber, then, in sudden freak, rise up together at other food, and leave behind them a rich legacy of circles, chasing each other into nothing on the surface of the waters. In a word, if it swim on unheeded at first—now fast, now slow, now spinning round the rim of an eddy, now resting still in the cup amidst the foam—sooner or later the hour will come when that very living being will come across it for whom it was meant for food, long before he or I had been ushered into the sea of life. And if there be but *one* unfamed, unknown Catholic father who is doubting on this point of education, who is vexed in mind between the “advantages” of fame, of position, of social equality, which the Protestant University holds out for his son, and the necessary worldly drawbacks and disadvantages of loyalty to the sacred traditions which his fathers committed to his charge,—if such a solitary man, on reading these words, shall feel an additional reason, however slight, for holding himself true to the voices of the past, I consider that this pamphlet has not been thrown away. I am of opinion that a far greater effort would be repaid by such a result ; for if a man cannot prevent the contagion of some frightful epidemic from carrying off the greater part of a population, he does not, on that account, consider it a trifle to rescue one single person from a visitation which is throwing down, in a general misfortune, the old and the young, the weak and the strong. Rather, the very fact of so great a loss of life makes life the dearer by that very reason ; and the instinct to save some, when all are threatened to be taken, is as strong as it is com-

mon to the species. Not that the danger is great as yet. The malady at present is but local ; it is only at the beginnings—

“ Nemo repente fuit turpissimus.”

And in parting with him, let me beg the reader to keep to the grand question at issue, and not to fly off into some point which is merely subordinate ; let me beg of him to consider the *main* arguments which have been brought under his notice, and not to allow himself to be distracted by the difficulties which may perchance rise in his mind when considering those which are merely accessories,—as to whether, viz. my view of the intention of parents be correct ; or whether I have not drawn too vivid a picture of our wants ; or whether the Encyclical can be explained to suit an Oxford sense ; or whether it be true or not that parents do not see the danger that is before them ; or whether the Public may think this or that : let him rather take, as it were, in his hand, and examine closely and carefully, the two great *antagonistic traditions* which *substand* all the multifarious phenomena of the world we see ; let him consider, in their various bearings, relations, and oppositions, those two organic, energizing principles. Let him remember the part the University of Oxford plays—that it is the great Assimilator, the monster Absorber, the Converter of the human intelligence ; that, as sure as a chemical process, it will digest and turn into its own blood and bone the minds that are brought into contact with its influence, in spite, too, of parents’ “ safeguards,” and of those minds themselves ; that the power of a principle works according to its own laws, and develops from the centre of its own intrinsic nature, and not

as we would have it develop. Let him then cast his eye upon *himself*: let him think of his own history as a human intelligence, remember of what clay he is made, and ask himself, after having studied humanity, in the broad outlines of his own being, whether a lad of *eighteen* or *nineteen* could possibly resist the moral pressure, the constraining, the enthralling bewitchery of the organised intellect of the first people of the world; whether such a raw, uncultured boy could keep the brightness of the faith of his fathers without his nature contracting a *taint*, in the very focus of the grand, ruling, intellectual, domineering Protestantism of this generation. In a word, let him look at the two principles apart, and then at the nature of that being with which they are to come in contact, and ask himself this simple question, "Is my son to go to Oxford? or am I to strive and agitate and importune, till we combine to do something for ourselves?" And let me be present at his ear when the answer is coming, saying: Yes; now, at once,—not next year, not next month, not presently, but at this very moment,—without delay, begin to agitate, and further the commencement of a centre of learning for ourselves, that we may be able in truth to say,—at length we have "a seat of wisdom, a light of the world, a minister of the faith, an Alma Mater of the rising generation."*

"Be wise to-day; 'tis madness to defer;
 Next day the fatal precedent will plead:
 Thus on, till wisdom is pushed out of life.
 Procrastination is the thief of time—
 Year after year it steals, till all are fled."

* *Newman on Universities*, p. 25.

N O T E.

IN the foregoing pages (for argument's sake) I have taken for granted that Oxford will create in the intelligence those well-known results which we believe to flow from a liberal education. I have not taken into account the number of failures that are achieved, nor the numerous instances of refinement and high education amongst ourselves, which owe nothing to either Oxford or Cambridge. That the reader may perceive how strongly (to use no other word) I have put the Oxford case, I would fain persuade him to peruse the following extract:

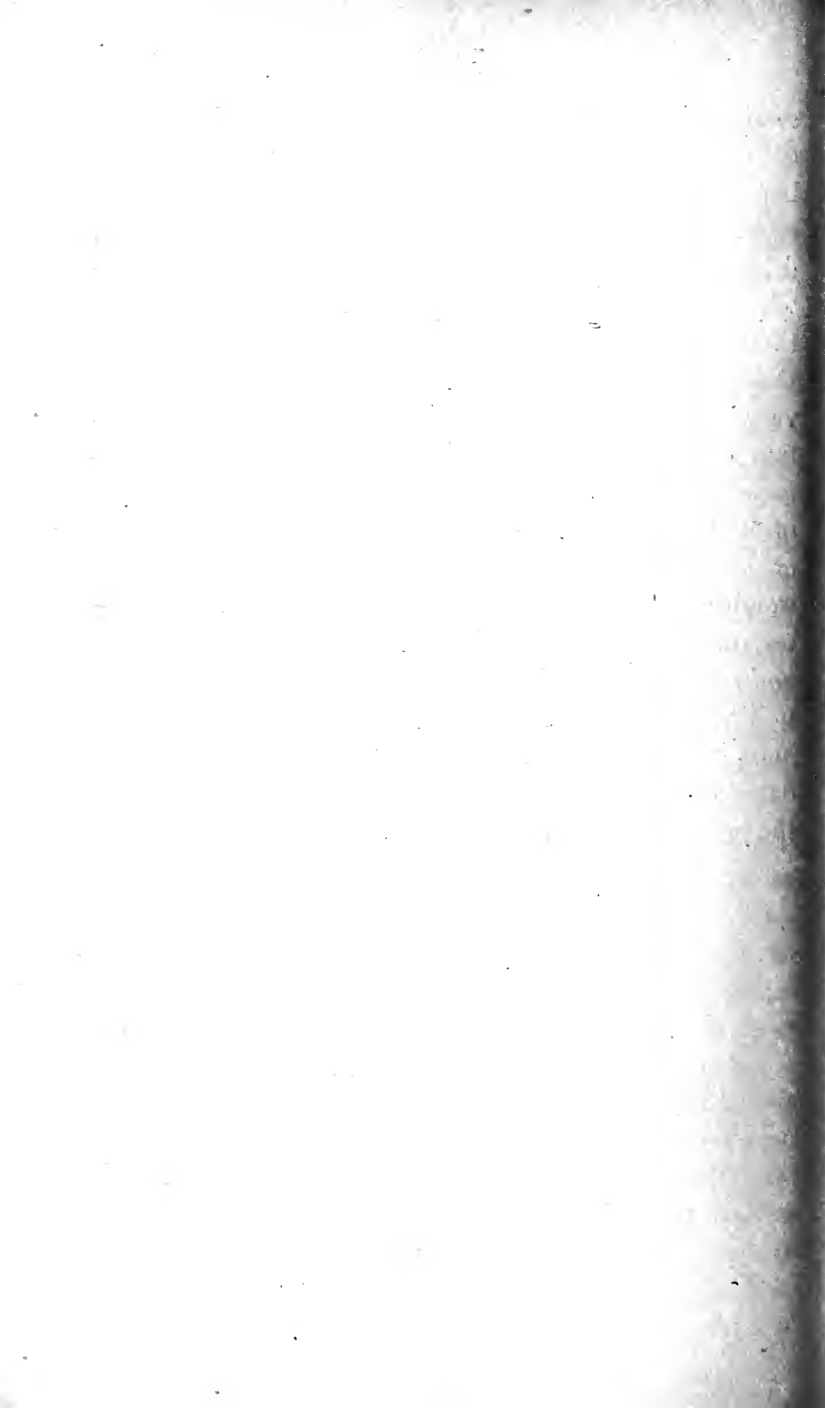
“It were well if none remained boys all their lives,” says Dr. Newman; “but *what is more common* than the sight of grown men, talking on political or moral or religious subjects, in that off-hand, idle way, which we signify by the word *unreal*? ‘That they simply do not know what they are talking about,’ is the spontaneous silent remark of any man of sense who hears them. Hence, such persons have no difficulty in contradicting themselves in successive sentences, without being conscious of it. Hence others, whose defect in intellectual training is more latent, have their most unfortunate crotchets, as they are called, or hobbies, which deprive them of the influence which their estimable qualities would otherwise secure. Hence, others can never look

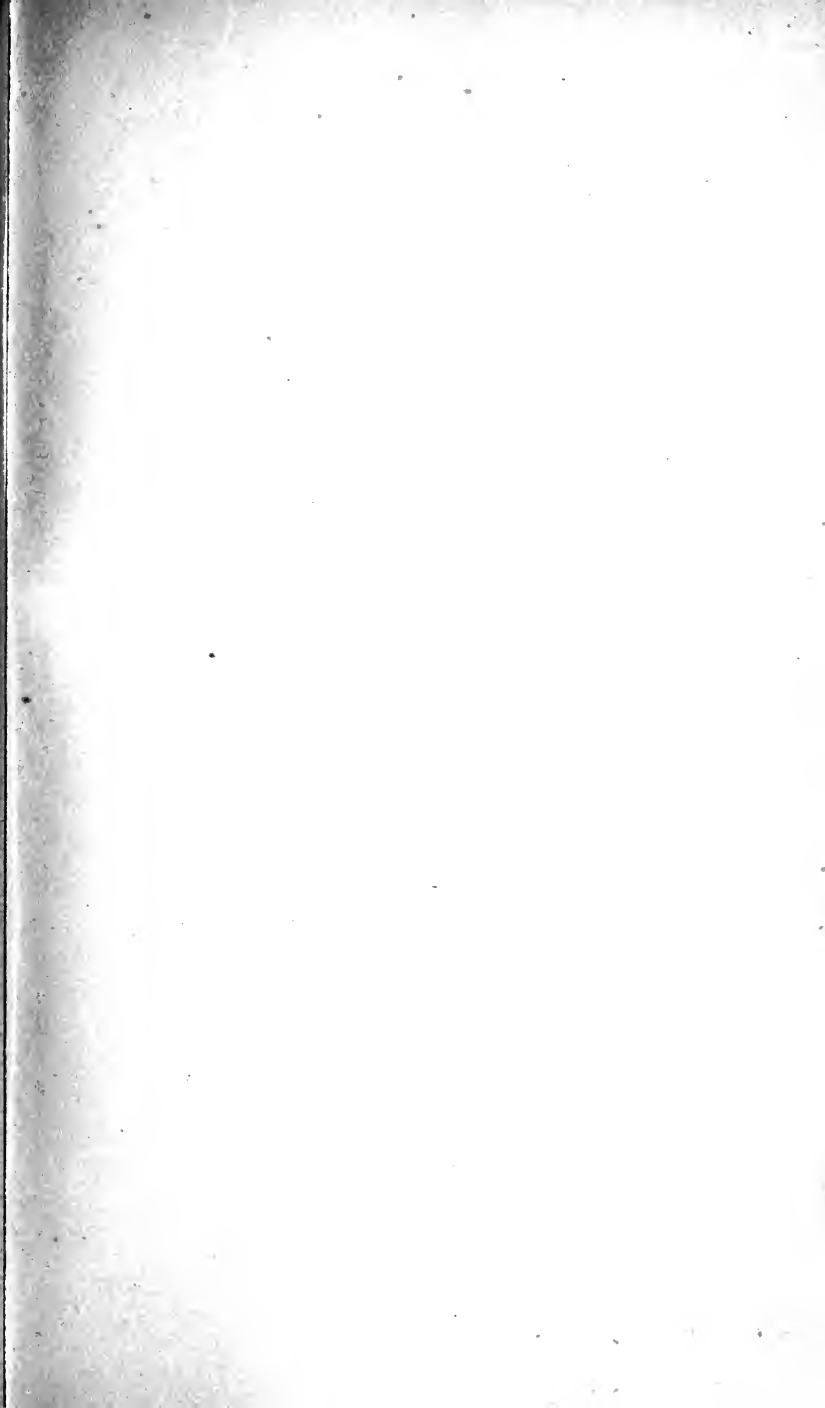
straight before them, never see the point, and have no difficulties in the most difficult subjects. Others are hopelessly obstinate and prejudiced, and return the next moment to their old opinions, after they have been driven from them, without even an attempt to explain why. Others are so intemperate and intractable, that there is no greater calamity for a good cause than that they should get hold of it. It is very plain from the very particulars I have mentioned, that, in this delineation of intellectual infirmities, I *am drawing from Protestantism and Protestants*; I am referring to what meets us in every railway carriage, in every coffee-room or *table-d'hôte*, in every mixed company. Nay, it is wonderful, that, *with all their advantages*, so many Protestants leave the University, with so *little of real liberality and refinement of mind*, in consequence of the discipline to which they have been subjected. Much allowance must be made here for original nature; much, for the detestable narrowness and (I cannot find a better word) the priggishness of their religion.”*

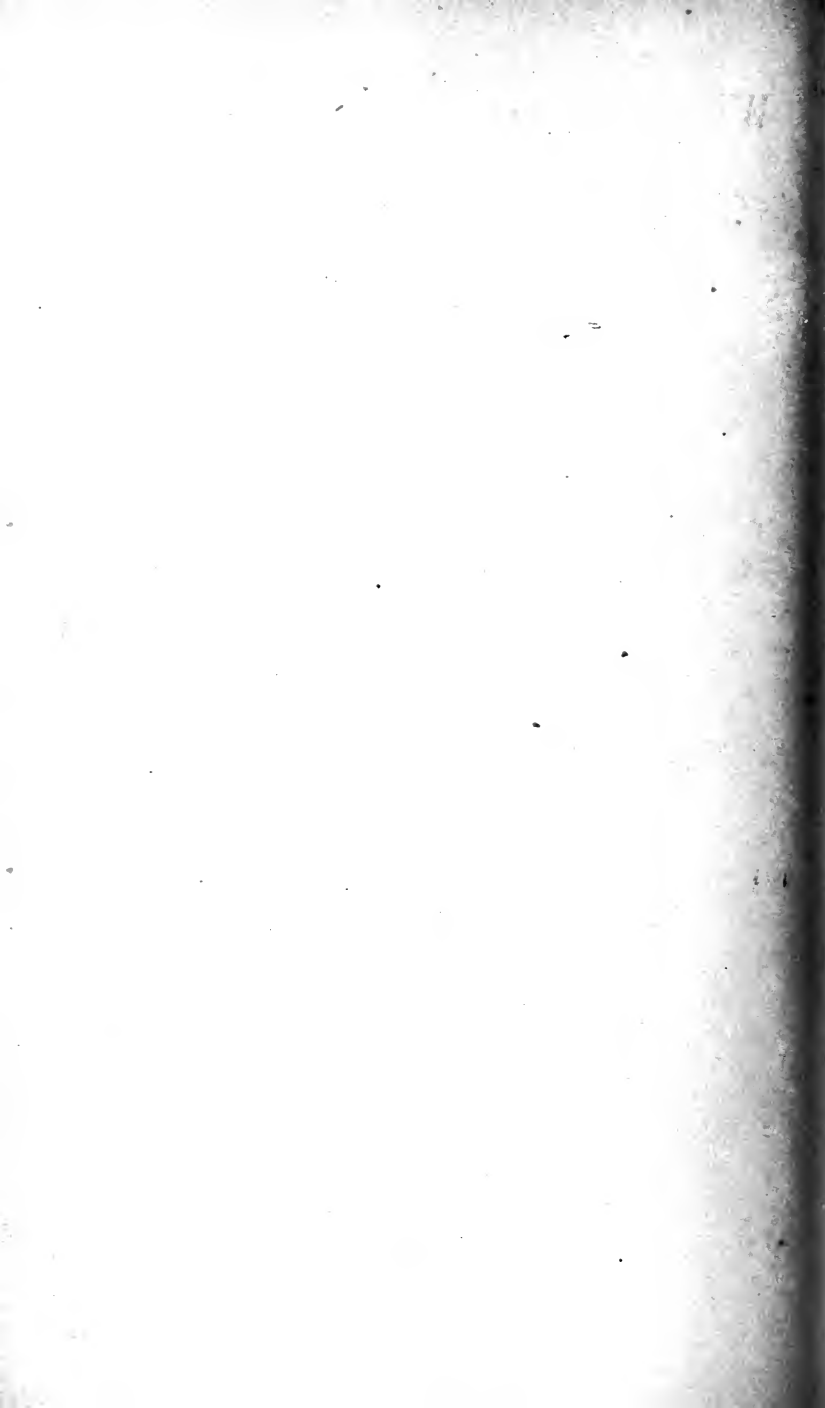
* *Newman on University Education*, Preface, p. xix.

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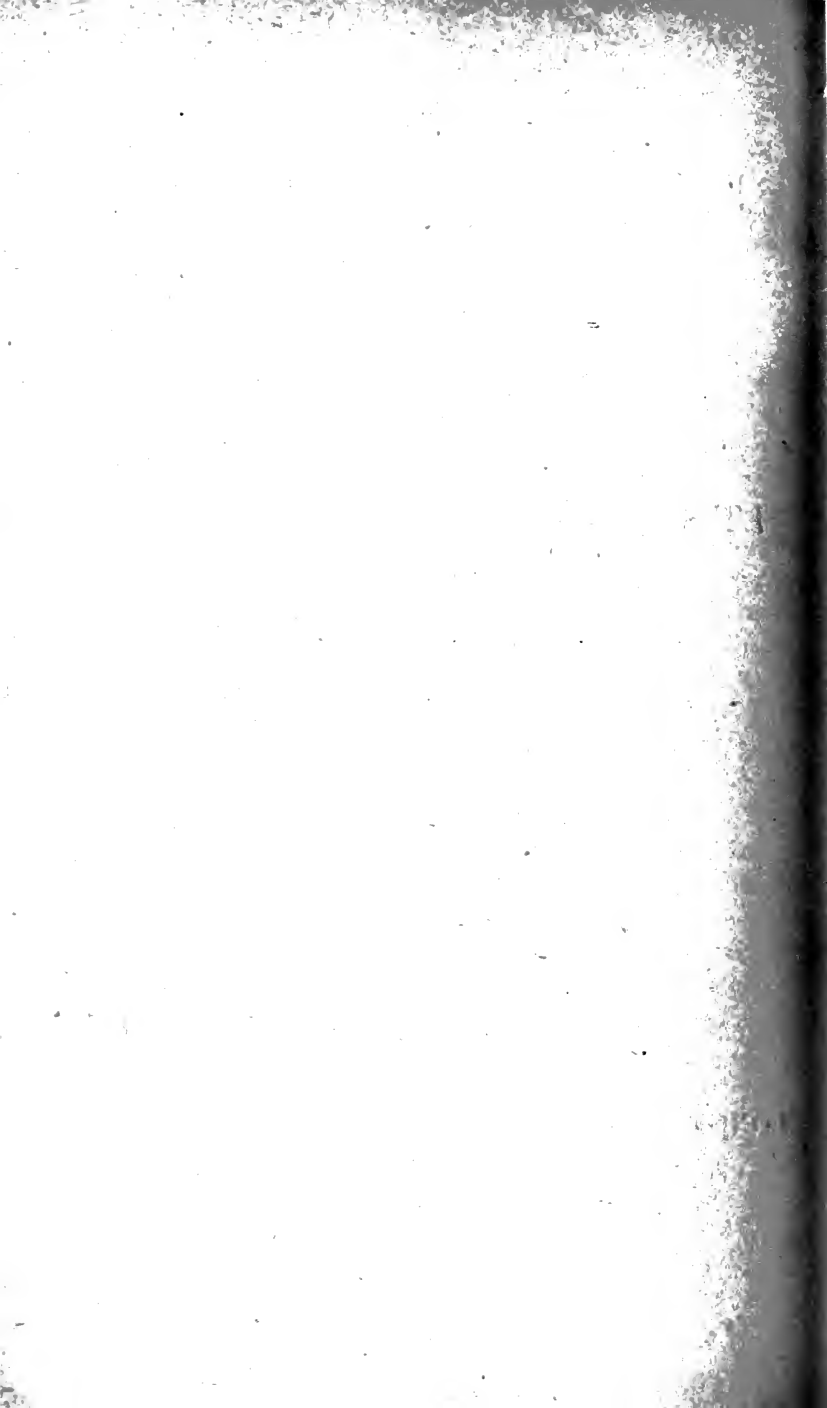


THE
TEMPORAL POWER
OF
THE POPE
IN
ITS POLITICAL ASPECT.

BY
HENRY EDWARD,
ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER.

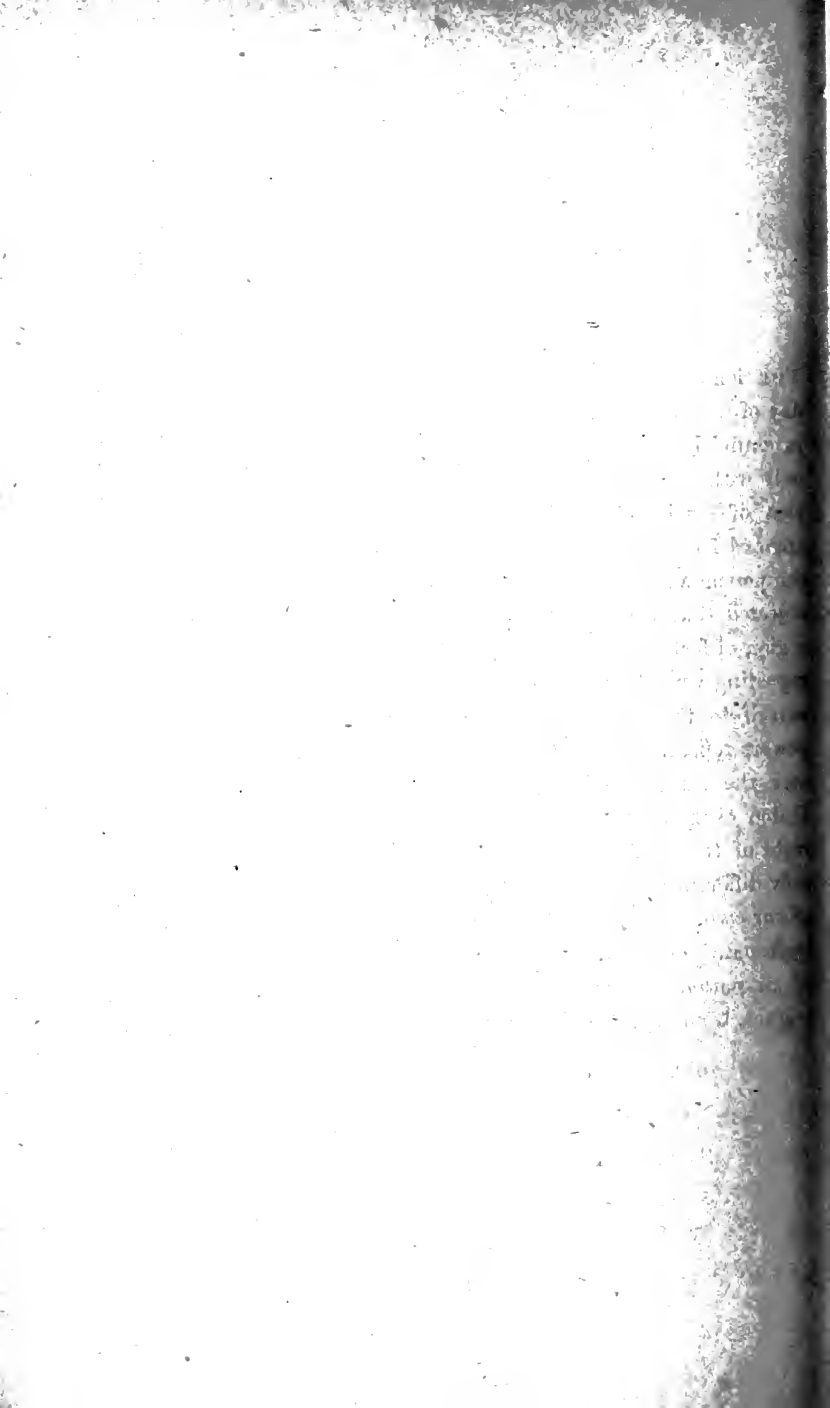
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1866.



NOTICE.

THE following pages contain the substance of what I said on the day of the general supplication in behalf of the Holy Father. It is confined to the political aspect of the Temporal Power, and deals only with the lowest ground on which it may be argued; namely, that of legal and political justice. I had already at other times claimed for the Temporal Power its higher sanctions, as related to the person and office of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. It was then objected that this was to remove the question from the tangible region of fact and law, to the impalpable region of faith. Without repeating what I have so often said before, I have here confined myself to the same field of argument, on which all legitimate powers repose. If the British Empire can be justified in its sway over the three kingdoms, and its dependencies, or the American Union over the Southern States, then far more surely may the right of the Pontiffs be maintained by the same arguments. The only difference I know is, that we and the Americans have bayonets of our own. The Pontiffs are unarmed. Foreign bayonets are a legitimate defence against foreign revolutions. Let the seditions of all nations be withdrawn, with their acts, conspiracies, and intrigues, from Rome, and there would be no need for bayonets.



THE TEMPORAL POWER OF THE POPE,

ETC.

“ Let every soul be subject to higher powers, for there is no power but from God ; and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God ; and they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation.”—
ROM. xii. 1-2.

To-day the Catholic Church throughout England and Scotland is united in supplication in behalf of the Sovereign Pontiff. The Festival of to-day is dear to the heart of every Catholic. It is full of memories of the conflicts and of the victories of the Church. We commemorate the Holy Rosary of the Immaculate Mother of God, to whose prayers we ascribe these interventions of Divine power. No doubt, to the world, the Festival and the supplication of to-day is a solemnity of folly. We go out to our warfare not even with a sling and stones out of the brook, but with a string of beads in the hands of little children. The Pastors and faithful of Ireland have led the way. England and Scotland close the procession with their united prayers.

I am conscious that I have to speak not only to those who are of the unity of the Catholic Church, but to those who are without ; not only to those who

believe, but to those who do not believe the Catholic faith. To you who believe it I need say nothing; your faith and fervour anticipate all I can utter, and your instincts of filial love for the Holy Father need no words of mine. But to those who unhappily are not of the unity and faith of the Church I desire to speak frankly, appealing to the truths and principles which they hold in common with us. I trust and believe that the solemnity of to-day, if it does not change the mind of any, will at least clear away much misconception, and mitigate much hostility which springs from error. My confidence of this is founded on the justice of our cause, the force of truth, the honesty of Englishmen, and, whether they will or no, on the grace of God.

There are here, I conceive, two classes of men—some who believe in the Visible Church, and its mission to the world—and others who admit only a Divine Providence over the world, and the laws of morality.

Now to both of these I offer this declaration of the Apostle, that submission is due to the constituted authority of government, on the principle not of expediency alone but of conscience; and on this basis I trust to justify the Temporal Power of the Sovereign Pontiff. I affirm then (1) That the Temporal Power of the Pontiff is a power ordained of God. (2) That it stands at least upon the same basis as all other rightful authority. (3) That it is sacred by every right common to other powers, and by rights and sanctions which transcend all other authorities on earth;

and lastly (4) that it therefore cannot be resisted, nor can any one excite resistance against it, without sin against, not only political justice, but the ordinances of God. From all these I further affirm that the overthrow of that power, if it were possible, would be, in an exceptional and eminent sense, both unjust, and dangerous to the Christian civilization of the world.

1. First, then, I affirm that the overthrow of the Temporal Power of the Sovereign Pontiff would be unjust, because it is sacred as a power existing *de facto* by the ordinance of God. St. Paul declared that even the heathen empire of Rome was ordained by God, and that every one owed subjection to it. He laid it upon the conscience of Christians to obey it in all things lawful, "not only for wrath," that is, for fear of punishment, "but also for conscience' sake." And yet the empire of Rome was not only heathen, but persecuting. It was steeped in Christian blood. Nevertheless, he declares it to be a power constituted by God. As such, the Christians obeyed it with an obedience limited only by the divine law of faith. And this law of civil obedience is of universal and perpetual obligation. It is this on which, as subjects of the British Empire we bear allegiance to our own Sovereign. As Catholics, we obey not for wrath only, but for conscience' sake; it is a part of our religion to be loyal: it is a dictate of our moral sense to be obedient to the law and faithful to the Throne. If it were not so, civil obedience would be degraded from its dignity as a moral virtue, and treason would be

divested of its highest guilt. There would be no such sin as heresy, if there were not a divine authority teaching among men ; nor such a sin as schism, if there were not a divine law of unity. Heresy would be mere error of opinion, and schism a lawful freedom of separation, if it were not for the divine authority of truth and the divine law of unity. So with treason, rebellion, sedition, disaffection ; if there were not a divine sanction for authority, they would be offences against society, but not sins against God : breaches of conventional laws, but not of christian morality towards God. On what other principle is the British Empire held together ? Like the empire of Rome of old, it is heterogeneous, widespread, made up of elements the most diverse, and even conflicting, and yet bound together by one sovereignty, and by an universal bond of allegiance to the supreme power. Britain was once an anarchy of uncivilised Saxon hordes—then a heptarchy of conflicting kingdoms—then a monarchy of many peoples fused in one ; then it became an empire of three kingdoms under one Sovereign, with colonies and dependencies, and islands in every sea ; and all these dominions, in many things so opposite, are held together by one common head, to whom obedience is a duty not only for fear of punishment, but also for the law and will of God. Upon what other law can the duty of obedience be imposed by England upon Scotland and Ireland, upon India, and upon Malta ?

It is precisely upon this basis, I affirm, that the Pontiffs have claim upon the obedience of their sub-

jects, and that their subjects owe them allegiance for conscience' sake. The Temporal Power of the Popes is as manifestly and as fully ordained of God as the power of Queen Victoria. Neither the one nor the other came by *Plebiscite*, or universal suffrage, or votes of inorganic masses, but by the gradual and watchful providence of the Divine Author of human and political society. The British Empire succeeds to the Roman Empire in Britain by a direct law of Divine Providence. When the last Roman legion left the shores of Britain, it began to gravitate to a centre within itself. The British Empire of to-day is formed round that centre, and rests upon it. So, when the Emperor of Constantinople ceased to be able to protect Rome, the Vicar of Jesus Christ became its centre. The Emperor had ceased to rule, and the throne was vacant by the visitation of God. The Pontiffs reigned as pastors and as rulers, and unconsciously and by force of necessity filled the vacant throne. They have reigned in Rome, first with an informal and pastoral sovereignty, and afterwards with a full and explicit sovereignty from that time to this. On what ground then, can obedience to the sovereignty of Great Britain be claimed, if obedience to the sovereignty of the Pontiff be denied? Every sanction of Divine Providence, and of christian morals, and of political justice, confirms the Temporal Sovereignty of the Pope.

2. But further, the Temporal Power is not only a power *de facto* but *de jure*. It not only exists, but it exists by a perfect title. It is a rightful authority in

its origin, in its formation, and in its claims upon its subjects. The foundation of it is not in the donation of man, but in the ordinance of God. The donation of Constantine is a fable; but it rudely represents the divine action whereby Rome and its provinces were transferred from the Cæsars to the Pontiffs. In like manner the alleged donation of Pepin to Stephen II., is equally fabulous. The restoration of Ravenna, and other cities of the patrimony, to the Pontiff, is declared to be a *restitution*.* Pepin required of Astolphus the

* That the Emperors of the East forfeited, in the eighth century at latest, all authority over Rome and its provinces, and that the Pontiffs remained in sole and supreme possession; and that the Emperors of the West never possessed or pretended to sovereignty over Rome and the Pontiffs, are facts as clear as any in history. The heretical and schismatical Emperor Leo made war upon Italy, and sent a fleet to seize the person of Gregory III. He invaded and seized the patrimonies of the Holy See in Sicily and Calabria. At that time the Lombards besieged Rome. The Emperors, so far from defending it, openly declared war against it. Gregory III wrote to Charles Martel, imploring his protection; and in his own name and that of the Roman people, offered him the dignity of Consul, on the condition of assuming the office of Protector. Charles Martel and Gregory III died the same year. The Lombards seized Ravenna and the Exarchate. Pope Zachary prevailed upon the King of the Lombards to restore Ravenna and the Exarchate, which he demanded, not in the name of the Emperor, but in his own and that of the Roman Commonwealth. The King of the Lombards restored them. It is declared to be a *restitution*. Throughout the history, the words *redonavit, reconcessit, restituit*, are everywhere employed. Pope Stephen succeeded to Zachary, and in his time the Lombards, under Astolphus, once more seized the Exarchate. Stephen, in A.D. 753, sent into France to Pepin, imploring protection. Pepin and his sons,

restitution of the cities and territories taken by his predecessors from the Roman Church and commonwealth. He thereby recognises, and recites in the very document by which he made restoration, the antecedent rights which had been violated by the Lombard invaders. He gave back possession of the invaded provinces to their rightful owners, as in our day Rome was restored by the armies of France to its rightful Sovereign. When I say that Rome and its provinces were given to the Pontiffs by the donation of Divine Providence, I speak as strictly as when I say that the throne of England was given by Divine Providence to our reigning Sovereign. I will not, nor indeed in this brief time can I, trace out the gradual formation of the Temporal Power, from the time of

Charles and Carloman, bound themselves by an engagement to restore to the Holy See, the Exarchate of Ravenna and the cities seized by the Lombards. The Pope conferred on Pepin and his sons the dignity of Patrician or Protector. Pepin fulfilled his engagement. Anastasius relates the event as follows: "The most Christian prince Pepin, King of the Franks, as a true defender of the Blessed Peter (the Roman Church), and in obedience to the wholesome counsels of the Holy Pontiff, sent his envoys to Astolphus, the wicked King of the Lombards, to obtain treaties of peace, and the *restitution of rights* to the before-named Holy Church of God, and the Commonwealth." Finally, Pepin was compelled to exact the restitution by force of arms. This is called by French writers the *donation* of Pepin: the word donation being used for *restoration*. Neither Pepin, nor any of his predecessors, had ever so much as laid claim to Rome. For the full detail of these events and the quotations of the original documents, see Gosselin's *Power of the Popes, etc.* Vol. I, pp. 212—228, and the notes especially at p. 216.

the liberation of the Pontiffs from all civil subjection, through the period of inchoate government to the formal sovereignty which they have borne for a thousand years. In the five centuries which intervened between the ceasing of persecution and the full sovereignty of the Pontiffs, they held the temporal possession of their three-and-twenty patrimonies in Italy, Sicily, and Gaul, and over those patrimonies they exercised a true temporal power of government. Such was the origin of their sovereignty. Round about these patrimonies, kingdoms and commonwealths arose—the first expanding outlines of Christian Europe. Over these also the Pontiffs exercised a supreme spiritual authority in all matters of divine faith and of the moral law. The confederation of Christendom is only the full corn in the ear, the harvest which springs up from the first blade to its ripeness under the hand and eye of the Pontiffs. How could they who had received from the Pontiffs both their Christianity and their civilisation, regard them otherwise than as their fathers and guides? The light of faith taught them that the Vicar of Jesus Christ was the supreme interpreter of the truth, and the supreme expositor of the law. How could they regard them in any way as subject to the authority of their princes? The doctrines of faith, the Sacraments of grace, the unity of the Church, the supreme authority descending from one fountain of jurisdiction, bound all christian nations in one, round the patrimonies of the Pontiffs and the person of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. How could they

regard him as in any way dependent on human power, and not as superior to them all? As supreme ruler, legislator, and judge, the Pontiffs hold their sovereignty not only by a title equal to all temporal princes, but in a way eminent and singular. If there be on earth a sovereign right complete in every condition of its perfection, it is theirs.

3. And yet it has a higher sacredness. It has the confirmation of the most ancient tradition in the christian world. While as yet Britain was pagan and barbarous, and France overrun by moving hordes, and Spain hardly counted as a nation, and Germany a forest of the heathen world, the Vicars of Jesus Christ reigned in Rome as pastors and as rulers. It may be said that possession pre-supposes a rightful title. True, but not always. Possession will confirm an invalid title; nay, it will create a valid one. The titles of usurpation and revolution may by lapse of time be confirmed by long possession against all claims, except that of the Church: for its possessions are sacred and cannot be usurped without sacrilege, which no length of possession can consecrate. And if lapse of time confirm a title invalid in the beginning, how much more does it confirm, and, I will say, consecrate a title rightful in its origin and its history by every condition of justice, both human and divine?

And such is the possession of the Pontiffs over the patrimony of the Church, and such the right of rule as sovereigns over Rome and its provinces. Even the violations of this right by invaders and spoilers have

only recorded it again and again in the public law of Christendom. The imperial laws from the eighth century, the laws of all European kingdoms down to the sixteenth, and of all international diplomacy down to this day have recognised the rights of the Pontiffs to their possessions, and their independent and therefore sovereign power. It was reserved for the age of revolutions, and for the inverted political philosophy of this century, to efface the record of these rights from the public conscience of Europe.

Thus far I have argued the Temporal Power upon grounds common to all temporal authorities. It rests upon the same basis, but more securely than all, and has upon it the sanction of a Divine Providence, and of a divine protection which no other sovereignty can shew.

4. But we must go further. The right by which the Pontiff holds his temporal power is not only sacred by all the sanctions which confirm it in other sovereignties; it has a special and singular sacredness which makes it exceptional and eminent above them all. The power of temporal rule in him meets and is united with the higher authority of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, which is both divine in its origin, and supernatural in its action. I know that I am now passing beyond the bounds of politics, and entering into a region where modern politicians seem to lose their calmness and their clearness of sight. Day by day, we are told that we confound together the Spiritual and the Temporal Power; that we make the spiritual

to depend upon the possession of a strip of territory ; that we proclaim the Temporal Power to be a doctrine of faith and a part of Christianity which, if the Temporal Power be destroyed, will fall. For my own part, I never yet met any Catholic either so besotted in understanding, or so base in heart, as to fall into any of these monstrous absurdities. Nevertheless, they are repeated day by day, as by the monotonous revolution of a mill wheel, which perpetually discharges the same noisy flood. It is of no use to expostulate, to correct, to refute ; over and over again, sometimes with a variation of phrase, oftener in the very same words, the same absurdities are poured over us. Of all men, they who believe that the Spiritual Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ was derived by a direct commission from our Divine Redeemer ; that it is contained in the words, “all power in heaven and in earth is given unto me, go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,” and “I dispose unto you a kingdom as my father hath disposed unto me,” and “thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it ;” and that the Church and the Pontiffs for three hundred years in their Spiritual Power alone conquered the world by martyrdom ; and that if the powers of the world apostatise from the Church of God, the Pontiffs will once more reign in undiminished Spiritual Power, though through persecution, and not in peace :—of all men, I say, they who believe these things, and proclaim them even to provocation, as we

do, ought to be held guiltless at least of the absurdities of confounding the Spiritual and the Temporal, or of making strips of territory, or walls of stone, the essence of Christianity, or the necessary condition of spiritual power. I doubt if men really believe these portentous figments. But they fill up space where arguments are not to be had. You who believe that the Holy Catholic Church in its unity and universality, in its supreme legislation and judicial power over the souls of men, with its perfections and gifts of indefectible life, and infallible knowledge and voice, is the kingdom of Jesus upon earth; and that the Vicars of Christ have reigned, from the hour of His ascension, over both the pastors and the flock, apart from all earthly power, and in spite of all its malice and of all its might, have no need to be told by any one, least of all by me, that we of all men distinguish the imperishable Church of God from all temporal accidents of possession and of power. Nay, more, it was the spiritual power of the Church, which, conquering all temporal antagonists, fashioned for itself by faith and law and beneficence, acting upon the reason, the conscience, and the heart of mankind, a new order, a new world with new temporal laws, and new thrones, and new tribunals of temporal sovereignty. It surrounded itself with a new apparatus for the service and welfare of men. The eternal clothed itself in the temporal, that it might mix more intimately and more effectually in the whole corporate and organic life of men and nations, with their public laws, the fountains of their

legislation, and the directions of their judges and other rulers. Such is the Temporal Power of the Pontiff; a personal freedom, and a supreme direction over men and nations in all things pertaining to the faith and law of God. And for the peaceful exercise of this supreme office, the Providence of God has formed for him a sphere into which no other sovereignty may enter; in which, therefore, because sole and supreme, he is invested with sovereign power. And of this too we are confident, that so long as a Christian world exists, so long this providential centre of its unity, the source of its Christian life will continue to exist. If the civilization of Europe ever fall back into the mere natural order, and the law and faith of Jesus Christ pass from the reason and conscience of men, then indeed the Temporal Power of His Vicar upon earth might cease. It is therefore transient only, as the Christian world may be thought to pass away. So long as it exists, the laws and relations which fashioned it will remain permanent and changeless; and he who is recognised to be Pastor and Father, Judge and Legislator over all, and Vicar of our Divine Redeemer upon earth, will hold the first place in both orders, Spiritual and Temporal, as Pontiff and as King.

5. And lastly, the temporal Power of the Sovereign Pontiff, sacred as it is by every title which consecrates the right of any ruler upon earth, confirmed by a longer possession and a more ample recognition in the law and conscience of the Christian world, and elevated by

the divine commission of the Vicar of Jesus Christ to a singular and exceptional authority, has yet this last title to the obedience of its subjects, to which no other dynasty among men can lay claim. It is a power which has never oppressed its people. In affirming the doctrine of the Apostle, that "there is no power but from God, and that whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God," I am not proclaiming what men are pleased to call the slavish doctrine of blind and immoral obedience. Rulers have their duties as well as their rights, and subjects have rights as well as duties. The ruler has a right to obedience, but he is bound by a duty to rule justly. The subject has a duty to obey, but he has also a right to justice. And the violation of the bond of their reciprocal duties is not only a crime, in both the ruler and the ruled, against society, which is an ordinance of God; but a sin against God, who is the supreme Author of society among men. It is not now the time, nor is it now my duty to define the limits of this question, or to say when or where a rightful power abdicates its claim to obedience by abuse. Tyranny, as well as rebellion, is a crime and a sin, and both have their just correction. No power can be more absolute than the law "thou shalt not kill," and yet in defence of life both an individual or a nation may take the life of a murderer or of an invading power. I am not here at this time to discuss these limits. They exist; and there are tribunals in every society of men to define them, and to try the facts both of rebellion and oppression. It is

enough for me to affirm that no Pontiff in the long line of a thousand, I may say of these fifteen hundred years, has ever abused his power, so as to relax the duty of obedience, or to purge the resistance of his subjects of the sin of rebellion. And this, which may be affirmed of the Pontiffs without fear, can be affirmed of no other line of rulers, of no other dynasty on earth. The Pontiffs have never made wars of aggression; they have never added a square foot of territory to their sacred patrimony by the blood and lives of their people; they have never swept away their homes by forest laws, nor plundered their inheritances, nor desecrated the sanctity of their homes, nor robbed them of the fruits of the earth to keep up a revenue and to live in luxury, nor wrested justice against any man, rich or poor, nor punished with oppressive and sanguinary codes, nor violated any laws of God or man to the hurt of their people. It is notorious as the light, that the sway of the Pontiffs has been mild even to indulgence, and beneficent even to the appearance of laxity. The very charges against it are that it does not drive on with the world, and strain in the race of material inventions. It has prisons because it hardly ever erects a scaffold; and lives that in any other country would have been peremptorily cut off are there benignly spared. Such is the character of the Temporal Power in its government. Its very clemency has emboldened those with whom it has dealt in excess of mercy, to despise it. The first amnesty was followed by the first conspiracy, and those who were conspicuous as

objects of pardon were conspicuous as the ringleaders of sedition. After a reign of twenty turbulent years, and in the midst of incessant provocations, Pius the Ninth may ask of his people in his own name, and in the name of the Pontiffs who have reigned before him: "Whom have I wronged, or on whom has the weight of my authority borne heavily? If any one be aggrieved by me let him rise up and bear his witness against me." I will be bold to say that no accuser will be found except they whose witness, as those of old, will not agree together. Men are now acknowledging that the rising against the government of the Pontiff is not because Pius the Ninth is a bad ruler, nor because his government is a bad government, nor because he has violated the law of mercy and justice, but because his subjects are resolved not to be governed by him. That is to say, "we will not have this man to reign over us." If this be not treason, if this be not rebellion, let some one tell me what rebellion and treason are. If people are to be told that they may change their government as they may change their garments, that civil allegiance depends upon their liking, or that dynasties may be overthrown and monarchies dismembered upon such causes as this, let them lay to heart what ears are listening. This is a doctrine which will find a ready faith to believe and practise it among a people not far off. And upon those who preach this gospel of revolution, I, as a pastor, am bound to declare that the sin of instigating rebellion rests, and that all who act upon such doctrine abroad or at home are rebels.

The sum then of the matter is this:—There is not a title of fact, or right, or possession, by which any crowned head holds authority over its people which does not unite in the largest and profoundest sense in the person of the Pontiff. But more than this: besides these titles common to all rightful sovereignties, there are two of a higher nature, the sacred character of the person who bears this lesser authority, and the justice, clemency, and mercy, which have marked its administration throughout the course of ages. The subjects of such a power have an inheritance of peace above all people upon earth. It is not disfranchisement to be exempted from the instabilities of the world and from the turbulence of revolution. They have a higher dignity and a nobler freedom than that of parliaments and political contentions; and they who excite them to discontent, and to rebellion, rob them of a higher inheritance, and fall under the condemnation of those who resist the ordinance of God.

So much for the injustice of this warfare against the Vicar of Jesus Christ. I said also that it is most dangerous to the peace of nations. Injustice must be dangerous: prosper as it may, its end is confusion. But time forbids me to add what I had intended to say. All I can do is to touch the mere outline of what would follow upon the dissolution, if that could be, of the Temporal Power of the Pontiffs. But first let me once for all, or rather once more for the thousandth time, sweep away the absurdity imputed to us, day by day, that we make the Temporal Power a

part of Christianity, and that if it were overthrown Christianity would fall with it. This surpasses even the extravagance of controversy. We do believe, indeed, that the dissolution of the 'two-fold authority of the Pontiff would strike out the key stone of Christendom ; that is, of the two-fold order of Christianity and civilization which for a thousand years has sustained the commonwealth of Europe. We believe that then Christianity would stand alone, on its own divine and imperishable basis ; and that civilization without Christianity would return to the natural order, and to the spiritual death out of which Christianity raised it to life.

It is no question of what God could do, or might do, or may do hereafter, for the future of the world. We are as full of faith in the inexhaustible wisdom of Divine Providence as our adversaries ; but this we affirm, that it is by this two-fold contact that the Church acts upon the Christianity and the civilization of mankind ; that so long as Christianity acts alone, it acts upon individuals one by one, as in the ages before Constantine ; that so soon as it acts upon races, legislatures, rulers, kingdoms, upon the public law and organic life of nations, the Temporal Power is its legitimate offspring and result. To undo this, is to go backward, not onward. It is to dissolve the work of Christianity upon the world, not to advance it ; to pull down, not to build up, the intellectual and moral perfection of human society. We affirm also that this retrogression and divorce of the spiritual and civil

societies of the world would desecrate the civil powers of the world. They would cease to recognise, as they have already to a great extent, the Christian law, the unity of faith, worship, communion, or authority, as principles of their public order.

And this would speedily bring on collision between the two powers always in presence of each other, each claiming to be supreme, with no arbiter or tribunal, no third and impartial judge to define the limits of their jurisdiction or the sphere of their competence. And this conflict could end only in the worst form of human government, that is, in despotism, or the union of temporal and spiritual supremacy in the civil power, which has ever been the fountain of persecution, of heresy, and of schism. The two powers, spiritual and temporal, are providentially united in Rome that they may be separated everywhere else in the kingdoms of the world. And it is this separation which has secured the two great conditions of human happiness, the liberty of the soul from all human authority, and the limitation of civil authority in its action upon its subjects. The history of Constantinople, of Russia, of England, and of France, suffices to prove that the power of monarchs is limited while the Church is free, and is despotic when it is fettered or opposed. The civil principedom of the Pontiffs therefore is, as Pius IX. has declared, the condition of Divine Providence to ensure and perpetuate the freedom of the Church in its Head.

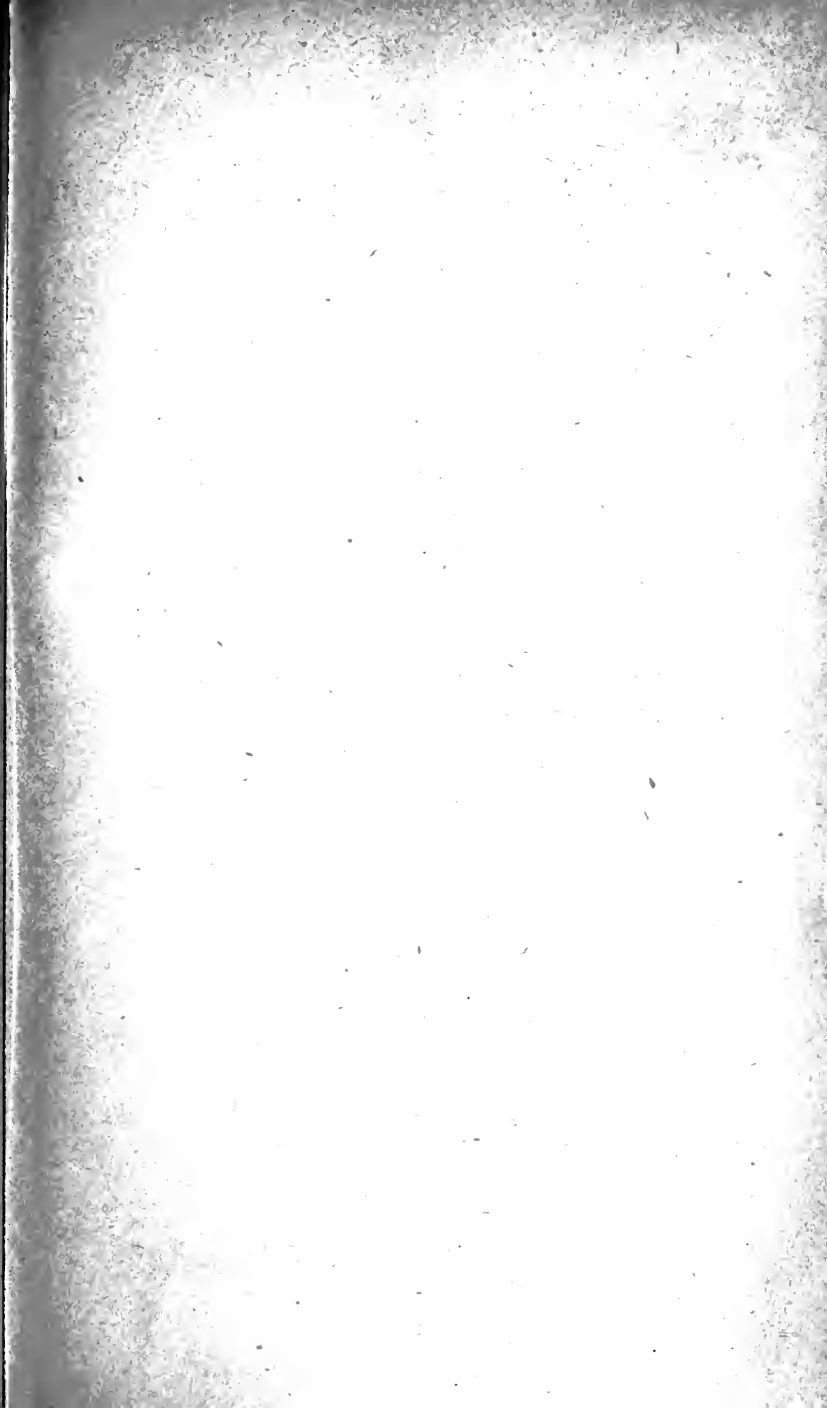
Lastly, nothing is more largely written in history than that despotisms generate revolutions. When civil

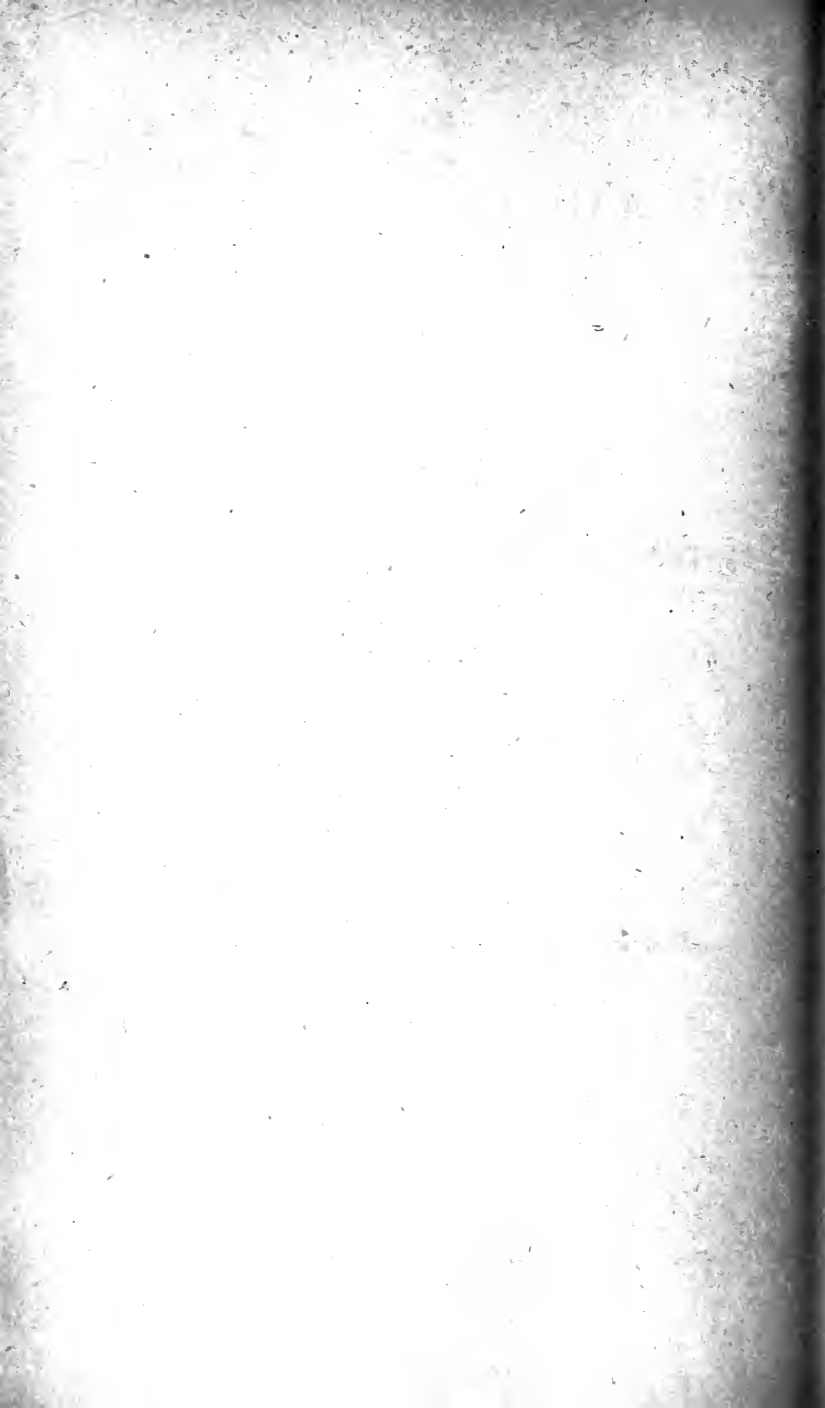
power becomes oppressive, men are driven to dangerous resolves. Into this I will not enter. I am no prophet; but the history of Europe reads us a lesson in the past which we shall do well to lay to heart as a warning for the future. Whosoever dissolves the bonds of christian law and unity brings in the spirit of lawlessness which is the tendency of all the national currents of this time. Society, to save itself, cowers under military despotisms which generate reactions; and reactions, unless tempered and restrained by the Christian law, are the fore-runners of anarchy. There are signs enough, not only in the sky but upon every country of the old world and of the new, warning us not to destroy the feeblest bond of our social stability, still less to strike out the key-stone of the arch which hangs tremulously over our heads.

Such then is the intention of our supplication to-day. God has so ordained that His Church should be always beaten by the water floods. The red surges of persecution were followed by the inundations of barbarous hordes; then came floods of heresy, and of Cæsarism, and of imperial tyranny and corruption; then the hosts of the infidel, which reached to all the shores of Christendom; now the revolutions which are one and universal, spreading through the nations and rising round the walls of Rome. But wave after wave has swept by, turned by the sea-wall which God has built, not man; the Rock immoveable. For this we pray, and for this we confidently wait. It is but one more of the thousand waves which are spent and gone. The

Vicar of our Divine Redeemer for these twenty years of his great Pontificate has been sitting all alone upon the hill-top, "awaiting the events" which God has permitted. The world has passed him by, wagging its head, and men have been "casting lots upon his garments, what every man should take." But the words of his Master are sure, *post tres dies resurgam*, "after three days I will rise again." Pray, then, to the Eternal Son of God reigning in the midst of us, manifested in the Sacrament of His power. The world is trying its strength with Him: armed in its might, intoxicated with its masteries over the earth which He has made. But there are powers above those of war and of destruction, greater than the laws and agencies of electricity and gravitation, which control this lower world, and of man himself even when he boasts of his mastery; there is the Word of God and the power of His might, and they are set in motion by the prayer of faith. "All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer believing, you shall receive." St. Matt. xxi. 22. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." St. Luke, xxi. 32.

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THE
POPE AND THE REVOLUTION :

A SERMON,

PREACHED

IN THE ORATORY CHURCH, BIRMINGHAM,

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1866.

BY

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, D.D.

LONDON :
LONGMANS, GREEN, READER, AND DYER.

1866.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Sermon is given to the world in consequence of its having been made the subject in the public prints of various reports and comments, which, though both friendly and fair to the author, as far as he has seen them, nevertheless, from the necessity of the case, have proceeded from information inexact in points of detail.

It is now published from the copy written beforehand, and does not differ from that copy, as delivered, except in such corrections of a critical nature as are imperative when a composition, written *currente calamo*, has to be prepared for the press. There is one passage, however, which it has been found necessary to enlarge, with a view of expressing more exactly the sentiment which it contained; viz. the comparison made at pp. 43, 44, between Italian and English Catholics.

The author submits the whole, as he does all his publications, to the judgment of Holy Church.

October 13, 1866.

The Church shone brightly in her youthful days,
Ere the world on her smiled ;
So now, an outcast, she would pour her rays
Keen, free, and undefiled ;
Yet would I not that arm of force were mine,
To thrust her from her awful ancient shrine.

'Twas duty bound each convert-king to rear
His Mother from the dust ;
And pious was it to enrich, nor fear
Christ for the rest to trust :
And who shall dare make common or unclean,
What once has on the Holy Altar been ?

Dear Brothers ! hence, while ye for ill prepare,
Triumph is still your own ;
Blest is a pilgrim Church ! yet shrink to share
The curse of throwing down.
So will we toil in our old place to stand,
Watching, not dreading, the despoiler's hand.

Vid. LYRA APOSTOLICA.

S E R M O N .

THIS day, the feast of the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, has been specially devoted by our ecclesiastical superiors to be a day of prayer for the Sovereign Pontiff, our Holy Father, Pope Pius the Ninth.

His Lordship, our Bishop, has addressed a Pastoral Letter to his clergy upon the subject. and at the end of it he says, "Than that Festival none can be more appropriate, as it is especially devoted to celebrating the triumphs of the Holy See obtained by prayer. We therefore propose and direct that on the Festival of the Rosary, the chief Mass in each church and chapel of our diocese be celebrated with as much solemnity as circumstances will allow of. And that after the Mass the Psalm *Miserere* and the Litany of the Saints be sung or recited. That the faithful be invited to offer one communion for the Pope's intention. And that, where it can be done, one

part at least of the Rosary be publicly said at some convenient time in the church, for the same intention."

Then he adds: "In the Sermon at the Mass of the Festival, it is our wish that the preacher should instruct the faithful on their obligations to the Holy See, and on the duty especially incumbent on us at this time of praying for the Pope."

I. "Our obligations to the Holy See." What Catholic can doubt of our obligations to the Holy See? especially what Catholic under the shadow and teaching of St. Philip Neri can doubt those obligations, in both senses of the word "obligation," the tie of duty and the tie of gratitude?

1. For first as to duty. Our duty to the Holy See, to the Chair of St. Peter, is to be measured by what the Church teaches us concerning that Holy See and of him who sits in it. Now St. Peter, who first occupied it, was the Vicar of Christ. You know well, my Brethren, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who suffered on the Cross for us, thereby bought for us the kingdom of heaven. "When Thou hadst overcome the sting of death," says the hymn, "Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to those who believe." He opens, and He shuts; He gives grace, He withdraws it; He judges, He pardons, He condemns. Accordingly, He speaks of Himself in the Apocalypse as "Him who is the Holy and the True, Him that hath the key of David, (the

key, that is, of the chosen king of the chosen people,) Him that openeth and no man shutteth, that shutteth and no man openeth." And what our Lord, the Supreme Judge, is in heaven, that was St. Peter on earth; he had the keys of the kingdom, according to the text, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."

Next, let it be considered, the kingdom which our Lord set up with St. Peter at its head was decreed in the counsels of God to last to the end of all things, according to the words I have just quoted, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And again, "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." And in the words of the prophet Isaias, speaking of that divinely established Church, then in the future, "This is My covenant with them, My Spirit that is in thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." And the prophet Daniel says, "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed . . .

and it shall break in pieces and shall consume all those kingdoms (of the earth, which went before it), and itself shall stand for ever."

That kingdom our Lord set up when He came on earth, and especially after His resurrection; for we are told by St. Luke that this was His gracious employment, when He visited the Apostles from time to time, during the forty days which intervened between Easter Day and the day of His Ascension. "He showed Himself alive to the Apostles," says the Evangelist, "after His passion by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them and speaking of the kingdom of God." And accordingly, when at length He had ascended on high, and had sent down "the promise of His Father," the Holy Ghost, upon His Apostles, they forthwith entered upon their high duties, and brought that kingdom or Church into shape, and supplied it with members, and enlarged it, and carried it into all lands. As to St. Peter, he acted as the head of the Church, according to the previous words of Christ; and, still according to his Lord's supreme will, he at length placed himself in the see of Rome, where he was martyred. And what was then done, in its substance cannot be undone. "God is not as a man that He should lie, nor as the son of man, that He should change. Hath He said then, and shall He not do? hath He spoken, and will He not fulfil?" And, as St. Paul says, "The gifts and the calling

of God are without repentance." His Church then, in all necessary matters, is as unchangeable as He. Its framework, its polity, its ranks, its offices, its creed, its privileges, the promises made to it, its fortunes in the world, are ever what they have been.

Therefore, as it was *in* the world, but not *of* the world, in the Apostles' times, so it is now:—as it was "in honour and dishonour, in evil report and good report, as chastised but not killed, as having nothing and possessing all things," in the Apostles' times, so it is now:—as then it taught the truth, so it does now; as then it had the sacraments of grace, so has it now; as then it had a hierarchy or holy government of Bishops, priests, and deacons, so has it now; and as it had a Head then, so must it have a head now. Who is that visible Head? who is the Vicar of Christ? who has now the keys of the kingdom of heaven, as St. Péter had then? Who is it who binds and looses on earth, that our Lord may bind and loose in heaven? Who, I say, is the successor to St. Peter, since a successor there must be, in his sovereign authority over the Church? It is he who sits in St. Peter's Chair; it is the Bishop of Rome. We all know *this*; it is part of our *faith*; I am not proving it to you, my Brethren. The visible headship of the Church, which was with St. Peter while he lived, has been lodged ever since in his Chair; the successors in his headship are the suc-

cessors in his Chair, the continuous line of Bishops of Rome, or Popes, as they are called, one after another, as years have rolled on, one dying and another coming, down to this day, when we see Pius the Ninth sustaining the weight of the glorious Apostolate, and that for twenty years past, —a tremendous weight, a ministry involving momentous duties, innumerable anxieties, and immense responsibilities, as it ever has done.

And now, though I might say much more about the prerogatives of the Holy Father, the visible head of the Church, I have said more than enough for the purpose which has led to my speaking about him at all. I have said that, like St. Peter, he is the Vicar of his Lord. He can judge, and he can acquit; he can pardon, and he can condemn; he can command, and he can permit; he can forbid, and he can punish. He has a supreme jurisdiction over the people of God. He can stop the ordinary course of sacramental mercies; he can excommunicate from the ordinary grace of redemption; and he can remove again the ban which he has inflicted. It is the rule of Christ's providence, that what His Vicar does in severity or in mercy upon earth, He Himself confirms in heaven. And in saying all this I have said enough for my purpose, because that purpose is to define our obligations to him. That is the point on which our Bishop has fixed our attention; "our obligations to the Holy See;" and what need I say more to

measure our own duty to it and to him who sits in it, than to say that, in his administration of Christ's kingdom, in his religious acts, we must never oppose his will, or dispute his word, or criticize his policy, or shrink from his side? There are kings of the earth who have despotic authority, which their subjects obey indeed and disown in their hearts; but we must never murmur at that absolute rule which the Sovereign Pontiff has over us, because it is given to him by Christ, and, in obeying him, we are obeying his Lord. We must never suffer ourselves to doubt, that, in his government of the Church, he is guided by an intelligence more than human. His yoke is the yoke of Christ, *he* has the responsibility of his own acts, not we; and to his *Lord* must he render account, not to us. Even in secular matters it is ever safe to be on his side, dangerous to be on the side of his enemies. Our duty is, not indeed to mix up Christ's Vicar with this or that party of men, because he in his high station is above all parties, but to look at his acts, and to follow him, whither he goeth, and never to desert him, however we may be tried, but to defend him at all hazards, and against all comers, as a son would a father, and as a wife a husband, knowing that his cause is the cause of God. And so, as regards his successors, if we live to see them; it is our duty to give *them* in like manner our dutiful allegiance and our unfeigned service, and to follow them also whither-

soever they go, having that same confidence that each in his turn and in his own day will do God's work and will, which we felt in their predecessors, now taken away to their eternal reward.

2. And now let us consider our obligations to the Sovereign Pontiff in the second-sense, which is contained under the word "obligation." "In the Sermon in the Mass," says the Bishop, "it is our wish that the preacher should instruct the faithful on their obligations to the Holy See;" and certainly those obligations, that is, the claims of the Holy See upon our gratitude, are very great. We in this country owe our highest blessings to the See of St. Peter,—to the succession of Bishops who have filled his Apostolic chair. For first it was a Pope who sent missionaries to this island in the beginning of the Church, when the island was yet in pagan darkness. Then again, when our barbarous ancestors, the Saxons, crossed over from the Continent and overran the country, who but a Pope, St. Gregory the First, sent over St. Augustine and his companions to convert them to Christianity? and by God's grace they and their successors did this great work in the course of a hundred years. From that time, twelve hundred years ago, our nation has ever been Christian. And then in the lawless times which followed, and the break up of the old world all over Europe, and the formation of the new, it was the Popes, humanly speaking, who saved the religion of Christ

from being utterly lost and coming to an end, and not in England only, but on the Continent; that is, our Lord made use of that succession of His Vicars, to fulfil His gracious promise, that His religion should never fail. The Pope and the Bishops of the Church, acting together in that miserable time, rescued from destruction all that makes up our present happiness, spiritual and temporal. Without them the world would have relapsed into barbarism—but God willed otherwise; and especially the Roman Pontiffs, the successors of St. Peter, the centre of Catholic Unity, the Vicars of Christ, wrought manfully in the cause of faith and charity, fulfilling in their own persons the divine prophecy anew, which primarily related to the Almighty Redeemer Himself: “I have laid help upon One that is mighty, and I have exalted One chosen out of the people. I have found David My servant, with My holy oil have I anointed him. For My hand shall help him, and My arm shall strengthen him. The enemy shall have no advantage over him, nor the son of iniquity have power to hurt him. I will put to flight his enemies before his face, and them that hate him I will put to flight. And My truth and My mercy shall be with him, and in My Name shall his horn be exalted. He shall cry out to Me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the support of my salvation. And I will make him My first-born, high above the kings of the earth. I will keep

My mercy for him for ever, and My covenant shall be faithful to him.”

And the Almighty did this in pity towards His people, and for the sake of His religion, and by virtue of His promise, and for the merits of the most precious blood of His own dearly-beloved Son, whom the Popes represented. As Moses and Aaron, as Josue, as Samuel, as David, were the leaders of the Lord's host in the old time, and carried on the chosen people of Israel from age to age, in spite of their enemies round about, so have the Popes from the beginning of the Gospel, and especially in those middle ages when anarchy prevailed, been faithful servants of their Lord, watching and fighting against sin and injustice and unbelief and ignorance, and spreading abroad far and wide the knowledge of Christian truth.

Such they have been in every age, and such are the obligations which mankind owes to them; and, if I am to pass on to speak of the present Pontiff, and of our own obligations to him, then I would have you recollect, my Brethren, that it is he who has taken the Catholics of England out of their unformed state and made them a Church. He it is who has redressed a misfortune of nearly three hundred years' standing. Twenty years ago we were a mere collection of individuals; but Pope Pius has brought us together, has given us Bishops, and created out of us a body politic, which (please God), as time goes on, will play an important part

in Christendom, with a character, an intellect, and a power of its own, with schools of its own, with a definite influence in the counsels of the Holy Church Catholic, as England had of old time.

This has been his great act towards our country ; and then specially, as to his great act towards us here, towards me. One of his first acts after he was Pope was, in his great condescension, to call me to Rome ; then, when I got there, he bade me send for my friends to be with me ; and he formed us into an Oratory. And thus it came to pass that, on my return to England, I was able to associate myself with others who had not gone to Rome, till we were so many in number, that not only did we establish our own Oratory here, whither the Pope had specially sent us, but we found we could throw off from us a colony of zealous and able priests into the metropolis, and establish there, with the powers with which the Pope had furnished me, and the sanction of the late Cardinal, that Oratory which has done and still does so much good among the Catholics of London.

Such is the Pope now happily reigning in the chair of St. Peter ; such are our personal obligations to him ; such has he been towards England, such towards us, towards you, my Brethren. Such he is in his benefits, and, great as are the claims of those benefits upon us, great equally are

the claims on us of his personal character and of his many virtues. He is one whom to see is to love; one who overcomes even strangers, even enemies, by his very look and voice; whose presence subdues, whose memory haunts, even the sturdy resolute mind of the English Protestant. Such is the Holy Father of Christendom, the worthy successor of a long and glorious line. Such is he; and, great as he is in office, and in his beneficent acts and virtuous life, as great is he in the severity of his trials, in the complication of his duties, and in the gravity of his perils,—perils, which are at this moment closing him in on every side; and therefore it is, on account of the crisis of the long-protracted troubles of his Pontificate which seems near at hand, that our Bishop has set apart this day for special solemnities, the Feast of the Holy Rosary, and has directed us to “instruct the faithful on their *obligations* to the Holy See,” and not only so, but also “on the duty especially incumbent on us at this time of *praying* for the Pope.”

II. This then is the second point to which I have to direct your attention, my Brethren—the duty of praying for the Holy Father; but, before doing so, I must tell you what the Pope’s long-protracted troubles are about, and what the crisis is, which seems approaching:—I will do it in as few words as I can.

More than a thousand years ago, nay near upon

fifteen hundred, began that great struggle, which I spoke of just now, between the old and the new inhabitants of this part of the world. Whole populations of barbarians overran the whole face of the country, that is, of England, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and the rest of Europe. They were heathens, and they got the better of the Christians; and religion seemed likely to fail together with that old Christian stock. But, as I have said, the Pope and the Bishops of the Church took heart, and set about converting the new comers, as in a former age they had converted those who now had come to misfortune; and, through God's mercy, they succeeded. The Saxon English,—Anglo-Saxons, as they are called,—are among those whom the Pope converted, as I said just now. The new convert people, as you may suppose, were very grateful to the Pope and Bishops, and they showed their gratitude by giving them large possessions, which were of great use, in the bad times that followed, in maintaining the influence of Christianity in the world. Thus the Catholic Church became rich and powerful. The Bishops became princes, and the Pope became a Sovereign Ruler, with a large extent of country all his own. This state of things lasted for many hundred years; and the Pope and Bishops became richer and richer, more and more powerful, until at length the Protestant revolt took place, three hundred years ago, and ever

since that time, in a temporal point of view, they have become of less and less importance, and less and less prosperous. Generation after generation the enemies of the Church, on the other hand, have become bolder and bolder, more powerful, and more successful in their measures against the Catholic faith. By this time the Church has well-nigh lost all its wealth and all its power; its Bishops have been degraded from their high places in the world, and in many countries have scarcely more, or not more, of weight or of privilege than the ministers of the sects which have split off from it. However, though the Bishops lost, as time went on, their temporal rank, the Pope did not lose his; he has been an exception to the rule; according to the Providence of God, he has retained Rome, and the territories round about Rome, far and wide, as his own possession without let or hindrance. But now at length, by the operation of the same causes which have destroyed the power of the Bishops, the Holy Father is in danger of losing his temporal possessions. For the last hundred years he has had from time to time serious reverses, but he recovered his ground. Six years ago he lost the greater part of his dominions,—all but Rome and the country immediately about it,—and now the worst of difficulties has occurred as regards the territory which remains to him. His enemies have succeeded; as it would seem, in persuading at least a large portion of his subjects

to side with them. This is a real and very trying difficulty. While his subjects are for him, no one can have a word to say against his temporal rule; but who can force a Sovereign on a people which deliberately rejects him? You may attempt it for a while, but at length the people, if they persist, will get their way.

They give out then, that the Pope's government is behind the age,—that once indeed it was as good as other governments, but that now other governments have got better, and his has not,—that he can neither keep order within his territory, nor defend it from attacks from without,—that his police and his finances are in a bad state,—that his people are discontented within,—that he does not show them how to become rich,—that he keeps them from improving their minds,—that he treats them as children,—that he opens no career for young and energetic minds, but condemns them to inactivity and sloth,—that he is an old man,—that he is an ecclesiastic,—that, considering his great spiritual duties, he has no time left him for temporal concerns,—and that a bad religious government is a scandal to religion.

I have stated their arguments as fairly as I can, but you must not for an instant suppose, my Brethren, that I admit either their principles or their facts. It is a simple paradox to say that ecclesiastical and temporal power cannot lawfully, religiously, and usefully be joined together. Look

at what are called the middle ages,—that is, the period which intervenes between the old Roman Empire and the modern world; as I have said, the Pope and the Bishops saved religion and civil order from destruction in those tempestuous times,—and they did so *by means* of the secular power which they possessed. And next, going on to the principles which the Pope's enemies lay down as so very certain, who will grant to them, who has any pretension to be a religious man, that progress in temporal prosperity is the greatest of goods, and that every thing else, however sacred, must give way before it? On the contrary, health, long life, security, liberty, knowledge, are certainly great goods, but the possession of heaven is a far greater good than all of them together. With all the progress in worldly happiness which we possibly could make, we could not make ourselves immortal,—death must come; that will be a time when riches and worldly knowledge will avail us nothing, and true faith, and divine love, and a past life of obedience will be all in all to us. If we were driven to choose between the two, it would be a hundred times better to be Lazarus in this world, than to be Dives in the next.

However, the best answer to their arguments is contained in sacred history, which supplies us with a very apposite and instructive lesson on the subject, and to it I am now going to refer.

Now observe in the first place, no Catholic

maintains that that rule of the Pope as a king, in Rome and its provinces, which men are now hoping to take from him, is, strictly speaking, what is called a Theocracy, that is, a Divine Government. His government, indeed, in spiritual matters, in the Catholic Church throughout the world, might be called a Theocracy, because he is the Vicar of Christ, and has the assistance of the Holy Ghost; but not such is his kingly rule in his own dominions. On the other hand, the rule exercised over the chosen people, the Israelites, by Moses, Josue, Gideon, Eli, and Samuel, *was* a Theocracy: God was the king of the Israelites, *not* Moses and the rest,—*they* were but Vicars or Vicegerents of the Eternal Lord who brought the nation out of Egypt. Now, when men object that the Pope's government of his own States is not what it should be, and that therefore he ought to lose them, because, forsooth, a religious rule should be perfect or not at all, I take them at their word, if they are Christians, and refer them to the state of things among the Israelites after the time of Moses, during the very centuries when they had God for their king. Was that a period of peace, prosperity, and contentment? Is it an argument against the Divine Perfections, that it was not such a period? Why is it then to be the condemnation of the Popes, who are but men, that their rule is but parallel in its characteristics to that of the

King of Israel, who was God? He indeed has His own all-wise purposes for what He does; He knows the end from the beginning; He could have made His government as perfect and as prosperous as might have been expected from the words of Moses concerning it, as perfect and prosperous as, from the words of the Prophets, our anticipations might have been about the earthly reign of the Messias. But this He did not do, because from the first He made that perfection and that prosperity dependent upon the free will, upon the co-operation of His people. Their loyal obedience to Him was the condition, expressly declared by Him, of His fulfilling His promises. He proposed to work out His purposes *through* them, and, when they refused their share in the work, every thing went wrong. Now they did refuse from the first; so that from the very first, He says of them emphatically, they were a "stiff-necked people." This was at the beginning of their history; and close upon the end of it, St. Stephen, inspired by the Holy Ghost, repeats the divine account of them: "You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do you also." In consequence of this obstinate disobedience, I say, God's promises were not fulfilled to them. That long lapse of five or six hundred years, during which God was their King, was in

good part a time, not of well-being, but of calamity.

Now, turning to the history of the Papal monarchy for the last thousand years, the Roman people have not certainly the guilt of the Israelites, because they were not opposing the direct rule of God; and I would not attribute to them now a liability to the same dreadful crimes which stain the annals of their ancestors; but still, after all, they have been a singularly stiffnecked people in time past, and in consequence, there has been extreme confusion, I may say anarchy, under the reign of the Popes; and the restless impatience of his rule which exists in the Roman territory now, is only what has shown itself age after age in times past. The Roman people not seldom offered bodily violence to their Popes,—killed some Popes, wounded others, drove others from the city. On one occasion they assaulted the Pope at the very altar in St. Peter's, and he was obliged to take to flight in his pontifical vestments. Another time they insulted the clergy of Rome; at another, they attacked and robbed the pilgrims who brought offerings from a distance to the shrine of St. Peter. Sometimes they sided with the German Emperors against the Pope; sometimes with other enemies of his in Italy itself. As many as thirty-six Popes endured this dreadful contest with their own subjects, till at last, in anger and disgust with Rome and Italy, they took

refuge in France, where they remained for seventy years, during the reigns of eight of their number¹.

That I may not be supposed to rest what I have said on insufficient authorities, I will quote the words of that great Saint, St. Bernard, about the Roman people, seven hundred years ago.

Writing to Pope Eugenius during the troubles of the day, he says, "What shall I say of the people? why, that it *is* the Roman people. I could not more concisely or fully express what I think of your subjects. What has been so notorious for ages as the wantonness and haughtiness of the Romans? a race unaccustomed to peace, accustomed to tumult; a race cruel and unmanageable up to this day, which knows not to submit, unless when it is unable to make fight. . . . I know the hardened heart of this people, but God is powerful even of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. . . . Whom will you find for me out of the whole of that populous city, who received you as Pope without bribe or hope of bribe? And then especially are they wishing to be masters, when they have professed to be servants. They promise to be trustworthy, that they may have the opportunity of injuring those who trust them. . . . They are wise for evil, but they are ignorant

¹ I take these facts as I find them in Gibbon's History, the work which I have immediately at hand; but it would not be difficult to collect a multitude of such instances from the original historians of those times.

for good. Odious to earth and heaven, they have assailed both the one and the other; impious towards God, reckless towards things sacred, factious among themselves, envious of their neighbours, inhuman towards foreigners, . . . they love none, and by none are loved. Too impatient for submission, too helpless for rule; . . . importunate to gain an end, restless till they gain it, ungrateful when they have gained it. They have taught their tongue to speak big words, while their performances are scanty indeed ²."

Thus I begin, and now let us continue the parallel between the Israelites and the Romans.

I have said that, while the Israelites had God for their King, they had a succession of great national disasters, arising indeed really from their falling off from Him; but this they would have been slow to acknowledge. They fell into idolatry; then, in consequence, they fell into the power of their enemies; then God in His mercy visited them, and raised up for them a deliverer and ruler, —a Judge, as he was called,—who brought them to repentance, and then brought them out of their troubles; however, when the Judge died, they fell back into idolatry, and then they fell under the power of their enemies again. Thus for eight years they were in subjection to the King of Mesopotamia; for eighteen years to the King of Moab; for twenty years to the King of Canaan; for seven

² De Consid. iv. 2. Vide note at the end.

years to the Madianites; for eighteen years to the Ammonites; and for forty years to the Philistines. Afterwards Eli, the high priest, became their judge, and then disorders of another kind commenced. His sons, who were priests also, committed grievous acts of impurity in the holy place, and in other ways caused great scandal. In consequence a heavy judgment came upon the people; they were beaten in battle by the Philistines, and the Ark of God was taken. Then Samuel was raised up, a holy prophet and a judge, and in the time of his vigour all went well; but he became old, and then he appointed his sons to take his place. They, however, were not like him, and every thing went wrong again. "His sons walked not in his ways," says the sacred record, "but they turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment." This reduced the Israelites to despair; they thought they never should have a good government, while things were as they were; and they came to the conclusion that they had better not be governed by such men as Samuel, however holy he might be, that public affairs ought to be put on an intelligible footing, and be carried on upon system, which had never yet been done. So they came to the conclusion that they had better have a king, like the nations around them. They deliberately preferred the rule of man to the rule of God. They did not like to repent and give up their sins, as the true

means of being prosperous; they thought it an easier way to temporal prosperity to have a king like the nations, than to pray and live virtuously. And not only the common people, but even the grave and venerable seniors of the nation took up this view of what was expedient for them. "All the ancients of Israel, being assembled, came to Samuel, . . . and they said to him . . . Make us a king to judge us, as all nations have." Observe, my Brethren, this is just what the Roman people are saying now. They wish to throw off the authority of the Pope, on the plea of the disorders which they attribute to his government, and to join themselves to the rest of Italy, and to have the King of Italy for their king. Some of them, indeed, wish to be without any king at all; but, whether they wish to have a king or no, at least they wish to get free from the Pope.

Now let us continue the parallel. When the prophet Samuel heard this request urged from such a quarter, and supported by the people generally, he was much moved. "The word was displeasing in the eyes of Samuel," says the inspired writer, "that they should say, Give us a king. And Samuel prayed to the Lord." Almighty God answered him by saying, "They have not rejected thee, but Me;" and He bade the prophet warn the people, what the king they sought after would be to them, when at length they had him. Samuel accordingly put before them explicitly

what treatment they would receive from him. "He will take your sons," he said, "and will put them in his chariots; and he will make them his horsemen, and his running footmen to go before his chariots. He will take the tenth of your corn and the revenues of your vineyards. Your flocks also he will take, and you shall be his servants." Then the narrative proceeds, "But the people would not hear the voice of Samuel, and they said, Nay, but there shall be a king over us. And we also will be like all nations, and our king shall judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles for us."

Now here the parallel I am drawing is very exact. It is happier, I think, for the bulk of a people, to belong to a small State which makes little noise in the world, than to a large one. At least in this day we find small states, such as Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland, have special and singular temporal advantages. And the Roman people, too, under the sway of the Popes, at least have had a very easy time of it; but, alas, that people is not sensible of this, or does not allow itself to keep it in mind. The Romans have not had those civil inconveniences, which fall so heavy on the members of a first-class Power. The Pontifical Government has been very gentle with them; but, if once they were joined to the kingdom of Italy, they would at length find what it is to attain temporal greatness. The words of Samuel to the Israelites would be fulfilled in them to the

letter. Heavy taxes would be laid on them; their children would be torn from them for the army; and they would incur the other penalties of an ambition which prefers to have a share in a political adventure to being at the head of Catholic citizenship. We cannot have all things to our wish in this world; we must take our choice between this advantage and that; perhaps the Roman people would like both to secure this world and the next, if they could; perhaps, in seeking both, they may lose both; and perhaps, when they have lost more than they have gained, they may wish their old Sovereign back again, as they have done in other centuries before this, and may regret that they have caused such grievous disturbance for what at length they find out is little worth it.

In truth, after all, the question which they have to determine is, as I have intimated, not one of worldly prosperity and adversity, of greatness or insignificance, of despotism or liberty, of position in the world or in the Church; but a question of spiritual life or death. The sin of the Israelites was not that they desired good government, but that they rejected God as their King. Their choosing to have "a king like the nations" around them was, in matter of fact, the first step in a series of acts, which at length led them to their rejection of the Almighty as their God. When in spite of Samuel's remonstrances they were obstinate, God let them have their way, and then

in time they became dissatisfied with their king for the very reasons which the old Prophet had set before them in vain. On Solomon's death, about a hundred and twenty years after, the greater part of the nation broke off from his son on the very plea of Solomon's tyranny, and chose a new king, who at once established idolatry all through their country.

Now, I grant, to reject the Holy Father of course is not the sin of the Israelites, for they rejected Almighty God Himself: yet I wish I was not forced to believe that a hatred of the Catholic Religion is in fact at the bottom of that revolutionary spirit which at present seems so powerful in Rome. Progress, in the mouth of some people,—of a great many people,—means apostasy. Not that I would deny that there are sincere Catholics so dissatisfied with things as they were in Italy, as they are in Rome, that they are brought to think that no social change can be for the worse. Nor as if I pretended to be able to answer all the objections of those who take a political and secular view of the subject. But here I have nothing to do with secular politics. In a sacred place I have only to view the matter religiously. It would ill become me, in my station in the Church and my imperfect knowledge of the facts of the case, to speak for or against statesmen and governments, lines of policy or public acts, as if I were invested with any particular mission to give my judgment, or

had any access to sources of special information. I have not here to determine what may be politically more wise, or what may be socially more advantageous, or what in a civil point of view would work more happily, or what in an intellectual would tell better; my duty is to lead you, my Brethren, to look at what is happening, as the sacred writers would now view it and describe it, were they on earth now to do so, and to attempt this by means of the light thrown upon present occurrences by what they actually have written whether in the Old Testament or the New.

We must remove, I say, the veil off the face of events, as Scripture enables us to do, and try to speak of them as Scripture interprets them for us. Speaking then in the sanctuary, I say that theories and schemes about government and administration, be they better or worse, and the aims of mere statesmen and politicians, be they honest or be they deceitful, these are not the determining causes of that series of misfortunes under which the Holy See has so long been suffering. There is something deeper at work than any thing human. It is not any refusal of the Pope to put his administration on a new footing, it is not any craft or force of men high in public affairs, it is not any cowardice or frenzy of the people, which is the sufficient explanation of the present confusion. What it is our duty here to bear in mind, is the constant restless agency over the earth of that bad angel who was

a liar from the beginning, of whom Scripture speaks so much. The real motive cause of the world's troubles is the abiding presence in it of the apostate spirit, "The prince of the power of this air," as St. Paul calls him, "The spirit that now worketh on the children of unbelief."

Things would go on well enough but for him. He it is who perverts to evil what is in itself good and right, sowing cockle amid the wheat. Advance in knowledge, in science, in education, in the arts of life, in domestic economy, in municipal administration, in the conduct of public affairs, is all good and from God, and might be conducted in a religious way; but the evil spirit, jealous of good, makes use of it for a bad end. And much more able is he to turn to his account the designs and measures of worldly politicians. He it is who spreads suspicions and dislikes between class and class, between sovereigns and subjects, who makes men confuse together things good and bad, who inspires bigotry, party spirit, obstinacy, resentment, arrogance and self-will, and hinders things from righting themselves, finding their level, and running smooth. His one purpose is so to match, and arrange, and combine, and direct the opinions and the measures of Catholics and unbelievers, of Romans and foreigners, of sovereigns and popular leaders—all that is good, all that is bad, all that is violent or lukewarm in the good, all that is morally great and intellectually

persuasive in the bad—as to inflict the widest possible damage, and utter ruin, if that were possible, on the Church of God.

Doubtless in St. Paul's time, in the age of heathen persecution, the persecutors had various good political arguments in behalf of their cruelty. Mobs indeed, or local magistrates, might be purposely cruel towards the Christians; but the great Roman Government at a distance, the great rulers and wise lawyers of the day, acted from views of large policy; they had reasons of State, as the kings of the earth have now; still our Lord and His Apostles do not hesitate to pass these by, and declare plainly that the persecution which they sanctioned or commanded was the work, not of man, but of Satan. And now in like manner we are not engaged in a mere conflict between progress and reaction, modern ideas and new, philosophy and theology, but in one scene of the never-ending conflict between the anointed Mediator and the devil, the Church and the world; and, in St. Paul's words, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places."

Such is the Apostle's judgment, and how, after giving it, does he proceed? "Therefore," he says, "take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day and to stand in all things perfect. Stand therefore, having

your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in all things taking the shield of faith, whereby you may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take unto you the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." And then he concludes his exhortation with words which most appositely bear upon the point towards which all that I have been saying is directed,—“praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching therein with all instance and supplication for all the Saints, and for me,” that is, for the Apostle himself, “that speech may be given me, that I may open my mouth with confidence to make known the mystery of the Gospel.”

Here, then, we are brought at length to the consideration of the duty of prayer for our living Apostle and Bishop of Bishops, the Pope. I shall attempt to state distinctly what is to be the *object* of our prayers for him, and, secondly, what the *spirit* in which we should pray, and so I shall bring my remarks on this great subject to an end.

1. In order to ascertain the exact *object* of our prayers at this time, we must ascertain what is the *occasion* of them. You know, my Brethren, and I have already observed, that the Holy Father has been attacked in his temporal possessions again and again in these last years, and we have

all along been saying prayers daily in the Mass in his behalf. About six years ago the northern portion of his States threw off his authority. Shortly after, a large foreign force, uninvited, as it would seem, by his people at large,—robbers I will call them,—(this is not a political sentiment, but an historical statement, for I never heard any one, whatever his politics, who defended their act in itself, but only on the plea of its supreme expedience, of some State necessity, or some theory of patriotism,)—a force of sacrilegious robbers,—broke into provinces nearer to Rome by a sudden movement, and, without any right except that of the stronger, got possession of them, and keeps them to this day.³ Past outrages, such as these, are never to be forgotten; but still they are not the occasion, nor do they give the matter, of our present prayers. What that occasion, what that object is, we seem to learn from his Lordship's letter to his clergy, in which our prayers are required. After speaking of the Pope's being "stripped of part of his dominions," and "deprived of all the rest, with the exception of the marshes and deserts that surround the Roman capital," he fastens our attention on the fact, that "now at last is the Pope to be left standing alone, and standing face to face with those unscrupulous adversaries, whose boast and whose vow to all the world it is, not to leave to him one single foot of Italian ground except

³ Vide Note at the end.

beneath their sovereign sway." I understand, then, that the exact object of our prayers is, that the territory still his should not be violently taken from him, as have been those larger portions of his dominions of which I have already spoken.

This too, I conceive, is what is meant by praying for the Holy See. "The duty of every true child of Holy Church," says the Bishop, "is to offer continuous and humble prayer for the Father of Christendom, and for the protection of the Holy See." By the Holy See we may understand Rome, considered as the seat of Pontifical government. We are to pray for Rome, the see, or seat, or metropolis of St. Peter and his successors. Further, we are to pray for Rome as the seat, not only of his spiritual government, but of his temporal. We are to pray that he may continue king of Rome; that his subjects may come to a better mind; that, instead of threatening and assailing him, or being too cowardly to withstand those who do, they may defend and obey him; that, instead of being the heartless tormentors of an old and venerable man, they may pay a willing homage to the Apostle of God; that, instead of needing to be kept down year after year by troops from afar, as has been the case for so long a time, they may, "with a great heart and a willing mind," form themselves into the glorious body-guard of a glorious Master; that they may obliterate and expiate what is so great a scandal to the

world, so great an indignity to themselves, so great a grief to their Father and king, that foreigners are kinder to him than his own flesh and blood; that now at least, though in the end of days, they may reverse the past, and, after the ingratitude of centuries, may unlearn the pattern of that rebellious people, who began by rejecting their God and ended by crucifying their Redeemer.

2. So much for the *object* of our prayers; secondly, as to the *spirit* in which we should pray. As we ever say in prayer "Thy will be done," so we must say now. We do not absolutely know God's will in this matter; we know indeed it is His will that we should ask; we are not absolutely sure that it is His will that He should grant. The very fact of our praying shows that we are uncertain about the event. We pray when we are uncertain, not when we are certain. If we were quite sure what God intended to do, whether to continue the temporal power of the Pope or to end it, we should not pray. It is quite true indeed that the event may *depend upon* our prayer, but by such prayer is meant perseverance in prayer and union of prayers; and we never can be certain that this condition of numbers and of fervour has been sufficiently secured. We shall indeed gain our prayer if we pray enough; but, since it is ever uncertain what *is* enough, it is ever uncertain what will be the event. There are Eastern superstitions, in which it is taught that, by means

of a certain number of religious acts, by sacrifices, prayers, penances, a man of necessity extorts from God what he wishes to gain, so that he may rise to supernatural greatness even against the will of God. Far be from us such blasphemous thoughts! We pray to God, we address the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Apostles and the other guardians of Rome, to defend the Holy City; but we know the event lies absolutely in the hands of the Allwise, whose ways are not as our ways, whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, and, unless we had been furnished with a special revelation on the matter, to be simply confident or to predict would be presumption. Such is Christian prayer; it implies hope and fear. We are not certain we shall gain our petition, we are not certain we shall not gain it. Were we certain that we should not, we should give ourselves to resignation, not to prayer; were we certain we should, we should employ ourselves, not in prayer, but in praise and thanksgiving. While we pray then in behalf of the Pope's temporal power, we contemplate both sides of the alternative, his retaining it, and his losing it; and we prepare ourselves both for thanksgiving and resignation, as the event may be. I conclude by considering each of these issues of his present difficulty.

(1.) First, as to the event of his retaining his temporal power. I think this side of the alternative (humanly speaking) to be highly probable.

I should be very much surprised if in the event he did not keep it. I think the Romans will not be able to do without him;—it is only a minority even now which is against him; the majority of his subjects are not wicked, so much as cowardly and incapable. Even if they renounce him now for a while, they will change their minds and wish for him again. They will find out that he is their real greatness. Their city is a place of ruins, except so far as it is a place of holy shrines. It is the tomb and charnel-house of pagan impiety, except so far as it is sanctified and quickened by the blood of martyrs and the relics of saints. To inhabit it would be a penance, were it not for the presence of religion. Babylon is gone, Memphis is gone, Persepolis is gone; Rome would go, if the Pope went. Its very life is the light of the sanctuary. It never could be a suitable capital of a modern kingdom without a sweeping away of all that makes it beautiful and venerable to the world at large. And then, when its new rulers had made of it a trim and brilliant city, they would find themselves on an unhealthy soil and a defenceless plain. But, in truth, the tradition of ages and inveteracy of associations make such a vast change in Rome impossible. All mankind are parties to the inviolable union of the Pope and his city. His autonomy is a first principle in European politics, whether among Catholics or Protestants; and where can it be secured so well as in that city,

which has so long been the seat of its exercise? Moreover, the desolateness of Rome is as befitting to a kingdom which is not of this world as it is incompatible with a creation of modern political theories. It is the religious centre of millions all over the earth, who care nothing for the Romans who happen to live there, and much for the martyred Apostles who so long have lain buried there; and its claim to have an integral place in the very idea of Catholicity is recognized not only by Catholics, but by the whole world.

It is cheering to begin our prayers with these signs of God's providence in our favour. He expressly encourages us to pray, for before we have begun our petition, He has begun to fulfil it. And at the same time, by beginning the work of mercy *without* us, He seems to remind us of that usual course of His providence, viz. that He means to finish it *with* us. Let us fear to be the cause of a triumph being lost to the Church, because we would not pray for it.

(2.) And now, lastly, to take the other side of the alternative. Let us suppose that the Pope loses his temporal power, and returns to the condition of St. Sylvester, St. Julius, St. Innocent, and other great Popes of early times. Are we therefore to suppose that he and the Church will come to nought? God forbid! To say that the Church can fail, or the See of St. Peter can fail, is to deny the faithfulness of Almighty God to His

word. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." To say that the Church cannot live except in a particular way, is to make it "subject to elements of the earth." The Church is not the creature of times and places, of temporal politics or popular caprice. Our Lord maintains her by means of this world, but these means are necessary to her only while He gives them; when He takes them away, they are no longer necessary. He works by means, but He is not bound to means. He has a thousand ways of maintaining her; He can support her life, not by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of His mouth. If He takes away one defence, He will give another instead. We know nothing of the future: our duty is to direct our course according to our day; not to give up of our own act the means which God has given us to maintain His Church withal, but not to lament over their loss, when He has taken them away. Temporal power has been the means of the Church's independence for a very long period; but, as her Bishops have lost it a long while, and are not the less Bishops still, so would it be as regards her Head, if he also lost his. The Eternal God is her refuge, and as He has delivered her out of so many perils hitherto, so will He deliver her still. The glorious chapters of her past history are but anticipations of other glorious chapters still to

come. See how it has been with her from the very beginning down to this day. First, the heathen populations persecuted her children for three centuries, but she did not come to an end. Then a flood of heresies was poured out upon her, but still she did not come to an end. Then the savage tribes of the North and East came down upon her and overran her territory, but she did not come to an end. Next, darkness of mind, ignorance, torpor, stupidity, reckless corruption, fell upon the holy place, still she did not come to an end. Then the craft and violence of her own strong and haughty children did their worst against her, but still she did not come to an end. Then came a time when the riches of the world flowed in upon her, and the pride of life, and the refinements and the luxuries of human reason; and lulled her rulers into an unfaithful security, till they thought their high position in the world would never be lost to them, and almost fancied that it was good to enjoy themselves here below;—but still she did not come to an end. And then came the so-called Reformation, and the rise of Protestantism, and men said that the Church had disappeared and they could not find her place. Yet, now three centuries after that event, *has*, my Brethren, the Holy Church come to an end? has Protestantism weakened her powers, terrible enemy as it seemed to be when it arose? has Protestantism, that bitter energetic enemy of the Holy See,

harmed the Holy See? Why, there never has been a time, since the first age of the Church, when there has been such a succession of holy Popes, as since the Reformation. Protestantism has been a great infliction* on such as have succumbed to it; but it has even wrought benefits for those whom it has failed to seduce. By the mercy of God it has been turned into a spiritual gain to the members of Holy Church.

Take again Italy, into which Protestantism has not entered, and England, of which it has gained possession:—now I know well that, when Catholics are good in Italy, they are very good; I would not deny that they attain there to a height and a force of saintliness of which we seem to have no specimens here. This, however, is the case of souls, whom neither the presence nor the absence of religious enemies would affect for the better or the worse. Nor will I attempt the impossible task of determining the amount of faith and obedience among Catholics respectively in two countries so different from each other. But, looking at Italian and English Catholics externally and in their length and breadth, I may leave any Protestant to decide, in which of the two there is at this moment a more demonstrative faith, a more impressive religiousness, a more generous piety, a more steady adherence to the cause of the Holy Father. The English are multiplying religious buildings, decorating churches, endowing monasteries, educat-

ing, preaching, and converting, and carrying off in the current of their enthusiasm numbers even of those who are external to the Church; the Italian statesmen, on the contrary, in our Bishop's words, "imprison and exile the bishops and clergy, leave the flocks without shepherds, confiscate the Church's revenues, suppress the monasteries and convents, incorporate ecclesiastics and religious in the army, plunder the churches and monastic libraries, and expose Religion herself, stripped and bleeding in every limb, the Catholic Religion in the person of her ministers, her sacraments, her most devoted members, to be objects of profane and blasphemous ridicule." In so brave, intelligent, vigorous-minded a race as the Italians, and in the 19th century not the 16th, and in the absence of any formal protest of classes or places, the act of the rulers is the act of the people. At the end of three centuries Protestant England contains more Catholics who are loyal and energetic in word and deed, than Catholic Italy. So harmless has been the violence of the Reformation; it professed to eliminate from the Church doctrinal corruptions, and it has failed both in what it has done and in what it has not done; it has bred infidels, to its confusion; and, to its dismay, it has succeeded in purifying and strengthening Catholic communities.

It is with these thoughts then, my Brethren, with these feelings of solemn expectation, of joyful

confidence, that we now come before our God, and pray Him to have mercy on His chosen Servant, His own Vicar, in this hour of trial. We come to Him, like the prophet Daniel, in humiliation for our own sins and the sins of our kings, our princes, our fathers, and our people in all parts of the Church; and therefore we say the *Miserere* and the Litany of the Saints, as in a time of fast. And we come before Him in the bright and glad spirit of soldiers who know they are under the leading of an Invincible King, and wait with beating hearts to see what He is about to do; and therefore it is that we adorn our sanctuary, bringing out our hangings and multiplying our lights, as on a day of festival. We know well we are on the winning side, and that the prayers of the poor, and the weak, and despised, can do more, when offered in a true spirit, than all the wisdom and all the resources of the world. This seventh of October is the very anniversary of that day on which the prayers of St. Pius, and the Holy Rosary said by thousands of the faithful at his bidding, broke for ever the domination of the Turks in the great battle of Lepanto. God will give us what we ask, or He will give us something better. In this spirit let us proceed with the holy rites which we have begun,—in the presence of innumerable witnesses, of God the Judge of all, of Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, of His Mother Mary our Immaculate Protectress, of

all the Angels of Holy Church, of all the blessed Saints, of Apostles and Evangelists, Martyrs and Confessors, holy preachers, holy recluses, holy virgins, of holy innocents taken away before actual sin, and of all other holy souls who have been purified by suffering, and have already reached their heavenly home.

NOTES.

NOTE I., on p. 25.

St. Bernard is led to say this to the Pope in consequence of the troubles created in Rome by Arnald of Brescia. " Ab obitu Cælestini hoc anno invalescere cœpit istiusmodi rebellio Romanorum adversus Pontificem, eodemque hæresis dicta Politicorum, sive Arnaldistarum. Ea erant tempora infelicissima, cùm Romani ipsi, quorum fides in universo orbe jam à tempore Apostolorum annunciata semper fuit, resilientes modo à Pontifice, dominandi cupidine, ex filiis Petri et discipulis Christi, fiunt soboles et alumni pestilentissimi Arnaldi de Brixiâ. Verùm, cùm tu Romanos audis, ne putes omnes eâdem insaniâ percitos, nam complures ex nobilium Romanorum familiis, iis relictis, pro Pontifice rem agebant, &c." Baron. Annal. in ann. 1144. 4.

NOTE II., on p. 35.

The following Telegram in the *Times* of September 13, 1860, containing Victor Emmanuel's formal justification of his invasion and occupation of Umbria and the Marches in a time of peace, is a document for after times:—

Turin, Sept. 11, evening.

The King received to-day a deputation from the inhabitants of Umbria and the Marches.

His Majesty granted the protection which the deputation solicited, and orders have been given to the Sardinian troops to enter those provinces by the following Proclamation:—

“Soldiers! You are about to enter the Marches and Umbria, in order to establish civil order in the towns now desolated by misrule, and to give to the people the liberty of expressing their own wishes. You will not fight against the armies of any of the Powers, but will free those unhappy Italian provinces from the bands of foreign adventurers which infest them. You do not go to revenge injuries done to me and Italy, but to prevent the popular hatred from unloosing itself against the oppressors of the country.

“By your example you will teach the people forgiveness of offences, and Christian tolerance to the man who compared the love of the Italian fatherland to Islamism.

“At peace with all the great Powers, and holding myself aloof from any provocation, I intend to rid Central Italy of one continual cause of trouble and discord. I intend to respect the seat of the Chief of the Church, to whom I am ever ready to give, in accordance with the allied and friendly Powers, all the guarantees of independence and security, which his misguided advisers have in vain hoped to obtain for him from the fanaticism of the wicked sect which conspires against my authority and against the liberties of the nation.

“Soldiers! I am accused of ambition. Yes; I have one ambition, and it is to re-establish the principles of moral order in Italy, and to preserve Europe from the continual dangers of revolution and war.”

The next day the Times, in a leading article, thus commented on the above:—

“Victor Emmanuel has in Garibaldi a most formidable competitor. . . . [Piedmont] must therefore, at whatever cost or risk, make herself once more mistress of the revolution. She must lead, that she may not be forced to follow. She must revolutionize the Papal States, in order that she may put herself in a position to arrest a dangerous revolutionary movement against Venetia. . . . These motives are amply sufficient to account for the decisive movement of Victor Emmanuel. He lives in revolutionary times, when self-preservation has superseded all other considerations, and it would be childish to apply to his situation the maxims of international law which are applicable to periods of tranquillity.

“These being the motives which have impelled Piedmont to draw the sword, we have next to see what are the grounds on which she justifies the step. These grounds are two,—the extraordinary misrule and oppression of the Papal Government, and the presence of large bands of foreign mercenaries, by which the country is oppressed and terrorized. The object is said to be to give the people an opportunity of expressing their own wishes and the re-establishment of civil order. The king promises to respect the seat of the Chief of the Church,—Rome, we suppose, and its immediate environs; but, while holding out this assurance, the manifesto speaks of the Pope and his advisers in terms of bitterness and acrimony unusual in the present age, even in a declaration of war. He will teach the people forgiveness of offences, and Christian tolerance to the Pope and his general. He denounces the misguided advisers of the Pontiff, and the fanaticism of the wicked sect which conspires against his authority and the liberties of the nation. This is harsh language, and is not inconsistently seconded by the advance into the States of the Church of an army of 50,000 men.”

It was the old Fable of the Wolf and the Lamb.

THE END.

Wm Cantow.
THE

REUNION OF CHRISTENDOM.

A PASTORAL LETTER TO THE CLERGY

ETC.

BY

HENRY EDWARD

ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER.

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1866.

LONDON

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NEW-STREET SQUARE

REVEREND AND DEAR BRETHREN,—

In the Synod of the Diocese held on the 14th of December in last year, I published a Letter of the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office, in reply to a communication of the Bishops of England relating to a society called an 'Association for Promoting the Unity of Christendom,' to which certain Catholics had become unwarily united. I made known to you also at the same time that the Holy Office had transmitted another document on the same subject, which it was my intention at a future time to communicate to the Clergy of the Diocese, together with certain instructions on the subject. This promise I will now fulfil.

It is not our practice in any official way to take cognizance of the affairs of those who are without, nor is there in the above-named Association any intrinsic importance to lead me to depart from our usual path. But special reasons induce me to do so, and they are the two documents which have been elicited from the supreme judicial authority of the Church, and the principles enunciated in them.

Inasmuch, Reverend and dear Brethren, as some of you may not be aware of the precise nature of the Association in question, I will begin with describing it; and that the description may be unimpeachable, it shall be given in the words of its own declaration. The founders and promoters of it announce it as follows:

‘ Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom.

‘An Association has been formed under the above title, to unite in a bond of intercessory prayer members both of the clergy and laity of the Roman Catholic, Greek, and Anglican communions. It is hoped and believed that many, however widely separated at present in their religious convictions, who deplore the grievous scandal to unbelievers, and the hindrance to the promotion of truth and holiness among Christians, caused by the unhappy divisions existing amongst those who profess to have “One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism,” will recognise the consequent duty of joining their intercession to the Redeemer’s dying prayer, “that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” To all, then, who, while they lament the divisions among Christians, look forward for their healing mainly to a corporate reunion of those three great bodies which claim for themselves the inheritance of the priesthood and the name of Catholic, an appeal is made. They are not asked to compromise any principles which they rightly or wrongly hold dear. They are simply asked to unite for the promotion of a high and holy end, in reliance on the promise of our Divine Lord, “that whatsoever we shall ask in prayer, believing, we shall receive;” and that “if two or three agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven.” The daily use of a short form of prayer, together with one “Our

Father," for the intention of the Association, is the only obligation incurred by those who join it; to which is added, in the case of priests, the offering, at least once in three months, of the Holy Sacrifice, for the same intention.'

Certain Catholic names appeared in the list of its members, and its chief promoters were understood to assert that not a few Catholics were inscribed in its books. This is perhaps not far from accurate, inasmuch as it is known that the promoters of the scheme had manifested much activity in seeking the names of Catholics, especially on the continent; and that Catholics abroad are hardly on their guard against enterprises, not unfrequent among us, of which their own countries afford no example. Moreover, both abroad and in England the very name of unity is dear to every Catholic heart, and every one who utters it speaks the password to our goodwill. A Catholic, in proportion to his love to the Church of God, and of Jesus, Who in dying for us laid the law of unity upon us, will always mourn over the schisms which men have made, and be ready to give not his name only, but his life, if he could heal them. It is not wonderful, therefore, if some fervent minds should have consented to unite in this association. Others again were involved in it with more simplicity on their own part, and I fear, from their statements, less on that of those who invited them.

A Review setting forth the principles of the Association, and the opinion of individuals composing it,

is published every two months. Certain Catholics were induced to unite in it; and statements purporting to come from Catholic hands have appeared in it, which compelled the Bishops of England to take cognizance of the Review and of the Association.

The matter was therefore referred by the united act of the Episcopate in England to the Holy Office, in the month of April 1864. The answer was dated on Sept. 16, 1864, and contains an enunciation of the following principles:

1. That the theory that Christendom or the Christian Church consists of three parts, the Roman, the Greek, and the Anglican, is a heresy overthrowing the nature of unity, and the Divine constitution of the Church. ‘*Fundamentum cui ipsa innititur hujusmodi est quod divinam Ecclesiæ constitutionem susque deque vertit. Tota enim in eo est ut supponat veram Jesu Christi Ecclesiam constare partim ex Romana Ecclesia per universum orbem diffusa et propagata, partim vero ex schismate Photiano et ex Anglicana hæresi, quibus æque ac Ecclesiæ Romanæ unus sit Dominus, una fides, et unum baptisma.*’*

2. That to unite in an association of prayer with those who hold this theory is unlawful, inasmuch as it is an implicit adhesion to heresy, and to an intention stained with heresy. ‘*At quod Christi fideles et ecclesiastici viri hæreticorum ductu, et quod pejus est, juxta intentionem hæresi quam maxime pollutam*

* S. R. I. Epist. ad omnes Angliæ Episcopos.

et infectam pro christiana unitate orent, tolerari nullo modo potest.’*

3. That such association favours indifferentism, and is therefore scandalous. ‘Conspirantes in eam indifferentismo favent, et scandalum ingerunt.’†

The Holy Office therefore concludes by strictly prohibiting the faithful to inscribe themselves in it, or in any way whatsoever to show it favour. ‘Maxima igitur sollicitudine curandum est ne Catholici, vel specie pietatis vel mala sententia decepti, societati de qua hic habitus est sermo aliisque similibus adscribantur, vel quoquomodo faveant.’

On the publication of this answer, the promoters of the Association addressed a letter to His Eminence Cardinal Patrizi, by whom, as Secretary of the Holy Office, the letter had been signed, saying that they had read it with great sorrow; that they had never affirmed that there are three Churches which with equal right (*æquo jure*) claim the name of Catholic; that they spoke only of *fact*, not of *right* (*facti, non juris*); that they never contemplated the reunion of three bodies holding discordant doctrines, but a reunion in truth; that the ‘Union Review’ had only a fortuitous connection with the Association, and conveyed only the opinions of individuals.

This address was signed by 198 Clergy of the Church of England.

The answer, dated Nov. 8, 1865, contains a lumi-

* S. R. I. Epist. ad omnes Angliæ Episcopos.

† Ibid.

nous and precise enunciation of Catholic principles, of which I give a brief analysis, exhorting you to study the whole document, which is given in the Appendix, with the greatest exactness.

It affirms that all labour for unity is in vain, unless it be reduced to the principles upon which the Church was constituted by Christ in the beginning. Those principles it declares to be as follows:

1. That the unity of the Church is absolute and indivisible, and that the Church had never lost its unity, nor for so much as a moment of time ever can. ‘Christi Ecclesia suam unitatem numquam amisit: numquam ne brevissimo quidem temporis intervallo amittet.’ There is, therefore, both *de jure* and *de facto*, only one Church; one by a numerical and exclusive unity.

2. That the Church of Christ is indefectible, not only in duration, but in doctrine, or in other words, that it is infallible, which is a Divine endowment bestowed upon it by its Head; and that the infallibility of the Church is a dogma of the faith. ‘Quod si Ecclesia Christi indefectibilis prorsus est, sponte sequitur eam infallibilem quoque dici et credi debere in Evangelica doctrina tradenda; quam infallibilitatis prærogativam Christum Dominum Ecclesiæ suæ, cujus Ipse est caput, sponsus, et lapis angularis, mirabili munere contulisse inconcussum est Catholicæ fidei dogma.’*

* Second Letter of Holy Office addressed to Members of the Association, &c. &c.

3. That the Primacy of the Visible Head is of Divine institution, and was ordained to generate and to preserve the unity both of faith and of communion, that is, both internal and external, of which the See of Peter is both the centre and the bond. ‘*Jam non minus certum, atque exploratum est Christum Jesum, ut fidei communionisque unitas in Ecclesia gigneretur ac perpetuo servaretur, utque capite constituto schismatis tolleretur occasio, Beatissimum Petrum præ cæteris Apostolis, tamquam illorum principem et ejusdem unitatis centrum et vinculum conspicuum, singulari providentia elegisse.*’

4. That therefore the Catholic and Roman Church alone has received the name of Catholic. ‘*Ecclesia sancta, Ecclesia una, Ecclesia vera, Ecclesia Catholica, quæ Catholica nominatur non solum a suis, verum etiam ab omnibus inimicis, sicque ipsum Catholicæ nomen sola obtinuit.*’

5. That no one can give to any other body the name of Catholic without incurring manifest heresy, ‘*citra manifestam hæresim.*’

6. That whosoever is separated from the one and only Catholic Church, howsoever well he may believe himself to live, by this one sin of separation from the unity of Christ, is in the state of wrath. ‘*A qua quisque fuerit separatus, quantumlibet laudabiliter se vivere existimet, hoc solo scelere quod a Christi unitate disjunctus est, non habebit vitam, sed ira Dei manet super eum.*’

7. That every several soul under pain of losing

eternal life is bound to enter the only Church of Christ, out of which is neither absolution nor entrance into the kingdom of heaven. ‘Quicumque ab unitate fidei vel societate illius [Beati Petri] quolibet modo semetipsos segregant, tales nec vinculis peccatorum absolvi nec januam possint regni cœlestis ingredi.’

Such are the principles on which the Supreme Authority of the Holy Office exhorts the members of this Association to hasten from their disinherited separation into the inheritance of Christ. ‘Ab exhæredata præcisione fugientes in hæreditatem Christi.’

Inasmuch, then, as these two letters of the Holy Office have been communicated to me both for my guidance and for yours, it is my duty to draw out the reasons which have called them forth, and the course which it is our duty to pursue towards those to whom these letters refer.

On the first principle of the former letter of the Holy Office, namely, ‘that the theory that Christendom or the Christian Church consists of three parts, the Roman, the Greek, and the Anglican, is a heresy, overthrowing the nature of unity, and the Divine constitution of the Church,’ we will for the present refrain from speaking, as it will fall more properly under the comments required hereafter by the second letter.

The second principle follows by necessity, ‘that to unite in such an association with those who hold this theory, is unlawful, inasmuch as it is an implicit

adhesion to heresy, and to an intention stained with heresy.'

I will therefore dwell upon the third, inasmuch as it makes practical application of the two former, namely, 'that such an association favours indifferentism, and is therefore scandalous.'

The sum of these three principles is briefly this, that the indivisible and exclusive unity of the Church is a dogma of faith, and that all association in prayer with those who deny it is unlawful. It is on this, then, that I purpose more fully to speak.

And in so doing I shall be compelled to treat not only of the matter of the declaration given above, but also of the principles and opinions put forward in the 'Union Review,' and in other works which are but repetitions of the same. They represent a school: and though in the letter to the Cardinal Secretary of the Holy Office certain members of the association affirm that it has only an accidental relation to the 'Union Review,' it is my duty to treat of both, as the errors are identical; and therefore, whether they be related or no, we are in conscience bound to deal with both. What I say, therefore, will apply to all works containing the same errors, by whomsoever written, whether he be of the association or not. As my object is first truth, and then unity, and as I know that both unity and truth are obscured by any breach of charity, I shall treat of errors, not of names, impersonally, and as they exist, not in any particular writer, but in themselves;

and I shall endeavour to treat them with as little severity as duty to truth admits.

That an association to promote the reunion of England with the Catholic and Roman Church should exist, and that nearly two hundred clergymen of the Church of England, describing themselves as 'Deans, Canons, Parish Priests, and other Priests' of the Church of England, should address the Cardinal Secretary of the Holy Office, expressing this desire, are facts new in our history since the separation of England from Catholic unity. We do not regard this as a merely intellectual or natural event. We gladly recognise in it an influence and an impulse of supernatural grace. It is a wonderful reaction from the days within living memory when fidelity to the Church of England was measured by repulsion from the Church of Rome. It is as wonderful an evidence of the flow in the tide which has carried the minds of men onward for these thirty years nearer and nearer to the frontiers of the Catholic faith. It is a movement against the wind and tide of English tradition and of English prejudice; a supernatural movement like the attraction which drew those who were once farthest from the kingdom of heaven to the side of our Lord. A change has visibly passed over England. Thirty years ago its attitude towards the Catholic Church was either intense hostility or stagnant ignorance. It is not so now. There is indeed still much hostility and much ignorance. But the hostility is more civilised, and

the ignorance is breached on all sides. We do not, however, over-estimate the importance of the movement of which this association is the advanced column. It must never be forgotten that the Church of England represents only one-half of the English people, and that the Anglican school represents only a portion of the Church of England, and that the Anglo-Catholic movement represents only a section of the Anglican school, and that the Unionist movement represents only a fraction of that section. Two hundred clergymen are a small proportion upon some seventeen thousand; and supposing many to agree with them who did not sign the letter to Rome, and many more to wish well to them, the whole is hardly an appreciable quantity upon the Church of England, and an inappreciable quantity upon the English people. We say this to moderate the anticipations of inconsiderate hope, not to chill the warmth of our sympathy with those who are feeling their way to the truth. One soul, as S. Charles was wont to say, is diocese enough for a Bishop; and a mere remnant stretching out their hands towards unity have a right to all our care. At the same time we must not forget that our mission is not only to a section or to a fraction who may be approaching nearer to us, but to the whole mass of the English people. If the handful who have come so near have a claim upon our sympathy, much more have the millions who are as sheep without a shepherd, wandering to and fro in 'the dark and windy day.'

Moreover, we owe an especial duty to the class of the English people in which descends the mid-stream of traditional hostility to the Catholic Church—that is, the middle class of educated and industrious men, the heart of English national life, vigorous, quiet, intelligent, and benevolent, though darkened by inherited prejudices, and narrowed by anti-Catholic faults. To this class above all we have a mission of charity, that is, to preach the truth in patience, and to wait till they will listen. From circumstances of birth and education, from historical contacts, and approximations of opinion, from social and political neighbourhood, and from manifold bonds of kindred, the Anglican system is more nearly related to the Catholic Church than the Baptist, Independent, Wesleyan, and other Nonconformist bodies. And yet to the Catholic Church the millions who are in separation from the Established Church are an object of the profoundest sympathy and charity. They are souls for whom Christ died, robbed of their inheritance by the Anglican separation, from which they by legitimate process have separated in turn. Their state of privation is all the less culpable, as they have been born into a diminished inheritance of truth with a greater difficulty of rising to it again. They are, moreover, marked by a multitude of high qualities of zeal, devotion to duty, conscientious fidelity to what they believe. If they are rougher in their language against the Catholic Church, they are more generous and candid adversaries, more vehement but less

bitter, and altogether free from the littleness of personality and petty faults which sometimes stain the controversy of those who are intellectually nearer to the truth. For such men it is our duty to cherish a warm charity and a true respect, and not disproportionately to waste upon those who stand nearer to us the time and the sympathy which is their due. The time is come that the Catholic Church should speak, face to face, calmly and uncontroversially to the millions of the English people who lie on the other side of the Anglican Establishment.

It may seem a strange and invidious thing for us who witness for the unity of the Church throughout the world to be tardy in going forth to meet those who approach us with invitations to union. This slowness is not, God knows, from indifference to division, or from disregard to the miseries and dangers of schism, or from insensibility to the dishonour of our Divine Master. For my own part, if I may speak of myself, it is more than a quarter of a century since the thought and name of unity so filled my whole mind that it has been often turned to my reproach. In all these years it has been my heart's desire and prayer, not only to see the members of the Anglican body gathered into Catholic unity, but the millions of Dissenters, that is, the whole English people, especially the multitude of its noble-hearted poor, united once more in the bond of peace and truth. We believe union to be a very precious gift, and only less precious than truth. There is

nothing we would not do or suffer, by the grace of God, to effect or to promote the reunion of all, or of any who are out of the fold, to the unity of the Church. We heartily pray, therefore, that He who has inspired and nurtured this desire of union may mature and perfect it; that He will remove all that hinders its accomplishment, purifying the hearts of men from all attachment to their errors and their separations, and cleansing their intelligence to see the immutable faith and sole unity of the Catholic and Roman Church. On our part, all that can cherish and foster these yearnings shall be done. The vision of England Catholic once more, its true and energetic people once more elevated by faith to the higher instincts of the Catholic Church; our domestic schisms healed, our bitter controversies ended, and all our powers turned from mutual conflict, upon the subjugation of the sin and unbelief which, day and night, devours souls on every side: all this is as beautiful and fascinating as the image of the Heavenly Jerusalem which the Apostle saw coming down from heaven. There is only one thing more beautiful and more commanding, and that is the Heavenly Jerusalem itself, not in image, but in reality; the Holy Church throughout the world in all the perfect symmetry of unity and truth, indefectible and infallible, incorruptible and changeless, the mother of us all, the kingdom of God on earth.

We are ready to purchase the reunion of our separated brethren at any cost less than the sacrifice of a

not or a tittle of the supernatural order of unity and faith. When, some fifty years ago, a writer more zealous than circumspect spoke of a reunion of the Anglican and Catholic Churches, Bishop Milner, with his vigorous common sense and his high Catholic instinct, answered, 'If we should unite ourselves with it, the Universal Church would disunite itself from us.' This is the only price we cannot give for even so great a happiness as the reconciliation of England. Nor must we be misjudged for this. It is not that we will not, but that we cannot. We cannot barter, or give that which is not our own. The Divine and infallible authority of the Church sets the limits to our powers and our desires. We can offer unity only on the condition on which we hold it—unconditional submission to the living and perpetual voice of the Church of God. If this be refused, it is not we who hinder unity. For it is not we who impose this condition, but the Spirit of Truth who abides in the Church for ever.

Thus much we have said, lest we should seem to forget our mission to the great people of England, in our contact with the little band who are advancing with swords wreathed in myrtle. Nevertheless with them we are willing to deal with all charity, though from the right and centre of their array we still hear the cry of 'No peace with Rome.' We thank God that there are to be found ten men who desire to be restored to the centre of unity. We should have to answer to the Good Shepherd, if so much as one

of His sheep were frayed away from the fold by harsh voices or rough handling on our part. Charity, in all its forms and instincts, of patience, tenderness, forbearance, hopefulness, and gentleness, is our duty as Pastors. But we owe them more than this. They have a right to the whole truth, and we are bound in duty to declare it to them. In this the beloved disciple is our pattern, the apostle of charity and of dogma, the most ardent in love to all men, the most inflexible for the doctrines of faith. It is startling to hear the disciple who lay upon the breast of Jesus say, 'If any man come to you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him God speed you, for he that saith unto him God speed you, communicateth with his wicked works.'*

It would be contrary to charity to put a straw across the path of those who profess to desire union. But there is something more divine than union, that is, the Faith. It was to declare this law of His kingdom that our Divine Lord said, 'Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth ; I came not to send peace, but the sword': † a Divine saying, most necessary in these days, when precision of doctrine is denounced as uncharitable, and dogma as the bar to union. It is this which the Holy Office has detected, with the true instinct of Rome, in the Association before us.

It is not lawful, then, for a Catholic to hold him-

* 2 S. John, 10, 11.

† S. Matth. x. 34.

self in a passive attitude towards any error contrary to faith. Therefore, it is not lawful for him to unite in prayer with those who hold such error. The fidelity he owes to the dogma of faith forbids it. 'Lex orandi,' as S. Augustine teaches, 'est lex credendi.' And this we shall see more clearly, by drawing out briefly what dogma is, and what are its obligations upon the conscience. It is the more necessary to do so, because it is precisely on this point that the Catholic Church is diametrically in conflict with the mind of the nineteenth century, and, so far as it utters itself in clamour, with the popular opinion of England. The Church is definite, precise, and peremptory in its declarations of doctrine. It refuses all compromise, transaction, or confusion of the terms and limits of its definitions. It is intolerant not only of contradiction, but of deviation. It excludes every formula but its own. The world is moving in the reverse direction. It is throwing everything open, levelling boundaries, taking in all forms of opinion, comprehending all sects of Christians, by eliminating all their differences, and finding a higher generality, a *summum genus* which embraces all. The Humanitarians merge all religion in Naturalism, the Unitarians in Christian morality, the Latitudinarians in the residuum of Christianity which survives the elimination of differences among Protestants, the Anglicans in an imaginary faith of the undivided Church, the Unionists in an agreement of the universal Church which shall neither be the

Thirty-nine Articles as they are understood by Englishmen, nor the Council of Trent as understood by Catholics, but the text of both, understood in a sense known neither to the Church of England nor to the Church of Rome; a doctrine wider than either, compared with which the faith and theology of the Church is denounced as narrow and sectarian. Such are the pretensions of a series and gradation of irreconcilable schools, conflicting with one another, agreed in nothing but common hostility to the only Church which is inflexible in dogma, and immutable in refusing all comprehension by way of compromise, and all contact with those who are without its unity. No wonder we are thought to be narrow, sectarian, and uncharitable. Nothing but a divine law could justify such a course. But such a law there is, which more than justifies. It binds the conscience of every member of the Church, from the Sovereign Pontiff to the little child in a Catholic school, to the divine unity of truth. For what is dogma but the true intellectual apprehension, and the true verbal expression of the truths and facts of the Divine Revelation? It is an eternal truth that there is one God in three Persons; the doctrine of Trinity in Unity is a dogma. It is a divine fact that the Son of God was made Man; the Incarnation is a dogma. It is a divine fact that the Holy Ghost came on the day of Pentecost, perfected and animated the Church with His presence, endowed it with an indivisible unity and a continuous infallibility, in virtue of His own perpetual

presence and assistance; the conception and expression of all these divine operations is dogma. So I might enumerate all the doctrines of the faith. They are outlines traced upon the intelligence of the mystical body by the Spirit of God; the reflection of the mind of God in the mind of the Church, and the enunciation of the divine truths and facts so apprehended in words which truly and adequately express them. The perpetual knowledge and perpetual enunciation of these truths and facts, by the perpetual presence and assistance of the Holy Ghost, is the infallibility of the Church, or, in other words, the perpetuity of the Divine Revelation, in virtue of a divine guidance to the Church in all ages, in the nineteenth as in the first. How, then, can the Church cease to be dogmatic, without betraying its divine trust, and ceasing to witness for God?

It is also in behalf of the human reason itself, of its freedom and its perfection, that the Church is jealous in its custody of dogma. What axioms are to science, dogma is to theology. As there can be no science without fixed principles and primary certainties, so there can be no knowledge of God, nor of His revelation, without fixed and primary truths. Such are the doctrines of the faith delivered to us by the perpetual and divine office of the Church. The intellect of man is feeble and vacillating until it has certain scientific principles to start from. These once given, it acquires firmness and power of advance. One truth scientifically proved, becomes the basis of many.

The physical sciences, each in their kind, are proof of this. The same is true in the science of God. The truths of the natural order are confirmed and perfected by revelation. On the basis of natural truths rests, by the Divine disposition, the order of revealed truths, such as the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, the Church and its supernatural endowments. The horizon of the human reason is therefore expanded by revelation, and the reason is elevated above its natural powers. And in this both its freedom and its perfection is secured. It is no bondage to know the truth, and no freedom to be in doubt. And yet they who know the truth are not free to contradict it; and they that are in doubt have the liberty of wandering out of the way. The law of gravitation once demonstrated, took away the liberty of contradicting it: and yet no man considers himself to be in bondage. All science limits the reason by the boundaries of its own certainty: but we do not therefore think men of science to be intellectual slaves. So is it with the science of God. We are limited by Divine Revelation, and by the infallibility of the Church, to believe in the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, and the whole dogma of faith; but we are not therefore slaves, but freemen. We are redeemed from doubt and error, and from that which is both at once, from the guidance of the blind, the theology of human teachers, by the presence and office of a Divine. 'You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' And not free only, but perfect;

for the human reason advances to its perfection in proportion as it is conformed to the Divine. The dogma of faith is the mind of God, and theology is the science of God; and they that are most fully illuminated by it, are the most conformed to the Divine intelligence, which conformity is the perfection of the reason of man.

And once more, as the Holy Office affirms, there is no unity possible except by the way of truth. Truth first, unity afterwards; truth the cause, unity the effect. To invert this order is to overthrow the Divine procedure. The unity of Babel ended in confusion; the unity of Pentecost fused all nations in one body by the one dogma of faith. To unite the Anglican, the Greek, and the Catholic Church in any conceivable way could only end in a Babel of tongues, intellects, and wills. The intrinsic repulsions of the three are irresistible. Union is not unity. Heterogeneous and repugnant things may be arbitrarily tied together, but this is not unity. Union has in itself no assimilating power. Closer contact elicits the repugnances which rend all external bonds asunder. Truth alone generates unity. It was the dogma of faith which united the intellects of men as one intelligence. The unity of truth generated its universality. The faith is Catholic, not only because it is spread throughout the world, but because throughout the world it is one and the same. The unity of the faith signifies that it is the same in every place. If it were not the same it would not be

universal. Identity is the condition both of unity and of universality. From this springs the supernatural harmony of the human intelligence, spreading throughout the Church and reaching throughout all its ages. The dogma of faith has made it one by the assimilating power of the one science of God. From this unity of intellects has sprung the unity of wills. The unity of the Church is created by the submission of all wills to one Divine Teacher through the pastors of the Church, especially the one who is supreme on earth. Submission to one authority by an inevitable consequence draws after it unity of communion. One authority and one communion; 'One body, one spirit;' indivisible because intrinsically one; united both in intellect and will by the indivisible truth and charity of the Holy Ghost, by whom the Church is compacted, animated, and sustained. To countenance the assumption of the name of Catholic by any bodies in separation from, and in contradiction to, the one only Church, by so much as a silent or passive association, cannot be free from an implicit adhesion to heresy.

For this cause the Holy Office forbids the faithful to be united, or in any way whatsoever to show favour to an association which puts union before truth, contradicting thereby the Divine order of grace, and inverting the process by which the Church has been founded and perfected. They who seek truth before union are in the path in which the Son of God has always led His disciples to suffer for His

sake. They who seek union before truth fall into heresy, or into indifference, and 'the rent is made worse.'

Once more: dogma is the way of salvation, and the Church is bound to its inflexible maintenance, not only by the obligation of truth, but also by the obligation of charity for the salvation of mankind. It is a dogma of faith that 'there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' Salvation through the Name of Jesus is an absolute and exclusive condition.

Again: that there is 'one baptism for the remission of sins,' and that there is no salvation for those who reject it, is a dogma necessary to salvation, on which the Church could not falter without violating both truth and charity, and incurring the guilt of losing souls for whom Christ died.

In like manner, that there is 'one fold under one Shepherd,' and that the one fold is undivided and indivisible, is a dogma as divine and as inflexible as the unity of the Saving Name and of the necessity of baptism. We are as much bound, under pain of eternal death, to bear witness that without the Church there is no salvation, as without baptism is no regeneration, and without the Name of Jesus no entrance into eternal life. In the old law it was written, 'Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark.'* And what is the visible unity of the Church

* Deut. xxvii. 17.

but the landmark which God has set up to bound the Fold of Salvation? They who deny its numerical and indivisible unity remove the landmark of God. They who teach that the Anglican separation and the Greek schism are parts of the Catholic Church violate a dogma of faith, destroy the boundaries of truth and falsehood, and 'cause the blind to go out of their way.'* The inflexible and exclusive dogmatic teaching of the Church, intolerant of all compromise and of all contact with error, is the voice of charity. As lighthouses are set up along dangerous coasts to guard seamen in the storms of night, so are the exclusive dogmas of the one Name, one Baptism, one Fold. To obscure these lights, much more to quench them, is cruelty to man. They who destroy sea-lights are enemies of the human race; much more they who cloud and confuse the distinctions which mark off the truths of God from the errors of men.

Lastly: not only charity to men but fidelity to God binds us to the most explicit and exclusive declaration of the truth, and the most vigilant refusal to unite even passively in any association with error. For truth is the Word of God; our Divine Lord identifies it with Himself and Himself with it. He says, 'I am . . . the Truth.'† The truth is, therefore, not a theory, but a Person, and we owe to it a personal fidelity. Every particle of His word, and every precept of His will, is a personal obligation on our con-

* Deut. xxvii. 18.

† S. John, xiv. 6.

science. The exclusive unity of His Church is both a Divine truth and a Divine precept, from which we cannot swerve without personal infidelity to Him.

Moreover, dogma is the mind of the Spirit of Truth, Who inhabits the only Church of God, and makes it the organ of His voice. To unite in prayer with those who deny the unity of His temple and the organ of His voice, who affirm that He is silent, and that because of schism He cannot speak, or, worse than all, that He speaks through three *de facto* Churches in perpetual contradiction and in perpetual conflict, is an infidelity to the Person of the Spirit of Truth, and a dishonour to His presence and His office.

Lastly, it is an infidelity to the Father of Lights, who has so revealed His mind and His will as to make His Church the light of the world, that is, the self-evident witness, more manifest than all reasonings, more luminous than all proofs, as 'a city seated on a mountain,' visible to all whose eyes are open.

The first theological virtue infused into us in our baptism—the grace of faith, and the union of our hearts to the Divine truth delivered by the Church— forbids even a passive union with those who violate an article of the Baptismal Creed, and obscure the way of salvation.

The Holy Office has declared with a dignified calmness of language, that for 'the disciples of Christ and the ministers of His Church to pray for the unity of Christendom, at the invitation of those

who are in heresy, and in union with an intention eminently depraved and infected by heresy, can in no way be tolerated.' We may pray for them, but not with them; and all the more pray for them as we are bound to bear active and explicit witness against all heresy, material or formal, as it may be, and the peril in which its teachers stand, by refusing all communion with them even in prayer. The only spiritual association founded by God is the Church of God.

Such, then, is the substance of the first letter.

We may now proceed to the second.

The adherents of the Association complained, as I have said, in their letter to his Eminence Cardinal Patrizi, that they had been misunderstood; that they did not affirm the existence of three Churches or of three parts of the Church 'æquo jure,' but only 'de facto;' that they did not desire reunion with a permanence of conflicting doctrines, from which, they admitted, that discord, under the same roof, rather than ecclesiastical unity, would arise.

To this the Holy Office answered, that there is but one principle of unity which is before all and generates all union, namely, Truth, working through the one and only Church united to its centre and bond of unity, the See of Peter. It affirmed also that to pray for the reunion of the Church, is to assume that it can be divided; that such an assumption is contrary to faith; that the unity of the Church never has been lost, nor ever can be; and that as

its unity is perpetual, so is its infallibility, in the nineteenth century as in the first.

Now it is not my intention to enter into these propositions in detail. For you, Reverend and dear Brethren, it is needless. They are the principles of your whole life, the instinctive laws of your minds. For others I cannot now attempt an adequate treatment: and can only refer to what I have endeavoured to say as to the doctrine of the Church on the Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost. But it is possible within our present limits and at this time to apply the principles of the Holy Office to the particular form of error which this Union movement has cast up. We may state it as follows:—The Church of Christ is one in origin, succession, and organisation; but not necessarily in communion. For six centuries or more it was united, till the East separated from the West: since then, it has indeed lost its perfection, but both parts continue to be the Church. While united it was infallible, and the faith received universally was certainly divine. After its division it continued to be infallible in all that was infallible before; but in all questions emerging after the division, it had no infallible voice or judgment to decide: neither could any decision be tested by the reception of the whole Church: the later divisions of the Reformation only reproduce the same anomalies in the West; the Anglican Church stands upon the same basis as the Greek; both contain the infallible truth of the undivided Church of the

beginning; neither claims to be infallible in questions emerging now : the Church of England has not erred in its thirty-nine Articles ; and the Roman Church has not erred in its decrees at Trent; both are capable of a true interpretation, and both need a more perfect interpretation than either have as yet received. Such interpretation in the future is the basis of reunion, and the hope of Christendom; such was the position of Bossuet, and such they claim as their own; but the great hindrance to reunion is the perpetual expansion of Roman opinions, and their transformation into new articles of faith, as for instance, the Immaculate Conception, and the Ultramontane theories which make the Pope personally infallible, and the temporal power a dogma of faith.

Let us draw out what these propositions contain.

1. First, they deny the indivisible unity and perpetual infallibility of the Church, which are affirmed by the Holy Office in precise terms. This was not the position of Bossuet, who lays down as follows :—

‘In the year 1542, when the Lutheran pestilence began to make havoc in this most Christian kingdom, the Doctors of Paris, assembled in Faculty, published these Articles:—

‘Every Christian is bound firmly to believe that the Universal Church is One, visible on earth, which in faith and morals cannot err, and which all the faithful, in whatsoever pertains to faith and morals, are bound to obey.’

‘It is certain that a General Council legitimately gathered together, representing the Universal Church, cannot err in its decisions in faith and morals.’

‘Nor is it less certain that in the Church Militant there is, by Divine right, one Roman Pontiff, whom all Christians are bound to obey. This rule of faith, delivered by all the Gallican Bishops and Churches, received also by Royal authority and the consent of all Orders, has been published and preserved by the same.’*

2. Next, they deny the infallibility of the Council of Trent, of which Bossuet thus writes to Leibnitz:—

‘To give a clear and final resolution of the doubts which are raised about the Council of Trent, certain principles must be presupposed:—

‘1. That the infallibility which Jesus Christ has promised to His Church resides in the whole body.

‘2. That this infallibility, inasmuch as it consists, not in receiving, but in teaching the truth, resides in the order of Pastors, who succeed the Apostles, to whom the promise of Jesus Christ was made.

‘3. That Bishops or Pastors, who are not ordained by and in this succession, have no part in the promise.

‘4. That the Bishops or principal Pastors, who have been ordained in that succession, if they renounce the faith of their consecrators, that is to say, the faith which is in vigour in the whole body of the Episcopate and of the Church, would renounce at the same time their part in the promise, because they renounce the succession, the continuity, and perpetuity of the doctrine.

‘5. That the Bishops and principal Pastors instituted in virtue of the promise, and abiding in the faith and the communion of the body where they have been consecrated, are able to bear witness to their faith, either by their unanimous preaching throughout the Catholic Church dispersed, or by an express judgment made in a legitimate Council. In either way their authority is equally infallible, and their doctrine equally certain. In the former way, because it is

* Defens. Declarat. Cleri Gallicani, ed. Luxemb. 1730, tom. i. p. 3.

to that body thus outwardly dispersed, but united by the Holy Ghost, that the infallibility of the Church is attached; in the latter, because that body, being infallible, the Assembly which truly represents it, that is to say, the Council, has the same privilege, and can say, after the manner of the Apostles, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."

'6. He adds that such a Council truly represents the Catholic Church, if its decrees be received by it.'

Bossuet sums up with this judicial sentence:—

'Those who will not accept these principles must never hope for any union with us, because they would never accept, but in words, the infallibility of the Church, which is the only solid principle of the reunion of Christians.

'On these principles it is easy to resolve all the doubts concerning the Council of Trent in that which regards the faith, as it is certain that it is received and approved in that respect by the whole body of the Churches which are united in communion with that of Rome, which alone we recognise as Catholic, which Churches would no more reject its authority than they would that of the Council of Nice.'*

3. Lastly, they deny the Council of Trent to be œcumenical, which Bossuet recognised as of equal authority with the Council of Nice. His words seem to be written for the present day, and for this peculiar phase of anti-Catholic thought.

In his project for the reunion between the Catholics and Protestants of Germany, he says: 'As to the objection of the Protestants that the Council of Trent was not œcumenical, because they did not sit

* *Projet de Réunion entre les Catholiques et les Protestants d'Allemagne. Lettre XXII.*

in it as judges, together with the Catholic Bishops, but sentence was passed by the adverse party; if their complaints were admitted there could never have been any Council, nor ever can be, inasmuch as neither did the Council of Nice admit as judges the Novatians and Donatists, or others already in any way separate from the Church; nor can heretics be ever judged, except by Catholics; nor they who secede from the Church, except by those who maintain its unity. Neither did the Lutherans, when in their synods they condemned the Zwinglians, have them as assessors; nor did justice permit that the Catholic Church should be judged by the English, Danish, Swedish Bishops, who professed open enmity against it, and had seceded from the Roman Church as impious, idolatrous and antichristian.'

The sum of Bossuet's judgment is given in these words:—'Nothing, therefore, will ever be done either by the Roman Pontiff, or by any Catholic whatsoever, by which the Tridentine Decrees of Faith can be shaken.'*

To what end, then, do men appeal to Bossuet, if they do not believe with Bossuet? Is it for the purpose of opposing the infallibility of the Pope? But that will not evade the infallibility of the Church. If Bossuet thought that the infallibility of the Pope *ex cathedrâ* could in his day be denied *salva fidei compage*,

* Bossuet, *Projet de Réunion entre les Catholiques et les Protestants d'Allemagne*, par. iii. art. 2. *Œuvres de Bossuet*, tom. viii. p. 637. Paris, 1846.

most assuredly he taught that no man could deny the infallibility of the Church without explicit heresy. If he taught that the reception of definitions by the Church was the test of their infallible certainty, he believed that Church to be the sole Catholic and Roman Church, in union with the See of Peter and exclusive of the Greek and Anglican schisms. What do they gain who appeal to Bossuet, but a greater condemnation? Out of their own mouth comes the sentence. Not only those who hold the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff condemn them, but all those who hold only the infallibility of the Church. Gallicanism, the minimum of Catholic truth, condemns them as peremptorily as the highest Ultramontane theology. It is dangerous to use arguments *ad invidiam*, and for those who are without to appeal to any tribunal within the Catholic unity. We may say to them as S. Augustine said to the Donatists who quoted the example of S. Cyprian against him: ‘ You object to us the letters of Cyprian, the judgment of Cyprian, the council of Cyprian; why put forward the authority of Cyprian for your schism, and reject his example which witnesses for the unity of the Church?’* We see Bossuet in Catholic unity; we see you in separation. Place yourselves where Bossuet lived and died, and then quote Bossuet. Being where you are, his name is a sentence against you.

The denial of the perpetual Divine assistance by

* S. Aug. de Baptismo contra Donatistas, lib. ii. sec. 4.

which the Church is preserved from error, has led some to say that they accept the decrees of the Council of Trent, but not the interpretation of them. The Church of England is supposed to be found, not in the multitudinous contradictions of its living teachers, but only in the passive letter of its formularies. The Church of Rome is supposed not to be found in its dogmatic decrees, but in any obscure writer whose books may not be censured. Still, even here truth is justified. The Church is to be found in its living voice; and its living voice is the true, and only true, and only authoritative interpretation of its formularies. By a law of natural production the formularies of the Church of England have generated contradictions over its whole surface; by a law of supernatural progression the decrees of Trent have expanded into a wide-spread and exuberant theology, dogmatic and mystical, pervading both the head and the heart, reaching far beyond the letter, as the spread of a cedar reaches on all sides beyond its centre, but is firmly and intrinsically united to its root, from which it derives life, symmetry, and substance.

When we call this living mind of the Church the true interpretation of the dogma of the faith, we need not remind you, Reverend Brethren, that in the Bull of Pius IV., confirmed and published by the Holy Council of Trent, the Sovereign Pontiff explicitly reserved to himself the interpretation of its decrees as follows:—

‘And further, to avoid perversion and confusion which might arise if it were permitted to every one according to his will to put forth his commentaries and interpretations of the decrees of the Council, we inhibit by apostolical authority to all persons of whatsoever order, condition or degree, whether ecclesiastical or lay, with whatsoever power they may be invested, if they be prelates, under the pain of interdict of entering the Church, and others, whosoever they be, under pain of excommunication *latæ sententiæ*, that no one, without our authority, venture to put forth any commentaries, glosses, annotations, *scholia*, or any kind of interpretation on the decrees of the same Synod, or to determine anything under whatsoever title, even under pretext of a greater confirmation or furtherance of the decrees, or any pretended reason. But if any one shall find in the same decrees any obscurity of language or of law, and for that cause any interpretation or decision shall seem to be needed, let him ascend into the place which the Lord hath chosen, that is, to the Apostolic See, the Guide of all the Faithful, whose authority the Holy Synod itself so reverently acknowledged. We therefore reserve to ourselves, according as the Holy Synod itself enjoined, the declaration and decision of all questions which may arise from its decrees.’*

* Bulla *Benedictus Deus* Pii IV. sup confirm. Conc. Trid. : ‘Ad vitandum præterea perversionem et confusionem, quæ oriri posset, si unicuique liceret, prout ei liberet, in decreta concilii commentarios et interpretationes suas edere, apostolica auctoritate inhibemus omnibus, tam ecclesiasticis personis, cujuscumque sint ordinis, conditionis, et gradus, quam laicis, quocumque honore ac potestate præditi, prælatis quidem sub interdicti ingressus ecclesiæ, aliis vero quicumque, fuerint sub excommunicationis latæ sententiæ pœnis, ne quis sine auctoritate nostra audeat ullos commentarios, glossas, annotationes, scholia, ullumve omnino interpretationis genus super ipsius concilii decretis quocumque modo edere, aut quicumque quocumque nomine, etiam sub prætextu majoris decretorum corroborationis aut executionis, aliove quæsito colore statuere. Si cui vero in eis aliquid obscurius dictum et statutum fuisse, eamque ob causam

We have, therefore, a body of principles which govern the interpretation of dogmatic definitions, and regulate the living teaching of the Church.

1. All interpretations emanating from Pontifical authority are certainly infallible.

2. All decisions and doctrines taught by inferior tribunals or by theological schools, so long as they are not condemned by the Church, being publicly known and held in the presence of the supreme authority, may be presumed to be free from all error against faith or morals.

Of the first class are the copious and luminous decisions of the Pontiffs, S. Pius V., Innocent X., and Alexander VII., in the doctrines of grace contained in the condemned propositions of Baius and Jansenius, and the like.

Of the second class are all theological and devotional works which the Church has not censured. If they be publicly known and tolerated they may be presumed to be conformable to the dogma of faith, and to be innocent. They might not, perhaps, deserve it. They might enjoy rather impunity than toleration. Yet, till noted with censure they are in possession; like as, by our common law, a man is

interpretatione aut decisione aliqua egere visum fuerit, ascendat ad locum quem Deus elegit, ad sedem videlicet apostolicam, omnium fidelium magistram, cujus auctoritatem etiam ipsa sancta synodus tam reverenter agnovit. Nos enim difficultates et controversias, si quæ ex eis decretis ortæ fuerint, nobis declarandas et decidendas, quemadmodum ipsa quoque sancta synodus decrevit, reservamus.'

innocent till he is found guilty. It is, indeed, a part of fidelity to truth, and of charity to souls, not to give impunity to errors in theology or devotion; and the Catholic instincts of pastors and people are quick and vigilant to detect any unsoundness, and to bring it under judicial examination. No great error passes undiscovered. And this is a presumption that whatsoever is publicly known and tolerated, whatever may be thought of it, cannot be contrary to faith or morals. But this does not make such teaching authoritative.

Nevertheless, we have no hesitation in saying, that whosoever shall rise up to condemn as pernicious what the public authority of the Church tolerates as innocent, is thereby guilty of temerity, and of immodesty. In so doing he would be ascribing to himself the supreme discernment which belongs to the Church alone. ‘The spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged by no man.’* It would be the illuminism of the individual revising the discernment of the Church; the climax and efflorescence of the private judgment which criticises all things—first Scripture, then Fathers, then Churches, then Councils, then Pontiffs, finally the accumulated living Christianity of the Catholic Church, in which the heart and mind of Fathers, Councils, and Pontiffs breathe, and teach, and worship.

It would be, then, a want both of prudence and of charity to encourage those who indulge this habit of

* 1 Cor. ii. 15.

mind in looking for concessions and explanations, to make tolerable to them the decrees of the Catholic Church. Such a course simply indulges and confirms the habit of private judgment, brings those who practise and those who indulge it under the censure of several Pontiffs, and obscures the only true principle of divine faith.

To profess a readiness to accept the Council of Trent, if it be interpreted according to our own opinion, is not to subject ourselves to the authority of the Council, but to subject it to our own judgment. To say we will accept it as the basis of reunion if it mean so and so, is to say we will not accept it if it mean otherwise: or, again, if the Pope would declare that the Council of Trent never meant what we object to, we would receive it. But what if it should mean otherwise? To ask for an authoritative interpretation, without engaging to submit to it, is to play fast and loose. If the authoritative interpretation agree with our own, well and good. But what if it differs? In this way we should not receive it because of its authority, but because of its agreement with our private judgment. If it differ, it would not be authoritative to us. Is it possible that men of any clearness or coherence of mind can fail to see through the obscurity and inconsequence of this procedure? In what does it differ from the private judgment of the common and consistent Protestant, who judges for himself of the meaning of Scripture, except only in this, that he confines himself to one

book, and they claim to judge of all the Fathers, Theologians, Councils, Pontiffs, and the whole Church in every age? The common Protestant passes dry-shod over all these without asking whether he agrees with them or not: the Anglo-Catholic summons and convenes them all before him; professes to recognise them for what they are, Fathers, Theologians, Councils, Pontiffs; acknowledges their special illumination, commission, and authority; but after all analyses, criticises, accepts, rejects their writings and their teaching with a final sentence that is an absolute superiority of judgment. In their opinion the Council of Trent is tolerable if it mean only what they mean; intolerable if it mean anything else: tolerable if it agree with Tract XC.; intolerable if it be in harmony with the faith, piety, devotion, and public worship of the Catholic and Roman Church throughout the world. Can private judgment exalt and enlarge itself beyond this girth and stature? Is there anything left on earth to be judged of; anything yet to pass under its analysis and its sentence; any tribunal standing, before which it is silent, or to which it inclines? It seems strange that good men do not perceive the moral fault of such pretensions, and men of intellect their incoherence. To read the pages of Holy Writ, luminous and simple as in great part they are, and, knowing no other teacher, neither Church nor Council, to walk humbly by the light of a few divine truths, reverently adoring many incomprehensible mysteries—this is intelligible, coherent, and com-

paratively modest. But to profess to believe in Saints, Doctors, and Councils, which, if they may err, still have a special guidance, and in the Church of God, inhabited by the Spirit of God, infallible for six hundred years, assisted still in its decrees, superior to all individual minds, the chief authority on earth, divinely ordained to guide men; and yet after this to criticise all its acts and utterances, from the Canons of Nice to the Decrees of Trent, from the Canon of Scripture declared by Pope Gelasius, to the Immaculate Conception declared by Pope Pius IX., and to propose this as the basis of reunion in the midst of the confusions of Anglicanism, is a process which I must refrain from characterising as it would demand. We should offend against both truth and charity if we were not to show with all fidelity and at all costs the impossibility of reunion on such terms. To receive the whole Council of Trent upon the principle of private judgment would make no man a Catholic. To receive the Council of Trent only because we critically believe its decrees to be true, and not because its decrees are infallible, is private judgment. We should not be submitting to them, but approving them. The formal motive of our approval would be not the divine authority of the Council, but the judgment of our private spirit. God forbid, Reverend and dear Brethren, that minds be so brought within the unity of the Church. It would multiply our number, but not multiply the faithful. It would be to introduce among us a new and un-Catholic element, a

show of material agreement disguising a formal and vital contrariety. Much as we desire to gather souls into the only Ark of Salvation, we dare not do so at the sacrifice of truth. The admission of those who deny the infallibility of the living Church Catholic and Roman of this hour, would not be salvation to them. They would be as S. Augustine said, 'intus corpore, corde foris.' All encouragement to such habits of mind can only end in disappointment, and miseries worse than disappointment. It could only end in apostacies, and complaints not unjust that they had been deceived. They would 'go out from us because they are not of us.' It is far more truthful and charitable to say, firmly and plainly: The Church of God admits of no transactions. Recognition of its divine office, acknowledgment of previous error, submission to its divine voice—these and no others are the conditions of reunion.

Trusting to the unpopularity of what is called Ultramontanism, and to the popularity of all that encourages Nationalism, efforts have been studiously made for some years, and by writers of all kinds, sometimes, I grieve to say, by those who bore the name of Catholic, to represent as extreme, exclusive, and Ultramontane, all who believe the Holy See to be the Supreme Fountain of Faith and jurisdiction. This has been lately renewed under the form of seeking reunion on a Gallican basis, rejecting Ultramontane excesses, and appealing to the higher authority of the universal Church, to be ascertained

hereafter by some process neither stated nor conceivable. You will not need, Reverend and dear Brethren, that I should point out to you that to refuse the Divine authority of the Church, speaking by its visible head, and to appeal from that authority even to a Council in the future, falls under the sentence of excommunication reserved to the Pope.

On a point of such gravity I think it well to give the summary of the Pontifical law. The appeal from the Pope to a future General Council is described by canonists as the crime of sacrilege against the primacy of the Sovereign Pontiff. Pius II. excommunicates all who so offend, and reserves their absolution to the Pope, declaring further that all who knowingly give counsel, help, or favour to those who so offend, incur the same pains and censures as the abettors of high treason and of heretical pravity.

And Julius II. declared that the same were to be held as true and undoubted schismatics, and of unsound opinions concerning the Catholic faith. Moreover, he extended all the above-named pains and censures to those who, by resolution, counsel, or deliberation, have either approved the words of others, or have given their opinion that an appeal from the Pope to a future General Council may, can, or ought to be made.*

* Thesaurus: De Pœnis Ecclesiasticis, ed. Giraldi, Romæ, 1831, p. 95 :—

CAPUT I.

Appellantes a summo Pontifice ad futurum Concilium Generale.

Hoc est crimen sacrilegii contra primatum Pontificis Romani,

And further, it must be always borne in mind, and explicitly declared to our flocks, that the infallibility of the Pope, speaking *ex cathedrâ*, is an opinion protected by the highest authority. Alexander VIII., by a decree of December 7, 1690, that is, eight years after the Gallican declaration of 1682, condemned the following proposition: 'The assertion of the authority of the Roman Pontiff over General Councils, and his infallibility in determining questions of faith, is futile and

Cajet. &c. Est autem jure declaratum non licere appellare a sententia Romani Pontificis, *cap. Nemo, cap. Aliorum facta, cap. Ipsi sunt, cap. Cuncta per mundum, &c.* . . . Præterea in dicta Bulla Pii II. incipit *Execrabilis*, statutum est, ut appellantes a Papa ad futurum Concilium, vel scienter consilium, auxilium, aut favorem ad id præstantes, eas pœnas, et censuras incurrant, quas rei læsæ majestatis, et hæreticæ pravitatis fautores incurrere dignoscuntur.

Et Julius II. dicta Bulla, incipit *Suscepti*, § 5, confirmavit dictam Constitutionem Pii II. supplendo omnem defectum solemnitatis, etiam publicationis forte omissæ; et, § 6, declaravit dictos contravenientes non solum ipso facto incurrere in pœnas in dicta Bulla *Execrabilis* impositas, sed ipsos pro veris et indubitatis schismaticis, et de catholica fide male sentientibus habendos, pœnisque canonicis et legalibus contra tales impositis subjacere. Item omnes supradictas pœnas et censuras extendit ad eos qui decreverint, consuluerint, deliberaverint, aut aliorum dicta approbaverint, aut vocem dederint, ut ad futurum Concilium universale a Papa appellare liceat, possit vel debeat.

Et merito quidem hæc statuta sunt: nam appellans a Papa ad Concilium, in crimen rebellionis incurrit, quatenus sic appellando se subtrahit ab obedientia supremi sui Principis in damnum ejusdem Principis, ejusque supremi domini, illud ad alium procurando convertere . . . Similiter quod tales sint schismatici, et de fide male sentientes, ait *Sylvest.*, &c. et alii communiter. . . . Et quod asserens licitum esse appellare a Papa ad futurum Concilium sint hæretici formaliter, tenet *S. Antonin.*, &c. . . . Unde sequitur tales incurrere in censuras et pœnas latas contra hæreticos.

has been often refuted.' The lightest censure inflicted by the decree on this proposition is that of temerity, and whosoever shall in public or in private maintain it, incurs excommunication reserved to the Pope. I say the lightest, because inasmuch as Theologians, such as Suarez and Bellarmine, hold the contrary of this proposition to be proximate to faith, it may be maintained with much reason that it is scandalous, savouring of heresy and proximate to heresy, and it is certain that to maintain it or to believe it, is a sin.*

But once more: we have said that this procedure obscures the principle of divine faith, which is the veracity of God proposing His revelations to us through the medium of His Church. It is no question at this day how God proposed His truth to man before His Church was instituted through the incarnation of His Son, nor how He may propose it now among those to whom His Church is not present. The question is for England at this day. The Catholic Church is present among us, visible and audible, proposing the whole revelation of God by the divine voice of His Holy Spirit. To criticise the decrees of Trent, before they believe or disbelieve their divine veracity, is evasion. To put forward lamentations over the onward course of the Church by accusing it of turning private opinions into dogmas of faith, is to beg the question. To accuse the Church of making new truths, is like

* Viva, *Damnatae Theses*. Patavii, 1737, p. 495.

accusing it of worshipping a wafer. A Catholic major premiss and a Protestant minor makes a poor syllogism. To complain of Ultramontaniam as the great obstacle to reunion, is to hide the true issue of the controversy. If the Pope be not infallible, at least the Church is. Let men submit to the infallibility of the Church, and we may then hear what they will say of the infallibility of the Pope. It is not Ultramontaniam that demands their submission, but even Gallicanism. And it is Gallicanism that bars their way, until they have submitted with heart and head in faith both to the exclusive and indivisible unity, and the exclusive and perpetual infallibility of the Catholic and Roman Church.

Divine faith consists in an infusion of supernatural grace illuminating the intelligence to know and the heart to believe all that God has revealed and proposed to be believed. The proposition of the Church is the test of the Revelation of God. The Church proposes all that God has revealed, and nothing that He has not revealed. We have no contact with the Revelation of God, except through the proposition of the Church. We are in contact with the Scriptures, because the Church proposes them to us as the written word of God; we are in contact with tradition, because the Church proposes tradition to us as the unwritten word of God. We are in contact with antiquity, because the Church proposes antiquity as its own past experience. Antiquity is no more than a period in the mind of the Church: for the mind

of the Church is continuous. It proposes to us now what it proposed in antiquity. Every age has its truths, terms, definitions; and all are guarded and laid up in the divine custody of the Church, and are proposed in every age as the householder 'bringeth forth things old and new:' the old new, because ever fresh; the new old, because they were from the beginning; though new errors demand new terms, and old truths need new fences to exclude new perversions. As Vincent of Lerins said, 'Non nova sed novè.'

The principle, or rule of divine faith, then, is this, that the enunciation of the Church of this hour is the test and evidence of the original Revelation. By this God speaks to our reason and our faith. To refuse this, is to reject the voice of God in the world. We have, in that case, no choice but to turn to human teachers and to human criticism.

It is strange that men of consecutive minds, who seem to have mastered the principle that the Church alone possesses the key of Scripture, and that the true mind of Scripture is to be known only as it is interpreted by the living mind of the Church, should not see that, *à fortiori*, by the same law, the sense of antiquity is to be known from the Church alone. It is in vain to answer to the Catholic: But we have antiquity before us, Fathers and Councils, facts and doctrines. The Protestant says the same to them in turn: We have Scripture before us, the Evangelists and the Apostles, the very words

and deeds of our Divine Lord. The Protestant is comparatively consistent in rejecting the Church, and interpreting both Scripture and antiquity for himself. How is it coherent to interpret Scripture by the Church, and antiquity by private judgment; to affirm the Church to be the interpreter of Scripture, but not of antiquity—that is, of the written word of God, but not of its own words and acts, its own experience, and its own intentions? This is surely a confusion into which nothing but the stress of controversy could have driven cultivated and thoughtful men. Was it that the one theory was necessary against Dissenters, the other against Catholics?

The ultimate cause, indeed, probably is, that such reasoners have no adequate perception of the unity and continuity of the mind of the Church; and that, because they have no adequate perception of the perpetual presence and office of the Spirit of Truth in the Church. This one truth once fully seen, solves all, not only by way of authority, but by way of intelligent explanation. The Fathers were but the disciples of the Church, ‘*Doctores fidelium ecclesie discipuli.*’ What they taught they first learned; and the Church who taught them, both recognises her own teaching in their writings, even when the language may be less exact, and can correct it where it is equivocal, obscure, or erroneous.

The same is true of Councils, which are its own assemblies, and express its collective mind, with the

sanction of its public authority. The Church of to-day sees its own mind, faith and morals, doctrine and discipline, not only in the first four Councils appealed to by Anglicans, but in the seven held to be general by the Greeks, and in the eleven which have continuously legislated and decreed, from the Second Council of Nice down to the Council of Trent. As the British empire knows the mind of its own legislature from its earliest parliaments to this day, and permits no man, be he subject, or prince, to contravene its authoritative interpretations, so, even in the natural order, the Catholic Church knows its own ancient statutes, and the acts of its own senate.

But more than this, the lineal and living consciousness of the Church has a higher fountain than the natural order. The perpetual knowledge and certainty of the revelation committed to its custody comes by a Divine assistance, as the revelation itself came by a Divine gift. The perpetuity of its infallibility is the permanence of the original revelation, by the perpetual presence of the same Divine Person from whom it flowed. Its onward progression in the explicit definition of truth is a property and an evidence of its perpetual divine office. When we enunciate these axioms of Catholic faith, we are accused of putting assertions for proofs. But it is the office of a divine teacher to assert and not to argue. The assertions of men are indeed no argument, but the assertion of the Church is proof in itself.

The denial of the perpetual Divine assistance of the Church has its newest form in the assertion that though the assistance be perpetual, yet we do not know when its exercise is to be expected. This comes strangely from those who say that the Church is divided, and that its divisions make the exercise of its infallible office at present impossible. They appear to admit that the assistance of the Holy Spirit is perpetual, but yet they affirm that it is not always. They appear to hold an intermittent operation of the Spirit of Truth, which gives no tests whereby it is to be discerned from the operation of human authority and of human teachers. The definition of the Immaculate Conception is accused as novel, unseasonable, and a hindrance to the reunion of Christendom. If true, why was it not defined before? If not necessary, why defined now?

To this we answer: When the disciples asked of our Divine Lord, 'Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' He said, 'It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in His own power. But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.*' In these words He declared the sovereignty and secrecy of His government over the Church. He reserved to Himself the time and the season of His operations; but when they came, all men recognised in them His presence and His action. During the ten days between the Ascension and the day of Pen

* Acts i. 7, 8.

tecost; they were in uncertainty as to the future, and what His words might mean. When the Holy Ghost descended all was manifest. No man could doubt that it was the operation of His will. So it may be said of the course and action of the Church. In the succession of its history from the declaration of the Consubstantiality of the Son to the Immaculate Conception of His Blessed Mother, there has been a line of definitions reaching through fifteen centuries of time. They who ask why the Immaculate Conception has been defined in the nineteenth century, would have asked why the 'homoousion' was defined in the fourth, or the two Natures in one Person in the fifth. To those who deny the perpetual Divine office of the Church, all this may indeed cause perplexity; but the perplexity arises not from the exercise of its Divine office by the Church, but from their denial of it. They are the makers of their own difficulties. To those who believe that the words of Jesus are verified to the letter, and that the Spirit of Truth perpetually abides with us in all the fulness of His operations, it is as obvious and as certain that the Church should infallibly declare the doctrines of the faith in the nineteenth as in the sixth or the fourth century. Nay, more; we believe that the discernment not only of the truth, but of the opportunity of declaring it, are both contained in the Divine assistance which guides the Church. We are sure that the 'homoousion' is true, and that the fourth century was the opportunity

divinely chosen for its declaration. We know with the certainty of faith that the Immaculate Conception is true, and we are certain that this time was the opportunity divinely chosen for its definition. The event is proof. The times and the moments were uncertain before the event ; after it they form a part of the Divine operation, and are declared by the fact. It is remarkable that the two questions proposed by the Sovereign Pontiff to the Bishops throughout the world were, not whether the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception were true ; but first, whether it were definable, and second, if so, whether the time for defining it were come. Is it from want of knowledge, or accuracy of mind, that some have represented the Bishops of the Catholic world as divided about the truth of the Immaculate Conception? They all alike and with one voice proclaimed, and, as we are told even by an adversary, ostentatiously proclaimed, their belief of it. Some of them indeed doubted before the event, whether the time and the moment were come for the definition. And this has been used to create a rhetorical impression, on the minds of those who do not know the facts of the case, that they were opposed to the doctrine to be defined. The unreserved freedom with which a small number of the Bishops expressed their opinion, either that the doctrine was not capable of definition, or that the time for defining it was not opportune, made all the more striking their unanimity in believing it to be true, and the unhesitating

firmness with which the Sovereign Pontiff proceeded to define it. A hostile critic has acutely remarked that the Pope knew the mind of his communion better than the few who counselled otherwise. And the event has justified his act. The whole Catholic Church has not only received the definition as certain, but acknowledged the time to be opportune. No shade of any of the anticipated dangers has been verified; but many momentous consequences to the Faith and to the Church have followed in this pontifical act. Inasmuch as those who are out of the unity of the Church lament over the Immaculate Conception as a stumbling-block in their own way, and a source of unknown evils to come hereafter to us, it may be well, at a more fitting time, to trace out the evident marks of the Divine hand in this event. We do not assume to know that which the Father has put in His own power; but, as we may know that the key which answers to the wards belongs to the lock, so when the *clavis scientiæ* corresponds minutely with the intellectual demands both of error without the Church and of truth within it, we may with certainty predicate that it is 'the Key of David' which alone 'openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.'*

We are told that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception has no foundation in Scripture or tradition, and is contradicted by antiquity. How then is it that the whole Church, East and West, from the

* Apoc. iii. 7.

beginning, has always affirmed the Blessed Mother of God to have been sanctified with a pre-eminent and exceptional sanctification; that even those who affirm her to be of sinful flesh, *ex massa peccatrice*, affirm the same also of her Divine Son, and therefore not as affirming personal sin; that in affirming her to be free from actual sin, they affirmed by implication the absence of sin altogether; that the very term and phrase 'original sin' are technical and of western origin; that as the nature of sin was more explicitly analysed in the Pelagian controversies, she was always more explicitly excepted from all affirmation of original sin; that the fact of her sanctification does include, and not contradict, as has been most preposterously said, her Immaculate Conception, which is no more than sanctification in its sovereign fullness; that the whole Episcopate, whensoever it has approached the question, has always affirmed it; that the Councils of Ephesus and of Francfort recognised her as sinless; that the Councils of Basil and of Avignon framed decrees to declare the Immaculate Conception; that the universities of Christendom always taught it, and bound their doctors to teach it; that every great religious Order, but one, defended it; that of the one only which hesitated, a majority of its theologians, as 130 to 90, maintained it; that those who objected to the terms Immaculate Conception, held that Mary was immaculate in her nativity; that is, that she was not only free from all actual sin, but from all original sin, and that by a

sanctification which preceded birth into this world ; that this is the doctrine of S. Bernard, who is always made to contradict himself to serve the ends of controversy, in the very same letter to the Canons of Lyons in which he opposes their introducing, without authority of the Holy See, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, instead of the Immaculate Nativity ; that, finally, thirty-three Pontiffs, in seventy Constitutions, have protected and promoted the belief of the Immaculate Conception, on which Pius IX. did no more than impress the image and superscription of the Divine and universal tradition of the Church of God? It would have inspired more confidence in the candour and pacific aims of those who write against us, if these things had at least been recognised by so much as a statement and rejection. The case then stands thus. The pre-eminent sanctification of the Mother of God is a tradition which has descended from the earliest traceable antiquity in the universal belief or passive infallibility of the Church of God. The active infallibility of the Church, as diffused throughout the world in the Episcopate, taught it. Six times Bishops gathered in Council have implied or affirmed it. Twice they actually proposed to define it, in the very form of the Immaculate Conception ; and now, lastly, the Sovereign Pontiff, after consulting the whole Episcopate throughout the world, receiving and weighing maturely the answers of some six hundred Bishops, defined the dogma *ex cathedrâ*, and the definition

has been received not only with assent, but with joy, by the whole Catholic world. We have here more than a General Council, by way of protracted and universal consultation, and universal reception following. The requirements of Gallicanism are here more than satisfied. Bossuet would now judicially pronounce any man to be a heretic who should refuse to accept the Immaculate Conception as a dogma of faith. For Bossuet, in unwisely extolling General Councils above the Pope, was not unwise enough to extol them above the Church; neither was he so superficial as to believe that the Church derives its infallibility from Councils, a theory seven-fold incoherent in those who maintain that General Councils may err. He did not hold the Church to be infallible because of the infallibility of Councils; but Councils to be infallible because of the infallibility of the Church. The Church is the fountain, the Council the pool into which the supernatural gift of infallibility flows. The universal reception of the Church was to him the test of that which the universal faith or passive infallibility of the Church already believed. Council or no Council, this was to Bossuet divinely and infallibly certain. The Church diffused throughout the world is always both passively and actively infallible. Councils are accidental, not necessary, to it. The Church is a perpetual Council in itself, containing not only all that the eighteen Councils have defined, but the whole revelation of truth which can ever be defined,

and the Divine discernment to define it. Bossuet held, as of faith, every Pontifical definition received by the whole Church, though no General Council had intervened. The doctrine of original sin declared by S. Innocent I., and received by the whole Church; the doctrines of grace declared in the condemnation of Baius by S. Pius V., and likewise universally received, were to him infallible utterances of the Church. The remonstrances of Pelagians in early times, and of Greeks and Protestants in his own day, were to him the voice of strangers, separate from Catholic unity, and therefore excluded from the reception of the Church. How then can those who are separated from the only Church which Bossuet recognised, say, 'We and Bossuet rest on the same foundation'?

And what is the intelligible sense of saying, that though all Churches have erred, the universal Church is infallible? What is this universal Church, and where? If the Church be divided into three parts, and each part has erred, where is the Church which cannot err? Where is it to be seen? where heard? Where does it teach? How does it witness? Whom does it govern? Who submits to it? Is it the Church before the division, or the Church after the reunion? Where, then, is it now, but in the imagination? It would seem to me that this position is of all the least tenable. It admits that the Church of God must be infallible; it rejects the exercise of its infallibility. It is, therefore, as Giraldus says, both a heresy and a

treason; a treason in appealing from the ultimate sovereignty of the Church of this hour, and a heresy in denying that ultimate sovereignty to be infallible. The Church has shown its unerring instinct in rejecting all who hold this error with pertinacity.

And here we have the precise point of contact between the error of the Unionist school and the faith of the Catholic Church. The Church teaches that its infallibility, whether in or out of Council, is perpetual. The Unionist school teaches that its infallibility is intermittent, from Council to Council, and that by reason of its present divisions a General Council is impossible. The Church holds that a General Council is possible to-morrow, and that if convened and confirmed by the Sovereign Pontiff it would be infallible. But, whether a Council be held or no, the Church diffused and the Church in its Head is permanently and perpetually infallible; the ultimate and highest witness, both in the natural and supernatural order, of the original revelation, of the sense of Scripture, of the testimony of antiquity, of the mind of Councils, the supreme judge of truth and falsehood in all matters of faith and morals, and of all facts and truths in necessary contact with them. There is no obscurity as to the faith of Catholics, in relation to the Church, its nature, notes, properties, or gifts. We may be denounced as peremptory, exclusive, unreasonable; but men know what we say, because we know what we mean.

It would seem to me an unwise course for those who approach us with professions of peace and desires of reunion, to cast stones at even the least in the household of faith. It is still less wise to assail the highest and most sacred person upon earth. It is dangerous and a sign of heresy to represent the Immaculate Conception defined by the Sovereign Pontiff as a hindrance to reunion. It is dangerous also to ascribe to any man opinions visibly absurd. It is indeed true that the portion of the Catholic Church most devoted to the 'cultus' of the Blessed Virgin is most persuaded of the personal infallibility of the Pope. But in no part of the Church, even among the most Ultramontane Catholics, is there to be found even one who believes that a continual flow of inspiration may at any time change popular opinion into infallible truth. If by this be meant into a dogma of faith, it is a simple confusion arising from want of common catechetical knowledge. No dogma is definable as of faith unless it have the first essential condition, namely, that it was revealed by God. Therefore Pius IX. in the definition of the Immaculate Conception did not declare the doctrine to be true, but to be revealed. It is hard to acquit such controversialists of a culpable want of knowledge, or of a rashness culpable in accusing.

But if this statement be intended to affirm only that popular opinion may become by the authority of the Church infallibly certain, it is most sound and

Catholic doctrine. We would give as an example of an 'infallible truth,' which was once only a popular opinion, and has become infallibly certain, though it can never become a dogma of faith, the necessity of the temporal power of the Holy See to the freedom of the Church and of its Head. It shows no exactness to impute to any one that he has made the temporal power a part of his creed.

For ourselves, Reverend and dear Brethren, it is hardly needful that I should say that as yet I have never known of any Catholic so ignorant of the Act of Faith which he learnt in childhood as to incorporate the proposition of the temporal power with the doctrines of the faith. My own mind on this subject was declared clearly enough four years ago to all who may wish to know it, or may desire not to misrepresent it. I then said :

'Inasmuch as it is better to err by excess of caution than by defect of explicitness, I will here say what I must ask all Catholics to pardon as needless to them, but necessary perhaps for those that are without.

'In the parallel I have drawn between the gradual definition of the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and of the Immaculate Conception, and the subject of the temporal power of the Sovereign Pontiffs, I have in no way and in no sense expressed or implied that the temporal power constitutes the material object of a dogma of faith.

'The first of the two conditions of a dogma of faith is, that it was revealed by God to the Apostles.

'The local sovereignty of the Vicar of our Lord over Rome and the Marches was a fact in Providence many centuries afterwards, and as such can form no proper or direct matter of a dogma of faith. The instinct of a Catholic child would

perceive this; and Catholics will forgive my pointing it out only for the sake of those who either have not the light of faith, or who are given to the spirit of contention.

‘Nevertheless, the temporal sovereignty affords abundant and proper matter for a definition, or judgment, or authoritative declaration of the Church, like the disciplinary decrees of General Councils; or, finally, the authoritative sentences in the Bulls of Pontiffs—as, for instance, in the Bull *Auctorem fidei*—of which many relate to discipline, to ecclesiastical and mixed questions bearing on temporal things.

‘And to such an authoritative utterance, under anathema, and by the voice of the whole Church through the Supreme Pontiff, the subject of the temporal power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ may legitimately, and not improbably, attain; and such a *judicium Ecclesie*, or authoritative sentence, would be binding on the consciences of all the faithful, and the contrary would be noted as “*propositio falsa, juribus Conciliorum Generalium et Summorum Pontificum laesiva, scandalosa et schismati fovens.*” And yet the subject matter may not be among the original articles of revealed doctrine, but of the nature of a dogmatic fact attaching to a Divine doctrine and institution, viz., the Vicariate of St. Peter and his successors; and therefore, after declaration, it would be of incontrovertible certainty and universal obligation, so that the denial of it would involve grave sin.’*

The necessity of the temporal power in this sense may, perhaps, be called a popular opinion until the Encyclical allocutions of the Sovereign Pontiff in 1859 and 1860. The declaration of nearly three hundred Bishops in Rome in the year 1862, and the reception of their words by the whole Episcopate of the Church, would even in Bossuet’s

* ‘The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ,’ by Henry Edward Manning, D.D. Second edition, with a preface, p. xxiv.

judgment raise this opinion to the rank of a truth, which, though not a dogma of faith, is yet incontestably certain. The words of the Bishops are as follows:—‘ We recognise the civil principedom of the Holy See as a thing necessary, and manifestly instituted by the providence of God; nor do we hesitate to declare that in the present state of human affairs that civil principedom is required for the good and free government of the Church and of souls. For it is fitting that the Roman Pontiff, the Head of the whole Church, should be subject to no prince, nor be guest of any, but that he should dwell in his own dominions and kingdom in full personal sovereignty; and that he should protect and defend the Catholic faith, and rule and govern the whole Christian commonwealth in a dignified, tranquil, and beneficent liberty.’ . . . ‘ But on this grave matter it hardly becomes us to say more, forasmuch as we have heard yourself not so much discoursing as teaching concerning it. For your voice has proclaimed . . . to the whole world that by “ a singular counsel of the providence of God it has been ordered that the Roman Pontiff, whom Christ constituted as Head and Centre of His whole Church, should have a civil principedom.” It is, therefore, to be held by us as a most certain truth, that this temporal government accrued to the Holy See not by chance, but was by a special Divine disposition conferred upon it, and by a long series of years, by an unanimous consent

of kingdoms and empires, and by almost a miracle has been confirmed and preserved.’*

They who deplore Ultramontaniam as a modern opinion and the extravagance of a party, must have superficially read the history of the Church, and can hardly know the one-and-twenty folio volumes of Rocaberti’s ‘*Bibliotheca Pontificia.*’ And as the name of Turrecremata has been carelessly used in this sense, it may be well to hear his own words. In the year 1588, he wrote as follows: ‘That See outshines others by so great a light of wisdom, that we await its teaching as divine answers from an inmost oracle. For in it, first of all, as in a resplendent fountain of light, the permanent and certain radiance of doctrine shines forth, from whence it is diffused throughout the Church for the illumination of the minds of men; for to Peter, as the head and foundation of the Church, it was specially declared, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.” And again, “I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren.” Wherefore, all who desire to cast out from their minds the anxiety of doubt, approach the Holy See as the rule of faith, and await from the Sovereign Pontiff himself, as from a heavenly authority, judgment and decision; and that because in the Roman Pontiff, as in the

* Declaration of the Bishops, &c. *Acta Canonizationis Pio IX. P.P. peractæ. Rom. 1864. Pp. 544, 545.*

Supreme Judge, resides the ultimate power of deciding in causes of faith, from which it was never lawful to any one to depart under pretence of appeal.' Again, he says afterwards: 'The most celebrated synods of the whole Christian world turn their eyes to him as their chiefest light, and refer the greater causes of the Church to the Bishop of Rome in person, as Christ has obtained by His prayer from the Father, that Peter, and the successor of Peter, and the Vicar of Christ himself, in pronouncing decisions of the public questions of faith, cannot err. For it was to Peter, not as a private man, but as head of the Church, and as abiding in the ecclesiastical hierarchy as long as the dominion of the Church shall endure, that it was explicitly declared, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren."'* This, at least, Turcremata does not hold to be the language of flattery which 'equals the Popes, as it were, to God.'

It is an ill-advised overture of peace, then, to assail the popular, prevalent, and dominant opinions, devotions, and doctrines of the Catholic Church with hostile criticism, and to appeal from it to some authoritative censure to be hereafter pronounced against them. What is this but to say, you must all come to my mind before I can unite with you? And who shall say this with modesty except he be

* *Alexandri a Turre Cremensis de Fulgenti Radio Eccl. Hier. lib. v. radius xviii. : 'De Vero ac Certo Apostolicæ Sedis Oraculo.' Rocaberti, Biblioth. Pont., tom. ii.*

an inspired person or an infallible judge? To claim this universal censorship in the same breath which denies the infallibility of the living Church is hardly reasonable. If *sentire cum Ecclesia* be a test of conformity to the mind of the Spirit, *Ecclesie dissentire* is no sign of illumination; for the presence and assistance of the Holy Ghost which secures the Church within the sphere of faith and of morals, invests it also with instincts and a discernment which preside over its worship and doctrine, its practices and customs. We may be sure that whatsoever is prevalent in the Church, under the eye of its public authority, practised by the people, and not censured by its pastors, is at least conformable to faith, and innocent as to morals. Whosoever rises up to condemn such practices and opinions, thereby convicts himself of the private spirit, which is the root of heresy.

But if it be ill-advised to assail the mind of the Church, it is still more so to oppose its visible Head. There can be no doubt that the Sovereign Pontiff has declared the same opinion as to the temporal power as that which is censured in others, and that he defined the Immaculate Conception, and that he believes in his own infallibility. If these things be our reproach, we share it with the Vicar of Jesus Christ. They are not our private opinions, nor the tenets of a school, but the mind of the Pontiff, as they were of his predecessors, as they will be of those who come after him. To appeal from the Pope to an 'Eighth' General Council

of Greeks, Anglicans, and Romans, who shall put down Ultramontaniam, restore the Immaculate Conception to the region of pious opinions without foundation in Scripture and antiquity, declare the Pope to be fallible, and subject to General Councils which may err, reunite Christendom on the basis of the Russian Catechism, the Thirty-nine Articles, and the decrees of Trent, interpreted not as they were intended, but by the rule of a Catholicism which the Catholic world has never known, elaborated by the criticism or illuminism of uncatholic minds nurtured in an anti-Catholic religion,—all this is to us no harbinger of unity, no voice of peace, because no sign of humility, no evidence of faith. The Holy Office, with unerring discernment, has declared that the tendency of the Association for Promoting the Reunion of Christendom is indifference; that it is an attempt to widen the unity of truth by the comprehension of those who differ. The universal Church is denounced as sectarian in these days. We are reproached for narrowness by those who would explain away the decrees of Trent, and bring them down to the Greek ‘orthodoxy’ and the Anglican formularies. And this, too, is narrow to those who are incorporating the Anglican religion with the semi-rationalism of Germany. Unionism is outwardly a reaction against Latitudinarianism; inwardly it promotes it. There can be but two principles and two tendencies: the one, divine faith, which perpetually expands into greater bulk, opens into fuller explicitness, ascends into a

loftier stature, as, for instance, the popular 'cultus' of the Mother of God, and the dominant faith of the infallibility of the Church, which rest upon the decrees of Trent, as I have said, like the cedar upon its root; the other, of human criticism, disguise it as you may in texts of Scripture, or in patristic learning, or in sceptical history, or in rationalistic interpretation, the tendency of which is always to wider formulas and diminished truth, to comprehension of communion, and loss of faith. There can be no doubt that the peril of the next ten years will be latitudinarian Christianity in all its forms. So long as men are approaching to the Catholic Church they hold the necessity of precise and inflexible dogma. The moment they waver in their approach, fidelity to dogma declines; they then feel about for a new basis. As it cannot be precision, it must be vagueness. Dogma is against them; they must be against dogma. Theology excludes them; they must hold theology cheap. From that moment (we write what we have seen) men move off from the path of truth, insensibly for awhile, unconsciously to themselves. The Catholic faith is 'Latin Christianity;' the Catholic Church is Rome; Trent is occidental; theology a transient phase of mediæval thought; Christianity, the education of the world, the joint contribution of nations, wide as the human race, old as creation, intolerant of visible forms, impatient of mixture with the earthly elements of government and temporal power, purer than the Church of God, awaiting its

redemption from the bigotries of sects and churches, its investiture in the theology of the nineteenth century, and the Church of the future. Such is the tendency of the day of which the theory of union before truth is the one extreme, and the rationalism of freemasonry is the other. All other forms of thought are but intermediates, one in principle, all alike irreconcilable with the principles of Divine faith, the presence of a Divine Teacher, and unconditional submission to His voice.

In your dealings, then, with persons of these opinions, Reverend Brethren, you will keep steadfastly to one point, namely, the perpetual infallibility of the Church, whether diffused, or in Council, whether speaking by the Council of Trent or by its Head. It is necessary to be on your guard against two modes of argument by which this affirmation is evaded. The one is to lead away into details, such as the devotion to the Blessed Virgin, or the Temporal Power of the Pope. This has the effect of diversion, and the main issue is left without an answer. The other is to admit the perpetual Divine office of the Church, denying the infallibility of its Head, and of the Councils held since the schism of the Greek Church. The sure test of this is to ask, Do you believe in the infallibility of the Council of Trent? Do you believe the Pontifical declarations of doctrine since the Council of Trent, received as they are also by the Catholic Church, to be infallible? If the answer be Yes,

you will know how to proceed. If it be No, you will have the proof that this supposed perpetual office or infallibility of the Church is a private imagination, like the doctrine of consubstantiation, or of particular redemption, or of divided unity.

Another test by which the absence of real faith or of real knowledge respecting the Divine office of the Church may be detected, is the objection which is made to the alleged definitions of new doctrine, and the making them the new terms of communion. If the Church be fallible, then such new definitions may, and in all probability would be, human opinions, and to make them articles of faith and communion would be tyrannous and schismatical. A supreme power claiming to regulate the faith and conscience of men, if liable to error, is an usurpation and a despotism. None would deprecate and abjure such new definitions so inflexibly as Catholics. They died rather than accept them under Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth.

But if the authority which defines these doctrines have a Divine assistance to preserve it from error, every new definition is a new declaration of truth, a broader light, and a more perfect knowledge of the Revelation of God. To object to such accessions of knowledge, proves that the Divine source and certainty of them is denied; for no man of sound or pious mind would deprecate a clearer and more perfect knowledge of the mind of God. It would

be like saying, 'Let the Holy One of Israel cease from before us.'* When these men desire to stay the onward course and growth of the living Church, and to keep down the explicit mind of the Church to a minimum as a means of reunion with their maximum—a strange dialect in matters of faith—as it is impossible, without great severity of judgment upon them, to imagine that they wish to bind the operations of the Holy Spirit, or to refuse His perpetual voice, it is evident that they deny His presence and His operations in the perpetual office of the Church. But this is what we affirmed and they denied from the beginning.

An impartial critic, further from the Catholic Church than from Anglicanism, well observed, that it is strange for men who proclaim so constraining a desire for unity to keep open a separation, for the difference between a maximum and a minimum which is supposed to be almost coincident. The critic further adds with great perspicuity, that the question of a little more or a little less of dogma can be nothing to those who accept the principle of infallibility, and that to those who do not accept it, there is no question of more or less.

I cannot refrain from noticing a letter lately published with the signature of Prince Orloff,† the Russian Minister at the Court of Brussels, detailing

* Isaias xxx. 11.

† 'Times' newspaper, Dec. 28, 1865.

the discussions held at a meeting on the 15th of November last, at which certain Anglican Bishops and 'about eighty persons, chiefly clergymen of High Church principles,' were assembled for the purpose of promoting union with the Russo-Greek Church. I notice it only to draw out certain points in confirmation of what has been hitherto said.

First, it is evident that if the Anglican clergy there present are willing to unite with the Russian Greeks, the mass of the Anglican Church and of the English people have no such will. Out of this project of union a domestic disunion of the gravest kind at once arises.

Next, it is equally certain, by the steady refusal of the Greeks to communicate with the Protestant or Reformed bodies, expressed again and again, as is the case in the seventeenth century of Cyril Leuchar, and in the overtures of Dr. Basire, and lately of Mr. William Palmer, and of the Anglican clergyman who went the other day to Servia, and most transparently shown in the conduct of Prince Orloff, detailed in his letter, that the Greek Church absolutely refuses all contact with those who are out of its communion, and at variance with its traditional 'Orthodoxy,' in which the Seven Sacraments, and the honour due to the Mother of God are primary and essential points.

Again, there is but little reliance to be placed in the professions of desire of reunion with Rome, when at the same time they who make them are courting

union with those who for a thousand years have made animosity to Rome a test of fidelity to Constantinople.

But, lastly, the strangest revelation in this affair was the proposal of instant communion, despite of all differences of doctrine or of faith. Prince Orloff wisely proposed that truth should prepare the way for unity. But this slow process was too tardy for some who were present. They proposed immediate communion in the Lord's Supper, postponing the adjustment of doctrinal differences; urging that 'we should not content ourselves with preparing the ground, leaving the harvest to be reaped by future generations, but deferring all dogmatical debates, proceed to celebrate the Lord's Supper by intercommunion.' The Holy Office was not wrong, therefore, in pronouncing that Unionism implies indifferentism. The comments which these proceedings have elicited both in England and Scotland, show how little this country is disposed for any such enterprises, and how impracticable and unreal it holds them.

These things we have written, Reverend and dear Brethren, under a constraining sense of duty towards our Divine Master, and the souls of our brethren in separation. God knows that the desire of our hearts and prayer to God is that they may be saved. If our life would reconcile this land, which we love so well, to the unity of the faith and of the Church, we trust that life would not be dear. But truth is better than life; and truth alone can restore us to unity. 'I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh

unto the Father but by me.’* Compromise, concession, conditions, transactions, explanations which soften Divine decrees, and evade the precision of infallible declarations of the Church, are not inspirations of the Holy Ghost. To hold out hopes of impossible events is deception and cruelty. A true love of souls dictates another course. Clear, open, patient, loving exhortations, definite and precise declarations of truth, without sharpness, and without controversy; holding up the light of faith, which by a sacramental power of its own enters into men and illuminates them when they are least aware; confidence in the supernatural grace, and the divine mission of the Church, in its authority to teach and its power to save—these are our nets to let down into the sea, our sickles to reap in the Master’s field. We are put in charge with the whole Revelation of God, and of all the souls around us. We must labour for them, though they smite us. We must ‘gladly spend, and be spent for them; although loving them more, we be loved less.’† Jesus did not lift a hand to shadow His face from the shame and spitting; not even to ward the blow from His cheek, much less to return the buffet which smote Him on the mouth. We have greater things at stake; nobler things in charge. We are guardians of the unity of the Truth, of the purity of the fold, of the infallible rule of faith, of the sovereign jurisdiction of Jesus Christ. We speak

* S. John, xiv. 6.

† 2 Cor. xii. 15.

in the name of the universal Church of God, which is the same in every place, and even by us here, in our fewness and weakness, speaks with the voice of the Church throughout the world, binds and looses with the keys of the kingdom of heaven. We received them from the Vicar of Christ; he—from the Son of God. We cannot open or shut but as He wills. If we close the door to those who approach it as critics, teachers, and reformers, it is for their sakes, that one day we may open it wide, with joy and thanksgiving, when they shall have learned to know its voice to be the voice of the Son of God. ‘Therefore let Christ speak, because in Christ the Church speaks, and in the Church Christ speaks; both the body in the Head, and the Head in the body.* And in the day when this is known, they will see that we have not been uncharitable, narrow or exclusive; but that they have thought to stay up the ark by laying their hands upon it. The Church of God accepts of no support, or service, except from its own divine power and commission: and truth can be spread in no way but that which our Lord has consecrated. ‘If any man would be My disciple, let him take up his cross and follow Me.’ He called men one by one. He so calls them still.

It is not for us to ask, ‘Lord, what shall this man do?’ The voice of Truth is articulate and clear, ‘Follow thou me.’ To question about others is to forget

* S. Aug. in Psalm. xl. tom. iv. p. 344.

ourselves. To check our own convictions is to resist a Divine grace. To wait for others is to assume a control over the dispensations of the Spirit. God calls whom, and as, and when He wills. We shall die alone, and be judged one by one. It is, therefore, by the obedience of the whole soul, all alone with God, detached from kindred and home, from all human traditions, from even spiritual bonds, by the witness of our whole being, at all costs and sorrows, by sufferings for the Truth, and that to the apparent overthrow of the work of a life, and the forfeiture of all usefulness to come; it is only by this that we can testify to the faith and make men believe it to be true, and believe that we believe it ourselves. So our Divine Master witnessed 'a good confession,' and so His disciples in every time and land have obeyed the Spirit of Truth, and won souls from error. It is not by movements like this, nor by convictions merged in parties, that truth is served and souls saved. Much less is it so that schism can be healed, or errors cast out. The act of conforming our own intelligence to the truth, and our own will to obedience, is the highest, the most divine, the only way in which we can promote the unity of the Church and the supremacy of faith. And this we shall do all the more powerfully and deeply in proportion as we suffer for it, and suffer, if so it be, one by one. I cannot doubt that of those who have addressed the Holy Office, and of those who are united in this movement, there are many who sincerely

desire to be reunited to the Apostolic See, the mother of all churches, and believe that they are advancing to this end. They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 'Magni passus,' as S. Augustin says, 'sed extra viam.' So far as this movement shall lead to the submission of individuals to the truth, it is of God; so far as it leads to the suppression of individual convictions and individual responsibility, it is not of God.

And now it is more than time to make an end.

Thus far I have been constrained by the imperative law of truth to lay bare the impossibility and the unlawfulness of all union except that which is based upon the only and infallible Church of God. 'Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid.'* Nothing else will endure the day of His judgment. All other work will be burnt up. But I cannot so dismiss the thought of union; the vision, distant as it may be, of seeing my brethren, countrymen, friends, and kinsmen once more in the bond of peace, of kneeling with them once before I die in the presence of Jesus upon the altar. God knows that for this I have prayed and laboured; for this I have incurred their displeasure and borne many a wound. For this I am ready to bear much more, and to bear it to the end. Every affection of nature and of grace binds me to desire, next after the glory of God, their salvation and the conversion of

* 1 Cor. iii. 11.

England. To this I gladly give the few years that remain to me in life. I know what it will cost me by what it has cost me already. 'Am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?' But truth unites or divides. It is never neutral; it never returns void. It kindles charity or enmity, and is 'a sweet odour of Christ unto God, both in them that are saved and in them that perish: to the one the odour of life unto life; to the other, of death unto death; and for these things who is sufficient?'

The Holy Office concludes its letter with words full of charity, calling on those who addressed it to return into the bosom of the One only Church which from its intrinsic nature can never be divided. It assures them that the Sovereign Pontiff with all his heart implores this grace for them continually from the Father of Light and of all Mercy. To this prevailing prayer let us add our own daily supplications, that the Spirit of Unity and Truth will out of the darkness of our country show to all men His marvellous light, and out of the confusions of this moment, and in the midst of the faults of men, call forth once more a new creation of unity in truth. And for this the prayers of saints and martyrs are ascending, and, above all, the prayers of those whose tears and whose blood have sunk into the soil of England. They so loved unity that they died for it; they so loved truth that they laid down their lives for its

* 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

sake. Their tears and their blood have not been shed in vain. They are ascending up before God with the intercession of His Immaculate Mother for the land which has so long forgotten to call her blessed. I might say more, but I refrain. Grant this, O Lord, in thine own good time and way, for the souls so dear to us are dearer still to Thee, for Thou hast redeemed them in Thy most precious blood.

I remain, Reverend and dear Brethren,
Your affectionate Servant in Christ,

✠ HENRY EDWARD,
ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER.

Epiphany 1866.

APPENDIX.

I.

*A Letter of the Supreme Holy Roman and Universal
Inquisition to all the English Bishops.*

It has been notified to the Apostolic See that some Catholics and even ecclesiastics have given their names to a Society established in London in the year 1857, 'for promoting' (as it is called) 'the unity of Christendom;' and that several articles have been published in the daily papers signed with the names of Catholics, in approval of this Society, or supposed to have been written by ecclesiastics in its favour. Now, the real character and aim of the Society are plain, not only from the articles in the journal called the 'Union Review,' but, from the very prospectus in which persons are invited to join it, and are enrolled as members. Organised and conducted by Protestants, it has resulted from a view, put forth by it in express terms, that the three Christian communions, the Roman Catholic, the schismatic Greek, and the Anglican, though separated and divided one from another, have yet an equal

claim to the title of Catholic. Hence, its doors are open to all men whencesoever—Catholics, schismatic Greeks, or Anglicans—but so that none shall moot the question of the several points of doctrine in which they differ, and each may follow undisturbed the opinions of his own religious profession. It appoints, moreover, prayers to be said by all its members, and Masses to be celebrated by priests, according to its particular intention; namely, that these three Christian communions, constituting, as by hypothesis they do, the Catholic Church collectively, may at some future time coalesce to the formation of one body.

The Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office, to whose scrutiny the matter has been referred as usual, has judged, after mature consideration, that the faithful should be warned with all care against being led by heretics to join with them and with schismatics in entering this Association. The Most Eminent Fathers the Cardinals, placed with myself over the Sacred Inquisition, entertain, indeed, no doubt that the Bishops of those parts address themselves already with diligence, according to the charity and learning which distinguish them, to point out the evils which that Association diffuses, and to repel the dangers it is bringing on. Yet they would seem wanting to their office, did they not, in a matter of such moment, further enkindle the said Bishops' pastoral zeal; this novelty being all the more perilous

as it bears a semblance of religion, and of being much concerned for the unity of the Christian society.

The principle on which it rests is one that overthrows the divine constitution of the Church. For it is pervaded by the idea that the true Church of Jesus Christ consists partly of the Roman Church spread abroad and propagated throughout the world, partly of the Photian schism and the Anglican heresy, as having equally with the Roman Church, one Lord, *one faith*, and one baptism. To take away the dissensions which distract these three Christian communions, not without grievous scandal and at the expense of truth and charity, it appoints prayers and sacrifices, to obtain from God the grace of unity. Nothing indeed should be dearer to a Catholic than the eradicating of schisms and dissensions among Christians, and to see all Christians '*solicitous to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*' (Eph. iv.). To that end, the Catholic Church offers prayers to Almighty God, and urges the faithful in Christ to pray, that all who have left the Holy Roman Church, out of which is no salvation, may abjure their errors and be brought to the true faith, and the peace of that Church; nay, that all men may, by God's merciful aid, attain to a knowledge of the truth. But that the faithful in Christ, and that ecclesiastics, should pray for Christian unity under the direction of heretics, and, worse still, according to an intention stained and infected by heresy in a high degree, can

no way be tolerated. The true Church of Jesus Christ is constituted and recognised as such by those four 'notes,' belief in which is asserted in the Creed, each note being so linked with the rest as to be incapable of separation. Hence, the Church Catholic, truly so called, must be luminous with all the high attributes of unity, sanctity, and apostolical succession. The Catholic Church therefore is One, in the manifest and perfect unity of all nations of the world; that is, the unity of which the supreme authority and more eminent principality of blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and his successors in the Roman See is the principle, the root, and indefectible origin. She is no other than that Church which, built on Peter alone, grows up into one body knit together and compacted in unity of faith and charity; which blessed Cyprian in his 45th Epistle heartily acknowledged, where he addresses Pope Cornelius: 'that our colleagues may firmly approve and hold to thee and thy communion—that is, alike to the unity and charity of the Catholic Church.' It was the assertion of this same truth that Pope Hormisdas required of the bishops who abjured the schism of Acacius, in the formula approved by the suffrage of all Christian antiquity, in which they 'who agree not in all things with the Apostolic See' are said to be 'put forth from the communion of the Church Catholic.' So far from its being possible that communions separate from the Roman See can be rightly called or reputed Catholic, their very separation and

disagreement is the mark by which to know those communities and Christians that hold neither the true faith, nor the true doctrine of Christ, as Irenæus (lib. iii. *contra Hæres.* c. 3) most clearly showed as early as the second century. Let the faithful, then, jealously beware of joining those societies to which they cannot unite themselves and yet keep their faith unimpaired; and listen to S. Augustine, who teaches that there can be neither truth nor piety where Christian unity and the charity of the Holy Spirit are absent.

A further reason why the faithful ought to keep themselves entirely apart from the London Society is this, that they who unite in it both favour *indifferentism* and introduce scandal. That Society, at least its founders and directors, assert that Photianism and Anglicanism are two forms of one true Christian religion, in which the same means of pleasing God are afforded as in the Catholic Church; and that the active dissensions in which these Christian communions exist, are short of any breach of the faith, inasmuch as their faith continues one and the same. Yet this is the very essence of that most baleful indifference in matters of religion, which is at this time especially spreading in secret with the greatest injury to souls. Hence no proof is needed that Catholics who join this Society are giving both to Catholics and non-Catholics an occasion of spiritual ruin: more especially because the Society, by holding out a vain expectation of those three

communions, each in its integrity, and keeping each to its own persuasion, coalescing in one, leads the minds of non-Catholics away from conversion to the faith, and, by the journals it publishes, endeavours to prevent it.

The most anxious care, then, is to be exercised, that no Catholics may be deluded either by appearance of piety or by unsound opinions, to join or in any way favour the Society in question, or any similar one; that they may not be carried away, by a delusive yearning for such new-fangled Christian unity, into a fall from that perfect unity which by a wonderful gift of Divine grace stands on the firm foundation of Peter.

C. CARD. PATRIZI.

Rome, this 16th day of September, 1864.

II.

ADDRESS FROM ANGLICAN CLERGY TO CARDINAL PATRIZI.

To the Most Eminent and Most Reverend Father in Christ, and Lord C. Cardinal Patrizi, Prefect of the Sacred Office.

MOST EMINENT LORD,

We the undersigned Deans, Canons, Parish Priests, and other Priests of the Anglo-Catholic Church, earnestly desiring the visible reunion, ac-

ording to the will of our Lord, of the several parts of the Christian family, have read with great regret your Eminence's letter 'To all the English Bishops.'

In that letter, our Society, instituted to promote the Reunion of all Christendom, is charged with affirming in its prospectus, that 'the three Communion, the Roman Catholic, the Eastern, and the Anglican, have an equal claim to call themselves Catholic.'

On that question our prospectus gave no opinion whatever. What we said, treated of the question of *fact*, not of *right*. We merely affirmed that the Anglican Church claimed the name Catholic; as is abundantly plain to all, both from the Liturgy and the Articles of Religion.

Moreover, as to the intention of our Society, that letter asserts our especial aim to be, 'that the three Communion named, each in its integrity, and each maintaining still its own opinions, may coalesce into one.'

Far from us and from our Society be such an aim as this; from which were to be anticipated, not ecclesiastical unity, but merely a discord of brethren in personal conflict under one roof. What we beseech Almighty God to grant, and desire with all our hearts, is simply that œcumenical intercommunion which existed before the separation of East and West, founded and consolidated on the profession of one and the same Catholic faith.

Moreover, the Society aforesaid should all the less excite your jealousy, that it abstains from action, and simply prays, in the words of Christ our Lord, 'May there be one Fold and one Shepherd.' This alone finds place in our hearts' desire; and this is the principle and the yearning we express to your Eminence with the utmost earnestness, with sincere heart and voice unfeigned.

As to the journal entitled 'The Union Review,' the connection between it and the Society is purely accidental, and we are therefore in no way pledged to its *dicta*. In that little work various writers put forth indeed their own opinions, but only to the further elucidation of the truth of the Catholic Faith by developing them. That such a mode of contributing papers should not be in use in Rome, where the controversies of the day are seldom under discussion, is hardly to be wondered at; but in England, where almost every question becomes public property, none results in successful conviction without free discussion.

To hasten this event, we have now laboured during many years. We have effected improvements, beyond what could be hoped for, where the faith of the flock, or divine worship, or clerical discipline, may have been imperfect: and, not to be deemed forgetful of others, we have cultivated a feeling of good will towards the venerable Church of Rome, that has for a long time caused some to mistrust us.

We humbly profess ourselves your Eminence's servants, devoted to Catholic unity.

(This Address was signed by 198 Clergy of the Church of England.)

III.

ANSWER OF HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL PATRIZI TO THE FOREGOING LETTER.

HONOURED AND VERY DEAR SIRS,

In the letter you have sent me, you profess as your only desire, with sincere heart and voice unfeigned, that, in our Lord's words, there should be one fold and one shepherd. This gives the Sacred Congregation a pleasing hope of your finally attaining to true unity, through the Divine grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. But you must beware lest, in seeking it, you turn aside from the way. It causes the Sacred Congregation the most heartfelt sorrow that such has been your case; forasmuch as you imagine that those Christian communities which claim to have inherited the priesthood and the name Catholic, constitute portions of the true Church of Jesus Christ, though divided and separated from the Apostolic See of Peter. Nothing is more contrary to the true idea of the Catholic Church than such a notion. For, as my letter to the English Bishops

lays down, that is the Catholic Church which, built on Peter alone, grows up into one body, knit together and compacted in the unity of faith and charity.* If, indeed, you will examine the matter with care, and dispassionately consider it, evident proofs will show that this unity of faith and charity—that is, of communion—is, by the immutable institution of Christ, not only a chief and fundamental attribute of the Church, but a note, sure and ever visible, whereby the Church herself is, with security and ease, distinguishable from all sects. Witness the express affirmations, the definite metaphors, the parables and similitudes of the sacred Scriptures, portraying, as it were, the Church in outline; then, the plain documents of the holy Fathers and Councils; again, the uniform method which the Church has from the first adopted against heretics and schismatics of every race, many of whom, all the while, arrogated to themselves the priesthood and the name Catholic. As, then, the Church of Christ is Catholic, and is called so, by virtue of that supreme unity of faith and communion which, diffused as she is through all nations and all time, she still firmly maintains; so, in virtue of that same unity, is she entitled Holy and Apostolic; and as without such unity she would cease, *de jure* and *de facto*, to be Catholic, so would she at once lose the attributes of sanctity and apostolical succession.

Its unity, however, the Church of Christ never has

* S. Ambros. de Offic. Ministr. lib. iii. c. 3, n. 19.

lost; never, for the briefest interval of time, will lose: forasmuch as, by the divine oracles, the Church is to endure for ever. But how can its perpetual duration be believed, if the succession of ages bring about new aspects and form in its essential condition, even as in the changeful things of this world; and if the Church itself could at any time lapse so far from that unity of faith and communion in which it was founded by Jesus Christ and then propagated by the Apostles? For therefore, says S. Ambrose, will the reign of the Church endure for ever, because the faith is undivided and the body one.* Now, if the Church of Christ be altogether indefectible, it follows at once that it is to be asserted and believed infallible also in propounding the doctrines of the Gospel. And that Christ our Lord, by a wonderful gift, has bestowed on His Church, of which He is Himself the Head, the Bridegroom, and the Corner Stone, this prerogative of infallibility, is a fixed dogma of the Catholic faith. What man of sound mind, indeed, could persuade himself that error might lurk in the Church's public and authoritative office as teacher, instituted by Christ to this very end, that we should not now be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, in the wickedness of men, in craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive; † which He promised should never be destitute of His own presence, and should be taught all truth by the Holy Ghost;

* In Luc. lib. vii. n. 91.

† Ephes. iv. 14.

through which He willed that all nations should be called to the obedience of faith, and be taught what to believe, and what to do; so that he should be condemned who would not believe the preaching of the Apostles and their lawful successors; and to which He gave the function and authority to prescribe the form of sound words, wherein all who are taught of God should unite? Hence S. Paul calls the Church the pillar and ground of the truth.* But how could the Church be the ground of the truth, unless they who sought were secure of obtaining the truth at her hands? Moreover, the holy Fathers, speaking with one voice, proclaim that the unity of the faith and doctrine of Christ is so inherent in the unity of the Church that the one cannot be disjoined from the other; which is the meaning of that golden saying of S. Cyprian, that the Church is the home of unity and truth.† Nor has the Catholic Church been ever in doubt of this prerogative, promised and communicated to it by the continual presence of Christ and the assistance of the Holy Ghost, so often as it has applied itself to decide controversies which arise on faith, to interpret the sacred Scriptures, or to overthrow such errors as oppose the deposit of revelation committed to it. It has ever put forth and proposed its definitions of dogma as a certain and immutable rule of faith, every one being bound to yield to them in-

* 1 Timoth. iii. 15.

† Epist. viii. ad Cornel. ap. Coustant, n. 1.

terior assent, without doubtfulness, uncertainty, or hesitation, as to a rule of faith. And such as contumaciously resist these definitions would, by the very fact, be judged to have made shipwreck of the faith necessary to salvation, and ceased to belong to Christ's flock. All which brings out more and more the absurdity of that figment of a Catholic Church as a coalition of three communions ; a figment whose authors are of necessity driven to deny the Church's infallibility.

Quite as certain is the proof that Christ Jesus, in order to produce and ever preserve unity in His Church, and through the appointment of a head to remove all occasion of schism,* has, by a special providence, chosen the most blessed Peter in preference to the other Apostles, to be their Prince, and the conspicuous centre and bond of that unity. On him He has built His Church ; to him He has given supreme charge and authority to feed the entire flock, to confirm his brethren, to bind and to loose throughout the world ; continuing it to his successors in every age. A Catholic dogma is one which, coming from the lips of Christ, delivered and maintained by the perpetual teaching of the Fathers, has been religiously preserved by the universal Church through every age, and which it has often confirmed against the errors of innovators, by decrees of supreme Pontiffs and Councils. Hence, that alone has ever been

* S. Hieronym. lib. i. adv. Jovin. n. 26.

believed to be the Church Catholic which is united in faith and communion with the See of the Roman Pontiffs, successors of Peter; the See named, therefore, by S. Cyprian the root and matrix of the Catholic Church,* designated by Fathers and Councils, as its especial title, the Apostolic See; the See whence sacerdotal unity took its rise;† whence the laws of religious communion flow to all;‡ wherein Peter ever lives, presides, and holds out to all who seek the truths of faith.§ S. Augustine, as we know, when he would recall the Donatists, convicted of schism, to the root and the vine whence they had departed, uses an argument frequent also with the earlier Fathers: ‘Come, my brethren, if ye would be grafted into the Vine. It is grievous to see you cut off and lying there. Number up the priests from the See of Peter itself, and see who in that series of Fathers succeeded to whom. That is the Rock, against which the haughty gates of hell prevail not.’ ||

No other proof is needed that he is not in the Catholic Church who is not joined to that Rock on which the foundation of Catholic unity is laid. In the same sense, S. Jerome held every one to be profane who was not united in communion with the

* Epist. iv. ad Cornel. ap. Coustant, n. 3.

† S. Cyp. epist. xii. ad Cornel. ap. Coustant, n. 11.

‡ Epist. Conc. Aquil. ad Gratian. Imp. an. 381, inter epist. S. Ambrosii.

§ S. Pet. Chrysol. epist. ad Eutyech. Act. iii. Concil. Ephes. ap. Harduin, i. 1478.

|| Psalm. in part. Donati.

See of Peter and the Pontiff seated there. 'Following (he writes to Damasus) no chief but Christ, I am joined in communion with your holiness, that is, with the chair of Peter. On that rock I know that the Church is built. Whosoever eateth the Lamb out of this house is profane. If any one be not in the ark of Noe he will perish when the flood prevails. Whosoever gathereth not with thee, scattereth; that is, he who is not of Christ is of Antichrist.'* In the same sense, also, S. Optatus of Milevis proclaims that chair to be one, known to all, set up in Rome, in which unity is so to be preserved by all that he is a schismatic and heretic whosoever sets up any other chair against that one alone.† And rightly too; for, as S. Irenæus openly proclaims to all, in the ordination and succession of the Roman Pontiffs, the tradition and publication of truth in the Church, which began with the Apostles, has come down even to us; this being proof complete that one and the same life-giving faith in the Church is handed down and preserved in truth from the Apostles to this day.‡

If, then, it be a mark of Christ's Church, special and perpetual, that with perfect unity in faith and charity of communion, it coheres, flourishes, and, as a city set on a hill, is manifest to all men in all time; if, again, Christ has willed that of such unity the Apostolic See of Peter should be the source, the

* Epist. xiv. al. 57, ad Damas. n. 2.

† De Schism. Donatist. lib. ii. n. 2.

‡ Lib. iii. contra Hæres. c. 3, n. 3, ex vet. interpret.

centre, and the bond, it follows that no congregation whatsoever, separated from the external visible communion and obedience of the Roman Pontiff, can be the Church of Christ, or can in any way whatsoever belong to the Church of Christ: to that Church which, after the Holy Trinity, is proposed to our belief in the Creed as a Church Holy, One, True, Catholic;* called Catholic not only by its children, but by all its enemies beside;† with such exclusive possession of the name that, whereas all heretics claim to be called Catholics, yet if a stranger should ask where the Catholic Church assembles, no heretic ventures to point out his own temple or place of meeting.‡ It cannot belong to that Church by means of which, as by a body in intimate union with Himself, Christ bestows the benefits of His redemption; severed from which, however much one may hold himself to be living blamelessly, yet for this sin alone, of being disjoined from the unity of Christ, he shall not have life, but the wrath of God remaineth on him.§ Wherefore, as the name Catholic can by no manner of right belong to such communions, so can it in no way be given to them without manifest heresy.

From all which, honoured and very dear Sirs, you will see why this Sacred Congregation has so care-

* S. Aug. de Symbol. ad Catech. c. vi.

† S. Aug. de Verâ Relig. c. vii.

‡ S. Aug. contra Epist. Fundam. c. iv. n. 5.

§ S. Aug. ep. cxli. al. 152, n. 5. '.

fully provided against the faithful of Christ being permitted to enrol themselves in, or to favour in any way, the Society you have lately set on foot to promote (as you express it) the unity of Christendom. You will also see that every effort at reconciliation must needs be in vain, except on condition of those principles on which the Church was at first founded by Christ, and thenceforward in every succeeding age propagated one and the same throughout the world by the Apostles and their successors; principles clearly expressed in that well-known formula of Hormisdas, which has been approved beyond all question by the whole Catholic Church. Lastly, you will see that the universal intercommunion before the Photian schism, of which you speak, obtained because at that time the Eastern Churches had not fallen away from the submission due to the Apostolic See; and that to restore such intercommunion, so greatly to be desired, it will not suffice that ill-will and hatred to the Roman Church be laid aside, but, by the precept and appointment of Christ, and by an absolute necessity, the faith and communion of the Roman Church be accepted; since, in the words of your illustrious countryman, Venerable Bede, 'Whosoever they be who in any way withdraw from the unity of the faith, or from communion with him (blessed Peter), these can neither be absolved from the bonds of their sins, nor enter the gate of the heavenly kingdom.'*

* Hom. in Nat. SS. Petri et Pauli.

Seeing, then, honoured and very dear Sirs, that *the Catholic Church has been shown to be one, and incapable of partition or division,** we would have you hesitate no longer to take refuge in the bosom of that Church which, by acknowledgment of all mankind, holds the supreme authority by the succession of its Bishops from the Apostolic See; heretics contending against it in vain.† May the Holy Spirit vouchsafe to fulfil and perfect without delay what He has begun in you by that good will towards the Church which He has imparted to you. And this, in union with the Sacred Congregation, our most holy Lord Pope Pius IX. desires with all his heart; and earnestly beseeches from the God of mercies and Father of lights that all of you at length, escaping from your severed, disinherited condition into the inheritance of Christ, the true Catholic Church, to which unquestionably your forefathers belonged before the deplorable separation of the sixteenth century, may happily attain the root of charity in the bond of peace and fellowship of unity.‡ Farewell.

C. CARD. PATRIZI.

Rome, this 8th November, 1865.

* S. Cypr. ep. viii. ad Cornel. ap. Coustant, n. 2.

† S. Aug. de Utilit. Credendi, c. xvii. n. 35.

‡ S. Aug. ep. lxi. al. 223, n. 2; ep. lxi. al. 238, n. 1.

IV.

*Supremae S. Romanae et Universalis Inquisitionis
Epistola ad omnes Angliae Episcopos.*

APOSTOLICAE Sedi nuntiatum est, catholicos nonnullos et ecclesiasticos quoque viros Societati *ad procurandam*, uti aiunt, *Christianitatis unitatem* Londini anno 1857 erectae, nomen dedisse, et jam plures evulgatos esse ephemeridum articulos, qui catholicorum huic Societati plaudentium nomine inscribuntur, vel ab ecclesiasticis viris eandem Societatem commendantibus exarati perhibentur. Et sane quaenam sit hujus Societatis indoles vel quo ea spectet, nedum ex articulis ephemeridis cui titulus '*The Union Review*,' sed ex ipso folio quo socii invitantur et adscribuntur, facile intelligitur. A protestantibus quippe efformata et directa eo excitata est spiritu, quem expresse profitetur, tres videlicet Christianas communiones Romano-catholicam, Graeco-schismaticam et Anglicanam, quamvis invicem separatas ac divisas, aequo tamen jure catholicum nomen sibi vindicare. Aditus igitur in illam patet omnibus ubique locorum degentibus tum Catholicis, tum Graeco-schismaticis, tum Anglicanis, ea tamen lege ut nemini liceat de variis doctrinae capitibus in quibus dissentiunt quaestionem movere, et singulis fas sit propriae religiosae confessionis placita tranquillo animo sectari. Sociis

vero omnibus preces ipsa recitandas, et sacerdotibus Sacrificia celebranda indicit juxta suam intentionem: ut nempe tres memoratae christianae communiones, utpote quae, prout supponitur, Ecclesiam Catholicam omnes simul jam constituunt, ad unum corpus efformandum tandem aliquando coeant.

Suprema S. O. Congregatio, ad cujus examen hoc negotium de more delatum est, re mature perpensa, necessarium judicavit sedulam ponendam esse operam, ut edoceantur fideles ne haereticorum ductu hanc cum iisdem haereticis et schismaticis societatem ineant. Non dubitant profecto E^mi Patres Cardinales una mecum praepositi Sacrae Inquisitioni, quin istius regionis Episcopi pro ea, quae eminent, caritate et doctrina omnem jam adhibeant diligentiam ad vitia demonstranda, quibus ista Societas scatet, et ad propulsanda quae secum affert pericula: nihilominus muneri suo deesse viderentur, si pastorem eorumdem Episcoporum zelum in re adeo gravi vehementius non inflammarent: eo enim periculosior est haec novitas, quo ad speciem pia et de christianae societatis unitate admodum sollicita videtur.

Fundamentum cui ipsa innititur hujusmodi est quod divinam Ecclesiae constitutionem susque deque vertit. Tota enim in eo est, ut supponat veram Jesu Christi Ecclesiam constare partim ex Romana Ecclesia per universum orbem diffusa et propagata, partim vero ex schismate Photiano et ex Anglicana haeresi, quibus aequae ac Ecclesiae Romanae unus sit Dominus, *una fides* et unum baptisma. Ad remo-

vendas vero dissensiones, quibus hae tres christianaee communioness cum gravi scandalo et cum veritatis et caritatis dispendio divexantur, preces et sacrificia indicit, ut a Deo gratia unitatis impetretur. Nihil certe viro Catholico potius esse debet, quam ut inter Christianos schismata et dissensiones a radice evelantur, et Christiani omnes sint *solliciti servare unitatem spiritus in vinculo pacis* (Ephes. iv.). Quapropter Ecclesia Catholica preces Deo O. M. fundit et Christifideles ad orandum excitat, ut ad veram fidem convertantur et in gratiam cum Sancta Romana Ecclesia, extra quam non est salus, ejuratis erroribus, restituantur quicumque omnes ab eadem Ecclesia recesserunt: imo ut omnes homines ad agnitionem veritatis, Deo bene juvante, perveniant. At quod Christifideles et ecclesiastici viri haereticorum ductu, et quod pejus est, juxta intentionem haeresi quammaxime pollutam et infectam pro christiana unitate orent, tolerari nullo modo potest. Vera Jesu Christi Ecclesia quadruplici nota, quam in symbolo credendam asserimus, auctoritate divina constituitur et dignoscitur: et quaelibet ex hisce notis ita cum aliis cohaeret ut ab iis nequeat sejungi: hinc fit, ut quae vere est et dicitur Catholica, unitatis simul, sanctitatis et Apostolicae successionis praerogativa debeat efulgere. Ecclesia igitur Catholica una est unitate conspicua perfectaue orbis terrae et omnium gentium, ea profecto unitate, cujus principium, radix et origo indefectibilis est beati Petri Apostolorum Principis ejusque in Cathedra Romana Successorum suprema

auctoritas et potior principalitas. Nec alia est Ecclesia Catholica nisi quae super unum Petrum aedificata in unum connexum corpus atque compactum unitate fidei et caritatis assurgit: quod beatus Cyprianus in ep. xlv. sincere professus est, dum Cornelium Papam in hunc modum alloquebatur: *ut Te collegae nostri et communionem tuam, id est Catholicae Ecclesiae unitatem pariter et caritatem, probarent firmiter ac tenerent.* Et idipsum quoque Hormisdas Pontifex ab Episcopis Acacianum schisma ejurantibus assertum voluit in formula totius christianae antiquitatis suffragio comprobata, ubi *sequestrati a communionem Ecclesiae catholicae* ii dicuntur, qui sunt *non consentientes in omnibus Sedi Apostolicae.* Et tantum abest quin communionem a Romana Sede separatae jure suo catholicae nominari et haberi possint, ut potius ex hac ipsa separatione et discordia dignoscatur quanam societates et quinam Christiani nec veram fidem teneant nec veram Christi doctrinam: quemadmodum jam inde a secundo Ecclesiae saeculo luculentissime demonstrabat S. Irenaeus lib. iii. contra Haeres. c. iii. Caveant igitur summo studio Christifideles ne hisce societatibus jungantur, quibus salva fidei integritate nequeunt adhaerere; et audiant sanctum Augustinum docentem, nec veritatem nec pietatem esse posse ubi christiana unitas et Sancti Spiritus caritas deest.

Praeterea inde quoque a Londinensi Societate fideles abhorrere summopere debent, quod conspirantes in eam et *indifferentismo* favent et scandalum inge-

runt. Societas illa, vel saltem ejusdem conditores et rectores profitentur, Photianismum et Anglicanismum duas esse ejusdem verae christianae religionis formas, in quibus aequae ac in Ecclesia Catholica Deo placere datum sit: et dissensionibus utique christianas hujusmodi communionem invicem urgeri, sed citra fidei violationem, propterea quia una eademque manet earumdem fides. Haec tamen est summa pestilentissimae indifferentiae in negotio religionis, quae hac potissimum aetate in maximam serpit animarum perniciem. Quare non est cur demonstretur Catholicos huic Societati adhaerentes spiritualis ruinae catholicis juxta atque acatholicis occasionem praebere, praesertim quum ex vana expectatione ut tres memoratae communionem integrae et in sua quaeque persuasionem persistentes simul in unum coeant, Societas illa acatholicorum conversionem ad fidem aversetur et per ephemerides a se evulgatas impedire conetur.

Maxima igitur sollicitudine curandum est, ne Catholici vel specie pietatis vel mala sententia decepti Societati, de qua hic habitus est sermo, aliisque similibus adscribantur vel quoquomodo faveant, et ne fallaci novae christianae unitatis desiderio abrepti ab ea desciscant unitate perfecta, quae mirabili munere gratiae Dei in Petri soliditate consistit.

C. CARD. PATRIZI.

Romae, hac die 16 Septembris, 1864.

V.

Eminentissimo et Reverendissimo in Christo Patri et Domino C. Cardinali Patrizi, S. Officii Praeposito.

EMINENTISSIME DOMINE,—

Nos infrascripti Decani, Canonici, Parochi, aliique Sacerdotes, Ecclesiae Anglo-Catholicae, Reunionem, juxta Christi voluntatem, Visibilem inter omnes partes Familiae Christianae vehementer desiderantes, Litteras ab Eminentia Tuâ ‘Ad omnes Angliae Episcopos’ emissas magno moerore perlegimus.

In his litteris Societas nostra, ad Reunionem totius Christianitatis promovendam instituta, inculpatur, quod in programme suo ‘Tres communionem, scilicet Romano-Catholicam, Orientalem atque Anglicanam, *aequo jure* Catholicum nomen sibi vindicare’ affirmet.

De quâ quaestione nullam prorsus programma nostrum tulit sententiam. Quod diximus quaestionem *facti* non *juris* tractavit, affirmavimus solummodo, Ecclesiam Anglicanam nomen sibi Catholicum vindicare; quod omnibus, tam a Liturgiâ quam ab Articulis Religionis, abunde patet.

Quin etiam, quod ad Societatis nostrae intentionem attinet, in hisce litteris asseritur, nos hoc potissimum agere, ‘ut tres memoratae communionem integrae, et in suâ quaeque persuasionem persistentes, simul in unum coeant.’

Longe à nobis et à Societate nostrâ tale propositum absit, ex quo non unitas ecclesiastica, sed discordia fratrum sub eodem tecto comminus pugnantium, foret speranda.

Id quod a Deo O. M. enixe rogamus, quod toto corde desideramus, non aliud est, quam illa, quae ante Orientis et Occidentis scissionem, intercommunio oecumenica extitit, unius ejusdemque Fidei Catholicae professione stabilita atque compacta. Societas immo illa supra dicta eo minorem invidiam apud vos movere debet, quod, ab agendo abstinens, solummodo oret, ut, secundum Domini nostri Christi verba, 'Unus Pastor fiat, et unum Ovile.' Hoc tantum in votis nostris collocatur, et hanc sententiam et desiderium Eminentiae Tuae corde sincero et voce non fictâ pro virili parte profitemur.

Quod ad ephemeridem, cui titulus '*The Union Review*' attinet, inter eam et Societatem nostram non nisi fortuita conjunctio exstat, ideoque nullo modo ejus dictis obligamur. In isto quidem opusculo varii scriptores opiniones proprias emittunt, ita tamen ut ex illorum sentiis evolvendis veritas Fidei Catholicae magis eluceat. Talem conscribendi rationem Romae, ubi controversiae hodiernae raro agitantur, in usu non esse vix mirandum est; at in Angliâ, ubi omnis fere quaestio fit publici juris, nulla sine liberâ disputatione in convictionem feliciter evadit.

Nos, ut in hunc eventum festinetur, multos jam annos laboravimus. Si quid minus perfectum fuerit in fide gregis, in cultu, et in disciplina cleri, nos ultra

spem in melius redegimus; et, ne aliorum obliti haberemur, erga venerabilem Romae ecclesiam eâ benevolentia, quae apud nonnullos olim nos suspectos fecit, usi sumus.

Eminentiae tuae nos servos, Catholicae Unitatis studiosos, humiliter profitemur.

VI.

HONORABILES ET DILECTISSIMI DOMINI,

Quod vos, litteris ad me datis, *corde sincero et voce non ficta* hoc tantum optare profiteamini, ut secundum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi verba unum ovile fiat et unus pastor, id spem affert huic Sacrae Congregationi jucundissimam, vos tandem divina ejusdem Jesu Christi gratia ad veram unitatem esse perventuros. Cavendum tamen vobis est, ne ipsam quaerentes deflectatis a via. Id porro Sacra Congregatio vobis contigisse vehementer dolet existimantibus, ad veram Jesu Christi Ecclesiam pertinere, tamquam partes, Christianos illos coetus, qui *sacerdotii et catholici nominis haereditatem* habere se jactant, licet sint ab Apostolica Petri Sede divisi ac separati. Qua opinione nihil est, quod magis a genuina catholicae Ecclesiae notione abhorreat. Catholica enim Ecclesia, ut in meis ad Episcopos Angliae litteris monetur, ea est quae super unum Petrum aedificata in unum con-

nexum corpus atque compactum unitate fidei et caritatis assurgit.* Equidem hanc fidei et caritatis seu communionis unitatem, ex irreformabili Christi institutione, non modo praecipuam esse ac fundamentalem verae Ecclesiae proprietatem, sed certissimam quoque semperque visibilem notam, qua ipsa Ecclesia ab omnibus sectis tuto ac facile distinguatur, evidentissime vobis, si rem sedulo inspicere pacatoque animo considerare volueritis, demonstrabunt tum Sacrarum Scripturarum diserta testimonia insignesque metaphorae, parabolae et imagines, quibus delineatur ac veluti repraesentatur Ecclesia, tum praeclarissima sanctorum Patrum antiquissimarumque synodorum documenta, tum constans agendi ratio, quam Ecclesia a suis usque primordiis sequi consuevit adversus cujusque generis haereticos et schismaticos, tametsi ex iis complures sacerdotii et catholici nominis haereditatem sibi arrogarent. Quemadmodum igitur Ecclesia Christi propter summam, quam per omnes gentes et in omne tempus diffusa firmissime retinet, fidei communionisque unitatem, catholica est et dicitur, ita propter unitatem eandem sancta et apostolica praedicatur; et quemadmodum absque tali unitate desineret et jure et facto esse catholica, ita sanctitatis etiam et apostolicae successionis insignibus continuo privaretur.

At Christi Ecclesia suam unitatem nunquam amisit, nunquam ne brevissimo quidem temporis intervallo

* S. Ambros. de Offic. Ministr. lib. iii. c. 3, n. 19.

amittet; quippe quae perenniter, juxta divina oracula, duratura sit. Quomodo vero Ecclesia perenniter duratura credatur, si in essentialem ejus statum aetas aetati succedens, non secus atque fit in mundanarum rerum mutabilitate, novam induceret speciem et formam, et ipsa adeo Ecclesia ab illa fidei et communionis unitate desciscere aliquando posset, qua et a Jesu Christo fundata est et ab Apostolis deinde propagata? Ideo enim, ait S. Ambrosius, regnum Ecclesiae manebit in aeternum, quia individua fides, corpus est unum.* Quod si Ecclesia Christi indefectibilis prorsus est, sponte sequitur, eam infallibilem quoque dici et credi debere in evangelica doctrina tradenda; quam infallibilitatis praerogativam Christum Dominum Ecclesiae suae, cujus ipse est caput, sponsus et lapis angularis, mirabili munere contulisse, inconcussum est catholicae fidei dogma. Et profecto quis sanus sibi persuadeat, errorem subesse posse publico ac sollemni Ecclesiae magisterio, quod Christus eo consilio instituit, ut jam non simus parvuli fluctuantes et circumferamur omni vento doctrinae in nequitia hominum, in astutia ad circumventionem erroris; † quod sui praesentia nunquam deserendum, atque a Spiritu Sancto de omni veritate edocendum pollicitus est; a quo voluit universas gentes ad obedientiam fidei vocari, et rerum credendarum agendarumque doctrinam ita accipere, ut qui Apostolis legitimisque eorum successoribus praedi-

* In Luc. lib. vii. n. 91.

† Ephes. iv. 14.

cantibus non credidisset, condemnaretur; cui munus auctoritatemque attribuit sanorum verborum formae praescribendae, in qua omnes docibiles Dei convenirent? Hinc Paulus Ecclesiam appellat columnam et firmamentum veritatis.* Sed quo pacto Ecclesia esset firmamentum veritatis, nisi tuto ab ea veritas peteretur? Sanctissimi quoque Patres una voce loquuntur ac praedicant, in unitate Ecclesiae unitatem fidei ac doctrinae Christi sic defixam esse ut una disjungi ab alia non valeat; quo spectat aurea illa S. Cypriani sententia, Ecclesiam esse unitatis ac veritatis domicilium.† Neque Catholica Ecclesia dubitavit unquam de hac praerogativa sibi promissa et per jugem Christi praesentiam Sanctique Spiritus afflatum communicata, quoties subortas fidei controversias dirimere, sacrarum Scripturarum sensum interpretari, erroresque commisso revelationis deposito adversos profligare aggressa est; suas enim dogmaticas definitiones edidit semper ac proposuit tamquam certam et immutabilem fidei regulam; quibus, ut fidei regulae, intimum quisque assensum sine ulla dubitatione, suspicione, haesitatione praestare deberet; qui vero iisdem definitionibus contumaciter obsisterent, hoc ipso circa fidem salutem consequendam necessariam naufragavisse nec amplius ad Christi ovile pertinere censerentur. Atque haec magis magisque absurditatem produnt illius commenti de Catholica Ecclesia ex tribus communionibus

* 1 Timoth. iii. 15.

† Epist. viii. ad Corn. ap. Coustant, n. 1.

coalescente, cujus commentu fautores infallibilitatem Ecclesiae necessario inficiari coguntur.

Jam non minus certum atque exploratum est, Christum Jesum, ut fidei communionisque unitas in Ecclesia gigneretur ac perpetuo servaretur, utque capite constituto schismatis tolleretur occasio,* bea- tissimum Petrum prae caeteris Apostolis, tamquam illorum principem et ejusdem unitatis centrum et vinculum conspicuum, singulari providentia elegisse; super quem Ecclesiam suam aedificavit, et cui totius gregis pascendi, fratres confirmandi, totoque orbe ligandi ac solvendi summam curam auctoritatemque contulit in successores omni aevo prorogandam. Catholicum dogma hoc est, quod ore Christi acceptum, perenni Patrum praedicatione traditum ac defensum Ecclesia universa omni aetate sanctissime retinuit, saepiusque adversus Novatorum errores Summorum Pontificum Conciliorumque decretis confirmavit. Quare Catholica Ecclesia illa solum semper credita est, quae fide et communionem cum Sede Romanorum Pontificum Petri successorum cohaeret, quam propterea Sedem S. Cyprianus nuncupat Catholicae Ecclesiae radicem et matricem;† quam unam Patres et Concilia per antonomasticam appellationem Apostolicae Sedis nomine designant; e qua sacerdotalis unitas exorta est‡ et in omnes venerandae communionis jura dimanant;§ in qua Petrus jugiter

* S. Hieronym. lib. i. adv. Jovin. n. 26.

† Epist. iv. ad Cornelium ap. Coustant, n. 3.

‡ S. Cypr. epist. xii. ad Corn. ap. Coustant, n. 14.

§ Epist. Concilii Aquileiensis ad Gratianum Imp. an. 381, inter Epistolas S. Ambrosii.

vivit et praesidet et praestat quaerentibus fidei veritatem.* Certe S. Augustinus, ut schismatis convictos Donatistas ad radicem et vitem, unde discesserant, revocaret, argumento utitur ab antiquioribus Patribus frequentato: Venite, fratres, si vultis ut inseminari in vite. Dolor est, cum vos videmus praecisos ita jacere. Numerate sacerdotes vel ab ipsa Petri Sede, et in ordine illo patrum, quis cui successit, videte. Ipsa est petra, quam non vincunt superbae inferorum portae.† Quo uno satis ostendit, in Catholica Ecclesia eum non esse qui non inhaereat illi Petrae, in qua fundamentum positum est unitatis catholicae. Neque aliter sensit S. Hieronymus, cui profanus erat quisquis non Cathedrae Petri et Pontifici in ea sedenti communionem consociaretur: Nul- lum primum (sic ille ad Damasum) nisi Christum sequens, beatitudini tuae, id est cathedrae Petri com- munionem consocior; super illam petram aedificatam esse Ecclesiam scio. Quicumque extra hanc domum agnum comederit, profanus est. Si quis in Noe arca non fuerit, peribit regnante diluvio. Quicumque tecum non colligit, spargit, hoc est, qui Christi non est, Antichristi est.‡ Neque aliter S. Optatus Mile- vitanus, qui singularem illam cathedram celebrat, omnibus notam, Romae constitutam, in qua unitas ab omnibus ita servari debet, ut schismaticus et

* S. Petrus Chrysol. Epist. ad Eutych. Act. iii. Concilii Ephes. ap. Harduin, i. 1478.

† Psalm. in part. Donati.

‡ Epist. xiv. al. 57, ad Damas. n. 2.

haereticus sit, qui contra illam singularem cathedram aliam collocet.* Et merito quidem; in Romanorum enim Pontificum ordinatione et successione, uti denunciat aperte omnibus S. Irenaeus, ea quae est ab Apostolis in Ecclesia traditio et veritatis praeconatio pervenit usque ad nos; et est plenissima haec ostensio, unam et eandem vivificatricem fidem esse quae in Ecclesia ab Apostolis usque nunc sit conservata et tradita in veritate.†

Itaque si proprium est ac perpetuum verae Christi Ecclesiae insigne, ut summa fidei caritatisque socialis unitate contineatur, efflorescat ac veluti civitas supra montem posita omnibus hominibus omni tempore patefiat; et si, alia ex parte, ejusdem unitatis originem, centrum ac vinculum Christus esse voluit Apostolicam Petri Sedem, consequens fit, coetus prorsus omnes ab externa visibilique communione et obedientia Romani Pontificis separatos, esse non posse Ecclesiam Christi, neque ad Ecclesiam Christi quomodolibet pertinere, ad illam scilicet Ecclesiam, quae in symbolo post Trinitatis commendationem credenda proponitur Ecclesia sancta, Ecclesia una, Ecclesia vera, Ecclesia catholica; ‡ quae catholica nominatur non solum a suis, verum etiam ab omnibus inimicis, § sicque ipsum catholicae nomen sola obtinuit, ut cum omnes haeretici se catholicos dici velint, quaerenti

* De Schism. Donatist. lib. ii. n. 2.

† Lib. iii. contra Hæres. cap. iii. n. 3, ex vet. interpr.

‡ S. Aug. de Symb. ad Catech. cap. vi.

§ S. Aug. de Vera Relig. cap. vii.

tamen peregrino alicui, ubi ad catholicam conveniatur, nullus haereticorum vel basilicam suam vel domum audeat ostendere;* per quam Christus veluti per corpus sibi penitissime conjunctum beneficia redemptionis impertit, et a qua quisque fuerit separatus, quantumlibet laudabiliter se vivere existimet, hoc solo scelere quod a Christi unitate disjunctus est, non habebit vitam, sed ira Dei manet super eum:† ejusmodi proinde coetibus catholicum nomen tum jure minime competere, tum facto attribui nullatenus posse citra manifestam haeresim. Inde autem perspicietis, honorabiles ac dilectissimi Domini, quare sacra haec Congregatio tanta sollicitudine caverit, ne Christifideles societati a vobis recens institutae ad promovendam, ut dicitis, christianitatis unitatem cooptari paterentur aut quoquomodo faverent. Perspicietis etiam in irritum necessario cadere quamcumque conciliandae concordiae molitionem, nisi ad ea principia exigatur, quibus Ecclesia et ab initio est a Christo stabilita et deinceps omni consequenti aetate per Apostolos eorumque successores una eademque in universum orbem propagata; quaeque in celeberrima Hormisdæ formula, quam certum est a tota catholica Ecclesia comprobata esse, dilucide exponuntur. Perspicietis denique, oecumenicam illam quam memoratis, *intercommunionem* ante schisma Photianum, ideo viguisse quia orientales ecclesiae nondum a de-

* S. Aug. contr. Epist. Fundam. cap. iv. n. 5.

† S. Aug. ep. cxli. al. 152, n. 5.

bito Apostolicae Cathedrae obsequio desciverant; neque ad optatissimam hanc intercommunionem restaurandam satis esse, simultates et odia in Romanam Ecclesiam deponere, sed omnino, ex praecepto et instituto Christi, oportere Romanae Ecclesiae fidem et communionem amplecti; quandoquidem, ut ait venerabilis Beda splendidissimum vestrae gentis ornamentum: Quicumque ab unitate fidei vel societate illius (beati Petri) quolibet modo semetipsos segregant, tales nec vinculis peccatorum absolvi nec januam possint regni caelestis ingredi.*

Atque utinam, honorabiles et dilectissimi Domini, quoniam *Ecclesia catholica una esse nec scindi nec dividi posse monstrata est*,† non amplius dubitetis, vos ejusdem Ecclesiae condere gremio, quae usque ad confessionem generis humani ab Apostolica Sede per successiones episcoporum, frustra haereticis circumlatrantibus, culmen auctoritatis obtinuit.‡ Utinam quod in vobis per inditam benevolentiam erga hanc Ecclesiam Spiritus Sanctus coepit, ipse complere et perficere sine mora dignetur. Id vobis una cum hac Sacra Congregatione toto ominatur animo et a Deo misericordiarum et luminum Patre enixe adprecatur sanctissimus Dominus Noster Pius Papa IX., ut vos tandem omnes ab exhaeredata praecisione fugientes in haereditatem Christi, in veram Catholicam Eccle-

* Hom. in Nat. SS. Petri et Pauli.

† S. Cypr. ep. viii. ad Corn. apud Coustant, n. 2.

‡ S. Aug. de Util. Credendi, c. xvii. n. 35.

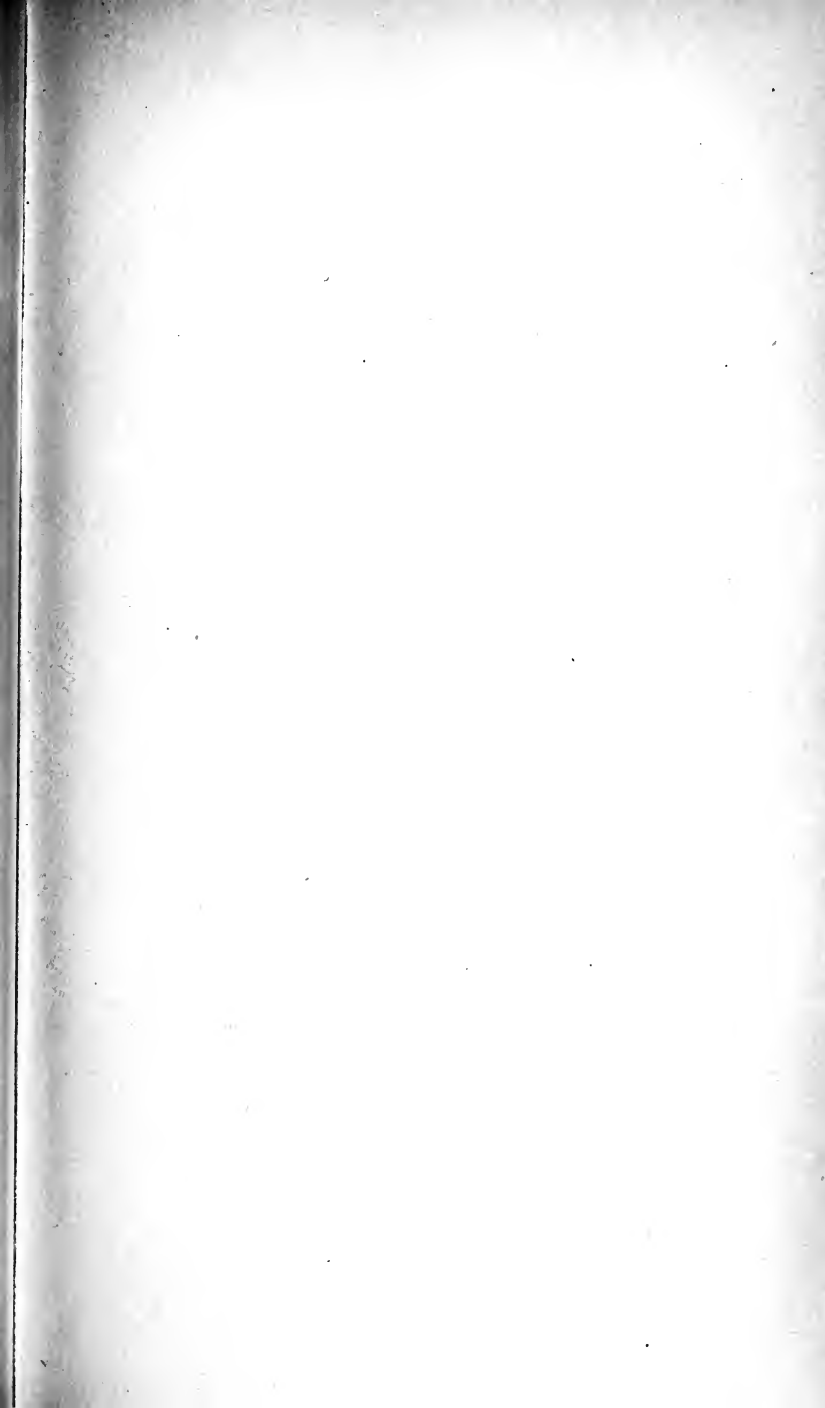
siam, ad quam certe spectarunt majores vestri ante lugendam saeculi sextidecimi separationem, accipere feliciter mereamini radicem caritatis in vinculo pacis et in societate unitatis.* Valet.

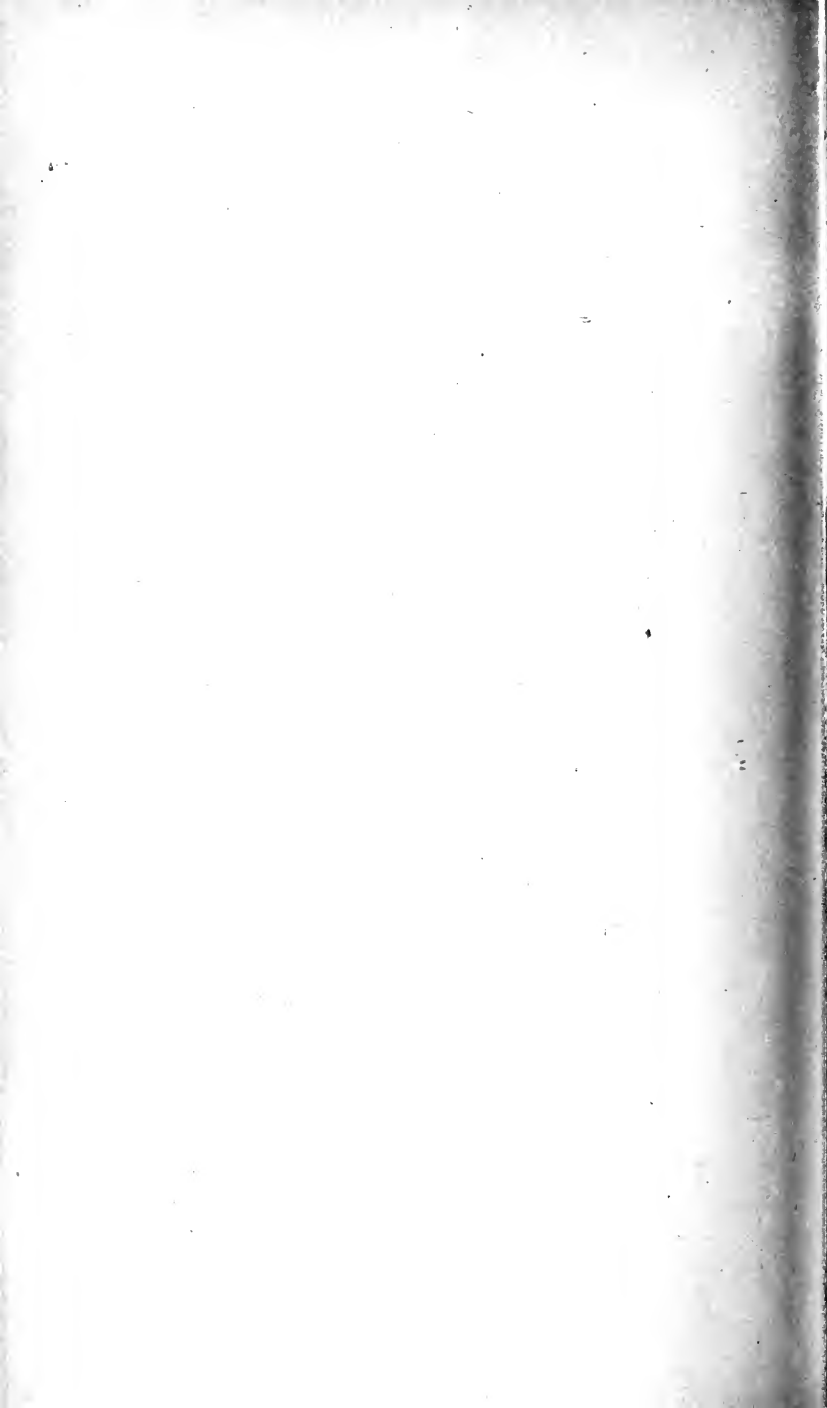
C. CARD. PATRIZI.

Romae, hac die 8 Novembris, 1865.

* S. Aug. ep. lxi. al. 223, n. 2; ep. lxi. al. 238, n. 1.

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ON
THE PRESENT STATE

OF

POLITICAL PARTIES IN AMERICA

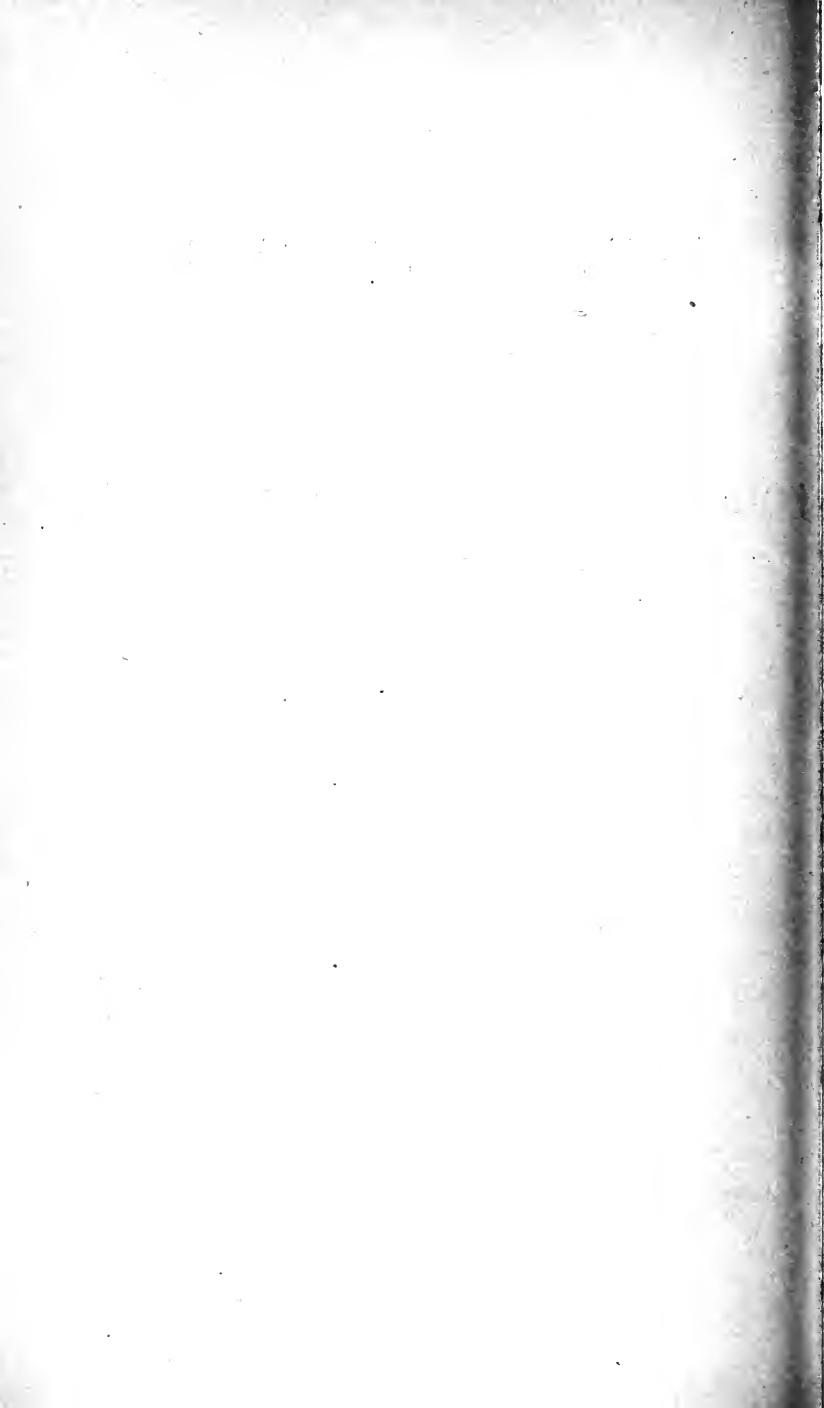
BY

LAURENCE OLIPHANT, Esq., M.P.

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MDCCCLXVI



P R E F A C E.

I HAVE been induced to republish the following lecture at the request of many of those before whom it was delivered in the Stirling District of Burghs, in the hope that the observations I was enabled to make during a recent visit to the United States may not be without some general interest. Evidences of a change of parties have taken place even since last month, when I left America; not only is the present sketch necessarily imperfect, therefore, from its brevity, but allowances must be made for the new and unexpected combinations which at such a crisis are being constantly produced. These will, I trust, be the more readily understood when the general features of the opposing views, as I have endeavoured to portray them, are clearly apprehended.

ATHENÆUM CLUB,
15th February.



ON
THE PRESENT STATE
OF
POLITICAL PARTIES IN AMERICA.

IF the subject of my lecture this evening is of a purely political character, I feel that I am not on that account the less justified in bringing it to your notice. In no country, not even in America, as I shall presently show, is the national government more directly subject to popular control than it is in Great Britain; and as the political destinies of this land are practically in the hands of the people, it is evident that a large proportion of popular lectures should be political. The electors of every constituency are supposed to be well-informed upon those issues which are more immediately occupying the attention of Parliament, and upon which, in the event of an appeal to the country, they are called upon to decide; and I hold it to be the duty of their representatives, whenever they are enabled specially to inform themselves upon these questions, to give the result of their labours and investigations to their constituents. Considering myself distinctly bound by this obligation, and believing that one of the most important topics which will come under the consideration of the Parliament that is about to assemble will be the present state of our relations with America, I feel that I scarcely owe you an excuse in asking you to spare me an hour while I

endeavour, however feebly, to place before you the result of my observations in that country, from which I have only a few days ago returned. In doing so I will endeavour, in the first place, as much as possible to avoid predictions. They are pretty sure to give offence, and one never gets credit for them when they come true. In the second, I will try and be as impartial as I can. I will express no sympathy in favour of either North or South, but I will tell you what I heard and saw, and how I was impressed, and will not by any means expect you to adopt my conclusions.

There is no country in the world in which it is so difficult to arrive at authentic information upon any point as America, or in which all one's preconceived ideas are likely to be more completely at fault. It is impossible to judge of it by any historical parallel, because no historical parallel exists. Every political experience through which it passes is novel and unique; and whereas the political convulsions of Europe are almost monotonous from their uniformity, those of America are quite original, and, I may add, highly sensational. The European traveller, imbued with the ideas of the present and the past of his own country, feels bewildered on his arrival in the United States by the anomalies and apparent contradictions which meet him at every turn. For instance, he knows that the Southern States have maintained a sanguinary struggle for four years in order to secede from the Union, and that the Northern States have incurred a debt of five hundred millions to prevent their leaving the Union; but he actually finds, when he goes there now, that the political struggle which the Southern States are making is to get back into the Union, and that a large majority of the United States Congress are straining every nerve to keep them out of it. That is anomaly number one. Anomaly number two is, that in the freest country in the world, which America undoubtedly is in some respects, the struggle has in a certain sense been all through in favour of the principle of absolutism. The South has been fighting to maintain absolute power over the negro, and the North to exercise absolute power over the South as to the treatment of the negro. In both cases it was

the right of somebody to coerce somebody else that was at the root of this republican struggle. Anomaly number three is, to find one political party styling itself Democratic or Conservative—a correct definition, because they want to conserve their old democratic institutions; and another party calling itself the Radical or Union party, which seeks to weaken these old democratic institutions, and to strengthen the central or national executive authority. Now, with us, those who wanted to take power from the people and give it to the Government would be called Conservatives, but in America they are called Radicals; and people who wanted to keep the power in the hands of local communities would here be called Radicals, but in America they are called Conservatives. It is very important to keep this distinction in mind. Another and very significant anomaly is, the extraordinary leniency of the North towards its conquered enemies. Having now seen every political convulsion of any note which has taken place in Europe since 1848, I was the better able to judge of the conduct of the North in this respect; and it is the most remarkable feature of the whole episode, as I shall show presently, because it really furnishes the key to the situation. Scarcely was the war at an end than New York and Washington were swarming with ex-generals and officers from the late Confederate army. Accustomed to the terrorism and secrecy which follow unsuccessful revolts in Europe, I was astounded at the openness with which Southern leaders talked of their exploits in public; traces even of their uniforms were still to be distinguished, and any real attempt at concealment was considered quite unnecessary. I thought of St Petersburg or Vienna immediately after a Polish or Hungarian insurrection; and the contrast between a civil war in a free country, and the revolt of an oppressed nationality against a despotism, struck me forcibly. In the one case the instinct of the vanquished at the end of the war is to leave the country altogether, or shrink into seclusion and offer a passive resistance to every measure of the oppressing Administration; in the other, it is for the leaders boldly and instantly to repair to the seat of the victorious Government, make hon-

ourable terms, and do what they can to recover their lost political position. In the case of a despotism, an unsuccessful insurrection is followed by the most terrible measures of vengeance and cruelty; in the case of a free country, pardons are distributed wholesale, and the generals who, a month before, met in deadly strife, dine together and discuss, as I have myself heard them, the campaigns in which they were opposed to each other. This constitutes, in fact, the important distinction between the war that has just terminated in America, and any other war with which history furnishes a parallel.

It was different from an ordinary civil war, because it was one section of the country fighting against another; and it was different from a revolution, because the rebels were fighting not to overturn, but to preserve an existing institution. It was not a war of races, but a war nevertheless susceptible of a distinct geographical expression—it was North against South. The question referred to the arbitrament of the sword was, “Does a right of secession from the Union exist?” Had the fortune of war given it in favour of the South, this war would hereafter have been known as a civil war; as the North have conquered, it will hereafter be very properly styled a rebellion, because it has established the great principle of Federal supremacy. So you will observe that even in a Republic freedom has its limits; and this war has decided that individual States are not free to secede—in other words, internal liberty is sacrificed at this point to centralised power, and the principle of local freedom is made in this, as in every country, subordinate to the instincts of national self-preservation. The inviolability of the Union was the great principle established by this war, and in order to secure it, the emancipation of the slaves was deemed a necessary measure.

No sooner was the war at an end than the South hastened to define what they conceived to be the only issue of the war. “We fought for the right of secession,” they say, “and for nothing else. We have been beaten, and we admit that we have lost that right (if we ever had it), and that we must

submit to the loss of our slaves ; but there the matter ends : the war settled nothing else ; all our other rights remain to us intact." So say the South ; and, in pursuance of this policy, they are making every effort now to recover their political position in the Federal Government with as little delay as possible. The South, thus stretching their argument to its utmost limit, would insist that they were never at any time out of the present Union—that the Confederate Government was an experiment which did not succeed, and therefore counts for nothing, and that the whole episode ought to be regarded as never having happened. Now, a large party in the North think that there is a certain advantage in adopting this view. "We will assume," they say, "that the South is in perfect good faith, that it is quite satisfied with having submitted the question to the ordeal of war ; and we do not fear any treachery if we open our arms to our late enemies, and welcome them back to the Union, or rather accept their view that they have never been out of it. By this means the process of reconstruction will be immensely facilitated—in fact, there will be scarcely any reconstruction necessary. All we have got to do is to go on as we did before, and this wonderful problem, which is looked upon by the world outside as insoluble, is at an end." That is rather the view which the President and his Cabinet take, and which I believe, the majority in the North support. It is the smooth, easy, pleasant view of things, and therefore the most popular one ; but there is a very influential and a very powerful, because a very earnest, party in the North which advocates with great vehemence a very opposite policy. "The South," they say, "aimed to destroy the Union ; by that act they put themselves out of it. The moment they fired the first shot they became belligerents (which, by the way, is just what we said ; only, Mr Stevens, one of their leaders, argued this point much more clearly than our Government). They started an opposition Government, and made war upon us as an independent sovereignty ; we beat them, and they are now a conquered country ; we must now govern them as such ; we must not allow their representatives to sit in a legislature which for

four years they refused to acknowledge. It would be madness to suppose that they are sincere in their professions of love to the Union; if they are, they are double traitors, for they are traitors to the cause they have been fighting for. It is not in human nature that they will not seek their revenge—their submission is too complete; we suspect it. The South is a serpent, and if we take it into our bosom it will sting us. At all events let us try them first; let us see how they treat the negroes; and if they do not treat them as we think right, let us make them; let us judge by their acts of their sincerity. So far as they have gone, these are not reassuring; all the most notorious rebels are the most popular men, and are placed by the Southern people in the most influential positions, and actually sent by them to represent them in Congress. We refuse to sit in the same legislature with such men; and we hold that to allow them the chance of regaining the reins of power is to throw away the results we have so dearly bought.” “The Southern States,” says Mr Stevens, “ought never to be recognised as capable of acting in the Union, or of being counted as valid States, until the Constitution shall have been amended, so as to make it what its framers intended, and so as to secure the perpetual ascendancy to the party of the Union.” The party that holds this view is called the Radical Republican party. The party that leans to a milder policy towards the South is called the Moderate Republican party; and the party which is absolutely Southern in sympathy is called the Democratic or Copperhead party.

Now, you will at once see that there is great room for diversity of opinion as to the mode of treatment which should be adopted towards the South; and just as there must be a great antagonism of opinion, you will also see that to each view is attached some very serious objections. The process of cutting a tiger’s claws, for instance, is about as difficult as the process of reconstruction. If you want to do it by force, you must be quite sure that you are strong enough to hold the animal down until the operation is quite completed; if you try gentleness, you must be equally sure that while you are absorbed in clipping his claws he won’t snap your head off.

The Radicals say, "We can hold him down;" their opponents say, "He will tire you out in the end; we shall have a better chance by soothing and petting." "Yes," say the others, "and have your head snapped off in the process." That is the whole question, and a very difficult question it is. It all depends upon the amiability of the tiger. If a sound thrashing is likely to improve his temper, he has had that, and he certainly is tame and submissive enough now. But he carries marks enough on his hide to remind him for life of the punishment he has had, and I have myself observed a latent fire in his eye which, to say the least of it, looked suspicious.

But besides the questions of political and administrative expediency which the treatment of the South gives rise to, there is another class of questions of a constitutional nature not less embarrassing. If this view—that the Southern States have never been out of the Union—be adopted, then they are at once in the enjoyment of political rights, which places their conquerors at an immense disadvantage—as, for instance, in the matter of their representation. Before the war the Southern States sent seventy members to Congress. At that time the population was based on the hypothesis that the negro was two-fifths of a man; but since he has been emancipated he has become a complete man—still without a vote—and the Southern States would send eighty-three members to Congress, thereby rendering a combination easy by which the North would be placed in a minority. The only way to get over this difficulty would be by another constitutional amendment excluding negroes from the basis of the representation whenever they are excluded from suffrage. Again, if the South have never been out of the Union, they are in the enjoyment of all their original State rights, and, although they could not introduce slavery, might pass any oppressive laws they chose affecting the negro, and introduce a labour-system very little removed from slavery. They would, in every respect and particular, be in exactly the same condition as the other States of the Union. It would be a question, for instance, whether, under these circumstances, a test-oath would be legal; and innumerable other acts of direct administration now exercised by the central

authority at Washington for the maintenance of order in the South would certainly be illegal; while, most important of all, the Congress would be acting unconstitutionally in excluding the representatives chosen by the South from their seats in the national legislature as they have done. If, in a word, at the close of the war they were found in the Union, they do not need to be restored to it, and every act of administrative authority exercised from Washington since then has been illegal, and there is no such thing as reconstruction. Reconstruction implies destruction; without the one there cannot be the other. The point is a nice one, and I wish to make it clear. Either the American Union was broken in two, or it was not. If it was not broken in two, then every act of interference with local State authority in the South since the termination of the war (and the whole of President Johnson's administration has consisted of nothing but such acts) has been illegal; and all exceptional action on the part of Congress is unjustifiable, and the so-called policy of reconstruction a work of unconstitutional supererogation. If, on the other hand, the Union was broken in two and has not yet been united, then the South have had no right to pass the Amendment Act abolishing slavery, to send representatives to Congress, to elect their governors, to convoke their State legislatures, and in all other respects to exercise their State rights as they have already done.

It seems to me that the only logical people are the two opposing extremes. The South must be either in the Union or out of it. At present, they are both or neither. When it suits the President they are in it; when it does not suit him they are out of it. "Now," he says, "you are out of it, and I am going to do a bit of reconstruction," and he appoints provisional governors. Presently he says, "Now you are in it, please do a bit of self-government," and he withdraws his provisional governors, and tells them to elect some for themselves. "Now, again, you are out of it, and I order you to repudiate your rebel debt." "Now you are in it, so settle the suffrage question as each State chooses for itself. I shall regulate the labour question by means of my officers, which I have a right

to do because you are out of the Union, and I call upon you to pass the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery, which could not be done unless you were in it. Finally, as free States in the Union, elect your representatives to Congress, and as conquered States out of it, I will give them a most tremendous test-oath to swallow when they get there." Well, the South grumble a good deal at all this. "Why force upon us humiliating conditions," they say, "when you give us rights that prove that we are legally exempt from them? You are very illogical and illegal; but altogether we will be satisfied with small mercies, for we should fare worse from the more logical Radicals." Now, the position of these latter is extremely clearly defined. "We maintain," they say, "that every concession made to the South is wrong in theory and in practice; they are as much conquered territories by us as India is by Britain, and should be administered and governed as conquered territory. We will confiscate certain lands that ought to be confiscated, and give them to the negroes, and we will compel them to give the negroes suffrage, and to give security for payment of the national debt, and to inaugurate a proper system of education for blacks and whites alike, and to abstain from all race legislation."

In answer to which, what is the argument of the Government and the Northern majority of expediency which support it? "If this course is followed, two sets of dangers are incurred: one danger is, that we exasperate the South into another rising; another danger is, that we are undermining the foundation upon which our own liberties are built. For, practically, what will be the effect of such a policy? It would virtually amount to a split of the Union as decided as ever the South wished. The South fought to be governed separately from the North, and they certainly would be if the Washington Government governed the Southern States while the North governed itself. If one-half the United States is governed one way and one-half the other, the Union is politically severed. If the Northern States are to govern the Southern from Washington, there is a very large hole made in the Constitution indeed; and it will require a very large standing army to

govern those States, and a very strong executive at headquarters—in fact, a military President would be best under such circumstances, and a military President governing one-half the United States by means of bayonets would be rather a dangerous institution for the other half.” Which things being considered, the country seems to incline to think that of all the holes which must be drilled into the Constitution, they prefer the holes the President is drilling; and the South are of opinion that, although he gives them a great many pills to swallow, the Radicals might give them more, and of a larger size. I have put the two opposite views as broadly as possible, in order to make them clear.

The defence of the Government for their policy is simply based on military necessity and political expediency. After a war it is impossible, they maintain, to revert at a bound to a strictly legal status—it must be done gradually; and President Johnson is now engaged in exchanging a centralised military rule for local independent government. Some think he is making the transition far too rapidly, others that he is not going fast enough; but, as far as I could judge, the majority do not trouble themselves with the legal technicalities of the question. He seems to have inspired them with the conviction that he knows what he is about, and as long as he can steer the craft safely to the smooth water at the foot of these rapids of reconstruction, they are willing to let him twist round awkward points of law, and scrape over dangerous constitutional reefs in any way he chooses. Ahead of him there are still some very nasty financial shallows, bounded on one side by Mexican rocks, and on the other by the whirlpools of repudiation, which will require very delicate navigation. Who can say yet how or when the barque of the Union will be calmly floating in untroubled waters again?

“*Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*” has always been a very disagreeable motto to throw at the head of statesmen in any country. The foundation of skilful statesmanship has been long held to be compromise, and any party that blindly holds to an abstract principle, however inexpugnable it may be theoretically, is always called fanatical—hence the Radical

party in New England are called fanatics. The American people, for the most part, are ready nevertheless to admit that this fanaticism saved the Union, for compromise can only steer the ship of the State through the troubled waters I have described when the airs are light and baffling; let a hurricane come on, and your fanatic invariably springs to the helm, lashes it to the only point of compass he believes in, and calmly abides the result. When the fury of the waves subsides, then compromise crawls out from its hiding-place, cuts the lashings of the helm, and begins to trim sails. Now, in this matter of the reconstruction of the Union, the (so-called) New England fanatics, who are gradually being pushed on one side by the President and the country, base their policy on what they believe to be the abstract principle which lies at the basis of a republican form of government. The Constitution contains one clause to the effect that "new States may be admitted into the Union," and another that the United States shall "guarantee to every State a republican form of government." They consider the South in the light of new States about to be admitted. Can a form of government be called republican which excludes a population of four millions from the right of the suffrage, and which legislates in one way for them, and in another way for the whites? Are they not constitutionally bound to fulfil this guarantee, and secure the blacks equal rights with the whites? If in doing this, everything were to come down by the run in consequence of the moral incapacity of the blacks, and the determined resistance of the whites (in neither of which they believe), then "*Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*"—"we must do what we believe to be right—the issues are in higher hands." That I think, as fairly as I can state it, is the position they have taken up, and the breach between them and the President is widening upon this issue every day.

Having thus given you a general idea of the political situation in the United States, I will endeavour to portray briefly the social condition of the South as I found it while the convulsion through which it had passed had not yet subsided. I may here incidentally remark that, having upon two previous occasions visited the United States, I was the better able

to judge of the prospects of the country generally, and of the negro in particular, by the light of my past observation and experience. The question uppermost in every man's mind was, Will the negro work? The Southerner, not yet recovered from the dejection of his defeat, naturally took a gloomy view of things, and having only had experience of the negro in one capacity, declared unhesitatingly that he would not. The Northern speculator, as sanguine as the other was despondent, and with no experience whatever of the servile negro, declared as unhesitatingly that he would. The negro himself, no less ignorant of what he was likely to do as a free man till he tried, declared also that he would work; but evidently it was complete conjecture on all sides. It depended, on the part of the negro, on his national character, on the acts of the Government, and the temper of the Southern whites; while, on the part of these latter, it depended upon the success and nature of the reconstruction policy, and on their power of adapting themselves to their new condition of master and not owner. Both races were expected in a day to unlearn the habits of their lives, and discover a sympathy, and not an antagonism, in the altered relations in which they stood to each other. It is manifest that if the result of slavery on a population was to make the owner an indulgent master, and the slave an industrious freeman, the system might have been continued. The effect practically was exactly opposite. The social revolution produced an antagonism between the races. The slave, as a rule, distrusted the Southerner as an employer, and, perhaps from the novelty as much as from any other reason, preferred to work for Northern men. The instinct of the Southerner was in favour of white labour rather than of negro labour under new conditions. The first experiences of the negroes in their new capacity of freemen were not encouraging. I conversed with numbers, and listened to unvarying records of the knavery to which they had been subjected. Of course I had no means of knowing whether their stories were true; but they complained that, whether they worked for mean whites, for Northern whites or for Southern whites, they invariably got cheated; while the officials in the freedmen's bureau, being usually in

partnership with neighbouring planters, so far from affording redress, were added to the list of their oppressors. I do not state this as being the case, but simply as being the negroes' view of the case; and Mr Sumner, in dwelling upon the sufferings which have overtaken the negro since his emancipation, drew a forcible picture of his melancholy condition not long since in Congress, which my own experience fully confirmed. I invariably asked every negro I conversed with whether he was better or worse off now than he was formerly, and as invariably received for answer that in some respects he was better and in some respects worse; one man on board a steamer illustrated the difference between his present and former condition as follows:—"If, when I was slave," he said, "I had tumbled overboard, the boat would have been stopped—I should have been picked up, put by the fire to dry, because I was property, and then given a thousand lashes for falling overboard; now if I fall overboard, 'Oh, it's only a cursed nigger! go ahead;' and I should never get picked up at all." In a word, the negro used to be a dog with a master, now he is a dog without one. Providence has, however, provided that, under all circumstances, even the most trying, negroes should be very happy dogs. I have seen them digging graves and burying their comrades with an irrepressible lightheartedness. Their power of laughing through their tears is quite unrivalled. The impression of most of the more intelligent is, that unless they are specially protected they will die out by violence, starvation, and disease; but this prospect does not in any way affect their spirits. It is estimated that since the proclamation of emancipation nearly a million have already vanished off the face of the earth. General Banks calculated the mortality at New Orleans alone, during his administration, at 80,000; and from my own observation of the wretched condition of the negro colonies, the number of deaths this winter must be fearful. As they are unable to pay for medical attendance, they are left to die like rotten sheep; and as they have never had the responsibilities of families, but do not the less on that account increase and multiply, the fate of the babies, now that they are no longer property, it is easy to imagine. So long as the negro ex-

ists there will be difference of opinion between the North and the South as to how he shall be treated; and so long as the two sections of the Union quarrel over him will his life remain a burden to him, until at last he will be absorbed in the contest, and, like a property in the Court of Chancery, there will be nothing left of him at all. The negroes, then, are cheerful without being sanguine, and they regard freedom as an impracticable abstraction. "The only freedom for us in this life, massa," one of them remarked to me, "is freedom from sin." He was evidently under the impression that there was as much chance of the one kind of freedom as of the other; but probably he was mistaken. The thing that puzzles them most is, "What have we done to deserve it? Why should we be made victims?" If they had ever travelled among their countrymen in equatorial Africa, they would have seen worse victims there. The doom is on the race, on whichever side of the Atlantic it happens to be.

It is said by the Radical party in the North that until the Southern question is settled, and settled in favour of negro suffrage, and his equal rights generally, Northern capital and Northern men will not migrate south, because they will be overpowered politically by the Southerners, and be at a disadvantage, unless they could count on the negroes on their side; but so far as my own experience went this did not seem to be the case. The Northern speculators whom I met in the South were almost invariably opposed to negro suffrage, and seemed to me in a fair way of becoming Southern in feeling and sentiment. The language of the Southern men is—"We want to see Northerners come down here, we will soon make Southern men of them;" and it is a certain fact that the most bitter Southerners during the war were men who had originally come from the North. The practical effect of this violent convulsion of society will be to cut up the South into smaller holdings, and to increase the variety of its products. Its resources are comparatively undeveloped; the main staples, such as cotton, sugar, rice, and tobacco, will cease to absorb the capital and labour of the country. Grain and stock-farms will increase—the urban populations will become augmented by the develop-

ment of mineral and industrial resources, which are known to exist, but are still to be worked—while manufactures will spring up, and the white population gradually crowd the blacks into the less favoured and unhealthy regions, until, in course of time, they may dwindle into a fraction of the community. I do not believe in the possibility of equal proportions of blacks and whites working together in a climate where it is possible for the white man to labour. In none of the Western States has it been possible for the negro to hold his own, and in the North their numbers have been only kept up by constant accessions of runaway slaves. Some of the most fervent Fenians I have seen are Irishmen who, under the influence of whisky, will work on railways in the South under a sun that would melt the brains of a less favoured mortal; and the only sentiment which rivals in intensity their hatred to the Briton is their hatred of the negro, so that we are in good company. The creed of every Irishman in America is the extermination of the Anglo-Saxon and the negro, provided always that the Anglo-Saxon is out of the United States, and the negro in them.

Whatever happens, it seems to me that the negroes are in a bad way. If the extreme party of the North attempts to force upon the South its views with reference to the negro, the South will take its remedy, not against the North, but against the negro. "Either," they insist, "we must be perfectly free to treat the negro as we think best—not as you think best—or we must get rid of him altogether. We cannot risk a Jamaica tragedy, nor do we intend to see a rival population of black aspirants to Congress springing up amongst us. You must either let us control the labour question as we like, or you will see the negro vanish off the face of the earth with a marvellous and mysterious rapidity. Our dogma is, this is a white man's government." In that case, both the white upper classes and the white labouring classes would be the enemy of the negro; but, on the other hand, if the South are permitted to legislate as they please for the negro, it is to be feared that the negro will find himself in some respects in a much worse condition than he formerly was. He will have many of the disadvantages of slavery without any of its advan-

tages ; he will be bound by yearly contracts to one master, a special code of punishments will be applied to him, he will not be allowed to buy or rent land, and he will be placed under numerous other disabilities ; while he will not, as of old, have his wife and children housed, clothed, fed, and provided with medical attendance ; nor, when he and his wife are old, will they be kept free of all care till the day of their death. Whichever way you look at it, the ultimate extermination of the negro seems to be the most probable result of their emancipation. I do not mean to imply by this, that slavery was an institution which should have existed. Indeed, now that it is abolished, the Southerners themselves are glad to have the stigma removed from them. What does seem hard is, if the only remedy for the disease should turn out to be the same as that which we are now endeavouring to apply to the cattle plague, and should result to the negro in his being "*stamped out.*" Meantime he is between the upper and the nether millstone, undergoing the process of being ground to powder ; and those who are endeavouring to better his condition, only seem to make it worse.

Thus it happens that attempts to correct abuses by violent and precipitate measures often result in failure, and, indeed, are sure to do so, unless those who are engaged in the work of reform are actuated by none other than the purest and most philanthropic motives. A great American thinker of the present day most truly says :—"The reason why great reforms perpetually fail is, not because they have their root in some radical injustice, not because the despotisms against which they rise are in themselves right, but because those who attempt to inaugurate new and better conditions upon the surface of the world are themselves, for the most part, desolate, darkened, and chaotic within." I ought here to observe in extenuation of the fate of the negro, that thousands of them were still, in many instances, on the plantations of their former masters ; in some cases they had never left them, in others they had gone away and returned, in others they had gone away and found profitable employment about the towns, which they always prefer to agricultural pursuits. Many of the planters have behaved

with the utmost benevolence and charity, keeping the old and sick at great personal inconvenience and expense, and paying those that would work fair wages. In some instances, too, Northerners had made good crops, finding it of the utmost importance to work absolutely side by side with the negro in the field as an example and a stimulant. As may be supposed, among the gentlemen of both the South and the North are many whose treatment of the negro has been unexceptionable, and who have, nevertheless, grave complaints to make of his indolence and dishonesty. But the majority of the Northerners in the South only go there to squeeze it for dollars, and the negro gets pinched in the process; while the mass of Southerners are suffering from pent-up feelings, which they must give vent to in some direction or other—and the negro is certainly often very provoking.

Notwithstanding all of which, I have little doubt that, in spite of the somewhat chaotic condition of society, the resources of the South will be rapidly developed under the pressure of financial necessities, and that at first, at all events, there will be every disposition in that part of the country to make political or social questions subservient, so far as may be, to material progress. If, in the mean time, the negro can make himself so useful a member of the community that his loss will be irreparable, he may yet be allowed to survive the disputes to which he has given rise.

It is scarcely possible beforehand to predict what course the South will most probably pursue after their representatives have regained their position in Congress. Their object will naturally be to combine upon some common ground with the West against the North-east, and there is no question which lends itself to such a combination so evidently as the question of tariff. I cannot resist saying one word here with reference to political economy as understood in America. Political economy is the least positive of all sciences, yet it is one about which persons are apt to hold the most positive opinions, and to cling most tenaciously to certain fixed laws, which they seek to apply to all countries. Now, the laws of political economy, it seems to me, differ in every country, and are controlled by an infinite

variety of circumstance. Our own free-traders recommend free trade to America in perfect good faith, believing that the same laws which have given us the control of the markets of the world would enable the Americans to compete with us in that control, if they would adopt them. The protectionists of America, wishing to arrive at the same result—viz., a successful competition with us in the markets of the world—adopt the precisely opposite view, and believe that, by fostering their manufactures by means of high duties, they may ultimately arrive at such a pitch of industrial and mechanical perfection as to be enabled to abolish, in the course of time, their duties as we did ours, and compete with us on equal terms. Now, with the greatest possible deference to Mr Bright on the one hand and Mr Carry on the other, it seems to me that both these views are erroneous, and that neither under a system of protection nor of free trade will America be able for centuries to come to compete with us in the markets of the world; and for the simplest of all reasons—viz., that we are an over-populated and they are an under-populated country, and that the same laws which apply to the one do not apply to the other. We are a nation of thirty millions, literally hived upon a coal-bed, who will die of starvation if we don't dig it up and live on it; they are a nation of thirty millions, scattered over innumerable millions of acres of arable land; and as it is more pleasant to live in the open air than in an atmosphere of oil and steam-engines, nothing short of bribery, in the shape of wages, will induce people to exchange the one for the other. In a word, we are manufacturers because we can't help it; but if there were suddenly ten Englands added on to the one we live in, with our present population, I should like to know how long the manufacturing population of Manchester and Birmingham would remain in the factories of those towns at their present wages. Therefore, free trade will not enable America to compete with us; nor will protection, because high import duties must check exports—in other words, prevent gold coming into the country, and ultimately destroy its commerce. America can only develop its manufacturing industries at the expense of its external trade; for it stands to reason that, in propor-

tion as you raise your duties, do you limit your commercial intercourse with other nations, and leave the markets of the world to those whose commercial intercourse is unlimited, because perfectly free. So that neither by protection will America be able to compete with this country in manufactures—a subject of congratulation for America, because successful manufactures implies an unequal distribution of wealth, and involves a certain amount of proletarianism and want and misery. Whether protection will ruin the South and West at the expense of the New England States, or whether the New England States will be sacrificed by free trade in favour of the South and West, is a question in which we have no direct interest, but which will be very fully discussed in the United States Congress; and, therefore, those who desire to make up their minds upon it will have no lack of arguments supplied by both sides on which to base their opinion. After the negro question, to which I have already alluded, it is the most important issue awaiting decision. The South will also propose a measure analogous to that known to us in Canada under the name of the Rebellion Losses Bill, and any future party of repudiation will naturally have its origin among South and West politicians.

And now I shall endeavour to point the moral of the state of things at present existing in America, in so far as it applies to this country. I began with a list of the anomalies which struck the stranger on arriving in America, but the greatest of all I have kept till now—and that is, that in this free republic it is not the people who are reconstructing the South, but the President. There is no greater fallacy than to suppose that republican government is purely popular government. The people only choose who shall govern them, but they do not govern themselves in the same sense that we do. For instance, at this moment, a large majority in the Congress is opposed to the whole of the President's reconstruction policy. I believe the people are in favour of it, but he cannot dissolve the Congress and appeal to the people on this issue; nor can the Congress, though disapproving of his policy, impede it without resorting to the extreme measure of stopping the supplies, or

having a majority of two-thirds in both Houses. Practically, for four years the President is absolute ; it is true, in the Senate he requires a majority for the ratification of appointments, &c., but there are means by which the supreme Government can secure the adhesion of senators, which it is not necessary to go into.

It is a favourite argument in this country against a Reform Bill, that it would Americanise our institutions, but nothing can be more utterly fallacious. We should be going backward, not forward, by becoming American, in many respects. In America, for instance, a Reform Bill would be impossible; not because they do not want reform—there is as general a feeling that a Reform Bill, altering and regulating the franchise (though there it is with a view to its limitation), is necessary there as it is here ; but, in order to reform their Constitution in the one point of slavery, they went to war for four years. The reason is, that their Constitution is a sacred document, and in order to alter a line of it, a majority of two-thirds of the States is required, and with one-half of the States diametrically opposed in feeling and interest to the other half, any unity of two-thirds is out of the question. In principle, I cannot conceive any more grievous millstone round the neck of a country than a written constitution standing in the way of all reform, and remaining unchangeable, while all the conditions under which it was made one hundred years ago are altered. Thank goodness, a majority of one will carry our Reform Bill. I should like to know what chance we should ever have of getting a Reform Bill, if we were to wait till we get an absolute majority of two-thirds in both our Houses of Parliament. It is quite impossible for a country which has no written constitution, and can change its institutions every day as we can, ever to become like one that has a constitution contained in a book to which it is solemnly and immutably bound ; and, therefore, I humbly submit that the idea of Reform Americanising our institutions is rubbish.

I do not wish to depreciate the institutions of America. This written Constitution has been of advantage to the Americans in many ways. The yearly influx of emigrants, who immedi-

ately take part in American politics before they have had time to know anything about them, makes it of the utmost importance that their political empiricism should be restrained within due limits. Had it not been for the Constitution there is no saying where the American Union would have been by this time. Moreover, a vast and silent change is taking place in American institutions in spite of the Constitution. There is a certain ambiguity in its wording as to the rights of States as contradistinguished from the rights of the Federal Government, out of which grew the late war, and which the late war has not settled, excepting in this respect, that States have not the right of secession from the Union ; but to what extent the Federal Government may interfere in their internal affairs where national interests require it, is not so clearly laid down, and the tendency of events is to weaken the State's, and to strengthen the central, authority. In other words, the tendency, though most strongly influenced by the Radicals, is decidedly (in our sense) Conservative. In the first place, the creation of a standing army of 60,000 is a fact tending to strengthen the central Government ; when the President requires a greater number of troops to keep the peace in America than we do in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland—notwithstanding the Fenians—and can dispose of those troops as he pleases within the Union, the States lose power, and the central Government gains it. Again, the existence of a national debt tends to strengthen the national Government, which has to collect it, and to regulate, irrespective of State rights, how the taxes shall be collected, and the national exchequer controlled. The framers of the Constitution, in order to prevent any encroachment on the rights of States in matters of finance by the Federal Government, actually prohibited it from levying any export duties without the concurrence of two-thirds of the States—a clause which is now found to be extremely inconvenient, and which there is little doubt will be evaded. In a word, the fundamental idea which runs through this remarkable document, is clearly, that only such power as is absolutely necessary for the national wellbeing should be delegated to the Federal Government, which should, indeed, be the servant

of the independent States whose common affairs it managed ; but the tendency is for the Federal Government, by gradual encroachments on State rights, to change this position and become their ruler.

So far from the conflict between Federal and State authority having come to an end, it is only just beginning. It will pivot as formerly upon the irrepressible negro, and both parties will claim to be acting in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution. One will maintain that the Constitution guarantees to every State independent rights, and that each State has therefore the right of controlling the suffrage and labour as it pleases, and of enforcing class privileges. Their opponents will invoke the clause of the Constitution guaranteeing a republican form of government, to which I have already alluded, and will maintain that the basis of republicanism consists in the absence of privilege ; so long as that exists in the South, this party will consider that they have an indisputable principle to fight for.

I am very much afraid of wearying you by being so technical ; but the fact is, that to my mind there is no spectacle furnished by the world at this moment so interesting as these 30,000,000 of Anglo-Saxons working out by hard experience the unsolved problems of republican government. In the first place, there is no other race fit to cope with those problems, or to understand the principles they embody, but that to which we and they alike belong. The French are trying perpetually, and failing miserably ; the Spanish republics of South America present a lamentable spectacle ; were it not for the gigantic efforts of our own flesh and blood in America, the world would refuse to believe in the possibility of republican institutions on a large scale. Now, although I do not believe in them for this country, where an equal population to that of the whole United States is crammed into the area of the two States of New York and Pennsylvania, I do most devoutly believe in republican institutions for America. I have no sort of objection to the Monroe doctrine, and the spread of Anglo-Saxon republics all over the American continent. The more the better ; that is the reason

I had no particular objection to seeing the Union divided, provided slavery were abolished, nor do I think it would matter now half as much as Americans imagine. Moreover, though I promised not to indulge in predictions, I think some day or other it must come to that yet.

I should be quite prepared to see Canada erected into an independent republic, and Australia when it gets old enough. There is no reason because we are a constitutional monarchy, and are well satisfied to remain so, that we should insist upon our colonies, who have none of the traditions or associations which have made us what we are, adopting monarchical institutions after they leave us. It is as unreasonable as for a man who happens to be a lawyer to expect all his sons to be lawyers after him instead of choosing their own professions. There is a very general impression in America that we are afraid of the spread of republican institutions, and cling to the principles of European despotisms. That is rather hard, considering that all the European despotisms accuse us of being republican and revolutionary. The fact is, we are neither afraid of the one nor the other, but we want to see the principles of liberty and constitutional freedom spread far and wide over the earth in every form; and as far as my experience of men and nationalities goes, the Anglo-Saxon race is the only race that can spread them.

There can be no doubt of this, that whatever amount of contemptible jealousy and pique may exist between this country and America politically, the Americans are the people with whom we sympathise more strongly than with any European nation. America is the only civilised soil where a man is as free as he is in England, and where religious liberty as well as civil is as firmly established. In point of religious liberty and education, I am sorry to say the Americans are ahead of us and the whole world. Such being the case, I think that if there is one thing that could be conceived more deplorable than another for the interests of humanity, it would be a war between these two countries. Instead of those entangling alliances which America has repudiated, but to which she nevertheless leans, and in which, I regret to say, we are deeply involved,

England and America should go hand in hand in the interest of the world's civilisation and the world's liberties. If those questions, which, instead of being settled at once, are still allowed to remain outstanding between us, were finally disposed of, we have no material or political interests which could possibly conflict with America; we have no old treaties to which we are solemnly bound, but which we flippantly tear up, as in Europe. We have no traditions of balance of power to hamper us, or bugbears in the shape of Eastern questions to alarm us. Therefore, I venture to assert that any Government which allows vexed questions of law or honour to remain unsettled between the American people and ourselves incurs a very serious responsibility.

Nor can I refrain from alluding to one, because I don't think that in this country we at all know how keenly the Americans feel with reference to it, and how important it is in the interests, not merely of the world's commerce but of the world's civilisation, that that question should be settled. Whether we are legally right or not in the matter of the Alabama does not alter the case in this respect; that a precedent has been established by us which, if it remains unaltered, will assuredly be made use of some day or other to sweep our commerce from the seas. Upon the first occasion of our being involved in hostilities with any foreign power, however insignificant, fleets of cruisers, under the flag of our enemy, whoever he may be, will leave the American ports, and entail upon us either a declaration of war with that country, or a passive submission on our part to the destruction of our commerce. Now, if the proposal made some years ago by the American Government at the Declaration of Paris were adopted, that all commerce upon the high seas, even though sailing under the belligerent flag, should be sacred—in fact, that men-of-war should only attack men-of-war and not merchant-ships—we, as the largest carriers in the world, would be the chief gainers. I regret, therefore, that, assuming that we were legally and technically right—about which, I fancy, there can be no doubt—in the case of the Alabama and other cruisers, advantage should not have been taken of the proposal by America to arbitrate, as furnish-

ing an excellent opportunity of imposing upon the world at large this important alteration in the present defective international maritime law. For there can be no doubt that England and America are in a position to lay down the maritime law of the world. Such a principle once fixed and established, would not merely remove the most fertile cause of difficulty between the two countries, but it would show the world that the Anglo-Saxon race, true to its high destinies, had entered upon a path of reform which should insure it the preponderance not of physical force, but that more noble pre-eminence which can only be acquired by a lofty and elevating moral influence. There is another question which has not yet arisen, but to which I will here allude, as it is one in which you have an indirect, and in which I had a very direct, interest. I allude to the Reciprocity Treaty. You will perhaps remember that to your lamented and distinguished neighbour Lord Elgin, that treaty was due; but there is no one probably but myself, who was his secretary at the time he carried it through, who can bear testimony to the tact, firmness, and skill with which he succeeded in inducing the American Government to accede to that important and most beneficial measure. For ten years one of the most thorny questions which ever risked the peaceful relations of the two countries was set at rest, and we heard nothing of the disputes which had been perpetually recurring, and which I venture to assure you will certainly recur again, on the fishing-grounds of Nova Scotia, unless the Reciprocity Treaty is immediately succeeded by some other arrangement finally settling the fishery questions. I need scarcely tell you that one of the most important measures for the securing of our peaceful relations with America would be the Confederation of the British North American Provinces. This is too long a question to go into now, or I could point out to you the immense advantages accruing from such a measure, and the necessity which exists for our insisting upon its being carried, even against the popular wish, as expressed in some of the provinces. Had we waited until Nova Scotia agreed in the expediency of the Reciprocity Treaty, it would never have been carried. It was, so to speak, forced through their legislature

against public opinion, and there is no colony which now more loudly expresses its regret at the termination of a measure which they so needlessly dreaded. Just so it is with the Confederation scheme. There are occasions when local prejudices, which are usually based on considerations of a narrow and selfish character, must give way to Imperial interests, and this is one of them. Having been officially employed in Canada for some time, I do not give this as a mere hasty opinion, arising out of any immediate exigency; but this I do feel assured of, that if the Alabama and fishery questions were satisfactorily disposed of, and the North American Provinces confederated, we might look forward without apprehension to an uninterrupted period of friendly intercourse with America; and, on the other hand, I cannot disguise from you the apprehension that, so long as those three questions remain in abeyance, the duration of peaceful relations hangs upon a slender thread, which the slightest strain may snap. If the people of this country realised that the total destruction of their commerce was impending like the sword of Damocles over their heads, and might fall at any moment, they would watch with more anxious attention the policy of their Government in an issue so momentous and vital. But let us hope that these gloomy anticipations may not be realised; and we may all of us do something towards averting their realisation by cherishing kindly feelings towards a people who have in reality the same aspirations as we have ourselves, and whose eagerness to surpass us in the great race of material progress is only natural, and to a certain extent justifiable. There is, however, a rivalry which I would gladly see substituted for the one which now exists—a rivalry not in material, but moral progress; when the struggle should be not who could produce the most invulnerable iron-clad, but who the purest and most immaculate statesmen; not who should manufacture the cheapest cotton fabrics, but the most just and equal laws; not who should excel in arts, but in religion;—in a word, who should exhibit to the world the happiest and most civilised, because the most God-fearing community.

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Confederate States of America

MESSAGE

DU PRÉSIDENT

JEFFERSON DAVIS

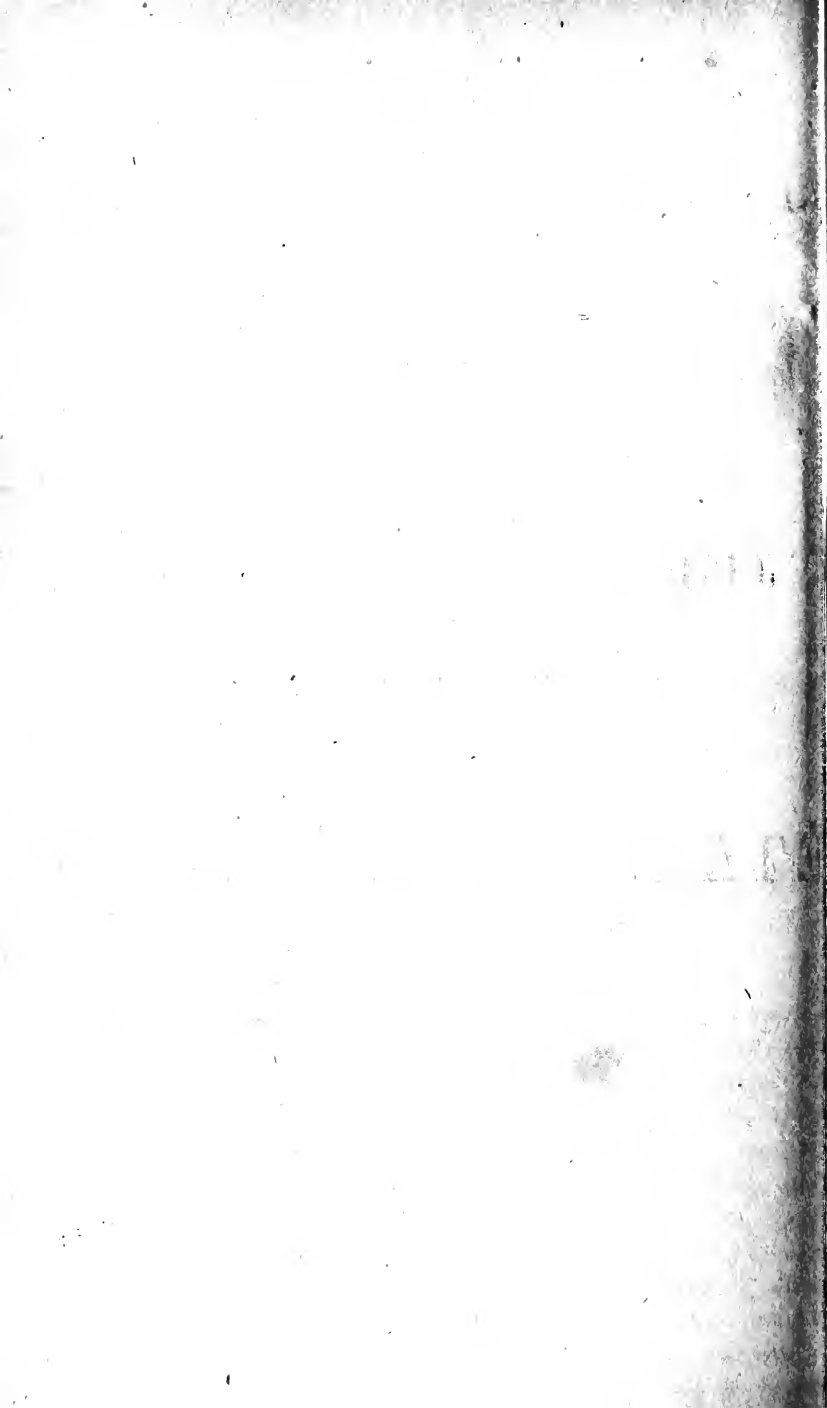
AU SÉNAT ET A LA CHAMBRE

DES

ÉTATS CONFÉDÉRÉS

le 7 décembre 1863.





MESSAGE

DU PRÉSIDENT JEFFERSON DAVIS

AU SENAT ET A LA CHAMBRE

DES

ÉTATS CONFÉDÉRÉS.

Richmond, 7 décembre 1863.

AU SÉNAT ET A LA CHAMBRE DES REPRÉSENTANTS
DES ÉTATS CONFÉDÉRÉS.

Les événements importants survenus durant la période qui s'est écoulée depuis votre ajournement et qui ont besoin de l'intervention législative, ainsi que mon désir de m'éclairer de vos conseils sur d'autres sujets d'un grave intérêt public, rendent votre présence en ce moment d'autant plus précieuse. En effet, n'eussent été les obstacles sérieux qui s'opposaient à votre convocation en session extraordinaire et la nécessité de mon absence temporaire du siège du Gouvernement, je vous eusse invités à vous réunir avant l'époque fixée lors de votre ajournement.

Aussitôt après votre départ de Richmond, nos armes ont essuyé de graves revers. Au commencement de juillet, nos

places fortes de Vicksburg et Port-Hudson, avec leurs garnisons entières, ont capitulé en présence des forces de terre et navales combinées de nos ennemis. Bientôt après, l'importante position intérieure de la ville de Jackson tomba temporairement en leur pouvoir. L'insuccès de notre assaut sur le poste d'Helena fut suivi, plus tard, de l'invasion de l'Arkansas ; et la retraite de notre armée de Little Rock livra à l'ennemi la vallée importante dans laquelle cette ville est située.

L'esprit ferme et résolu du peuple remplaça bientôt l'abattement momentané qui résulta tout naturellement de ces revers. Les vaillantes troupes, si habilement commandées dans les Etats situés au delà du Mississipi, ont infligé des défaites répétées aux armées envahissantes en Louisiane et sur la côte du Texas. Des détachements de troupes et des corps de partisans ont soutenu une guerre si active sur le Mississipi, que la valeur de ce fleuve a été rendue stérile comme débouché de commerce.

La défense courageuse et pleine de succès de Charleston, contre les opérations combinées de terre et de mer de nos ennemis, est un exemple glorieux de notre aptitude à repousser les attaques de la flotte cuirassée, sur laquelle ils comptaient essentiellement, tandis que, sur la frontière du Nord, nos succès étaient encore plus marquants.

L'habile commandant qui a dirigé la campagne en Virginie décida de conjurer la menace d'une attaque contre Richmond, pour laquelle nos ennemis avaient fait de longues et coûteuses préparations, — en forçant leurs armées de traverser le Potomac pour la préservation de leur propre capitale et de leurs foyers. Transportant ainsi le champ de bataille sur leur propre sol, il les contraignit à une retraite de la Virginie, et, dans la rude bataille de Gettysburg, il leur infligea une punition si sévère qu'il les rendit incapables de renouveler la campagne aussitôt qu'ils en avaient d'abord formé le projet. Malheureusement, les communications sur lesquelles notre général comptait pour recevoir les approvisionnements et munitions furent interrompues par des crues extraordinaires et subites, qui gonflèrent tellement le Potomac, que les gués par lesquels il avait opéré sa marche en avant devinrent impraticables. De là une retraite forcée, qui fut conduite avec une entière sécurité, après

avoir mis en sûreté de nombreux trains d'approvisionnements capturés par nos troupes, et tout en offrant constamment une bataille que l'ennemi ne crut pas devoir accepter. Depuis, en plus d'une occasion, l'ennemi a fait des démonstrations indiquant un dessein d'avancer, mais elles furent invariablement suivies, à l'approche de nos forces, d'une retraite précipitée derrière des lignes retranchées.

L'arrêt ainsi opposé au progrès des envahisseurs, sur tous les points, était de nature à faire naître l'espoir que leur expulsion de ces portions de notre territoire précédemment occupées par eux serait prochaine, lorsque le pays fut douloureusement surpris à la nouvelle que l'officier qui commandait à Cumberland Gap avait rendu cet important passage, d'une défense facile, sans tirer un coup de fusil, sur la simple sommation d'une force qui, à ce qu'on pense encore, aurait été insuffisante à le réduire, et cela lorsque des renforts se trouvaient à sa proximité et avec ordre de se porter à son aide. La garnison entière, avec son commandant, étant encore prisonnière, il ne m'est pas possible de donner aucune explication de ce désastre, qui a ouvert l'est du Tennessee et le sud-ouest de la Virginie à des opérations hostiles, en coupant la ligne de communication entre le siège du gouvernement et le centre du Tennessee. Ce facile succès, remporté par l'ennemi, fut suivi d'une marche du général Rosencranz dans la Georgie, et notre armée, évacuant Chattanooga, saisit l'occasion qui lui fut offerte de gagner, sur le champ de Chickamauga, une des victoires les plus brillantes et les plus décisives de cette guerre. L'insigne défaite du général Rosencranz fut suivie de sa retraite dans Chattanooga, où sa position périlleuse eut pour effet immédiat de suspendre l'imminence de l'invasion sur d'autres points, en forçant la concentration, pour le secourir, de grands corps de troupes tirées des armées stationnées dans la vallée du Mississippi et dans le nord de la Virginie. Les forces combinées, ainsi accumulées contre nous dans le Tennessee, surpassaient tellement notre armée en nombre, que l'ennemi fut encouragé à nous attaquer. Après une longue bataille, dans laquelle il a subi un grand carnage, quelques-unes de nos troupes abandonnèrent d'une manière inexplicable des positions très fortes, et, par une retraite désordonnée, obligèrent le commandant de rappeler les

forces victorieuses sur d'autres points, et finalement à se retirer avec toute son armée dans une position à vingt ou trente milles en arrière. On pense que si les troupes qui abandonnèrent l'assaut s'étaient battues avec la valeur dont elles avaient fait preuve en de précédentes occasions, et qui se manifestait dans cette bataille sur les autres points de la ligne, l'ennemi aurait été repoussé avec un très grand massacre, notre pays eût échappé à l'infortune, — et l'armée à la mortification, — de la première défaite résultant de l'inconduite des troupes. Dans ces entrefaites, l'armée du général Burnside fut chassée de toutes ses positions dans les campagnes de l'est du Tennessee et forcée de se retirer dans ses retranchements à Knoxville, où, durant quelques semaines, il a été menacé d'être capturé par les forces du général Longstreet. Je n'ai reçu aucune information sur le résultat définitif des opérations de notre commandant, bien que la nouvelle de sa retraite de cette place nous soit parvenue.

Bien que le succès avec lequel nous avons chassé l'ennemi de notre sol n'ait pas réalisé les vives espérances que nous avons conçues au début de la campagne, sa marche ultérieure a du moins été arrêtée. Si nous sommes forcés de regretter les pertes que nous avons subies dans le Tennessee et l'Arkansas, nous avons lieu de nous féliciter de nos succès en Louisiane et au Texas. Sur la côte, l'ennemi s'est épuisé en de vains efforts pour se rendre maître de nos ports, tandis que, sur la frontière du Nord, il s'est vu menacé à son tour, et redoute une nouvelle invasion. Le courage indomptable et la persévérance du peuple à défendre ses foyers ont été noblement attestés par l'unanimité avec laquelle les législatures de la Virginie, de la Caroline du Nord et de la Géorgie se sont récemment rendues les interprètes du sentiment populaire; et l'on peut attendre des manifestations pareilles de tous les États. Quelle que soit l'obstination déployée par l'ennemi dans des sacrifices désespérés d'argent, d'hommes et de libertés, dans l'espoir de nous subjuguier, l'expérience a trop fait voir la supériorité qu'a sur la force brutale l'héroïque abnégation de ceux qui combattent, pour leurs foyers, leurs libertés et leur indépendance. On ne saurait donc concevoir le moindre doute sur le résultat définitif de la lutte que nous soutenons tous.

RELATIONS EXTÉRIEURES.

Je regrette de vous annoncer que l'état de nos relations avec les pays étrangers ne s'est nullement amélioré depuis mon Message de janvier dernier.

Au contraire, les nations européennes se sont, dans leur conduite, écartées plus encore de cette impartialité réelle qui seule mérite le nom de neutralité, et, dans certains cas, leur façon d'agir a pris un caractère positivement hostile.

Vous avez été jusqu'ici informés que, d'un commun accord, les puissances étrangères avaient sur tous les points et en ce qui concerne la lutte qui se poursuit sur ce continent, laissé l'initiative aux deux grandes nations maritimes de l'Europe occidentale, et que les gouvernements de ces deux nations étaient convenus qu'ils ne prendraient aucune mesure sans concert préalable. Il est donc résulté de ces arrangements de mettre au pouvoir, soit de la France, soit de l'Angleterre, d'empêcher à son gré l'acte de reconnaissance auquel la Confédération a justement droit, voire même de prolonger, de ce côté de l'Atlantique le cours des hostilités, si l'ajournement de la paix pouvait servir la politique de l'une ou de l'autre de ces deux puissances. Chacune se vit par là en possession d'une grande influence pour donner à l'exercice des droits des neutres en Europe une interprétation pouvant favoriser une des parties belligérantes au détriment de l'autre. Dans votre session précédente, je vous ai déjà fait connaître quelques-uns des points principaux qui, dans la conduite suivie par de prétendus neutres, trahissaient un penchant marqué du côté de nos ennemis; mais des événemens qui se sont produits depuis cette époque m'engagent à revenir sur ce sujet avec de plus grands développemens que je ne l'avais alors jugé nécessaire. En appelant votre attention sur la conduite de ces gouvernements, je me fonde sur les documents qui accompagnent les messages du président Lincoln, ainsi que sur leur propre correspondance, comme révélant la nature

réelle de leur politique et les motifs qui l'ont inspirée. On ne peut faire aucune objection à cette manière d'agir, d'autant plus que notre attention a été attirée vers ces sources d'informations par leur publication officielle.

Au mois de mai 1861, le gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique informait nos ennemis « qu'il n'avait pas pris vis-à-vis des Etats Confédérés autre chose qu'une position indéterminée, » et leur assurait que les sympathies de la Grande-Bretagne étaient acquises au Nord plutôt qu'au Sud.

Le 1^{er} juin 1861, le gouvernement britannique interdit l'entrée de ses ports « aux vaisseaux de guerre et aux corsaires des Etats-Unis et des Etats dits Confédérés » ainsi qu'à leurs prises. Le secrétaire d'Etat des Etats-Unis appréciait parfaitement la nature et le motif de cette interdiction quand il dit à lord Lyons qui la lui communiquait « que cette mesure et celle de même nature adoptée par la France seraient probablement un coup de grâce pour les corsaires du Sud. »

Le 12 juin 1861, le ministre des Etats-Unis à Londres fit savoir au secrétaire des affaires étrangères de Sa Majesté que le fait d'avoir accordé des entrevues aux commissaires de ce gouvernement avait « causé un vif mécontentement à Washington, et que la continuation de semblables relations serait regardée par les Etats-Unis comme une marque d'hostilité et provoquerait une action analogue de leur part. » En répondant à cette intimation, le secrétaire de Sa Majesté a assuré le ministre « qu'il ne comptait plus voir les commissaires du Sud. »

Par des proclamations en date du 19 et du 27 avril 1861, le président Lincoln déclarait bloquée toute la côte de la Confédération depuis le Potomac jusqu'au Rio-Grande, embrassant, selon les données du *Coast Survey* des Etats-Unis, une étendue de 3,549 milles, sur laquelle le nombre de rivières, golfes, ports, anses et passes est de 189. La marine dont les Etats-Unis disposaient pour mettre ce blocus en vigueur se composait, d'après les rapports officiels adressés par le président Lincoln au Congrès des Etats-Unis, de 24 bâtiments de toutes classes en commission, dont la moitié se trouvait dans des mers éloignées. L'absurdité d'un blocus semblable en présence de la déclaration des droits maritimes

des neutres, faite à Paris en 1856, était si patente qu'on ne considérait cette mesure que comme une tentative, afin de voir jusqu'où irait la patience des puissances neutres et à laquelle on ne doutait pas qu'elles s'opposeraient promptement.

Cette opinion trouvait sa justification dans le fait que les gouvernements de France et de la Grande-Bretagne ont déclaré qu'il était nécessaire d'obtenir des deux parties belligérantes « des garanties touchant la manière d'agir envers les neutres. » Dans les instructions qui « confiaient les négociations dans cette affaire » au consul britannique à Charleston, il est dit « que l'accord le plus parfait existe sur cette question entre le gouvernement de Sa Majesté et celui de l'Empereur des Français, » et ces instructions étaient accompagnées d'une copie de la dépêche du *Foreign-Office* du 18 mai 1861, déclarant qu'il n'existait pas de différence d'opinion entre la Grande-Bretagne et les Etats-Unis au sujet de la validité des principes énoncés dans le quatrième article de la déclaration de Paris au sujet des blocus.

Vos prédécesseurs du Congrès provisoire n'ont donc fait aucune difficulté de proclamer les résolutions que j'ai volontiers approuvées et qui abandonnaient, en faveur de la Grande-Bretagne et de la France, notre droit de saisir les biens de l'ennemi sous les pavillons de ces puissances. Nous avons compris que les « garanties, » ainsi demandées par ces Gouvernements seraient également exigées des deux belligérants. Les neutres se trouvaient exposés de notre part à l'exercice du droit de belligérant, en vertu duquel leurs vaisseaux pouvaient être capturés lorsqu'ils transportaient la marchandise ennemie. De la part des États-Unis, ils étaient exposés à une interruption dans leur droit incontesté de faire le commerce avec nous par le blocus sur le papier, auquel il est fait allusion ci-dessus. Nous n'avions nul motif de douter de la bonne foi de la proposition qui nous était faite, ni de soupçonner que nous serions seuls liés par son acceptation. Il est vrai que les instructions des puissances neutres à leurs agents portaient qu'il était très essentiel, dans les circonstances actuelles, d'agir avec la plus grande prudence pour ne pas soulever la question de la reconnaissance de la nouvelle Confédération; » c'est pour ce motif que cette entente n'a pas pris la forme d'une convention formelle. Mais nous n'a-

vons pas pensé qu'il serait juste, pour cette cause, de refuser l'arrangement proposé, puisqu'il n'y avait que trois mois écoulés depuis l'arrivée de nos Commissaires en Europe. Les nations neutres avaient bien le droit de réclamer un délai raisonnable avant de prendre parti sur un sujet si important, et qui, à leur point de vue, présentait des difficultés que nous n'étions peut-être pas à même d'apprécier complètement. Ce qui est certain, c'est que la conduite de notre Gouvernement en cette circonstance et l'accomplissement fidèle de ses propres engagements lui donnaient le droit d'attendre de la part de ceux qui dans leur intérêt ont recherché une entente mutuelle, l'observation la plus scrupuleuse de leurs propres promesses. Je me vois contraint de vous dire que cette attente a été déçue, et que non-seulement les Gouvernements qui ont contracté ces engagements ont subi la prohibition de faire le commerce avec nous, édictée par les États-Unis, en violation du droit des gens, mais encore que cet abandon de leurs droits de neutres, à notre détriment, a été plus d'une fois invoqué par eux comme une preuve d'amitié à l'égard de nos ennemis. Quelques extraits de la correspondance du principal Secrétaire d'État, pour les affaires étrangères de Sa Majesté Britannique, suffiront pour faire ressortir l'encouragement marqué, donné aux États-Unis de persévérer dans ce blocus fictif, et la résolution évidente, prise par le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté, de n'en pas contester la validité.

Le 21 mai 1861, Lord Russell fait remarquer au Ministre des États-Unis à Londres que « l'on parviendrait sans doute à rendre le blocus effectif, vu le petit nombre des ports sur la côte du Sud, malgré qu'une étendue de plus de 3,000 milles fût comprise dans les termes de ce blocus. »

Le 14 janvier 1862, le Ministre de Sa Majesté, à Washington, fait savoir à son Gouvernement que, pour atténuer la tentative barbare ayant pour but de détruire le port de Charleston, en y coulant des navires chargés de pierres, M. Seward a expliqué « que le gouvernement des États-Unis avait, au printemps dernier, avec une marine très peu préparée pour une opération aussi considérable, entrepris de bloquer 3,000 milles de côtes. Le secrétaire de la marine avait exposé dans son rapport officiel qu'il pourrait « fermer les grands

trous au moyen de ses vaisseaux, mais qu'il ne pourrait pas fermer les petits. » Voilà pourquoi on avait jugé nécessaire de fermer quelques-uns des petits passages en y coulant des pierres.

Le 6 mai 1862, loin de revendiquer le droit des sujets britanniques, comme neutres, de faire le commerce avec nous belligérants, et de regarder le blocus comme non avenu par suite de l'aveu explicite de notre ennemi, de son impuissance à le rendre effectif, le Secrétaire d'Etat des affaires étrangères de Sa Majesté faisait valoir auprès des Etats-Unis ce respect du blocus comme une preuve d'amitié. Sa Seigneurie observait que « le Gouvernement des Etats-Unis, sur l'allégation qu'il existait une rébellion dans 9 à 11 Etats de l'Union, a depuis plus de douze mois essayé de maintenir un blocus sur une côte de 3.000 milles. Ce blocus, maintenu irrégulièrement, mais cependant avec la plus grande sévérité lorsque son action se faisait sentir, avait infligé des dommages très graves au commerce et à l'industrie du Royaume-Uni. Par suite de ce blocus, des milliers d'individus sont réduits à vivre de l'assistance publique. Cependant le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté n'a jamais cherché à profiter des imperfections évidentes de ce blocus pour le déclarer non effectif. Il a scrupuleusement observé les devoirs de la Grande-Bretagne envers un Etat ami, malgré les pertes qui en sont résultées pour la nation. »

De même, le 22 septembre 1862, le même noble comte a affirmé que « les Etats-Unis étaient très loin d'être dans une position à pouvoir demander aux autres nations de considérer chaque port sur les côtes du Sud comme effectivement bloqué. »

Lorsque, en présence de ces faits et de l'obligation incombant à la Nation britannique d'adhérer aux stipulations faites par son Gouvernement à Paris, en 1856, et renouvelées envers cette Confédération en 1861, et aussi devant l'aveu formel et réitéré de l'imperfection, de l'irrégularité et de l'inefficacité du blocus prétendu de nos côtes, j'ai chargé notre Commissaire à Londres d'inviter le Gouvernement britannique à remplir ses promesses, et de refuser son aide morale et sa sanction à la violation flagrante du droit des gens commise par nos ennemis, il nous a été répondu que le Gouverne-

ment de Sa Majesté ne pouvait considérer les ports du Sud que comme « effectivement bloqués » au mois de février 1862, et que « la manière dont le blocus a été depuis mis à exécution ne donne aux Gouvernements neutres aucun motif pour affirmer qu'il n'a pas été efficacement maintenu. » De plus, quand nous avons insisté en disant que, d'après les termes de la convention, aucun blocus ne pourrait être regardé comme effectif s'il n'était « réellement suffisant pour empêcher l'accès de nos côtes, » on nous a répondu que la déclaration de Paris était de fait dirigée contre les blocus qu'aucune force réelle ne soutenait, ou qui n'étaient maintenus que par une force notoirement insuffisante, telle que l'apparition de temps à autre d'un vaisseau de guerre au large ou quelque chose d'analogue.

Il était impossible que cette interprétation d'un engagement qui lui fait dire presque l'opposé de ce qu'il était manifestement destiné à signifier, fût considéré autrement que comme une notification que le Gouvernement britannique n'entendait point rester lié par son engagement, ni respecter plus longtemps ces articles de la déclaration de Paris, que les hommes d'État de la Grande-Bretagne avaient souvent dénoncés, et que le comte Russell avait caractérisés comme « très imprudents » et « très peu satisfaisants. »

S'il restait encore quelque doute sur les motifs qui ont inspiré la conduite du Ministère britannique, il serait entièrement dissipé par les aveux clairs et nets, et les explications contenues dans un discours récemment prononcé par le secrétaire des affaires étrangères de Sa Majesté. En commentant les remontrances de ce gouvernement contre l'appui donné à un blocus non effectif, il a employé le langage suivant : « On dit que, contrairement au traité de Paris, contrairement à la loi internationale, nous avons toléré le blocus de 3,000 milles de la côte américaine. Il est vrai que nous avons agi ainsi, et le prétendu grief est également vrai, à savoir que malgré que le blocus fût maintenu par un nombre suffisant de navires, cependant ces navires avaient été employés en toute hâte, étaient mal adaptés au service auquel ils étaient affectés, et n'avaient pas maintenu le blocus assez complètement et efficacement pour que ce blocus fût effectif. »

Cet aveu complet de la violation de la convention faite avec nous et du droit international, est défendu par des motifs dont nous soumettons avec confiance la validité au jugement loyal du monde entier.

Ces motifs sont ainsi exposés : « Cependant, eu égard au droit des gens, c'était un blocus tel que nous, autrefois, grande puissance belligérante, aurions reconnu. Nous-mêmes, nous avons bloqué plus de 2,000 milles de côtes, et il n'a paru que la justice envers les États fédéraux de l'Amérique exigeait la reconnaissance de ce blocus de notre part. Mais un autre motif a eu aussi son poids dans ma détermination. Nos compatriotes souffraient cruellement du manque de la matière première qui constituait l'élément essentiel de leur industrie, et cela transformait en une question d'intérêt personnel le point de savoir s'il nous convenait de rompre le blocus. Mais selon moi, l'Angleterre devenait à tout jamais infâme si, pour sauvegarder ses propres intérêts, elle violait le droit public et faisait la guerre de concert avec ces États esclavagistes d'Amérique contre les États fédéraux. »

Nos droits ne sont pas mis en jeu par le second de ces motifs, bien qu'il soit permis de faire observer que, jusqu'à présent, les Gouvernements ne sont pas taxés d'infamie pour défendre leurs droits toutes les fois qu'une atteinte à ces droits a causée de sérieuses souffrances parmi leurs populations et en a affecté gravement les intérêts. Mais la déclaration qu'il serait honteux d'entrer en relations avec ces États, parce qu'ils possèdent des esclaves, n'aurait probablement pas été faite si le personnage officiel qui proclame cette doctrine se fût rappelé que ces mêmes États, pendant qu'ils étaient encore colonies de la Grande-Bretagne, ont reçu l'esclavage par l'intervention directe du pouvoir de la Grande-Bretagne, qui était elle-même intéressée dans la traite, pensant alors qu'il était dans ses intérêts d'introduire l'esclavage dans ses colonies.

Mais le second argument invoqué est très grave. Il prétend établir qu'une violation du droit des gens par la Grande-Bretagne, en 1807, lorsque ce Gouvernement déclara un blocus sur le papier de 2,000 milles de côtes (violation dénoncée alors par les tribunaux, les jurisconsultes, par la seule raison qu'elle constituait des représailles) justifierait une violation semblable des droits des neutres par les États-Unis

en 1861, outrage pour lequel on ne peut plaider aucune circonstance atténuante, et que la « justice envers les États fédéraux oblige » la Grande-Bretagne à se soumettre à ce blocus illégal en 1861, en retour de la guerre que les États-Unis firent contre elle, en résistant à ce même blocus illégal de 1807. Une circonstance des plus alarmantes dans cette déclaration, c'est l'admission que les États-Unis ont un juste titre à exiger de la Grande-Bretagne, durant cette guerre, le mépris des principes reconnus du droit public moderne et de ses propres engagements, toutes les fois que l'on peut citer comme précédent une conduite équivoque de la Grande-Bretagne « dans les temps passés. » Sans manquer au respect et à l'admiration dus au grand peuple dont le Gouvernement nous donne cet avertissement, il est permis de lui suggérer que son histoire, pareille à celle de l'homme en général, offre des cas exceptionnels de conduite inexcusable « dans les temps passés, » et que nous avons bien le droit de nier la moralité d'une violation d'engagements récents par égard pour de mauvais précédents anciens.

Après avoir justifié de cette manière la conduite du Gouvernement britannique au sujet du blocus, le Secrétaire des affaires étrangères de Sa Majesté Britannique prend soin de ne nous laisser aucun doute sur la résolution du Gouvernement britannique d'empêcher à l'avenir tout achat de navires pour notre compte dans la Grande-Bretagne, quoiqu'il fournisse à nos ennemis des fusils et autres munitions de guerre, et annonce l'intention de s'adresser au Parlement pour lui fournir les moyens de mettre son dessein à exécution.

Il donne aux États-Unis l'assurance qu'il fera en leur faveur tout ce qu'exige le droit des gens, tout ce que permet la loi anglaise sur les recrutements, telle qu'elle existe aujourd'hui, et il ajoute qu'il proposera au Parlement de sanctionner les mesures ultérieures que les Ministres de Sa Majesté Britannique jugeront nécessaires. Ce langage est si évidemment un exposé officiel de la politique suivie par le Gouvernement britannique à notre égard, que je manquerais au devoir que la Constitution m'impose de vous fournir de temps à autre des renseignements sur la position de la Confédération, si je ne vous le mettais distinctement devant les yeux.

Pour des détails plus amples sur cette affaire, je vous renvoie à la correspondance ci-jointe du Département d'État. Les faits que j'ai brièvement énumérés seront, je pense, suffisants pour vous faire apprécier la véritable nature de cette prétendue neutralité. Je ne suis pas en mesure de vous apprendre jusqu'à quel point le Gouvernement français partage les vues si ouvertement avouées par celui de la Grande-Bretagne, aucune correspondance publiée du Gouvernement français n'ayant été reçue. Aucune protestation publique, aucune opposition à la prohibition de trafiquer avec nous imposée aux citoyens français par le blocus de papier des États-Unis, n'a toutefois été faite par Sa Majesté Impériale, quoique j'aie raison de croire qu'une tentative a été faite (mais sans réussite) de sa part pour obtenir l'acquiescement du Gouvernement britannique à une conduite plus en harmonie avec le droit public et avec ce que commande la justice envers nous.

La partialité du Gouvernement de S. M. la Reine en faveur de nos ennemis a été, en outre, rendue évidente par la différence marquée de sa conduite au sujet des munitions achetées par les deux belligérants. Cette différence a été frappante dès le commencement même de la guerre; déjà, le 1^{er} mai 1861, le ministre britannique à Washington a été informé par le secrétaire d'État des États-Unis qu'il avait envoyé des agents en Angleterre, et que d'autres iraient en France, pour l'acquisition d'armes. Ce fait a été communiqué au Foreign-Office, qui n'y a opposé aucune difficulté. Cependant, en octobre de la même année, le comte Russell écouta la plainte du ministre des États-Unis à Londres qui représentait que les États-Confédérés de l'île de Nassau faisaient des importations de contrebande de guerre, ordonna une enquête à ce sujet, et obtint des autorités de l'île un rapport officiel qui réfutait ces allégations. Ce rapport a été communiqué à M. Adams, qui l'accepta comme suffisant à dissiper les soupçons naturellement dirigés contre les autorités de Nassau par cet acte insoutenable. De même, quand le Gouvernement confédéré, observant soigneusement la loi publique et la loi municipale de la Grande-Bretagne, a acheté dans ce pays, comme dans un pays neutre, des navires qui, plus tard et loin des eaux britanniques, ont été armés et

équipés en guerre, le Gouvernement britannique, en violation de ses propres lois et par déférence aux importunités des États-Unis, tenta, mais en vain, de saisir un vaisseau, et en saisit effectivement un autre qu'il retint à Nassau, où il venait de toucher, en route pour les États-Confédérés. Ce vaisseau a été l'objet d'un procès illégal, dans le temps même qu'on expédiait, sous déguisement, des ports de la Grande-Bretagne à New-York, des cargaisons de munitions de guerre destinées à servir contre nous. Les journaux viennent d'apporter la nouvelle que le Gouvernement britannique a ordonné la saisie, dans un port anglais, de deux navires qu'on soupçonne être vendus à ce gouvernement pour être armés et équipés pour notre service, tandis qu'on recrute librement des milliers de sujets britanniques en Irlande, et qu'on les expédie aux États-Unis pour combattre la Confédération, contrairement au droit public et aux prescriptions expresses des lois anglaises ; sans même se donner la peine de cacher leur destination, on les embarque à bord de navires anglais pour les ports des États-Unis, et, après les avoir armés de fusils, également importés de la Grande-Bretagne, on les fait servir dans une guerre de conquête dirigée contre nous. Cependant, devant cette violation flagrante de la loi du pays et de la loi publique de la part de nos ennemis, la prérogative royale se tait, et le pouvoir exécutif reste les bras croisés, tandis que, pour empêcher ce Gouvernement d'acheter des navires, inutiles comme vaisseaux de guerre, jusqu'à ce qu'ils aient été armés et équipés en dehors de la juridiction neutre de la Grande-Bretagne, on donne aux lois existantes une interprétation forcée, on propose l'établissement de lois nouvelles, et on a recours à des expédients douteux.

Depuis près de trois ans, notre Gouvernement a exercé une autorité incontestée sur plusieurs millions d'hommes unis et dévoués. Il a rencontré et défait de vastes armées d'envahisseurs, qui cherchaient en vain à le renverser. Soutenue par la confiance et par l'affection de ses citoyens, aucun des éléments qui, selon les principes du droit public, distinguent une nation indépendante, n'a manqué à la Confédération. Tous les départements de son gouvernement, les pouvoirs législatif, exécutif et judiciaire, ont, chacun dans sa sphère, accompli leurs fonctions avec une régularité

constante, comme en temps de paix profonde, et toutes les énergies du peuple ont été développées dans l'organisation de nombreuses armées, en même temps que leurs droits et leurs libertés sont restés intacts sous l'égide des tribunaux. Cette Confédération est indépendante si elle n'est pas dépendante des États-Unis, car aucune autre puissance du monde ne revendique le droit de la gouverner. Sans un seul fait historique pour appuyer cette prétention, sans une ligne ni un mot dans un traité ou une convention quelconques qui pourraient la justifier, les États-Unis prétendent, et le Gouvernement britannique veut bien concéder que ces États souverains sont des dépendances du gouvernement qui siège à Washington.

Le Gouvernement britannique est donc resté en relations les plus suivies et les plus intimes avec le Gouvernement de Washington, tout en refusant de rester en termes amicaux avec nous. Par des arrangements pris avec les autres nations d'Europe, il nous a non-seulement refusé l'admission dans la famille des nations, mais il a encore opposé un obstacle passif, mais non moins efficace, à la reconnaissance de nos droits par d'autres puissances. Aussitôt qu'il est devenu évident par les déclarations des Ministres britanniques dans le Parlement, au mois de juillet dernier, que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté était déterminé à persister indéfiniment dans une ligne de conduite qui, sous des professions de neutralité, servait en effet les desseins de nos ennemis, j'ai senti qu'il était de mon devoir de rappeler les Commissaires autrefois accrédités auprès de cette Cour. La correspondance changée à ce sujet vous est communiquée.

Je devais à vous et au pays cette explication détaillée des justes motifs de mécontentement que nous avons contre la Grande-Bretagne. Je sais trop bien que nous sommes malheureusement sans remède contre l'injustice qui nous est faite par une nation puissante, dans une conjoncture où nos ressources entières sont occupées à la défense de nos vies, de nos libertés et de notre indépendance, contre un ennemi beaucoup plus fort que nous en nombre et en ressources matérielles. Ne demandant ni aide ni faveur, sûrs que nous pouvons défendre nos propres droits contre tous les efforts d'un adversaire emporté par la passion, nous avons cru pouvoir, sans être taxés d'extravagance, espérer qu'on refuserait cette

aide à nos ennemis, et que la conduite des nations étrangères serait dictée par une véritable impartialité entre les deux belligérants. On ne pouvait pas penser qu'une neutralité professée serait observée de telle sorte, que le Secrétaire des affaires étrangères à Londres pourrait rappeler dans sa correspondance avec nos ennemis « que l'observation impartiale des devoirs de neutres de la part du gouvernement de Sa Majesté, a été jusqu'à présent extrêmement favorable à la cause du plus puissant des deux adversaires. » Il se peut que le Gouvernement britannique croie trouver dans cette guerre une occasion favorable, en faisant le sacrifice temporaire de ses droits de neutres, d'établir un précédent qui justifiera l'exercice de ces prétentions extrêmes, que sa puissance maritime rendrait si formidables en cas de guerre. Une politique consistant à obtenir le consentement tacite de l'Europe en faveur d'une attitude qui méconnaît les obligations de la déclaration de Paris, et réussissant à faire considérer cet instrument plutôt comme un exposé théorique de principes que comme un engagement ayant force de loi, peut être considérée par le Ministère britannique comme le justifiant, s'il cherche un grand avantage pour son propre pays aux dépens du nôtre. Mais nous ne pouvons laisser passer sans protestation l'assertion que cette conduite avantageuse à un belligérant est une « neutralité impartiale, » soit en droit, soit en morale publique.

J'ai dit qu'il n'y avait pas de remède à cette injustice. Il n'y a que deux mesures qui paraissent applicables à la situation. L'une serait d'imiter l'injustice dont nous nous plaignons; elle consisterait à déclarer un blocus sur papier des côtes des Etats-Unis, ce qui permettrait de capturer tous les navires neutres commerçant avec ces ports que nos croiseurs pourraient intercepter sur les hautes mers. Cette mesure, je ne peux la recommander. Il est vrai qu'en agissant ainsi, nous ne ferions que suivre les précédents établis par la Grande-Bretagne et la France dans les décrets de Berlin et de Milan, et dans les *orders in council* anglais au commencement du siècle actuel. Mais il faut se rappeler que nous-mêmes nous avons protesté contre ces mesures, comme des violations graves de la loi internationale, et que nous avons déclaré futile l'excuse qu'on nous a fait valoir, en déclarant que c'étaient des représailles. Ces blocus sont, aujourd'hui,

cités par les auteurs, comme un reproche perpétuel à ces nations, qui se sont portées à cette injustice par une exaspération temporaire. Il faut les regarder comme des erreurs à éviter et non des exemples à suivre.

L'autre mesure ne soulève pas la même objection. Le second article de la déclaration de Paris, portant « que le pavillon neutre couvre la marchandise ennemie, à l'exception de la contrebande de guerre, » était une nouvelle concession faite par les belligérants aux neutres, et non pas simplement l'énonciation d'une règle préexistante, comme l'article IV qui traite des blocus. Nous avons accepté cette concession par une convention conclue avec la Grande-Bretagne et la France, qui prit la forme de résolutions adoptées par vos prédécesseurs, le 13 août 1861. On ne nous accorde pas l'équivalent pour lequel nous avons fait cette concession. Nous avons donc le droit incontesté de ne plus nous considérer comme liés par un contrat que l'autre partie refuse l'accomplir ; mais nous ne devons pas oublier que la guerre n'est que temporaire, et que nous désirons que la paix soit permanente. La politique future de la Confédération devra toujours être de soutenir les droits des neutres dans toute leur étendue. Les principes de la déclaration de Paris se recommandent comme étant plus justes, plus humains et plus conformes à la civilisation moderne que les prétentions que les grandes puissances maritimes ont jusqu'à présent cherché à introduire dans le code maritime. Renoncer à notre droit irrécusable de faire valoir ces prétentions, c'est une politique plus élevée, plus digne de nous et de notre cause, que de révoquer notre adhésion aux principes que nous approuvons. Espérons que nous obtiendrons réparation, grâce au sentiment de la justice qui ne peut manquer de s'éveiller chez un grand peuple qui comprend que la lutte dans laquelle nous sommes engagés doit être plutôt un motif de tolérance à notre égard qu'une occasion d'hostilité, dont nous avons le droit de nous plaindre.

MEXIQUE.

Les événements de l'année qui vient de s'écouler ont produit des changements importants dans la condition de notre voisin du Sud. L'occupation de la capitale du Mexique par l'armée française, et l'établissement d'un Gouvernement provisoire, suivi d'un changement radical dans la constitution du pays, ont excité le plus vif intérêt.

Tout en préférant notre propre Gouvernement et ses institutions à ceux des autres pays, nous n'avons aucune disposition à leur contester l'exercice du même droit de *self-government* que nous revendiquons pour nous-mêmes. Si le peuple mexicain préfère la monarchie à la république, il est clairement de notre devoir d'acquiescer de grand cœur à sa décision, et de manifester un intérêt sincère et amical pour sa prospérité. Si toutefois les Mexicains préfèrent maintenir leurs premières institutions, nous n'avons pas de motifs d'appréhender qu'aucun obstacle soit mis au libre exercice de leur choix. L'Empereur des Français a solennellement désavoué tout dessein d'imposer au Mexique une forme de Gouvernement que la nation ne voudrait pas accepter; et l'éminent personnage auquel le trône a été offert refuse de l'accepter, à moins que l'offre ne soit sanctionnée par les suffrages du peuple. En tout cas, nous pouvons donc espérer avec confiance la continuation des relations pacifiques qui ont été maintenues sur la frontière, et même un grand développement du commerce déjà existant, au mutuel avantage des deux pays.

Il a paru nécessaire, depuis l'ajournement du Congrès, de prendre une décision au sujet de certains consuls étrangers dans la Confédération. La nature de cette décision et les motifs sur lesquels elle est fondée, sont trop bien expliqués dans la correspondance du département d'Etat qui vous est transmise pour nécessiter de commentaire.

A propos de nos relations étrangères, il me paraît conve-

able de vous communiquer mes vues au sujet des traités conclus par le Gouvernement des Etats-Unis, antérieurement à notre séparation, et qui, par conséquent, nous engageaient aussi bien que les puissances étrangères quand cette séparation a eu lieu. C'était, en partie, dans le but de régler les arrangements nécessités par notre changement de Gouvernement, que nous avons envoyé des commissaires à l'étranger, afin d'entamer les négociations destinées à fixer les droits et les devoirs des parties intéressées dans ces traités. Cette offre de notre part ayant été rejetée par ces puissances, comme elles nous refusent le bénéfice de ces traités, nous ne sommes plus engagés et, selon mon opinion, nos relations avec les nations de l'Europe ne sont plus soumises qu'aux stipulations du droit des gens. Il faut cependant ajouter que ces remarques ne doivent s'appliquer qu'aux traités conclus avec les Gouvernements étrangers, et non aux droits des individus.

FINANCES.

Les finances publiques sont dans une situation à réclamer sans délai votre plus sérieuse attention. Je n'ai guère besoin de dire que le fonctionnement régulier des branches de l'administration exige qu'un remède prompt et efficace soit apporté à l'état actuel de notre système monétaire. Heureusement, les ressources de notre pays sont si abondantes, et l'esprit populaire si dévoué à la cause, qu'on est prêt à fournir les réquisitions nécessaires. Nous avons donc tout ce qu'il faut à notre disposition, pourvu que nous ayons la sagesse d'en tirer parti par une bonne législation.

Au début de la guerre, nous étions loin de nous attendre à la durée et à l'importance de la lutte dans laquelle nous nous engageons. Les plus sages prévisions ne pouvaient faire croire que les passions des gens du nord les entraîneraient

au sacrifice aveugle de leurs vies, de leurs trésors et de leurs libertés, dans la vaine espérance de subjuguier treize États indépendants, habités par tant de millions d'hommes pour qui le droit naturel à la liberté est plus cher que la vie. Une longue exemption de toute taxe imposée directement par le gouvernement général, avait créé une profonde aversion contre tout impôt produit autrement que par des droits d'importation. On supposait aussi que ces droits suffiraient amplement pour les dépenses courantes en temps de paix, tandis que les fonds nécessaires à la guerre seraient fournis presque exclusivement en engageant le crédit public.

Le premier acte du Congrès provisoire fut donc seulement de voter une loi des tarifs, et d'emprunter une somme de 15 millions de dollars, garantis par un léger droit d'exportation sur le coton.

A la seconde session, la guerre fut déclarée entre la Confédération et les États-Unis, et on émit 20 millions de dollars en billets du trésor, en même temps qu'on empruntait 30 millions de dollars sur des bons. Le tarif fut révisé, et des mesures préparatoires furent prises pour permettre au Congrès d'établir un impôt direct (*internal*) à la session suivante. Ces lois furent adoptées en mai, et les États de la Virginie, de la Caroline du Nord, du Tennessee et de l'Arkansas, s'étant joints à la Confédération, le Congrès s'ajourna à Richmond, pour le mois de juillet suivant.

Avant la réunion de vos prédécesseurs à Richmond, pour leur troisième session, près de la fin de juillet 1861, le président des États-Unis avait développé dans son message le projet « de rendre la lutte courte et décisive, » et il avait demandé au Congrès quatre cent mille hommes et 400 millions de dollars. Le Congrès, dépassant les désirs du pouvoir exécutif, avait autorisé la levée d'un demi-million de volontaires, et augmenté en outre les forces régulières militaires et navales des États-Unis. Il devint donc tout d'abord d'une nécessité évidente d'établir un plan financier sur une base assez large pour être en proportion avec la terrible lutte dont nous étions menacés. Sachant que cette lutte, au lieu d'être « courte et décisive, » serait d'une durée indéfinie, et cesserait seulement le jour où les États-Unis se réveilleraient de leurs illusions de conquête, un système financier permanent

était requis, système complètement en rapport avec les exigences de notre situation.

Le plan alors imaginé par le Congrès était basé sur cette théorie : émettre des billets du Trésor susceptibles d'être convertis au gré du détenteur, en bons 8 p. 0/0, avec intérêt payable en espèces. On pensait avec raison que toute tendance à la dépréciation, pouvant prévenir de trop fortes émissions de papier monnaie, serait entravée par l'exercice continu du droit des détenteurs de convertir leurs billets à un intérêt très avantageux et payable en espèces. Le succès de ce système dépendait de la capacité du Gouvernement de payer continuellement l'intérêt en espèces, et on lui en fournissait les moyens dans la loi autorisant les émissions de papier. Une taxe intérieure, appelée taxe de guerre, fut décrétée, avec l'espoir que le produit de cette taxe, avec celui des droits d'importation, suffirait à atteindre le but qu'on se proposait. Le plan exigeait, pour bien fonctionner, que notre commerce avec les nations étrangères ne fût pas suspendu. On ne pensait pas qu'une telle suspension serait tolérée, sinon en cas de blocus effectif, et il était absurde de supposer qu'un blocus « réellement capable d'empêcher l'accès » de notre côte entière pût être maintenu.

Nous avons donc (si les neutres ne s'étaient pas associés pour aider nos ennemis par la sanction d'une prohibition illégale appliquée à leur commerce) les moyens nécessaires pour assurer au Trésor l'encaissement du numéraire suffisant pour payer l'intérêt des bons, et maintenir ainsi les billets du Trésor à un taux presque égal à leur valeur en espèces. Aussi longtemps que l'intérêt aurait continué à être payé de cette manière, avec la réserve de numéraire existant déjà dans notre pays auparavant, l'expérience aurait confirmé les espérances des auteurs de ce système. Ainsi, le 1^{er} décembre suivant, le numéraire n'avait atteint qu'une prime de 10 p. 0/0, quoiqu'il fût déjà apparent que le commerce de ce pays était menacé d'une suspension permanente, à cause de la conduite des nations neutres, et que le résultat inévitable serait l'épuisement de notre réserve de numéraire. Le blé, au commencement de 1862, se vendait à 1 dollar 30 cents le boisseau, ce qui ne dépassait donc pas son prix moyen en temps de paix. Les autres produits agricoles du pays étaient

à de pareils prix modérés, indiquant ainsi qu'il n'y avait pas un excédant de papier en circulation, et que le taux de la prime du numéraire était augmenté par les cours exceptionnels qui tendaient à faire épuiser les espèces sans possibilité d'en renouveler l'approvisionnement.

Cette revue de la politique de vos prédécesseurs est destinée à leur rendre justice et à montrer l'état des finances à la date de l'organisation du Gouvernement permanent.

En même temps, l'aversion populaire contre toute taxe intérieure imposée par le Gouvernement général, avait influencé la législation dans plusieurs Etats; dans trois d'entre eux seulement, la Caroline du Sud, le Texas et le Mississipi, l'impôt a été réellement levé. La part des autres Etats avait été levée par l'émission de bons et de billets du Trésor des Etats particuliers, ce qui avait augmenté la dette publique du pays au lieu de la diminuer, comme on l'espérait, par cette taxe imposée par le Congrès.

Ni à la première, ni à la seconde session du Congrès actuel, on n'a essayé de fournir au Gouvernement les fonds nécessaires par le moyen de l'impôt; on s'est borné à autoriser de nouvelles ventes de bons et de nouvelles émissions de billets du Trésor. Dans vos efforts répétés pour arriver à un bon système d'impôt, vous avez rencontré un obstacle qui n'existait pas pour vos prédécesseurs, et qui était un grand sujet d'embarras pour imaginer un plan quelconque d'impôts. Environ les deux tiers de la propriété susceptible d'être imposée, dans la Confédération, consistent en terre et en esclaves. La faculté générale d'établir des taxes, dont le Congrès est investi par la Constitution provisoire (qui devait être seulement temporaire en ce qui regarde ses provisions légales), n'a pas été restreinte par aucune autre condition que celle qui exige « que tous les droits, impôts, octrois, soient uniformes dans tous les Etats de la Confédération. » Mais la Constitution permanente, sanctionnant le principe que l'impôt et la représentation devaient s'appuyer sur la même base, édicte aussi spécialement que « les taxes représentatives et » directes seront partagées entre les divers Etats, d'après le » chiffre de leurs populations respectives, — chiffre qui sera » déterminé en ajoutant les trois cinquièmes de tous les es- » claves au nombre entier des personnes libres, y compris

celles engagées à servir pendant un laps de temps, et ex-
cluant les Indiens non taxés.

Il fut encore ordonné qu'un recensement serait fait dans les trois ans après la première réunion du Congrès, et que, « aucune taxe, capitale ou directe, ne serait imposée, sinon en proportion des chiffres du recensement ou de l'énumération relevée d'après les principes ci-dessus édictés. »

Il est évident que, sous cette législation, la capitation et les taxes directes doivent être levées en proportion du recensement quand il sera fait. Il est clair aussi que le Congrès a pour devoir de faire procéder au recensement avant le 22 février 1865. On peut encore ajouter que, d'après l'interprétation admise de la Constitution des États-Unis (interprétation admise depuis plus de soixante ans), la taxe sur la terre et les esclaves est une taxe directe; la conclusion semble donc être nécessairement qu'en reproduisant sans modification, dans notre propre Constitution, ce langage de la Constitution de 1787, notre convention voulait y attacher la signification sanctionnée par un acquiescement ancien et continu.

Tant qu'il parut y avoir une probabilité de pouvoir exécuter ces prescriptions de la Constitution dans leur intégralité et conformément aux intentions de leurs auteurs, il y avait une difficulté évidente à organiser un autre système d'impôt. Une loi qui exempterait du fardeau deux tiers de la propriété du pays serait aussi injuste pour les propriétaires du tiers restant, qu'elle serait incapable de répondre aux exigences du service public.

Mais la nécessité était telle, cependant, qu'après de très grandes difficultés et plus de trois mois d'un travail assidu, vous avez réussi à faire la loi du 24 avril 1863, par laquelle vous cherchiez à atteindre, autant que possible, toutes les ressources du pays, excepté le capital placé en propriétés foncières et en esclaves, et grâce à un impôt sur le revenu, et à une taxe en nature sur les produits du sol, aussi bien que par des patentes imposées aux professions libérales et mercantiles vous avez trouvé les fonds nécessaires aux besoins du pays. Mais ces fonds, en très grande partie, pouvaient être réalisés seulement à la fin de l'année présente ou au commencement de la suivante, tandis que d'ici là nos be-

soins ne permettaient aucun délai. Dans cet état de choses, entraînés presque inévitablement par les chances de la guerre dans laquelle nous sommes engagés, nous avons accru l'émission des billets du Trésor jusqu'à ce que le papier en circulation atteignît à plus de 600,000,000 de dollars, c'est-à-dire plus du triple du chiffre exigé par les nécessités commerciales du pays.

Il serait inutile de s'appesantir sur les mauvais effets produits par un tel état de choses. Ces effets ne sont malheureusement que trop évidents. Outre les obstacles qui s'opposent ainsi aux opérations nécessaires du Gouvernement et à la bonne conduite de la guerre, le plus déplorable de ces résultats a été l'influence corruptrice qu'ils peuvent avoir sur la moralité du peuple. La possession de vastes sommes en billets du Trésor a naturellement conduit au désir de les placer avantageusement, et, avec le constant accroissement de la quantité du papier-monnaie, il y eut une augmentation également continue dans le prix de toutes les choses susceptibles de spéculation. Ceci stimula les acheteurs, grâce à la certitude apparente de gros bénéfices, et on vit se développer un esprit de spéculation dont l'influence est si avilissante et les conséquences si ruineuses, que notre devoir suprême est d'en détruire la cause par des mesures qui ne sauraient jamais être trop promptes ou trop rigoureuses.

Pour en revenir aux lois constitutionnelles déjà citées, la question qui se représente est de savoir s'il est possible d'établir l'impôt d'après le recensement qui doit en être la base. Tant que cette opération parut praticable, personne ne peut nier la justesse de la conduite que vous avez tenue en vous abstenant d'imposer des taxes directes avant de pouvoir le faire dans le mode précis, indiqué par la loi constitutionnelle. Mais il est évident que la Constitution vous impose beaucoup de devoirs dont l'exécution entière dépend de la possession tranquille du territoire dans lequel ces devoirs doivent être remplis. Le même document qui ordonne de faire un recensement dans tous les États, impose à la Confédération le devoir de « garantir à chaque Etat une forme républicaine de Gouvernement. » Il nous enjoint de « protéger tous les États contre l'invasion, » et, tout en déclarant que ses motifs et son but principal sont « d'établir la justice, d'as-

« surer la tranquillité domestique et les bienfaits de la liberté à nous et à notre postérité, » ce document nous confère les moyens, et, par conséquent, nous impose le devoir, par excellence, de remplir ses intentions, en « établissant et en levant les taxes, les droits, les impôts et les octrois nécessaires pour payer les dettes publiques, pour voir à la défense commune et maintenir le Gouvernement des États Confédérés. »

Personne ne pourrait prétendre que la Constitution est violée, parce qu'en raison de la présence d'armées ennemies, nous ne sommes pas à même de garantir une forme républicaine de Gouvernement aux États ou portions d'États, actuellement sous l'occupation temporaire de l'ennemi. Il n'y aurait pas plus de justice à blâmer le Gouvernement pour n'avoir pas fait le recensement, quand cette inexécution de la loi est attribuable à des causes non prévues par les auteurs de la Constitution et au delà de notre contrôle. L'intention générale de notre Charte constitutionnelle est indubitablement que la propriété soit taxée, afin de lever l'argent nécessaire pour la défense commune, et le mode spécial prescrit pour lever cet impôt est impraticable à cause d'événements imprévus. D'après moi, notre premier devoir est d'exécuter l'intention générale exprimée dans les termes de l'acte auquel nous avons fait serment d'obéir, et nous ne pouvons nous dispenser de remplir ce devoir, sous prétexte que nous ne pouvons le faire dans la manière précise qui est indiquée. Toutes les fois qu'il nous sera possible d'exécuter notre devoir dans toutes ses parties, nous devons le faire en nous conformant strictement à la lettre et à l'esprit de la Constitution. Jusqu'à ce que ce temps arrive, il faut l'exécuter autant que notre situation nous le rend praticable. Toutes les fois que la retraite de l'ennemi nous permettra de faire le recensement et la répartition des taxes directes, toute autre manière de les lever sera contraire à la volonté du législateur, et incompatible avec notre obligation d'obéir à cette volonté; jusque-là la seule alternative qui nous reste est d'obéir à la recommandation principale, et de l'exécuter d'après la seule autre manière prévue, c'est-à-dire de « rendre la taxe uniforme dans tous les États Confédérés. »

Les considérations que je viens de présenter sont forte-

ment soutenues par la réflexion que toute tentative de répartition des taxes dans les Etats occupés en tout ou en partie par les forces ennemies renverserait le désir des auteurs de la Constitution, et produirait la plus révoltante injustice, au lieu de cette juste corrélation qu'ils avaient pour but d'assurer entre la taxe et la représentation. Avec de grandes portions de quelques Etats occupées par l'ennemi, quelle justice y aurait-il d'imposer aux autres portions la taxe de l'Etat entier proportionnellement à sa représentation? Quel autre effet cette mesure produirait-elle, sinon d'augmenter encore le fardeau de ceux qui souffrent le plus de la guerre, et de faire de notre impuissance à les protéger contre l'invasion, comme la Constitution nous le demande, un motif d'ajouter à leurs souffrances, en essayant d'adhérer à la lettre de cet acte dont nous violerions l'esprit? Un tel objet n'a pu être celui des auteurs de la Constitution, qui ne pouvaient vouloir davantage d'un pareil résultat. Un poids de plus s'ajoute à ces considérations, si nous réfléchissons que, quoique la Constitution ait requis qu'elle serait exécutoire avec une représentation temporairement répartie entre les Etats, elle ordonne expressément, après avoir exigé un recensement dans les trois ans, que cette répartition temporaire du pouvoir représentatif durera « jusqu'à ce que l'énumération requise soit faite. » Personne ne dira que, pour n'avoir pu faire le recensement dans le temps fixé, le gouvernement doit s'évanouir à la fin de cette période, faute d'avoir un corps représentatif. Sous quelque aspect qu'on envisage le sujet, je suis amené à la conclusion déjà énoncée, et qui s'accorde d'ailleurs avec le vote exprimé dans les deux Chambres, à la dernière session. Donc, jusqu'au jour où nous pourrons employer le mode prescrit par la Constitution, je jugerais de mon devoir de sanctionner toute loi décrétant l'impôt que vous devez établir pour la défense du pays, ou tout autre moyen praticable qui répartira le fardeau, d'une manière uniforme et impartiale, sur les biens de la nation entière.

Dans vos premiers actes législatifs, vous avez essayé d'éviter l'accroissement du nombre des billets en circulation, en offrant des avantages pour une conversion volontaire. Les mesures adoptées dans ce but n'ont eu qu'un succès partiel,

et le mal a maintenant atteint un tel développement, qu'il ne permet pas d'autre remède que la réduction forcée du papier-monnaie à la quantité réclamée par les nécessités commerciales du pays. Cette réduction devrait être accompagnée par l'engagement que, dans aucune circonstance, cette quantité ne sera dépassée. Aucune manière possible d'employer le crédit du gouvernement ne peut être aussi désastreuse que celle qui trouble la base de tous les échanges, rend impossible toute appréciation des valeurs futures, augmente en proportions croissant continuellement le prix de tous les objets nécessaires à la vie, et déprécie tellement le prix du travail, les salaires et le revenu, qu'elle les rend incapables de pourvoir à la subsistance elle-même. Si à cela on ajoute l'influence encore plus fatale exercée sur la moralité et le caractère du peuple, ce dont je vous ai déjà entretenu, je suis persuadé que vous conclurez avec moi qu'une adhésion inflexible au principe de la délimitation du papier-monnaie à une somme fixe, est l'élément indispensable de tout système financier à adopter par nous.

Les détenteurs du papier aujourd'hui en circulation ne peuvent être protégés, dans le recouvrement de leurs justes réclamations, que par la substitution d'autres valeurs à celles qu'ils possèdent. Si le papier n'est pas largement et promptement réduit, l'échelle actuelle des prix non-seulement continuera de se maintenir, mais par le fait même des grandes sommes ainsi requises pour la conduite de la guerre, ces prix deviendront encore plus exagérés, et le système entier croulera sous son propre poids, rendant impossible le remboursement de la dette, et détruisant complètement sa valeur entre les mains des détenteurs actuels. Si, au contraire, une dette convertie, avec intérêt hypothéqué sur une taxe directe, peut être substituée à notre papier en circulation, les détenteurs pourront l'utiliser dans la mesure de sa valeur entière, et le Gouvernement sera dans une position qui lui permettra, en dehors de tout événement possible, de poursuivre la guerre jusqu'à un heureux résultat. L'intérêt du créancier, aussi bien que celui du pays en général, demande donc que la dette publique, aujourd'hui représentée par les billets du Trésor, soit convertie en bons portant un intérêt proportionnel, avec les arrangements nécessaires pour assurer le

payement effectif, et l'amortissement final de la dette entière.

Le rapport du Ministre des finances présente les principaux traits d'un système qui, aidé de la législation déjà existante, est destiné à assurer les divers résultats d'une réduction du papier en circulation, dans des limites fixes et raisonnables, à pourvoir aux nécessités futures du Gouvernement, à donner des garanties pour le payement ponctuel des intérêts, et l'extinction finale du capital de la dette publique, et à placer les affaires commerciales du pays sur une base aussi rapprochée du payement en numéraire que cela est possible, pendant la durée de la guerre. J'appelle instamment votre attention sur ce plan, et surtout sur la nécessité de n'apporter aucun délai à propos de cette question vitale. J'ai l'espoir que vous y donnerez toute votre attention, jusqu'au jour où vous en aurez décidé d'une manière qui nous permettra d'atteindre le mieux possible les importants résultats que votre pays espère voir sortir de vos actes législatifs.

On pourrait ajouter qu'en étudiant cette question, le peuple doit constamment se rappeler que le Gouvernement, en contractant une dette, n'est que l'agent de la nation, et que sa dette est celle du peuple entier. Comme le papier est exclusivement entre nos mains, il est clair que, si chaque personne possédait des billets du Trésor en proportion exacte avec sa propre fortune, chacune se devrait à elle-même, par le fait, le montant des billets qu'elle posséderait; et, s'il était possible de répartir, dans cette exacte proportion, le papier-monnaie parmi le peuple, un impôt levé sur le papier seul, dans des proportions suffisantes pour le ramener à ses limites naturelles, cet impôt serait le meilleur des remèdes. Dans de telles circonstances, le papier restant entre les mains de chaque détenteur, après le payement de sa taxe, vaudrait juste autant que la quantité qu'il possédait auparavant, car il pourrait acheter avec elle au moins autant d'objets de consommation. Ce résultat ne peut être parfaitement atteint par aucune mesure législative, mais on peut au moins s'en approcher par le moyen d'une taxe. Un impôt sur toutes les valeurs a pour effet, non-seulement de faire peser une juste portion du fardeau sur le détenteur des billets, mais de contraindre ceux qui possèdent

peu ou ne possèdent point de ce papier, de faire partager une partie de leurs biens à ceux qui ont des billets en excès, afin de pouvoir satisfaire aux demandes du collecteur d'impôts. C'est la seule manière praticable de faire contribuer tout le monde aussi également que possible au fardeau que tous doivent supporter, et c'est pour cette raison que l'impôt proportionné aux besoins publics, dans les circonstances présentes, doit former la base d'un système de conversion, ou de tout autre remède destiné à donner de la stabilité à nos finances.

ARMÉE.

Je vous renvoie au Rapport du ministre de la guerre, pour les détails relatifs à la condition de l'armée et aux mesures législatives nécessaires pour la maintenir en son état, recruter ses rangs et fournir les choses dont elle a besoin.

Malgré la perte de beaucoup de nos meilleurs soldats et de nos concitoyens les plus patriotiques (triste mais inévitable résultat des batailles et des fatigues d'une campagne comme celle qui rendra l'année 1863 pour toujours mémorable dans nos annales), nous considérons l'année comme étant, sous tous les rapports, en meilleure condition qu'à aucune époque précédente de la guerre. Nos braves défenseurs, aujourd'hui vétérans, familiarisés avec le danger, endurcis par les fatigues et confiants en eux-mêmes et en leurs officiers, supportent les privations avec un courageux enthousiasme, et attendent les batailles avec impatience. Les officiers, grâce à l'expérience acquise au service et à l'élimination des incapables par les conseils supérieurs, sont devenus beaucoup plus habiles qu'au commencement de la guerre. Personne ne mémentira cette affirmation qu'au point de vue du moral, de la valeur, de l'habileté et du dévouement patriotique, notre armée n'a pas trouvé son égale dans aucun corps de troupes aussi nombreux dont parlera l'histoire de cette guerre.

La forte conscription récemment ordonnée par l'ennemi,

et son appel subséquent de volontaires, qui doit lui-même être suivi par une autre conscription, en cas d'insuccès de l'appel, tout cela nous avertit de n'épargner aucun effort pour augmenter nos forces effectives, le plus vite et le plus largement possible. Nous en trouverons les moyens en réintégrant dans l'armée tous ceux qui en sont illégalement absents, en arrêtant le système du remplacement militaire, modifiant la loi d'exemption, restreignant le nombre des hommes détachés, et en appelant dans les rangs les hommes valides employés maintenant comme conducteurs, infirmiers, cuisiniers et autres, qui font le service pour lequel les nègres seraient parfaitement capables.

L'Acte du 16 avril 1862 ordonne que toutes « les personnes non soumises au service militaire peuvent servir de » remplaçants à celles qui tombent sous la loi, mais dans la » limite des règlements que peut prescrire le ministre de la » guerre. » L'expérience a démontré qu'on avait tort de suivre ce système. Non-seulement la force effective de nos armées a été sérieusement diminuée par les fréquentes désertions auxquelles ces remplaçants sont notoirement enclins, mais le mécontentement s'est introduit parmi les citoyens qui ne voulaient ou ne pouvaient profiter de l'occasion, ainsi offerte, d'échapper au service militaire.

Je suis complètement de l'opinion du ministre de la guerre, qui pense qu'aucune objection sérieuse ne peut être opposée à ce que ceux qui ont déjà fourni des remplaçants soient appelés sous les drapeaux, et qu'il n'y a là aucune violation de l'arrangement intervenu avec le gouvernement. Accepter un remplaçant n'était pas devenir partie à un contrat, mais simplement conférer un privilège! Donc, lorsque le remplaçant tombe lui-même sous la conscription, il paraît naturel que celui dont il a pris la place doit à son tour remplacer un homme pour l'exemption duquel le gouvernement n'a reçu aucun dédommagement. Toutefois, dans le cas où les nouvelles prescriptions de la loi ne s'appliqueraient pas à un remplaçant actuellement au service, mais où le remplacé tomberait de nouveau à la conscription, il paraît équitable d'exiger une compensation du conscrit qui aurait, dans ce cas, fourni à l'armée un soldat passible de l'enrôlement en aucune autre manière.

Quant aux exemptions, on pense généralement que les abus de ce système ne peuvent être enravés qu'en plaçant le système lui-même sur une base toute différente de celle actuellement fixée par la loi. Le but de votre législation fut, non pas de conférer des privilèges à certaines classes, mais d'exonérer du service militaire les gens habiles dans divers métiers, professions et arts mécaniques, afin d'utiliser leurs services le mieux possible pour le bien du pays, en leur laissant poursuivre leurs occupations actuelles plutôt qu'en les enrôlant dans les rangs de l'armée. Ce but est évidemment bon, mais il serait bien mieux atteint en enrôlant toutes ces personnes, et en permettant ensuite d'en former des détachements spéciaux en rapport avec les besoins du pays. On estime qu'un nombre considérable de citoyens sont maintenant exemptés du service militaire, et que, cependant, ils ne servent en rien, dans leurs professions civiles, la cause publique.

Certaines fonctions maintenant accomplies, dans l'étendue du territoire, par des détachements de l'armée, pourraient l'être tout aussi bien par des citoyens ayant dépassé l'âge légal de la conscription. Sans aucun fardeau inutile à supporter par la population, on espérerait augmenter beaucoup nos forces en campagne par une extension de la limite d'âge, de manière à comprendre dans la conscription les personnes au-dessus de quarante-cinq ans et capables de veiller à la garde des routes, des chemins de fer et des ponts, d'arrêter les déserteurs, de remplacer, quand ce serait possible, les jeunes gens employés aux bureaux des salpêtres, de l'artillerie, des approvisionnements et des fournitures générales.

Si, aux mesures précédentes, on ajoutait une loi élargissant la pensée de l'acte du 21 avril 1862, de manière à autoriser le ministère à remplacer, par des nègres, non-seulement les cuisiniers enrôlés, mais les conducteurs de trains, l'équipages et autres auxiliaires de l'armée, on pourrait espérer de voir nos cadres si bien remplis, que nos troupes, à la prochaine campagne, défieraient les plus grands efforts de l'ennemi.

Afin de maintenir intacte, jusqu'à la fin de la guerre, l'organisation actuelle de l'armée, vos actes législatifs préoyaient un arrivage fréquent de recrues. On comptait qu'a-

vant l'expiration de trois ans, pour lesquels les hommes étaient enrôlés, d'après l'acte du 16 avril 1862, la majorité des soldats de chaque compagnie serait composée de ceux qui y furent adjoints à différentes dates postérieures à l'organisation première de la compagnie, mais que la libération de ceux qui auraient fini leur temps de service ne serait jamais, à aucune époque, assez nombreuse pour laisser dans la compagnie un nombre d'hommes moindre que la quantité nécessaire pour conserver le cadre, après le renvoi dans leurs foyers des soldats libérés. La difficulté d'enrôler des recrues dans certaines localités, et les nombreuses exemptions du service militaire autorisées par la loi ont empêché, dans plusieurs compagnies, de recevoir assez de monde pour conserver les cadres, après la libération des membres originels de ces compagnies. L'avantage de conserver des officiers éprouvés et expérimentés, ainsi que de mêler des recrues avec des soldats déjà faits, est si évident, si clairement démontré, qu'on n'a pas jugé nécessaire de montrer les fatales conséquences qui résulteraient de la destruction des anciens cadres, ou de s'appesantir sur les bénéfices qu'on retirerait en remplissant les compagnies anciennes, aussi longtemps que possible avant la libération des anciens soldats. Dans les cas où il serait jugé impraticable de maintenir les régiments à un chiffre d'hommes suffisant pour justifier le maintien de l'organisation présente, on gagnerait, à une consolidation et à une réorganisation, au point de vue de l'économie et de l'utilité. Cela nécessiterait le renvoi d'une partie des officiers ; mais on réglerait cette opération de manière à faire le choix le plus judicieux de ceux qui doivent être gardés, tout en ne blessant pas les susceptibilités de ceux mis en disponibilité.

L'expérience a démontré la nécessité d'une nouvelle législation en ce qui concerne les chevaux de la cavalerie. Beaucoup d'hommes perdent leurs chevaux par des accidents survenus au service, accidents qui, d'après la loi, ne donnent pas le droit d'exiger une compensation de la perte subie. Il peut ainsi arriver assez souvent que les meilleurs cavaliers, sans aucune faute de leur part, — souvent même à cause de leur zèle et de leur activité, — sont perdus pour le service de la cavalerie.

Il paraît convenable aussi que le gouvernement puisse avoir un entier contrôle sur tout cheval au service de l'État, avec la réserve cependant que le propriétaire ne saurait être privé de son animal sans une juste compensation. S'il en était autrement, des cavaliers pourraient avoir des chevaux incapables pour le service; et la question de savoir si ces hommes doivent servir à pied ou à cheval dépendrait non des qualités de l'homme, mais du simple fait qu'il possède un cheval.

Nous aurons à promulguer quelques ordonnances jugées nécessaires, pour obvier aux inconvénients qu'entraîne l'absence prolongée d'officiers au service. Quand cette absence n'est excusée par aucun motif sérieux, il ne semble que juste de retirer leurs grades aux officiers ainsi absents.

Mais quand l'absence résulte de la prise par les ennemis, ce qui, grâce à leur refus barbare d'échanger les prisonniers de guerre, peut être considéré comme une absence pour un temps indéfini, il est nécessaire de remplacer les officiers manquant pour pareille cause dans leurs divers corps. Ce tout serait atteint par des nominations temporaires, qui seraient maintenues jusqu'au retour des officiers en titre. Si l'absence résulte d'une incapacité corporelle permanente survenue aux officiers dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions, il serait convenable de les porter sur la liste de retraite et de les remplacer d'après les règles déjà établies. Je vous suggère aussi l'idée de l'organisation d'un corps d'invalides dans lequel seraient transférés les officiers en retraite. Un pareil corps est estimé capable d'être utilement employé à divers services, aujourd'hui remplis par des soldats et des officiers valides.

Une organisation régulière de l'état-major de l'armée rendrait encore plus utile cette branche si importante du service. Le plan adopté pour les établissements militaires fournit un modèle pour l'état-major d'une armée provisoire, si on jugeait convenable de conserver une pareille distinction; mais je recommande à votre attention la question de savoir s'il ne vaudrait pas mieux l'abolir, et pourvoir à l'organisation de plusieurs corps d'état-major, en nombre suffisant, et avec des grades tels que peuvent l'exiger les besoins du service. Afin de pouvoir rencontrer les talents nécessaires pour des posi-

tions plus importantes, il faudra chercher à s'assurer des officiers d'un grade plus élevé que celui autorisé maintenant dans ces corps d'armée. Pour donner aux officiers des rapports convenables entre eux et un commun accord, et pour conserver dans le chef de chaque corps une influence et un contrôle utile sur ses subordonnés, il ne devrait pas y avoir d'avancement basé sur le grade du général sous qui ces officiers peuvent servir, en vertu d'une nomination spéciale. Il paraît convenable aussi de donner à l'état-major d'un général le grade correspondant au sien propre, et de proportionner cet état-major au commandement du général. Pour éviter les conséquences d'une mise en disponibilité, à cause d'un changement de service, la partie variable d'un état-major personnel pourrait être composée d'officiers de la ligne, qui conserveraient leurs grades primitifs.

La situation de notre papier-monnaie, à laquelle j'ai déjà fait allusion, a imposé au gouvernement un système de fournitures militaires si incertain, si vexatoire pour le producteur, si fatal aux intérêts industriels, et causant un si grand mécontentement dans le peuple, qu'on ne peut le justifier que par l'existence de la nécessité absolue. Le rapport du ministre, sur ce point, établit surabondamment que si les bureaux furent forcés de lever par réquisitions forcées les subsistances militaires, ce fut à cause de l'impossibilité de se fournir par adjudication ou sur le marché, excepté à des prix augmentant si rapidement, que les fonds votés se fussent trouvés insuffisants pour les besoins de l'armée. Il est probable, en effet, que la tentation d'accaparer les provisions, en vue des prix excessifs sur lesquels on pouvait certainement compter, a été enrayée par la seule crainte des réquisitions forcées, et que les objets de consommation furent offerts sur les marchés, principalement pour échapper à la réquisition, et pour vendre à un prix supérieur à celui de l'estimation. Les plaintes contre ce vicieux système étaient bien fondées, mais la vraie cause en était mal appréciée. On trouvera le remède, non pas dans un changement de la loi sur les réquisitions, mais dans le retour du papier-monnaie à une base permettant au ministère d'acheter les fournitures sur le marché, et faisant ainsi de la réquisition un moyen essentiellement exceptionnel.

Le même remède produira le résultat, universellement désiré, d'une augmentation de paye de l'armée. Les projets de loi présentés à votre précédente session, qui augmentent la paye du soldat, grâce à une nouvelle émission de billets du Trésor, lui auraient apporté peu de soulagement. Mais une réforme radicale de notre monnaie ramènerait la solde à la valeur approximative qu'elle avait auparavant, et améliorerait réellement la condition du soldat.

Les rapports des bureaux d'artillerie et des mines sont très satisfaisants, et l'accroissement de nos moyens de produire, avec nos propres ressources, les armes et les munitions de guerre, a été tel, que nous pouvons être assurés de ne plus ou presque plus dépendre des nations étrangères, pour nos approvisionnements militaires. Les établissements pour la fonte des canons, la fabrication des projectiles, des armes et de la poudre, l'extraction du salpêtre des terrains nitriques artificiels, et les opérations des mines en général, tout cela a été arrangé et distribué sur toute la surface du pays, de manière à mettre nos ressources à l'abri de désastres partiels.

Les recommandations du ministre de la guerre, sur d'autres points, sont minutieusement détaillées dans son rapport, qui vous est présenté, et elles méritent une attention sérieuse, car elles s'étendent à presque toutes les branches du service.

ÉCHANGE DES PRISONNIERS.

Je regrette d'avoir à vous informer que l'ennemi est revenu à la politique barbare, inaugurée par lui au commencement de la guerre, et que l'échange des prisonniers est interrompu depuis quelque temps. La correspondance des Commissaires de l'Échange vous est soumise par le ministre de la guerre, et elle a déjà été publiée dans l'intérêt de tous ceux qui subissent aujourd'hui un emprisonnement inutile. La conduite

des autorités des États-Unis a toujours été perfide sur ce sujet. Au commencement de la guerre, un arrangement pour l'échange des prisonniers venait d'être conclu, quand la prise du fort Donnelson renversa le précédent état de choses, et donna à l'ennemi un excédant de prisonniers. Il renonça immédiatement à l'arrangement déjà conclu, et cela jusqu'au jour où la fortune de la guerre plaça, de nouveau, entre nos mains, un nombre supérieur de prisonniers. Un nouveau cartel d'échange fut alors conclu ; pendant plusieurs mois, nous rendîmes ainsi à l'ennemi des milliers de prisonniers de plus que ceux qu'il pouvait nous remettre en échange ; des camps de prisonniers sur parole, rendus par nous en plus du nombre voulu, furent établis dans les États-Unis, et, dans ces camps, les soldats pouvaient donc jouir de l'avantage et de la consolation d'être en constante communication avec leurs villes natales et leurs familles. En juillet dernier, le sort de la guerre favorisa de nouveau l'ennemi, et il se trouva à même d'échanger nos prisonniers de Vicksburg et de Port-Hudson contre ceux de ses hommes dont nous avons renvoyé un excédant. Les prisonniers faits à Gettysburg restèrent cependant entre les mains des États-Unis, quoiqu'ils eussent dû être renvoyés dans nos lignes, pour attendre, sur parole, leur échange. Ils furent cependant gardés en captivité permanente, grâce à de faux prétextes ardemment cherchés, et malgré les plus simples exigences de la justice et de la bonne foi. Les ordres généraux, partant des bureaux de Washington, se succédaient rapidement, pour donner chacun une nouvelle interprétation à un arrangement qui n'avait pas soulevé le moindre désaccord quand l'avantage du nombre de prisonniers était en notre faveur. Avec un mépris, jusque-là sans précédent, d'obligations honorablement consenties, le Nord n'a pas hésité, tout en retenant les prisonniers capturés par lui, à déclarer nulle la parole donnée par les captifs faits par nous dans les mêmes séries de combats, et que nous avons libérés à la condition qu'ils ne serviraient pas avant d'avoir été échangés. Dès lors, l'ennemi a toujours insisté pour considérer comme nulle la parole donnée par ses propres soldats prisonniers, et comme valable celle donnée par nos hommes captifs, absolument dans les mêmes circonstances. La série de ces prétentions

injustes a été exposée dans une correspondance longue et fastidieuse, qui employait tous les moyens possibles pour cacher le mépris d'un devoir, que le sentiment de l'honneur peut seul faire exécuter entre belligérants.

Cette question n'a pas besoin de plus longs commentaires. Je voudrais seulement appeler votre attention sur la conclusion de la correspondance qui vous est soumise. Vous y verrez que la dernière proposition faite par l'ennemi, pour arranger toutes les contestations à propos du cartel d'échange, est que nous devrions délivrer tous les prisonniers en notre possession, sans même qu'on nous offrît de délivrer aucun de nos hommes au pouvoir des Etats-Unis.

En même temps, des efforts systématiques et vigoureux sont faits pour apaiser, dans les Etats-Unis, les plaintes des parents et amis des prisonniers que nous avons entre les mains, et qui ne comprennent pas pourquoi le cartel d'échange n'est pas exécuté en leur faveur, en faisant croire faussement à ces familles que c'est nous qui nous refusons à l'échange. Le Nord essaye aussi d'atténuer l'exécration attirée sur lui par les traitements odieux subis par nos officiers et soldats prisonniers entre ses mains, en répandant de faux bruits, en affirmant que les captifs internés au Sud sont privés de nourriture. A cette dernière accusation, on a répondu d'une manière concluante, qu'en vertu de nos lois et des ordres du ministère, les rations des prisonniers sont absolument les mêmes, en qualité et quantité, que celles fournies à nos braves soldats en campagne, et qui leur suffisaient pour les soutenir dans leurs rudes travaux ; jamais l'ennemi n'a prétendu, de son côté, appliquer la même règle généreuse aux prisonniers faits par lui. Par une indulgence, peut-être sans précédents, nous avons même permis aux prisonniers de recevoir, de leurs amis et parents, des objets confortables, dont sont privés les soldats qui les firent prisonniers sur le champ de bataille. Tout au contraire de cela, la plus révoltante inhumanité a caractérisé la conduite des Etats-Unis envers les prisonniers qu'ils détiennent chez eux. Un fait principal, qui ne peut être ni nié ni excusé, servira de preuve. Les officiers de notre armée, — nés sous les climats presque tropicaux du Sud, et inaccoutumés aux froids des hivers du Nord, — ont été internés, pendant les rigueurs

de la saison actuelle, dans l'endroit le plus septentrional et le plus inclément que l'ennemi a pu trouver. Là, sans rien de confortable, et même souvent sans nouvelles de leur patrie et de leurs familles, exposés au froid rigoureux des lacs du Nord, nos hommes sont gardés par des gens qui ne peuvent ignorer les résultats à attendre d'un pareil emprisonnement, lors même qu'il n'y aurait pas eu préméditation. Combien de nos malheureux amis et camarades, qui ont passé sans égratignures par tant de batailles, périront dans l'île Johnson, sous le coup de la rude épreuve à laquelle ils sont soumis, — combien? Personne que Celui qui sait tout ne peut nous le dire à l'avance. Ils supporteront ces traitements barbares avec le courage qu'ils ont déjà montré au service de leur pays, nous n'en doutons pas. Mais, à qui fera-t-on croire que c'est notre refus d'exécuter le cartel d'échange, et non la méchanceté de l'ennemi, qui a infligé de telles cruautés intolérables à nos défenseurs si honorés et si aimés par nous!

DÉPARTEMENT DU TRANS-MISSISSIPI.

Les communications régulières et ponctuelles avec les régions au delà du Mississippi sont interrompues, de façon à rendre difficile l'exercice complet des fonctions exécutives dans ce Département. Remplir les emplois vacants, agir efficacement en certaines matières liées à l'organisation militaire, contrôler l'emploi des fonds produits par l'impôt ou envoyés par le Trésor, entretenir le service de la Direction des Postes, etc., tout cela exige, d'après la Constitution et les lois existantes, l'intervention du Président et des Ministres. Les besoins du service militaire se refusent souvent à des délais, et jusqu'à ce qu'une direction régulière, provenant

du siège du Gouvernement, puisse être établie, l'exercice d'une autorité temporaire devrait être autorisé par un acte législatif. En ce qui regarde spécialement le Département des Postes, je propose de nommer pour les États au delà du Mississippi un aide Directeur, auquel le Directeur général serait autorisé à déléguer tous les pouvoirs exercés par lui-même et nécessaires pour contrôler les fonds du Département dans ces États, et les appliquer au paiement des adjudicataires du service de la malle, pour surveiller les bureaux de poste et les contrats passés avec les agents, pour l'emploi temporaire de gens capables de remplir les fonctions de Directeurs des Postes et d'adjudicataires dans les cas urgents, jusqu'à ce que les nominations régulières puissent être faites, et pour d'autres cas semblables. S'il n'y a pas de loi passée à ce sujet, on court risque de voir cesser le service postal à cause des délais et des difficultés dont souffrent les entrepreneurs sous le système actuel, qui exige l'envoi constant de leurs comptes à Richmond, aussi bien que celui de l'argent reçu par les Directeurs locaux, avant d'autoriser le paiement des services rendus par ces agents. La même action législative est aussi nécessaire pour le Département du Trésor; mais, quant aux affaires militaires, il semblerait suffisant d'autoriser le Président et le Ministre de la guerre à déléguer au commandant général, pour les besoins du service, la portion de pouvoirs discrétionnaires dont la loi les a eux-mêmes investis.

MARINE.

Le rapport officiel du secrétaire donne le détail des opérations de ce Département depuis le mois de janvier passé. Il contient tous les renseignements tant sur la disposition et le service des navires, des officiers et des marins, que sur les vaisseaux en cours de construction à Richmond, Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, Selma, et sur les rivières Roa-

noke, Nease, Pedee, Chattahoochee et Tombigbee, non moins que sur les provisions de bois de construction, sur la manufacture d'artillerie et des équipages. Les fonderies et les chantiers ont été améliorés et agrandis, de sorte que leur capacité à fournir toute l'artillerie de gros calibre nécessaire à la défense de nos côtes et ports n'est limitée que par la disette d'ouvriers spéciaux. Le manque de tels ouvriers et de marins se fait sentir péniblement dans les travaux de ce Département.

On ne saurait donner trop de louanges à l'habileté, au courage et à l'activité de nos croiseurs. Ils ont infligé des pertes graves à l'ennemi sans avoir souffert un seul désastre, et ils ont sérieusement compromis la marine marchande des États-Unis, par la nécessité qui leur a été imposée d'abriter leur commerce à l'étranger sous des pavillons neutres.

Votre attention est appelée sur les mesures proposées dans ce rapport, afin de recruter des matelots pour le service de la marine, et sur les besoins de la législation au sujet de la marine volontaire.

DIRECTION DES POSTES.

Le rapport du Directeur général des Postes nous montre que les recettes de ce Département, pendant l'année fiscale finissant le 30 juin dernier, se sont élevées à 3,337,853 dollars 1 cent, et les dépenses, durant la même période, de 2,662,804 doll. 67 cents. D'après cet exposé, il y a donc un surplus de recettes s'élevant à 675,048 doll. 44 cents, au lieu d'un déficit de plus de 1 million de dollars, comme pendant l'année fiscale précédente. Il est satisfaisant de voir que ce Département a pu se suffire à lui-même, selon les vrais principes économiques et conformément aux conditions expresses de la Constitution qui exige que ses dépenses soient couvertes par ses propres revenus à partir du 1^{er} mars 1863.

CONDUITE DE L'ENNEMI.

Je ne puis clore ce message sans faire une nouvelle allusion à la férocité sauvage qui signale toujours la conduite de nos ennemis dans la poursuite de la guerre. Après avoir été repoussés devant Charleston, ils cherchèrent d'abord à en tirer vengeance par une tentative infructueuse de détruire la ville au moyen d'une composition incendiaire, lancée d'une distance de quatre milles par une artillerie perfectionnée. Ayant échoué en ceci, ils changèrent leurs projectiles, mais fort heureusement ils n'ont réussi jusqu'ici qu'à tuer deux femmes dans l'intérieur de la ville. Leurs commandants, — Butler, M'Neil et Turchin, dont les horribles barbaries ont imprimé à leurs noms une notoriété lointaine et partout exécration, sont encore honorés et protégés à Washington. Le premier, après avoir été rappelé des lieux témoins de ses cruautés contre les femmes et les prisonniers de guerre (comme une concession à contre-cœur faite aux demandes de l'humanité outragée en Europe), vient d'être investi d'un nouveau commandement à Norfolk, où des femmes et des enfants sans défense sont de nouveau mis à sa discrétion.

Une guerre non moins implacable a été faite par ces prétendus amis des libertés et des droits de l'humanité contre les malheureux nègres. Partout où nos ennemis ont pu pénétrer, ils ont entraîné de vive force, dans les rangs de leur armée, tous les hommes en état de porter les armes et dont ils ont pu s'emparer ; les vieillards, les femmes et les enfants ont été par eux, soit abandonnés, exposés à périr d'inanition, soit groupés dans des camps, où ils ont été moissonnés par une effrayante mortalité. Sans vêtements ou sans abri, souvent sans nourriture, incapables, par eux-mêmes, de prendre les plus ordinaires précautions contre la maladie, ces malheureux sans ressources, accoutumés à compter pour leurs besoins sur la prévoyance de leurs maîtres, sont en voie

d'une extermination rapide, partout où ils sont mis en contact avec les envahisseurs. Ils sont traités avec aversion et négligence par les hommes du Nord, dont les préjugés profondément enracinés ne donnent accès à aucun sentiment de bienveillance à leur égard. Il n'est point hasardeux de prédire que, dans toutes les localités où l'ennemi a obtenu un pied-à-terre temporaire, les nègres qui, sous nos soins tutélaires, ont vu leur nombre augmenter dans la proportion de un à six, depuis leur incorporation dans les colonies de la Grande-Bretagne, auront été réduits, par la mortalité pendant la guerre, à la moitié de leur chiffre primitif.

Nos informations, à ce sujet, reposent non-seulement sur nos propres observations, et sur les déclarations des nègres qui ont réussi à s'échapper de chez l'ennemi, mais leur confirmation la plus complète ressort des comptes rendus que publient dans les journaux du Nord des hommes humanitaires, dans le but de faire des appels aux personnes charitables pour aider à prévenir les ravages résultant de la maladie, du manque d'abri et de l'inanition parmi les femmes et les enfants nègres accumulés dans des campements.

La frontière de notre pays témoigne de l'empressement et de l'efficacité avec lesquels les ordres du jour de l'ennemi ont été mis à exécution, par la dévastation des fermes, la destruction des instruments d'agriculture, l'incendie des maisons et la destruction de tout objet mobilier. Son aspect tout entier est un commentaire douloureux de l'ordre du jour émis par les États-Unis, le 24 avril 1863, et contenant « des instructions pour les gouverneurs des armées des États-Unis en campagne, » dont l'extrait suivant est tout un enseignement :

« La nécessité militaire admet toute destruction directe
» de la vie et de la personne d'ennemis armés et d'autres
» personnes dont la destruction est inévitable dans la lutte
» armée de la guerre. Elle permet de capturer tout ennemi
» de quelque utilité pour le gouvernement hostile ou offrant
» quelque danger à l'auteur de la capture ; elle permet la des-
» truction complète des propriétés et l'obstruction de tous che-
» mins et canaux de trafic, de voyage ou de communications,
» et la retenue de toute subsistance ou moyen d'existence
» de l'ennemi ; elle permet de s'approprier tout ce que le

» pays de l'ennemi offre de nécessaire à la subsistance et au
» salut de son armée, et de pratiquer toute déception qui
» n'implique point un manque de bonne foi, en opposition
» aux conventions faites durant les hostilités, ou en contra-
» diction avec les lois modernes de la guerre. Des hommes
» qui s'arment les uns contre les autres dans une guerre pu-
» blique ne perdent point pour cette raison la qualité d'êtres
» moraux, responsables les uns envers les autres et envers
» Dieu. »

Le contraste frappant entre cette doctrine mise en pratique et la conduite de notre armée lors de son invasion dans la Pensylvanie, montre le caractère moral de notre peuple. Bien que ce ménagement ait pu être non mérité et non apprécié par l'ennemi, il s'est imposé de lui-même à nos soldats en vue de leur respect personnel, qui leur commandait de ne point dégénérer, de guerriers chrétiens qu'ils sont, en brigands pillards, attaquant la propriété, la vie et l'honneur d'une population sans défense. Si leur conduite, ainsi mise en contraste avec les usages inhumains de notre ennemi, ne réussit pas à commander le respect et la sympathie des nations civilisées contemporaines, elle ne pourra manquer d'être appréciée par leur postérité moins trompée.

L'espoir conçu l'année dernière d'une prompte terminaison de la guerre ne s'est point réalisé. Si le carnage était de nature à satisfaire l'ardeur de nos ennemis à la destruction de vies humaines ou bien encore si le chagrin et la douleur pouvaient apaiser leur rage d'occasionner des souffrances humaines, il y a eu assez de sang versé de part et d'autre, et les deux pays ont été suffisamment assombris par les vêtements de deuil, pour amener une disposition à la paix.

Si l'unanimité chez un peuple pouvait faire cesser l'illusion, elle s'est manifestée d'une manière trop flagrante pour ne pas réduire à néant le prétexte que les États du Sud n'ont été agités que par une insurrection factieuse, et il y a longtemps que l'on a pu reconnaître qu'ils n'ont fait qu'exercer les droits qu'ils s'étaient réservés, de modifier leur propre gouvernement de manière à mieux assurer leur bonheur. Mais ces considérations ont été impuissantes pour apaiser la haine, rien moins que chrétienne, de ceux qui,

habitués depuis longtemps à retirer de grands bénéfices de leur union avec nous, ne peuvent pas maîtriser la rage excitée par la conviction qu'ils ont d'avoir, par leur propre folie, détruit les sources les plus fécondes de leur prospérité.

Ils refusent même d'écouter des propositions dans le sens de l'unique paix possible entre nous, d'une paix qui, reconnaissant l'abîme infranchissable qui nous divise, permettrait aux deux peuples, séparément, de réparer les maux infligés à tous deux par la guerre sans cause qui nous est faite.

Ayant commencé la guerre en violation directe de leur Constitution qui leur défendait de faire violence à un Etat, ils se sont endurcis dans le crime au point de ne plus même essayer de masquer leur dessein, qui consiste à détruire les institutions et à renverser la souveraineté et l'indépendance de ces Etats. Nous savons donc maintenant que l'unique espoir de la paix repose dans la vigueur de notre résistance attendu que la cessation de leurs hostilités ne peut venir que de l'épuisement de leurs ressources.

Le patriotisme du peuple s'est montré à la hauteur de tous les sacrifices exigés pour le bien de la patrie. Nous avons été unis comme jamais peuple ne le fut dans des circonstances semblables. Dieu nous a accordé des succès hors de proportions avec nos ressources, et sous sa divine faveur nos travaux devront enfin être couronnés par la récompense due aux hommes qui ont donné tout ce qu'ils possédaient pour la juste défense de leurs droits inaliénables, leurs foyers et leurs autels.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

Dupanloup, Felix Antoine Philibert, Bp

LETTRE PASTORALE

DE

M^{GR} L'ÉVÊQUE D'ORLÉANS

SUR

LES MALHEURS ET LES SIGNES DU TEMPS.

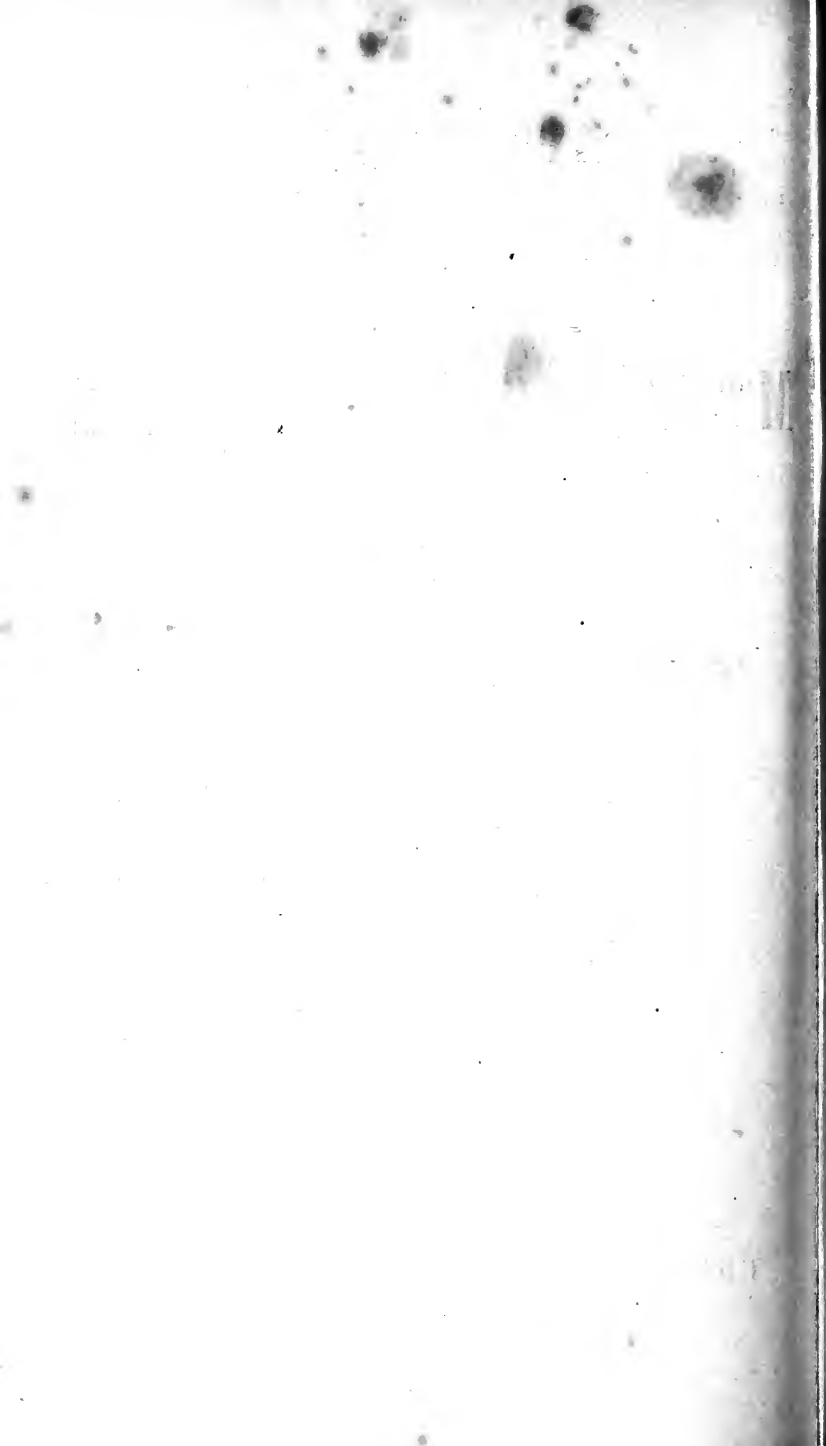


PARIS

CHARLES DOUNIOL, LIBRAIRE-ÉDITEUR

29, rue de Tournon.

—
1866



LETTRE PASTORALE

DE

M^{GR} L'ÉVÊQUE D'ORLÉANS

SUR

LES MALHEURS ET LES SIGNES DU TEMPS.



MESSIEURS ,

Nous ne sommes pas dans des jours heureux. Non, l'année qui marche à son terme ne comptera pas parmi les années heureuses. Le patriotisme, la religion, l'humanité auront eu à verser des larmes.

C'est sous l'impression toute vive encore des spectacles dont je viens de contempler l'horreur que je vous adresse de nouveau ces quelques paroles. Il faut avoir vu sur place et dans le détail ce que j'ai vu, pour se rendre compte des affreux ravages que cette inondation a causés, et concevoir la profondeur des misères que nous avons à secourir.

Dans les premiers moments du désastre, nous avons recueilli et nourri à l'Évêché tout ce que nous avons pu de ces malheureuses familles inondées. J'ai été moi-même tout d'abord dans un grand nombre de paroisses ravagées distribuer quelques premiers secours, et j'en ai fait aussi parvenir à la hâte dans toutes les autres. Je dois ajouter, Messieurs, que ç'a été pour moi une consolation particulière de voir les communautés religieuses rivaliser de zèle pour recueillir, elles aussi, les inondés ;

et c'est sur elles que je compte, ainsi que sur mes fidèles diocésains, pour m'aider dans l'œuvre principale que j'entreprends à cette heure en faveur des pauvres enfants, dont les parents ont été mis par l'inondation hors d'état de les nourrir et de les envoyer aux écoles.

En un mot, nous sommes tous activement à l'œuvre pour réunir les offrandes et les dévouements de la charité. Vous nous seconderez, Messieurs, de tout votre zèle, et prendrez, comme vous le devez, votre part dans ce grand mouvement charitable et national qui se produit ; car, vous le voyez, le gouvernement, les administrations départementales et municipales, la France entière fait les efforts les plus généreux pour venir en aide aux victimes de l'inondation. Nous devons une particulière reconnaissance à M. le préfet du Loiret, dont l'activité intelligente et le zèle infatigable ont lutté et luttent encore avec énergie sur tous les points, comme aussi à M. le maire d'Orléans et à ses dignes collègues, qui se sont si bien montrés à la hauteur de leur tâche. Puissions-nous, par tous ces efforts réunis, je ne dis pas égaler les secours aux besoins, mais du moins soulager et consoler ces immenses misères. Tout ce qui peut être fait sera fait, je l'espère de la générosité orléanaise et française.

Mais, je me le demande de nouveau, quelle est donc la puissance de cet élément terrible, inexorable, qui renverse tout devant lui, se joue de tous nos travaux, brise tous les obstacles, et que les digues les plus fortes ne semblent contenir que pour le précipiter tous les dix ans avec une plus affreuse violence ?

A qui donc obéit-il ? qui l'appelle et qui l'envoie ?

On l'oublie trop, Messieurs, et Dieu nous le rappelle de temps à autre par des coups où il faut bien reconnaître sa souveraineté : bon gré, mal gré, nous sommes tous dans sa main ; il est le maître, et il le restera.

Sachons au moins nous souvenir de lui et de sa Providence, quand ses fléaux nous visitent ; et, après avoir gémi sur ces malheurs qui atteignent tout un pays, et les avoir soulagés de notre mieux, demandons-nous à nous-mêmes si rien, de notre part, ne les a provoqués, si nous n'avons pas fait monter au Ciel le cri de quelque grande iniquité qui appelle enfin la justice.

Pour moi, Messieurs, en face des malheurs qui viennent de tomber tout à coup sur nous comme la foudre, il est impossible de passer mon chemin sans regarder plus haut ; je me sens amené à me recueillir, et je vous invite à réfléchir comme moi

sur ces malheurs et sur tant d'autres qui nous ont déjà frappés ou qui nous menacent.

Quand je considère ce qui se passe en ce moment dans le monde, un souvenir évangélique vient à moi et me saisit : je ne puis pas ne pas remarquer combien les expressions dont se sert Notre-Seigneur pour annoncer les mauvais jours s'appliquent étrangement aux temps où nous sommes et aux fléaux qui nous éprouvent.

Notre-Seigneur parle quelque part dans l'Évangile de ces temps où l'on n'entendra parler que de luttes et de révolutions : *Cum audieritis praelia et seditiones*; de guerre et de bruits de guerre ; *bella et opinioniones bellorum* ; il s'y rencontrera aussi des tremblements de terre, des pestes, et des famines menaçantes : *Et terræ motus magni erunt per loca, et pestilentiae et fames*.

Encore une fois, comment n'être pas frappé, Messieurs, de retrouver dans ces avertissements de Notre-Seigneur quelque chose de ce que nous voyons et souffrons aujourd'hui ?

Non certes que je sois de ces âmes défaillantes qui ne savent que s'effrayer et gémir et jeter autour d'elles une indiscreète épouvante. Je sais d'ailleurs ce que, dans cette société vieillie, il y a encore de nobles âmes, de vertus chrétiennes, de forces vives qui se rajeunissent pour le bien. Je sais ce que l'Église de Jésus-Christ a essuyé à travers les âges et peut essuyer encore de tempêtes. Mais je vois aussi grandir et s'élever, à des proportions inaccoutumées, le mal ; et si Fénelon, en plein XVIII^e siècle, a pu s'écrier, voyant venir la Révolution française : « Le jour de la ruine est proche, et les temps se hâtent d'arriver ; *Adeste, festinant tempora* (1) ; » moi, voyant aussi le flot qui monte, je ne puis pas ne pas être ému.

Je le dis froidement : j'ai traversé bien des jours mauvais, je n'en ai point rencontré de plus menaçants que ceux où nous sommes.

J'ai entendu, dans ces derniers temps, des cris d'irrégion comme je n'en avais jamais entendu.

On peut le dire avec saint Paul : Le mystère d'iniquité se forme : *Mysterium jam operatur iniquitatis*.

Depuis dix ans, l'impiété a pris parmi nous un caractère effroyable, celui que saint Paul a si précisément et si énergiquement défini par ces paroles : *Extollitur super omne quod dicitur Deus, aut quod colitur*. Tout ce qui est Dieu, religion,

(1) Deuter., 32, 35.

culte, voilà ce qu'aujourd'hui l'impiété, qui se sent à l'aise, poursuit à des profondeurs, et avec une audace et un ensemble qui ne s'étaient pas encore vus.

Oui, plus j'y pense, Messieurs, plus je trouve dans les paroles de Jésus-Christ et des saintes Écritures que je viens de vous citer, les sujets de méditation les plus sérieux, et les plus nécessaires, au milieu de tous les malheurs que nous avons subis, et de ceux que nous craignons encore.

Car enfin, les esprits les plus légers eux-mêmes, les plus irréflechis, peuvent-ils détourner leurs regards des fléaux qui nous consternent !

La guerre ne désolait-elle pas, il y a peu de temps, deux grands pays ? Ne la redoutions-nous pas nous-mêmes ? Et, à l'heure qu'il est, n'entendez-vous pas de tous côtés, malgré les traités de paix, des bruits de guerre ? Ne voyez-vous pas de toutes parts les peuples recourir, et sans délai, à des armements formidables, à des instruments de destruction que le passé ne connaissait pas ? En sorte que les inventions les plus meurtrières se succèdent à l'envi et avec une émulation fiévreuse chez les peuples européens, et voilà ce qui marchera désormais de front avec les progrès de l'humanité !

Et, en même temps que les calamités de la guerre s'abattaient sur deux puissantes nations, un fléau plus terrible encore, la peste, le choléra, promenait et promène encore dans plusieurs grandes contrées de l'Europe ses mystérieux ravages ; il pénétrait dans notre France, et couvrait de deuil nos plus populeuses cités ; et en ce moment il rôde encore autour de nous, comme ce lion dont parle l'Écriture : *Circuit quærens quem devoret.*

Naguère, un effroyable tremblement de terre jonchait de ruines une de nos florissantes colonies, la Guadeloupe. Nous n'avions pas terminé la quête que la juste sollicitude du gouvernement nous avait demandée pour ce désastre, qu'une autre quête était nécessaire pour notre colonie africaine, qui voyait passer sur elle des nuées d'étranges envahisseurs, ces formidables légions de sauterelles, qui dévoraient tout, et laissaient après elles le désert.

Et chez nous-mêmes, au centre de la France, après qu'un tremblement de terre a tout à coup secoué notre sol, voilà que nos rivières et nos fleuves débordent et promènent la dévastation sur leurs rives.

Mais ce qui tremble encore plus que le sol qui nous porte, c'est, Messieurs, la société : ce qui déborde et nous inonde d'une

inondation plus menaçante que nos fleuves, ce sont les fléaux d'un autre ordre, les maux de l'ordre social.

Les doctrines impies et révolutionnaires ne font plus sourdement leur chemin sous terre; elles aussi ont rompu leurs digues; je ne sais quelle puissance mystérieuse les enhardit et les déchaîne. On les voit faire aujourd'hui leur œuvre comme elles ne l'ont peut-être jamais faite, avec une tranquillité et une assurance du succès qui ne se dissimule plus.

Ainsi les fléaux de l'ordre social donnent la main aux fléaux de l'ordre physique. Faut-il s'en étonner, quand on voit l'état des âmes et des consciences : en haut, cette élégante et effroyable corruption des mœurs que de temps en temps la presse nous raconte; en bas, les passions les plus menaçantes mal contenues; partout le débordement des plus subversives erreurs : la guerre à Dieu et à l'Église, plus universelle, plus radicale, plus acharnée que jamais.

Oui, et voilà surtout ce qui m'épouvante et me fait craindre pour les derniers jours de ce siècle les dernières calamités. La guerre à Dieu et à la religion grandit chaque jour. L'athéisme marche tête levée. Sous ce rapport, le XVIII^e siècle est de loin dépassé. Si on en doute, qu'on prête l'oreille.

Car chaque jour des bruits de cette guerre arrivent jusqu'aux plus inattentifs et frappent tous ceux qui ont des yeux pour voir et des oreilles pour entendre. Rappelez-vous, Messieurs, comme signes des temps où nous sommes, quelques faits seulement entre tant d'autres : le congrès des étudiants à Liège, le congrès international des ouvriers à Genève, la franc-maçonnerie, et cette démagogie italienne qui a trouvé, hélas! ou acheté tant d'échos en France.

« Guerre à Dieu ! » tel est le cri d'impiété forcenée qui a été poussé à ce congrès de Liège par des jeunes gens nourris des doctrines dont les maîtres, applaudis et décorés par la fortune, fleurissent aujourd'hui parmi nous. Je l'ai dit naguère dans un *Avertissement aux Pères de famille*, et les faits ne sont venus que trop tôt me donner raison : tous ces jeunes et élégants philosophes, tous ces beaux écrivains qui distillent le poison d'une main blanche, et le présentent dans des coupes dorées à la jeunesse, sont ici les premiers coupables. La jeunesse de Liège n'a fait que traduire, dans un détestable, mais franc langage, les doctrines positivistes, matérialistes, panthéistes et athées de ces Messieurs.

Mais, pour mesurer la profondeur du mal, et le ravage des

doctrines propagées aujourd'hui dans la jeunesse, il faut, Messieurs, regarder ici le détail, prêter l'oreille à l'accent même des paroles, et remarquer l'effrayant accord qui se trouve entre ces jeunes gens de Liège, les ouvriers de Genève, les francs-maçons de Paris et les révolutionnaires italiens.

L'un de ces jeunes hommes se déclare tout d'abord « franchement matérialiste ! »

Un second n'hésite pas à dire « qu'avec le spiritualisme, il n'y a pas de morale !... » Un autre, que « la morale évangélique est fausse... fatale... il faut l'éliminer de l'enseignement « de la jeunesse... elle conduit à la dépravation des esprits. »

« La discussion est entre Dieu et l'homme, disent-ils encore ; il faut crever la voûte du ciel comme un plafond de papier ! »

Aussi, l'un d'eux, un solitaire, parle d'établir « un culte appelé l'athéisme. »

Dans l'ordre religieux, ce qu'ils veulent, c'est « l'anéantissement de toute religion... la négation de Dieu. »

Dans l'ordre social, « la transformation de la propriété, l'abolition de l'hérédité. »

Et qui est-ce qui accomplira toute cette œuvre ? — La Révolution.

Et ils la définissent, l'un : « une matière en fusion, pareille à la lave des volcans ; l'autre : « un coup de foudre qui éclairera, disent ils, ceux qu'elle frappera. »

Et ils s'écrient enfin :

« Plus d'autorité ; la force ! la force révolutionnaire ! »

Aussi l'un d'eux concluait, dans une dernière séance tenue à Bruxelles : « S'il est besoin de la guillotine, nous ne reculerons pas. »

« Si la propriété résiste à la Révolution, il faut, par les décrets du peuple, anéantir la propriété ; si la bourgeoisie résiste, il faut tuer la bourgeoisie. »

« Citoyens, vous le savez aujourd'hui, les bourgeois sont des assassins et des voleurs... »

« La Révolution, c'est le triomphe de l'homme sur Dieu. »

« Ainsi, guerre à Dieu ! Haine à la bourgeoisie ! Haine aux capitalistes ! »

« Et les femmes ne doivent pas rester en dehors du mouvement révolutionnaire. C'est Eve qui a jeté le premier cri de révolte contre Dieu ! »

« On a parlé de guillotine : nous ne voulons que renverser les

« obstacles. Si cent mille têtes font obstacle, qu'elles tombent ;
« oui, nous n'avons d'amour que pour la *collectivité humaine*. »

Après ces abominables discours, aucun orateur ne demandant plus la parole, le citoyen président se lève et dit :

« Nous avons assisté à UNE FÊTE FRATERNELLE. Je ne veux re-
« mercier personne, chacun a pour soi la conscience du devoir
« rempli. C'est assez (1). »

Oui, certes, assez... Si ce n'était là, Messieurs, qu'un langage d'étudiants, ce serait déjà effroyable. Mais ce congrès a été inauguré par le premier magistrat de la ville de Liège, par un ancien ministre, lequel, dans son discours d'ouverture, appelait ces jeunes gens « l'élite de la jeunesse studieuse, les jeunes apôtres de la liberté et du progrès, les soldats de la civilisation, les représentants les plus autorisés et les plus dignes des principes de conservation sociale. »

Et, d'ailleurs, comme nous l'avons déjà dit, ces jeunes gens n'étaient là que l'écho d'enseignements détestables : ce sont nos professeurs d'athéisme qui, à Liège, parlaient par leur bouche. Et ce qu'il faut particulièrement ici remarquer, je l'ai dit aussi, c'est l'appel de ces jeunes gens aux ouvriers, et l'accord des ouvriers avec ces jeunes gens.

Ils avaient proclamé dans leur congrès que « la Révolution sera sauvée par *l'alliance des étudiants et des ouvriers*. » Et voilà que, bientôt après, tout récemment, un autre congrès international, composé d'ouvriers cette fois, se tenait à Genève. Et là, dans la discussion des questions les plus vitales pour les masses populaires et pour les sociétés, savez-vous ce qui fut écarté ? Dieu et la religion. Par respect peut-être, direz-vous. Non ; Dieu fut écarté, « comme une hypothèse métaphysique et inutile, » et les idées religieuses ont été déclarées funestes au peuple et contraires à la dignité humaine. C'est dans ce même congrès qu'on posait la question de la morale *indépendante de la religion* ; qu'on parlait d'organiser en Europe *des grèves immenses invincibles* ; et qu'a été repoussée l'intervention *de toute autorité, de tout gouvernement*, dans la question sociale. — Voilà, d'après le journal *la Liberté* lui-même, *le flot qui monte, et qui dans vingt ans couvrira tout* : et voilà aussi, comme un autre journal la nommait, « une franc-maçonnerie nouvelle, dont les affiliés se compteront peut-être un jour par millions d'hommes, et qui re-

(1) Congrès international des Étudiants, publié à Liège, en 1865, 2^e édition.

« çoit le mot d'ordre d'un comité occulte. Voilà la révélation capitale du Congrès de Genève. »

Il y a quelques jours à peine, les journaux nous apportaient encore une autre révélation de cette guerre profonde entreprise comme de concert contre la religion et la société. Ici, on n'en est plus aux paroles, aux doctrines ; on agit, on s'organise, avec une cynique audace, pour soustraire l'homme à la religion, dans tous les moments de la vie, et surtout à l'heure la plus solennelle, à l'heure de la mort. Dans une des loges maçonniques, établie depuis trois ans (en 1863), à Paris, on a voulu établir un comité nouveau : et pourquoi ? Pour chasser la religion du lit des mourants. Voici ce que je trouve dans les statuts :

Les membres du comité déclarent S'ENGAGER à mourir en dehors de tout culte religieux (art. 5).

Ils se proposent de pratiquer publiquement ces principes et de les propager PAR TOUS LES MOYENS MORAUX ET MATÉRIELS propres à leur faire atteindre leur but (art. 5).

Du reste, pour eux, les religions révélées sont la négation de la conscience (art 4). — On le voit, l'identité entre ces doctrines et celles des congrès de Liège et de Genève est frappante.

Et ces *Libres-Penseurs*, comme ils s'appellent, se livrant corps et âme au comité, abdiquent entre ses mains la raison, la conscience, et tous ses réveils possibles ; et ce comité, par le plus odieux despotisme, les déclare liés et obligés envers lui, de telle sorte que c'est lui, lui seul, qui veillera à leur chevet, et il n'y aura plus là pour le franc-maçon, à sa dernière heure, ni père, ni mère, ni enfant, ni frère, ni sœur, ni lien quelconque de sa famille et de la religion ; plus rien que ce comité et sa tyrannie (art. 10) (1).

Vous êtes étonnés, Messieurs. Eh bien ! sachez-le, ce despotisme impie est le dernier mot, le but souverain de la démocratie irrégulière et socialiste, et c'est là à mes yeux une des plus

(1) Art. 10. Le libre-penseur, pouvant être empêché au moment de la mort par des influences *étrangères* de remplir SES OBLIGATIONS MORALES VIS-A-VIS DU COMITÉ, remettra au moins à trois de ses frères (de ses frères les francs-maçons), pour faciliter leur mission en ce cas, un mandat dont la forme est déterminée comme suit :

« Je soussigné déclare expressément vouloir mourir et être enterré en dehors de toute espèce de rite religieux, et je charge spécialement les frères (.....) de veiller à l'exécution de ma volonté, etc. »

Le grand maître, M. le général Mellinet, a suspendu pour six mois la

grandes menaces de l'heure présente ; car, par un égarement profond de cette démocratie qui se plaît gratuitement à creuser l'abîme entre elle et nous, c'est la tyrannie des âmes qui se

loge où était formé ce comité, et dont le *vénérable* est un député bien connu. Voici le texte du décret :

GRAND-ORIENT DE FRANCE.

DÉCRET.

« Nous, grand maître de l'ordre maçonnique en France,
« Vu la pl. de convocation de la loge l'*Avenir*, O. de Paris, pour sa tenue générale du mardi, 26 juin 1866, etc., etc. ;

« Avons décrété et décrétons :

« Art. 1^{er}. La loge l'*Avenir*, de l'O. de Paris, est provisoirement suspendue.

« Art. 2. Notre grand maître adjoint, le F. Lenglé, est chargé de la notification et de l'exécution du présent décret.

« Donné en l'hôtel du Grand-Orient de France, ce 4^{er} juillet 1866 (E. V.).

« Le grand maître de l'ordre maçonnique en France,
« MELLINET.

« Par le grand maître :

« Le grand maître adjoint,
« LENGLE. »

Il paraît que la loge maçonnique de l'*Avenir* n'a tenu qu'un compte médiocre de ce décret ; car voici dans quels termes cette loge a annoncé sa suspension aux autres loges :

« Or. de Paris, 23 août 1866.

« T. C. F.,

« Dans ma précédente p., j'avais le regret de vous annoncer que nos trav. étaient provisoirement fermés par ordre de notre très-ill. G. M. Fidèles en cela aux plus vieilles traditions de la franc-maçonnerie, n'ayant rien à brûler, continuons à adorer dans nos cœurs l'objet sacré de notre culte, et, un jour, ceux qui nous trouvent AUJOURD'HUI TROP HARDIS diront de nous que nous avons bien mérité de nos FF. »

« Veuillez agréer, T. C. F., mes salutations les plus fratern. »

« Le secrét. de la loge l'*Avenir*,

« G. TRÉBOIS.

« Rue Saint-Benoît, 8. »

(Le Progrès, de Lyon.)

prépare sous le nom de liberté ; c'est l'œuvre de la Convention qui est reprise sous une autre forme. Et, pour le dire ici en passant, l'instruction gratuite et obligatoire, séparée, comme on le veut et comme on y travaille, de la religion, serait l'instrument le plus inique et le plus violent de cette tyrannie pour tous les enfants des familles populaires en France : s'il le faut, je le démontrerai quelque jour.

Enfin, pour achever ce triste tableau, n'est-ce pas hier encore que le héros de la démagogie italienne, cet homme ridicule, mais dont l'influence est plus grande de beaucoup que le personnage lui-même, Garibaldi, renouvelait à Florence, avec une insolence applaudie des ministres de Victor-Emmanuel, ses anciennes menaces contre l'Église, contre Rome et le Pape ? « Mes amis, disait-il à ses chemises rouges, tant que les prêtres ne seront pas vaincus, la patrie ne sera ni libre ni heureuse. » Vainement ajoutait-il qu'il ne voulait la mort de personne : on sait comment ce programme a été pratiqué à Naples et ailleurs.

Et n'est-ce pas le même homme qui disait aux étudiants de Pavie : « Mes amis, il faut écraser le vampire sacerdotal. Il faut exterminer les robes noires. Il faut extirper de l'Italie le chancre de la papauté. Il faut écraser les prêtres sur le pavé des rues. » Aujourd'hui qu'il revient de la guerre triomphant de dix défaites, il s'adoucit un moment et se contente de dire : « N'allez plus à la messe. Si vous allez à la messe, vous fournissez aux prêtres le moyen de vous nuire. » Puis se tournant vers les enrôlés romains, et retrouvant tout à coup son accent accoutumé : « L'année ne s'écoulera pas, je l'espère, sans que vous rentriez à Rome délivrée du joug odieux des prêtres. » M. Ricasoli, le chef du cabinet italien, était là et applaudissait. Les journaux le disent : si cela n'est pas, qu'il le démente.

Je m'arrête ici, Messieurs ; vous comprenez que je n'ai pris que le sommet des choses, et que, si je voulais entrer dans tout le détail, j'a urais des révélations effroyables à vous faire.

L'avenir un jour remarquera cet accord profond et menaçant entre les doctrines irréligieuses et les doctrines révolutionnaires, et aussi la coïncidence de tous ces fléaux de l'ordre physique, moral et social avec cette guerre acharnée faite à Dieu, et ce dernier attentat contre l'Église dont le terme fatal, marqué par les révolutionnaires, s'avance sous les yeux des chrétiens frappés de stupeur et d'immobilité.

Messieurs, je ne puis me défendre de le dire : Nos ennemis ont un art étrange de nous endormir dans la torpeur : nous

sommes là les bras croisés et la bouche muette, n'osant plus même essayer les protestations de l'honneur. Sans doute, ces protestations seront peut-être impuissantes, mais du moins elles seront vengeresses. Oui, vengeresses; car ce que l'honneur et la conscience auront flétri le sera à jamais, à jamais les coupables en porteront au front la marque indélébile. Mais non, comme si tout devait se consommer dans le silence, on regarde et l'on se tait, et l'on attend, comme stupéfiés, l'inévitable catastrophe, de même que ces jours-ci, du haut de nos ponts, nous regardions, impuissants et mornes, le fleuve qui montait, montait toujours, et enfin emportait tout.

Et cependant Dieu nous avertit, et on ne comprend pas. Dieu nous frappe, et on ne comprend pas. Les pestes sur les animaux et sur les hommes, les guerres et les tremblements de terre, les inondations se succèdent, et on ne comprend pas. L'ordre moral et social est bouleversé, et on ne comprend pas. Les doctrines les plus perverses sont proclamées, les principes vacillent comme des astres égarés sur nos têtes, et on ne comprend pas. — On comprendra un jour, mais trop tard; car, bon gré mal gré, il faut que la grande loi providentielle du monde s'accomplisse, et, pour les sociétés comme pour les individus, ainsi que le disait le paganisme lui-même, la justice suit toujours, d'un pas lent quelquefois, mais sûr, l'iniquité.

Cette loi sans doute a ses mystères; Dieu l'applique comme il l'entend, et nous ne savons pas ses secrets.

Mais la loi, la grande loi de justice est certaine, et nul n'y échappe: tôt ou tard le mal appelle le malheur.

JUSTITIA ELEVAT GENTES, MISEROS AUTEM FACIT POPULOS PECCATUM: la justice élève les peuples, mais le péché les rend malheureux.

L'histoire le proclame aussi haut que le livre sacré.

Chaque siècle l'atteste à son tour, chargé, dirait-on, par la Providence de crier aux générations inattentives, comme ce grand coupable des temps antiques:

Discite justitiam moniti, et non temnere divos!

Qu'on se révolte tant qu'on voudra, qu'on entasse sophisme sur sophisme, on ne chassera pas la Providence du monde, ni la justice de Dieu de l'histoire.

Et l'histoire n'aura pas assez d'exécration pour ceux qui auront amené et consommé les attentats dont nous sommes témoins. On saura ce qu'il en coûte à un siècle pour avoir porté

la main sur le Christ du Seigneur, et ce qui tombe autour de cette colonne ébranlée de l'ordre, de la justice, de la société.

Oui, on m'appellera si l'on veut un prophète de malheur, peu m'importe ! mais ce qui se prépare en Europe est effroyable. Je ne le verrai peut-être pas, mais je l'annonce.

Que les défenseurs du Pape, de quelque point de l'horizon qu'ils soient venus, le sachent bien, ils ont été les défenseurs de la société en péril.

Si les catholiques de tous les pays, je dirai même, si les chrétiens de toutes les communions, si les hommes d'ordre, quels qu'ils soient ; si tous les hommes qui pensent, qui ont une intelligence et un cœur, se laissent aveugler et endormir, si on ne comprend pas qu'il y a aujourd'hui un grand accord à faire de tous les honnêtes gens pour le bien public, tout est perdu.

Quant à ceux qui croient qu'en se mettant à la tête de toutes les forces subversives on les contiendra, ils sont dans une erreur fatale. Si ce n'était aussi effrayant, vous m'amuseriez, quand je vous vois monter sur le flot débordé pour guider le fleuve.

O légèreté de l'esprit français, si prompt à se troubler quelquefois ; et si prompt aussi à oublier les causes de son épouvante !

Je le demande à tous ces hommes qui volontiers se mettent aujourd'hui un bandeau sur les yeux : Ne vous souvenez-vous plus quelles étaient en 1848 vos erreurs ?

Certes, elles étaient fondées.

Eh bien ! je vous le demande : De bonne foi, aujourd'hui, croyez-vous les doctrines qui vous épouvantaient alors abdiquées, et les hommes qui les devaient mettre en pratique convertis ?

Le sol n'est-il plus miné sous vos pas ?

Le fleuve révolutionnaire, grossi par tous les triomphes de la révolution en Europe, est-il moins menaçant ?

Et si les forces qui contiennent encore l'explosion manquaient et venaient à être emportées, l'explosion en serait-elle moins terrible ?

Messieurs, dans un tel état de choses, au milieu de tous ces malheurs du passé et de ces craintes pour l'avenir, je me sens pressé de vous dire que le temps est venu de faire monter vers Dieu, avec plus d'instance que jamais, le cri de nos prières.

Dieu, quelquefois si redoutable dans ses justices, est plus admirable encore dans ses miséricordes. Il frappe, mais il guérit :

Percutit et sanat; il plonge dans les abîmes, mais il en retire aussi quand son heure est venue : *Deducit ad inferos et reducit*. Il a fait les nations guérissables : *Sanabiles fecit nationes orbis terrarum*; et il y a encore dans nos pays assez de forces généreuses et de vertus pour vaincre le mal, si on sait s'en servir pour le bien.

Oui, prions, Messieurs, prions ! Nous ne savons plus assez prier. Nous ne savons plus élever nos yeux et nos mains vers le ciel. Nous oublions trop quelle ressource puissante est la prière. La prière fléchit le ciel et détourne la justice divine.

O Dieu ! n'accomplissez pas vos menaces ! O Dieu ! ne faites pas tomber sur nous votre bras irrité ! Délivrez-nous du mal, Seigneur ! du mal, cause première de nos châtimens, et de ces châtimens eux-mêmes ; et rendez enfin la paix à nos tristes jours : *Libera nos a malo ; da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris*.

A ces causes, nous avons ordonné et ordonnons ce qui suit :

1° Jusqu'à la fin du carême prochain, tous les prêtres réciteront à la sainte messe les oraisons *Pro quacumque necessitate*. Missel, p. LVII.

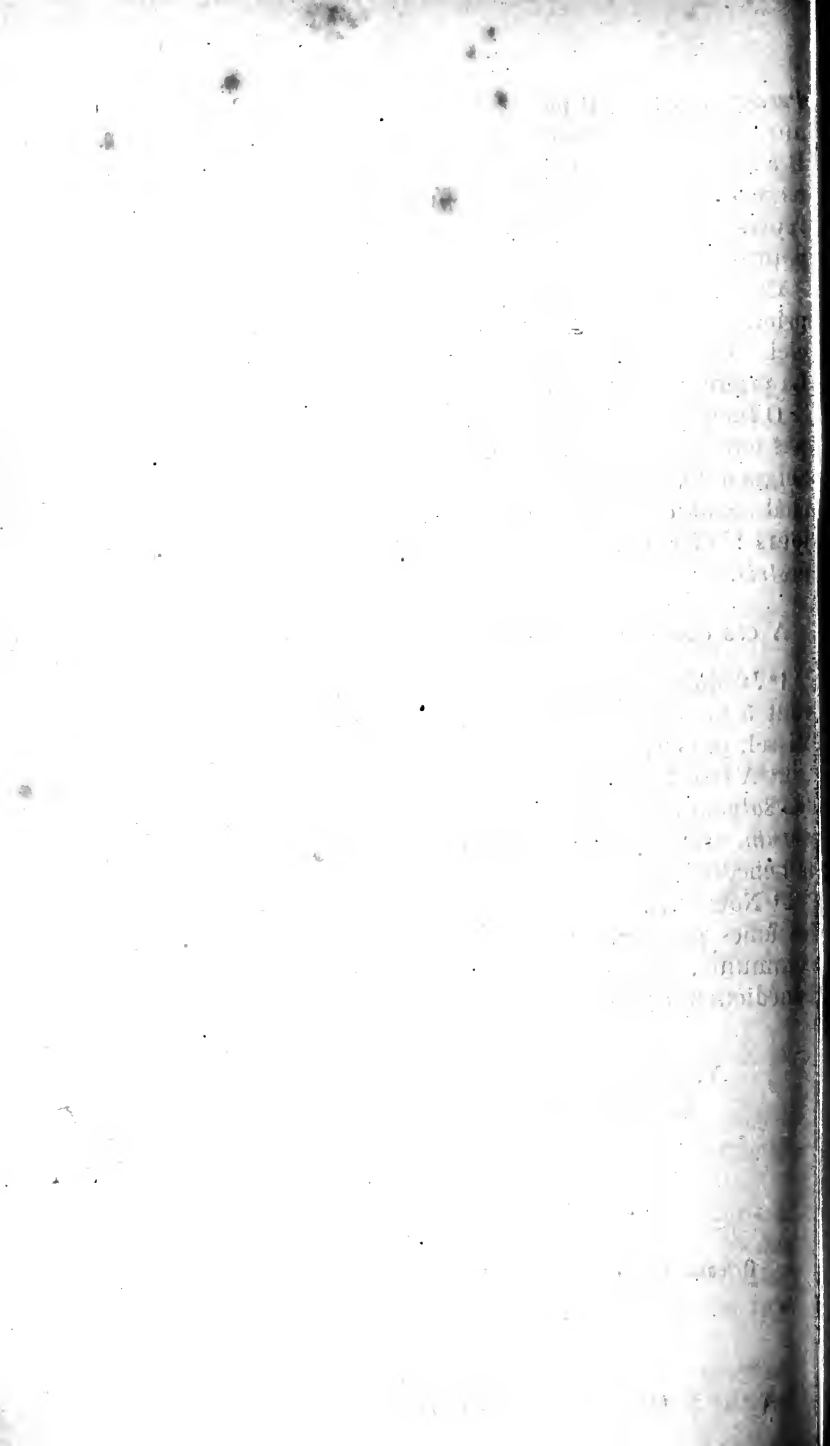
2° A tous les saluts, on chantera le ps. LIII : *Deus, in nomine tuo saluum me fac*, ainsi que l'invocation : *Auxilium christianorum*, avant la bénédiction ; et la prière *Parce, Domine*, après la bénédiction.

3° Nous invitons toutes les communautés religieuses et toutes les âmes pieuses de notre diocèse à faire chaque semaine une communion pour appeler sur l'Eglise et sur la France toutes les bénédictions de Dieu.

Veillez agréer, Messieurs, la nouvelle assurance de mon profond et religieux dévouement.

FÉLIX, évêque d'Orléans.

Orléans, ce 9 octobre 1866.



L'ATHÉISME

ET

LE PÉRIL SOCIAL

Dupanloup, Félix Antoine Philibert, Bp

L'ATHÉISME

ET

LE PÉRIL SOCIAL

PAR

M^{GR} L'ÉVÊQUE D'ORLÉANS

DE L'ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE

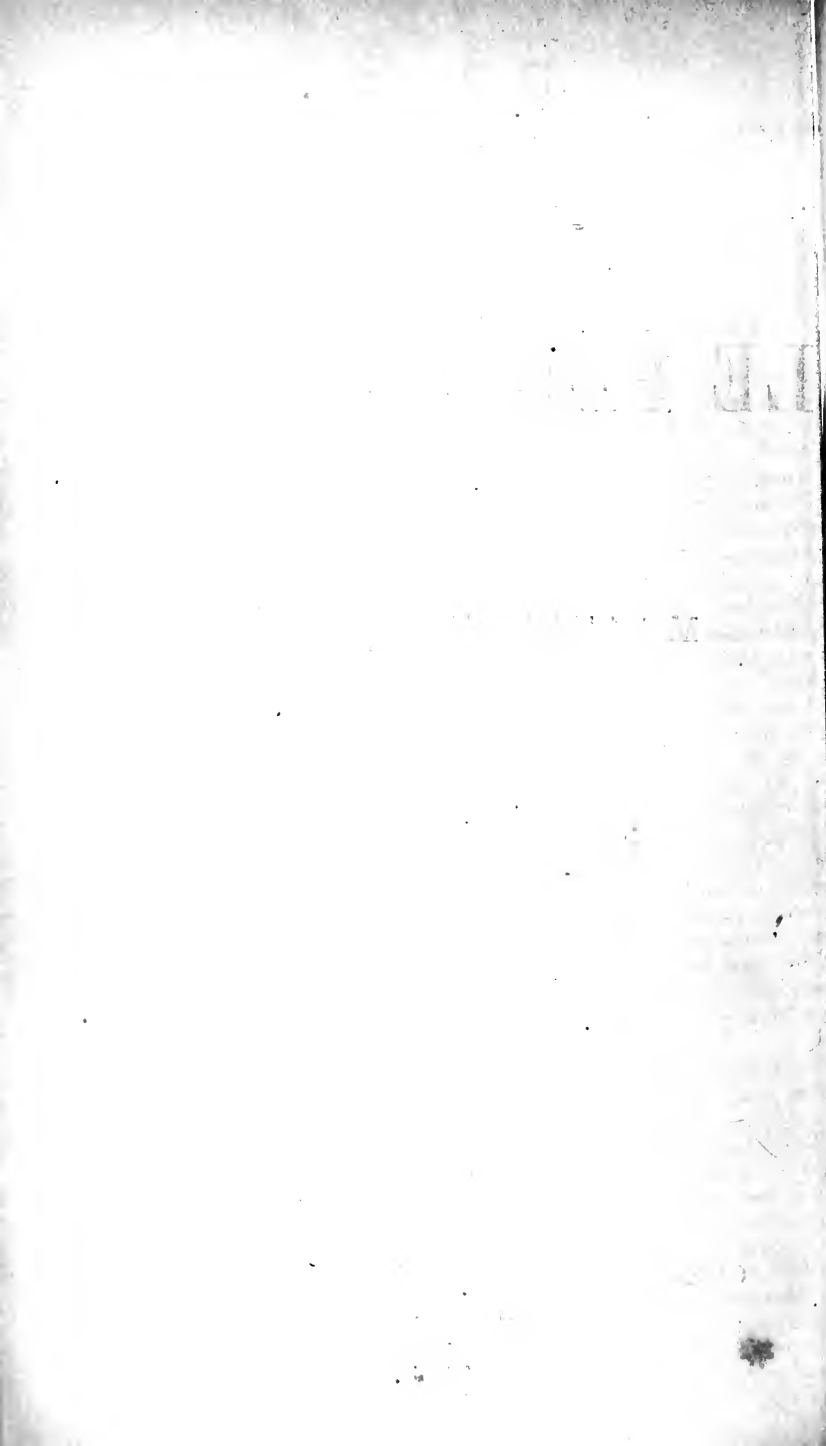
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1866



B R E F

ADRESSE PAR N. S. P. LE PAPE A M^{GR} L'ÉVÊQUE D'ORLÉANS

AU SUJET

DE SA LETTRE SUR LES MALHEURS ET LES SIGNES DU TEMPS

PIUS P. P. IX.

Venerabilis Frater, Salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem.

Pergratae Nobis exiiterunt tuae Litterae die 18 proximi mensis Octobris datae, quibus Nobis misisti exemplar tuae Epistolae ad istius Dioecesis Clerum die 8 ejusdem mensis scriptae, typisque in lucem editae. Qua epistola, Venerabilis Frater, merito lamentaris maxima sane damna, quae ex recenti praesertim inundatione in Galliam misere derivarunt, ac veluti catholicum Antistitem maxime decet, omnes etiam atque etiam hortaris, et excitas ut tam gravi aerumna afflictis christiana caritate omnem opem auxiliumque ferre non desinant. Ac tibi ex animo gratulamur, quod boni, et amanti simi pastoris partes explens nullis curis, nullisque consiliis, ac sumptibus parcere existimasti, ut isti potissimum tuae Dioecesis fideles a tanta respirarent calamitate.

Eadem autem Epistola graphice describis, ac vehementer et optimo jure deploras innumera, et nunquam satis lugenda mala, quibus catholica Ecclesia et humana societas calamitosis simis hisce temporibus miserandum in modum affligitur ac dirivexatur. Exponis enim et summo opere reprobas ac detestaris teterrimum sane bellum Deo ejusque sanctae catholicae Ecclesiae ac doctrinae ubique tum ab incredulis, tum a cujusque

PIE IX, PONTIFE.

Vénérable Frère, Salut et Bénédiction apostolique.

Nous avons reçu avec joie votre Lettre du dix-huit octobre dernier, par laquelle vous nous adressiez un exemplaire de la Lettre écrite par vous au clergé de votre diocèse, et publiée le huit du même mois. C'est avec granderaison, Vénérable Frère, que vous déplorez les lamentables malheurs que la dernière inondation vient de faire si tristement déborder sur la France ; et que, fidèle au devoir d'un Evêque catholique, vous exhortez instamment et pressez les fidèles de réveiller en eux la charité chrétienne pour porter aux malheureux toute l'aide et le secours que réclament ces grands désastres. C'est de tout notre cœur aussi que nous vous félicitons de ce que, remplissant la charge d'un bon et dévoué Pasteur, vous n'avez épargné ni soins, ni sages conseils, ni sacrifices, afin que les fidèles de votre diocèse fussent promptement secourus dans une si grande infortune.

Vous avez également dépeint dans votre lettre et déploré avec autant de force que de raison, les maux innombrables, dignes de toutes nos larmes, qui dans ces temps mauvais, affligent et troublent d'une manière si déplorable l'Eglise catholique et la société humaine. Vous exposez et vous réprouvez énergiquement l'odieuse guerre qu'ont déclarée à Dieu, à son Eglise et à la sainte doctrine les incrédules de tout pays, les sectes condamnées et les fauteurs de révolutions. C'est avec douleur que

vous énumérez et que vous flétrissez les manœuvres coupables et multipliées, les opinions dangereuses, les erreurs, les doctrines perverses par lesquelles ces ennemis de Dieu et des hommes, ces audacieux contempteurs de toute vérité et de toute justice, voudraient, s'ils le pouvaient, ruiner le catholicisme, ébranler les fondements de la société civile, corrompre les esprits, pervertir les âmes, abolir tous les droits soit humains, soit divins, propager partout le crime et fomenter le vice.

Poursuivez cette tâche, Vénérable Frère; employez votre courageuse piété, votre sollicitude épiscopale, votre zèle de plus en plus grand; consacrez toutes les forces et l'ardeur de votre esprit à l'énergique défense de la cause religieuse, à la poursuite de tant de pernicieuses erreurs, et au salut de votre peuple. Ne vous laissez point de persuader, ainsi que vous l'avez fait déjà, à tous les fidèles qui vous sont confiés, qu'ils ne cessent jamais d'offrir au Dieu riche en miséricorde, leurs plus ferventes prières, pour le triomphe de sa sainte Eglise et la conversion de tous les pécheurs,

Et recevez, en témoignage de notre particulière affection, la Bénédiction Apostolique, que, du fond de notre cœur, nous vous donnons, Vénérable Frère, à vous, à tout le clergé, et aux fidèles laïcs commis à votre vigilance.

Donné à Rome, le huit novembre de l'année 1866, de notre Pontificat la 21^{me}.

PIE IX, PP.

generis damnatarum sectarum, et rebellionum hominibus illatum, et dolenter recensens, ac damnas multiplices nefariasque machinationes, opiniones, errores, pravasque doctrinas, quibus Dei, hominumque hostes, et omnis veritatis justitiaeque osores rem catholicam, si fieri unquam posset, penitus evertere, civilisque societatis fundamenta labefactare, omniumque animos, mentesque corrumpere, et jura omnia divina et humana delere, et vitia quaeque, ac scelera propagare et fovere connituntur.

Perge, Venerabilis Frater, pro egregia tua pietate, et episcopali sollicitudine omnes praestantis tui ingenii vires majore usque studio adhibere ad sanctissimae nostrae religionis causam viriliter tuendam, ad tot pestiferos errores profligandos, atque ad tui gregis salutem procurandam. Ne intermittas vero, ut jam fecisti, fidelibus tuae curae traditis, inculcare, ut nunquam desistant fervidas diviti in misericordia Deo offerre preces pro Ecclesiae suae sanctae triumpho, et omnium peccatorum conversione.

Ac praecipuae Nostrae in te benevolentiae pignus accipe Apostolicam Benedictionem, quam intimo cordis affectu tibi ipsi, Venerabilis Frater, cunctisque Clericis, Laicisque fidelibus tuae vigilantiae concreditur peramanter impertimus.

Datum Romae apud S. Petrum die 8 novembris, anno 1866, Pontificatus nostri, anno vicesimo-primo.

PIUS PP. IX.

L'ATHÉISME

ET

LE PÉRIL SOCIAL

La Lettre que j'ai publiée sur les *Malheurs et les signes du temps* a soulevé de grandes clameurs : je n'en ai pas été surpris. On ne signale pas de tels périls, en un temps comme celui-ci, sans importuner ceux qui ne voudraient ni voir, ni entendre, sans irriter ceux qui voudraient qu'on ne vît pas et qu'on n'entendît rien.

J'aurais pu désirer plus d'équité dans les appréciations de mon acte, je ne pouvais m'attendre à moins de colère.

Par une tactique connue, employée naguère contre un grand acte pontifical, on a résumé cette Lettre tout entière dans des formules exagérées jusqu'à l'absurde, et là-dessus on s'est donné pleine carrière.

Je me suis tu, et j'ai laissé tout dire ; et cependant j'ai

tout lu attentivement : pas moins de cent articles de journaux ou revues sont sous mes yeux en ce moment. Il en paraissait hier encore. J'ai eu là un triste spectacle.

J'ai vu à l'œuvre la presse antichrétienne ; j'ai vu ce que je ne savais pas à ce degré, — car, absorbés dans les détails et les mille œuvres de nos diocèses, nous ne pouvons toujours suivre d'assez près la marche de l'impiété ; — j'ai vu comment cette presse parle chaque jour à la société française, de quelles doctrines elle abreuve, par quels sophismes elle égare, vers quels abîmes elle pousse.

Il s'est fait là à mes yeux une explosion soudaine de tout ce qui se dit en détail et s'inocule tous les jours lentement au pays, d'erreurs, d'irrégion, de mensonges, dans ces revues périodiques et dans ces feuilles quotidiennes dont l'incessante action est si puissante.

Ça été une nouvelle et douloureuse démonstration de ce que j'ai affirmé, et, pour moi, un signe des temps plus redoutable que ceux que j'ai signalés.

Et maintenant qu'on a tout dit, et que j'ai laissé la parole et le champ libre à mes contradicteurs, je dois parler de nouveau moi-même. Je le ferai, avec une tristesse profonde, je l'avoue, mais avec la détermination tranquille qui convient, quand on aime assez son pays pour lui dire la vérité, même au péril de déplaire ;

Quand on a la conscience de parler pour remplir un grand devoir ; pour avertir, non pour blesser ; pour montrer l'abîme, avant qu'on y tombe ;

Quand on est Évêque enfin, c'est-à-dire gardien pour sa part des vraies et saines doctrines, et qu'on a sous les yeux un immense péril religieux, un immense péril social.

J'ai écrit ma dernière Lettre précisément pour dénoncer ces deux périls, pour montrer le terme extrême du mouvement irreligieux auquel la guerre contre le Pape a donné tout à coup une si grande violence : mais c'est ce qu'on a voulu le moins voir dans ma Lettre, et ce à quoi on n'a rien répondu. Il était plus commode de déplacer le débat en dénaturant ma pensée.

Mais c'est en vain. Il est en ce moment dans le monde un point fixe qui attire tous les regards, et dont nul, quel qu'il soit, ne peut détourner sa pensée. C'est Rome et le Pape.

L'heure est solennelle. Nous touchons à une crise dont le dénouement, quel qu'il soit, sera mémorable dans l'histoire. Il s'agit de savoir, si le trône dix fois séculaire du Chef Suprême de l'Église catholique disparaîtra du monde, et ce que va devenir le glorieux protectorat de la Papauté exercé par la France depuis Charlemagne.

Il faut donc replacer la question sur son vrai et grand terrain, et c'est pourquoi j'élève encore la voix.

Je signalerai de nouveau, et avec plus de netteté et de force, si je le puis, la coïncidence avec la guerre faite au Pape d'une guerre effroyable faite à Dieu. Je n'en ai montré dans ma dernière Lettre que quelques signes; j'exposerai ici la situation tout entière : les plus funestes doctrines faisant explosion, à la faveur d'une politique révolutionnaire, les grandes écoles de radicale impiété, l'athéisme, le matérialisme, et les théories les plus subversives de toute morale, s'étalant avec audace, se propageant avec une ardeur redoublée par les malheurs du Pape et par l'espérance d'un triomphe impie — et cela non-seulement en France, mais d'un bout de l'Italie à l'autre — et menaçant de déborder comme un torrent, quand la dernière digue aura été rompue.

Puis, je dirai, et, je l'espère, avec une clarté qui ne permettra plus qu'aux aveugles de ne pas voir, quelles sont les conséquences sociales, inévitables et prochaines peut-être, d'un pareil mouvement d'impiété.

Mais auparavant, je dois examiner, d'une manière incidente et sommaire, quoiqu'en touchant le fond des choses, les contradictions que j'ai rencontrées, et tout ce bruit qui s'est fait autour de ma Lettre. Cette partie accessoire se rattache d'ailleurs intimement à la question elle-même. Il ne s'agit pas certes d'une défense personnelle : les plus grandes vérités sont seules ici en cause.

Cet écrit aura donc trois parties :

1° La récente controverse ;

2° Le péril religieux ;

3° Le péril social.

Il y a, dans tout cela, l'ensemble d'une situation des plus graves qui furent jamais, et sur laquelle ni le clergé, ni les chrétiens, ni les honnêtes gens, quels qu'ils soient, ne peuvent fermer les yeux.

PREMIÈRE PARTIE

LA RÉCENTE CONTROVERSE

I

QUE S'EST-IL DONC PASSÉ ?

Un Évêque, en France, au XIX^e siècle, après dix-neuf siècles de Christianisme, s'est permis, dans une Lettre à son clergé, de rappeler ces vérités premières, fondamentales, que l'humanité, à toutes les époques, a proclamées, que les païens eux-mêmes ont admises, et dont la négation, quand elle se produisait parfois sous la plume de quelque sophiste, excitait partout l'horreur et l'indignation publiques :

Il y a un Dieu ;

Il y a une Providence ;

Il y a une justice divine, qui châtie par des maux privés et par des calamités publiques les péchés des hommes et des peuples.

Et, cet enseignement, si simple, a paru étrange, intolérable. On s'étonne, on se récrie ; et, bien qu'il ne faille pas mettre absolument au même rang tous les adversaires que cette doctrine a rencontrés, la presse française donne à ce

sujet, depuis plus d'un mois, le spectacle d'une exaltation d'impiété qui inspirerait le dégoût, si elle n'excitait un juste effroi.

Encore une fois, qu'a donc osé dire cet Evêque ?

Je le répète textuellement :

« Qu'il y a un Dieu, une Providence, une justice divine.

« Qu'on oublie trop ces vérités, et que Dieu, de temps à autre, nous les rappelle par des coups où il faut bien reconnaître sa souveraineté !

« Que, bon gré mal gré, nous sommes tous dans sa main.

« Qu'il est le maître et qu'il le restera.

« Qu'il faut, quand il nous visite par ses fléaux, nous souvenir de lui, rentrer en nous-mêmes, prier, et nous demander si rien de notre part ne les a provoqués. »

— Ce qui impliquait, sur *la loi providentielle du monde*, la grande doctrine chrétienne et philosophique ; et cette doctrine, je l'exposais dans les termes que voici :

« Pour les sociétés comme pour les individus, ainsi que le disait le paganisme lui-même, la justice suit toujours, d'un pas lent quelquefois, mais sûr, l'iniquité. »

J'ajoutais :

« Cette loi sans doute a ses mystères ; *Dieu l'applique comme il l'entend, et nous ne savons pas ses secrets.*

« *Mais la loi, la grande loi de justice est certaine, et nul n'y échappe : tôt ou tard le mal appelle le malheur.*

« JUSTITIA ELEVAT GENTES, MISEROS AUTEM FACIT POPULOS PECCATUM : la justice élève les peuples, mais le péché les rend malheureux.

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Discite justitiam moniti, et non temnere Divos !

« Qu'on se révolte tant qu'on voudra, qu'on entasse sophismes sur sophismes : on ne chassera pas la Providence du monde, ni la justice de Dieu de l'histoire. »

Voilà donc la première chose que j'ai dite. J'en ai dit une seconde ; c'est que :

« Les fléaux physiques ne sont pas les seuls fléaux dont nous ayons souffert. Il y en a d'autres, plus menaçants encore, qui appellent nos plus sérieuses méditations. »

Et, après un coup d'œil rapide sur l'état de la société française et européenne, sur les maux profonds des âmes et des consciences, sur le débordement des doctrines impies et anarchiques, plus terrible que celui des fleuves, sur cette guerre à Dieu, à l'Église et à son Chef suprême, qui va grandissant tous les jours, sur l'athéisme qui marche tête levée, qui s'étale dans des congrès internationaux, qui s'associe et conspire ouvertement pour tout envahir : après ce triste regard jeté autour de moi, je montrais à la suite du péril religieux le péril social.

Tel est l'acte que j'ai fait.

Et, parce que, sur la justice de Dieu et sur la Providence, un Évêque a osé dire ces choses, si simples, si vulgaires, admises par le bon sens des peuples et des siècles avec une telle unanimité que les païens eux-mêmes n'auraient pas compris qu'on pût ici contester, un débordement d'injures, dans une partie de la presse française, s'est fait dès le lendemain contre cet Évêque.

Si je mets sous les yeux de mes lecteurs une telle nomenclature, c'est qu'ils y trouveront un étrange témoignage de l'état des esprits parmi nous.

On a trouvé dans cet écrit :

Un monstrueux outrage au bon sens. (*La Gironde*, 14 oct.)

Des variations brutales sur le motif vulgaire : *V'là ce que c'est, c'est bien fait.* (*L'Indépendance belge*, 17 oct.)

Une accumulation d'incohérences et d'absurdités. (*La Gironde*, 11 oct.)

Un appel aux superstitions populaires. (*La Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 15 oct.)

A des préjugés de bonnes femmes et de Chinois. (Même Rev., 15 oct.)

La confusion d'idées, la plus décousue et la plus incohérente. (La même.)

Une sainte philippique. (*La Morale indépendante*, 28 oct.)

Un produit de fanatisme. — Une grande colère. (*Prog. de Lyon*, 16 oct.)

Une longue et violente diatribe. (*L'Avenir national*, 13 oct.)

Une diatribe violente et provocatrice contre tous les libres penseurs. (*La libre Conscience*, 1^{er} n^o, oct. 1866.)

Un carnage des libres penseurs. (*La libre Pensée*, 28 oct.)

Un pamphlet épiscopal. (*L'Indépendance belge*, 13 oct.)

Attribuant à Dieu ses fureurs, lui prêtant sa maladresse. (Le même.)

Atteignant nos lois sociales. (*Le Journal de Rouen*, 15 oct.)

Un vieux thème usé. (*La Morale indépendante*, 11 nov.)

Une amplification de rhétorique. (*Ibid.*)

Des arguments imités de l'Apocalypse. (*Les Débats*, 18 oct.)

Une brochure apocalyptique. (*Les Débats*, même jour.)

Pour varier, une épître apocalyptique. (*Les Débats*, 23 oct.)

De l'astrologie. (*La Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 15 oct.)

Une affaire d'almanach. (La même Revue.)

Une concurrence à Mathieu de la Drôme. (*La libre Pensée*, 28 oct.)

Un blasphème. (*Le Courrier français*, 14 oct.)

Un fatalisme atrophiant, exclusif de toute morale élevée, favorisant les rêves de l'Apocalypse. (*Le Courrier du Gers*, 18 oct.)

Quelque chose comme la vue de l'ivrogne, bien propre à dégoûter de l'ivresse. (*La Gironde*, 18 oct.)

Une résurrection du vieux Jéhovah, qu'on avait cru mort. (*Le Temps*, 18 oct.)

La fantasmagorie d'un Dieu brutal s'amusant à tourmenter ou à épouvanter ses créatures pour châtier leur orgueil... (*La Gironde*, 14 oct.)

L'œuvre d'un évêque... qui veut noyer la révolution dans l'eau bénite. (*L'Opinion nationale*, 26 oct.)

D'un évêque, qui, devant le fléau dont la France est émue, n'éprouve que des sentiments de haine. (*L'Avenir national*, 13 oct.)

Manque à la charité chrétienne, — au bon goût, — à l'urbanité, — la haine l'emporte. (*Ibid.*)

Outrage les gens qu'il ne peut convertir. (*Ibid.*)

D'un évêque qui compromet singulièrement le nom de Dieu. (*Courrier français*, 14 oct.)

Qui accuse Dieu d'injustice et de cruauté. (*Le Courrier du Gers*, 18 oct.)

Attribue à la Providence d'évidentes inconséquences et d'inexpliquables contradictions. (*Les Débats*, 23 oct.)

Prêchel 'athéisme le plus redoutable de tous. (*Le Temps*, 18 oct.)

La plus radicale négation de Dieu. (*Le Temps*, même jour.)

On l'a appelé : le fougueux évêque. (*La Revue des Deux-Mondes* 15 oct.)

Un prêtre bruyant. (*La Gironde*, 14 oct.)

Un bouillant évêque... répétant sans les rajeunir les diatribes des païens. (*L'Avenir National*, 13 oct.)

Un ancien professeur de rhétorique — un lion littéraire. — Un évêque revenant au fanatisme des pharisiens. (*La Morale indépendante*, 21 oct.)

Oubliant l'Évangile. (*La libre Pensée*, 28 oct.)

Calomniant tout le corps universitaire sans exception. (*La Patrie*.)

Ayant fait sinon un vaudeville, du moins une sombre et élégante Apocalypse. (*Le Nain jaune*.)

Un religionnaire. (*Le Courrier français*.)

Un nouveau Daniel. (*L'Opinion nationale*, 14 oct.)

Successeur de Jérémie. (*L'Indépendance belge*, 17 oct.)

Un Alceste épiscopal. (*L'Opinion nationale*, 14 oct.)

Un véritable fou. (*L'Indépendance belge*.)

On a encore dit de son œuvre : que c'était un monitoire d'un autre temps. (*Le Siècle*, 23 oct.)

Un violent réquisitoire. (*Ibid.*, 13 oct.)

Une incroyable sortie. (*La Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 15 oct.)

Une déclamation incompréhensible. (*Ibid.*)

Pleine d'intolérance et d'illogisme. (*L'Indépendance belge*, 13 oct.)

Une affaire de tempérament. (*Le Messager du Midi*, 15 oct.)

Des déclamations théurgiques. (*La Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 15 oct.)

Des anathèmes archaïques. (*Le Courrier du Gers*, 16 oct.)

Des théories injurieuses pour la divinité, et conduisant à un énervant fatalisme. (*La Gironde*, 14 oct.)

Une absurdité de langage et de conduite. (*La Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 15 oct.)

Un envahissement des théories les plus stupides. (*L'Indépend. belge*.)

Des objurgations farouches et des citations brutales. (*Le Temps*, 13 oct.)

Un colossal aveu d'impuissance. (*Ibid.*)

Enfin, un *De Profundis*. (*Gironde*, 12 oct.)

Voilà ce qui remplit les colonnes de cent journaux, à Paris et dans les provinces ; voilà ce qui est lu par des millions de lecteurs, dans les cabinets littéraires, les cercles, les cafés, les cabarets, dans les villes et les villages... Et voilà enfin où nous en sommes en France à l'heure qu'il est !

Eh bien ! c'est ce que j'appelle un nouveau et redoutable signe des temps.

Oui, redoutable, en vérité, je le répète; à moins qu'on ne veuille regarder comme une chose indifférente ce travail d'impiété profonde, qui se poursuit, depuis dix années surtout, par la presse et d'autres moyens, au sein du premier peuple de l'Europe, et qui a eu déjà cet épouvantable succès de faire que l'idée même de Dieu, d'un Dieu créateur, se mêlant des affaires du monde et y intervenant par sa Providence, étonne et révolte ceux qui se donnent parmi nous pour les maîtres de l'opinion publique.

Et qu'on ne s'imagine pas que ce soient ici les injures et les grossièretés qui m'émeuvent ! Je me tairais, assurément, s'il n'y avait que cela. S'il s'est jamais rencontré un honneur dans ma vie, c'est celui qu'on vient de me faire. Ce qui me touche, c'est autre chose ; c'est le fond même de cette étonnante situation ; c'est ce que de telles paroles, de tels cris, ce qu'une si violente tempête, à propos des vérités premières, fondement de tout ordre social et moral, révèlent de mal dans le présent, et de périls pour l'avenir, aux yeux de quiconque sait regarder et prévoir. Voilà ce qui m'émeut et m'oblige à parler.

Si l'on croyait que de telles luttes me soient agréables, ce serait bien se tromper ; mais je n'ai guère jamais compté avec ma peine, ni préféré ma paix à mon devoir.

II

LA TACTIQUE DES ADVERSAIRES.

Après les injures on a essayé des raisonnements : nous en verrons la valeur bientôt ; mais, tout d'abord, signalons une interprétation vraiment par trop commode employée contre ma

Lettre, et dégageons le débat de la misérable équivoque dont, par tactique, — car je ne puis voir là un simple malendu, — la plupart de mes adversaires ont fait comme le pivot de leur discussion.

J'ai proclamé la justice de Dieu. J'ai dit que :

« La loi, la grande loi de la justice est certaine; nul n'y échappe; tôt ou tard, le mal appelle le malheur. »

Et j'ai ajouté :

« Cette loi a ses mystères : Dieu l'applique comme il l'entend et nous ne savons pas ses secrets. »

Or, qu'a-t-on fait ?

On m'a fait précisément dire le contraire; on m'a fait deviner, divulguer, affirmer les secrets de Dieu; on m'a fait dire, comme si j'en avais eu révélation, pour quel crime particulier tel fléau particulier était envoyé !

« Aucun créole de la Guadeloupe, dit gravement le *Journal des Débats* (1), ne faisait partie de l'assemblée de Liège » Comme si j'avais assigné pour cause du tremblement de terre de la Guadeloupe l'assemblée de Liège.

« Le Congrès de Liège, » dit un autre, « est la cause des éruptions qui bouleversent la rade de Santorin (2). »

« La Loire est sortie de son lit, parce que des habitants des rives de la Seine ont développé, en Suisse ou en Belgique, des doctrines que M. Dupanloup appelle *impies* (3). »

Assurément, et pour beaucoup de lecteurs, de telles phrases dans les colonnes d'un journal, sont agréables et démonstratives : mais quelle est cette iniquité de polémique, et où a-t-on vu tout cela dans ma Lettre ?

Je le répète encore une fois :

« La loi, la grande loi de la justice est certaine, et nul n'y échappe : tôt ou tard le mal appelle le malheur ; mais cette loi a ses mystères, Dieu l'applique comme il l'entend, ET NOUS NE SAVONS PAS LES SECRETS DE DIEU. »

(1) 18 octobre 1866.

(2) *L'Avenir national*, 19 octobre 1866.

(3) *La Morale indépendante*, 21 octobre 1866.

Et c'est pour cela précisément, parce que nous ne savons pas les secrets de Dieu, que, quand le mal abonde sur la terre, — et chacun de nous en a sa part, car nul ici-bas n'est innocent, — et qu'à cette masse d'iniquités universelles viennent se joindre encore certains grands scandales publics, des débauches d'esprit, des orgies d'impiété comme à Liège, des blasphèmes comme ceux que nous lisons chaque jour dans vos livres et vos journaux, forts de leurs milliers de lecteurs et de complices, c'est alors surtout, je le crois et le répète, qu'on doit craindre les coups de la justice divine.

Jefferson disait : Je tremble pour mon pays, quand je réfléchis que Dieu est juste !

Je pense comme Jefferson, et je redis sa parole.

Et voilà pourquoi on m'accuse de faire appel à la peur, à la superstition et à la force.

A la peur ? — A quelle peur ? Est-ce de ce nom que vous appelez la crainte de Dieu et de sa justice ?

A la superstition ? — A quelle superstition ? Est-ce de ce nom que vous appelez la foi des siècles à l'existence de Dieu, à la Providence et à la justice divine ?

A la force ? — Comme si quelque part il en existait une aujourd'hui qui fût au service de la vérité méconnue ! comme si nous ne savions pas que l'empire et l'usage de la force sont chez nos ennemis !

Non : je tâche d'exciter à la réflexion, au courage, au repentir, à la prière, à la générosité virile, à l'union active et chrétienne, à tous les travaux, à tous les dévouements qui rendent la peur condamnable et la force inutile, à toutes les vertus enfin, qui peuvent sauver encore la société menacée.

Certes, quand un Évêque voit que les hommes outragent Dieu et le blasphèment, et quand il élève la voix pour conjurer les hommes de réfléchir, et Dieu de pardonner, qu'il plaise ou qu'il déplaise, cet Évêque fait son devoir.

Comment ! En face de cette grande certitude et de ce mystérieux inconnu, la certitude de la justice divine, et l'inconnu des applications particulières de cette justice, et en présence

aussi du mal contemporain, — car notre siècle aurait-il par hasard la prétention de se lever devant Dieu, et de lui dire comme cet orgueilleux philosophe : « Nul n'est meilleur que moi? » — En face, dis-je, de toutes ces choses, il n'y anrait pas même ici une conjecture et une possibilité redoutables qui commanderaient la prière? Et un Évêque ne pourrait pas élever la voix et dire : Nous sommes éprouvés, nous avons souffert, nous souffrons encore : Prions? Et il n'y aurait « pas lieu du tout » de nous demander à nous-mêmes si nous ne devons rien à la justice divine?

Non, non : tous tant que nous sommes, nous devons réfléchir, nul de nous ne peut se croire pur devant Dieu; et j'ajoute : en présence du péril religieux et social qui chaque jour grandit, en présence de « la guerre faite à Dieu, de l'athéisme qui « marche tête levée, de l'accord profond et menaçant des doctrines irréligieuses et des doctrines révolutionnaires, » « nous devons tous craindre et prier.

Mais laissons cette tactique de nos adversaires, et passons à leurs arguments.

La Justice et la Providence de Dieu : la Providence se mêlant des affaires humaines, ayant le droit d'intervenir dans le monde et dans l'histoire; et la Justice divine ayant le droit de punir les péchés des hommes, voilà ce qui est ici en cause : c'est-à-dire la plus grande question philosophique, morale et religieuse qui se puisse agiter parmi les hommes. Car il ne faut pas se faire illusion : les principes au nom desquels on m'a répondu impliquent nécessairement la négation radicale, non-seulement de la religion révélée, du christianisme, mais de toute religion et de toute philosophie.

III

LES ARGUMENTS.

On a essayé des raisonnements : on a argumenté à l'encontre de ces grandes et élémentaires vérités ; et ce qui étonne ici, ce qui est encore un signe des temps, et une révélation tout à la fois de la perversion et de l'affaiblissement des esprits, c'est que de tels arguments, contre l'ajustice de Dieu et sa Providence, aient pu être faits par ceux qui les ont faits, aient pu troubler ceux qui les ont lus.

Voici ces arguments ; je les résume ; ils sont délayés, étendus, enveloppés, dissimulés souvent, selon la méthode des sophistes, dans les plis et le miroitement des mots ; mais j'affirme qu'ils sont ce que je vais dire.

§ 1.

Il y a des lois naturelles. Les grandes calamités qui nous frappent, les inondations, par exemple, sont des effets nécessaires des lois naturelles.

Donc Dieu n'y est pour rien !

En d'autres termes, la cause des inondations, ce sont les pluies, ce sont les nuées, ce sont les vents.

Donc ce n'est pas Dieu !

Et encore :

Quel rapport peut-il y avoir entre le choléra et les impiétés ?

En d'autres termes, si je comprends .

Le choléra nous vient des Indes et de la Mecque, de miasmes, d'insectes microscopiques peut-être ;

Donc Dieu n'y est pour rien !

C'est-à-dire qu'il n'y a pas de cause première, parce qu'il y a des causes secondes ; ou que la cause première a abdiqué, et Dieu s'est dessaisi de l'empire du monde, et s'y est interdit toute action, parce qu'il s'est donné des agents secondaires et a établi des lois !

Comme si Dieu n'était pas le principe des lois ! Comme s'il ne pouvait pas, sans changer ces lois, en gouverner les applications particulières, et les faire servir, quand il lui plaît, à l'exécution des secrets desseins de sa providence !

§ 2.

Les causes des débordements de nos fleuves sont :

- 1° Le déboisement des montagnes , c'est la *cause générale* ;
- 2° L'insuffisance des travaux d'endiguement , c'est la *cause spéciale*.

Donc Dieu n'est pas et ne peut pas être la cause des inondations : et il serait absurde de regarder ces grands débordements des eauxfluviales comme un fléau possible de sa justice.

Plus clairement :

Des montagnes boisées auraient retenu les eaux ; des digues plus élevées et plus fortes les eussent contenues : donc ce n'est pas Dieu qui a fait pleuvoir sur nos montagnes déboisées, et lancé ces énormes masses d'eau dans les lits mai endigués de nos fleuves ; en un mot, Dieu n'est, et ne peut être pour rien dans les inondations dont nous avons souffert, et voir là un châ-timent possible de nos fautes, c'est une absurdité !

C'est-à-dire qu'une cause, et la cause première, perd sa puis-

sance, et ne peut plus produire ses effets, parce que ces effets *auraient pu être empêchés*, dans une hypothèse qui ne s'est pas réalisée, par des obstacles qui *auraient pu exister, mais qui n'existaient pas*.

Un journal ajoute que la circulaire de M. Béhic aurait *tout empêché*, si elle avait paru plus tôt.

Maintenant donc que la circulaire de M. Béhic a paru, Dieu sera bien *empêché* et bien embarrassé, quand il voudra punir les hommes.

Nous pouvons désormais nous mettre à notre aise, et blasphémer tant qu'il nous plaira, sous la protection de M. le Ministre des travaux publics, qui, assurément, ne croit pas avoir tant ni si bien fait.

§ 3.

On ne peut jamais attribuer à Dieu les fléaux de tout genre qui nous affligent ; « tremblements de terre, perturbations météorologiques, inondations... » Car, si Dieu était la cause de ces phénomènes, il ne faudrait pas en chercher d'autres causes ; et l'étude et la recherche des causes naturelles serait alors une absurdité, un non-sens.

C'est-à-dire que, s'il y avait une cause première, et si Dieu pouvait quelque chose dans le monde, il n'y aurait plus de causes secondes qui puissent être l'objet des études de l'homme. « Et il faudrait, ajoute-t-on naïvement, supprimer l'Institut de France. »

Tranquillisez-vous, Messieurs : l'Institut de France peut en toute sécurité continuer ses nobles travaux, poursuivre ses expériences, et tirer ses conclusions. Croyez-vous donc que la li

berté d'action soit en Dieu la fantaisie ? Même quand Dieu agit par voie de miracle, le miracle, précisément parce qu'il est tel, ne prend pas rang parmi les faits dont s'occupent les sciences naturelles. Il est d'un autre ordre, voilà tout, quoique non moins démontrable.

Au fond, je vous comprends : vous avez peur des miracles

Allons au fait : quand Dieu intervient, par miracle ou autrement, il ne détruit pas plus la nature, ses forces ou ses lois, que ne le fait ma libre volonté, quand j'use de ma main pour soulever une pierre en sens contraire de l'attraction. Est-ce que l'attraction et sa loi ne subsiste pas tout entière, quand ma force physiologique se superpose à cette force physique ? Eh bien ! quand la force divine se superpose aux forces de toute nature, elle ne supprime pas la moindre partie de ces forces, ne viole aucun iota de leur loi. Et la science n'en subsiste pas moins tout entière.

Se peut-il que des esprits sérieux se viennent aheurter contre de telles raisons ! Et cependant nous en connaissons qui ne sont pas chrétiens, pour ce seul motif que la science humaine serait perdue, si Dieu pouvait faire un miracle !

On dirait que c'en est fait des lois générales et du cours ordinaire de la nature, institué par le Créateur, si on permet au Créateur d'y intervenir, et de se mêler en rien de son œuvre !

Est-ce que Dieu, par hasard, ne peut pas, comme il le veut, commander aux vents, diriger la foudre et les nuées (1) ?

(1) Je ne puis me défendre de citer ici un texte admirable du grand naturaliste Linnée ; texte que j'avais ignoré jusqu'à ce jour, et dont je dois la connaissance à la savante revue mensuelle publiée par les PP. Jésuites, sous le titre de : *Études religieuses, historiques et littéraires*.

« Le Dieu éternel, immense, sachant tout, pouvant tout, a passé devant moi. Je ne l'ai pas vu en face, mais ce reflet de lui, saisissant soudainement mon âme, l'a jetée dans la stupeur de l'admiration. J'ai suivi ça et là sa trace parmi les choses de la création ; et, dans toutes ces œuvres, même dans les plus petites, les plus imperceptibles, quelle force ! quelle sagesse ! quelle in-

Nous intervenons bien, nous-mêmes, et aujourd'hui plus que jamais, de mille manières admirables, par la mécanique et par la chimie, pour diriger et varier l'application des lois de la nature, sans les changer. Et Dieu ne pourrait pas ce que l'homme peut !

Des miracles, certes, Dieu peut en faire, s'il lui plaît ; et celui qui dénierait à Dieu ce pouvoir, « ce serait, dit Rousseau « lui-même, lui faire trop d'honneur que de le punir, il faudrait « l'enfermer. »

§ 4.

Mais, si Dieu, dit-on d'autre part, était la cause des inondations et du choléra, aider, réconforter les inondés, soigner les cholériques, et même les plaindre, serait une entreprise sacrilège ; ce serait s'inscrire contre les arrêts du ciel ; ce serait

définissable perfection ! J'ai observé comment les êtres animés se superposent et s'enchaînent au règne végétal, les végétaux eux-mêmes aux minéraux qui sont dans les entrailles du globe, tandis que ce globe gravite dans un ordre invariable autour du soleil auquet il doit sa vie. Enfin j'ai vu le soleil et tous les autres astres, tout le système sidéral, immense, incalculable dans son infinitude, se mouvoir dans l'espace, suspendus dans le vide par un premier moteur incompréhensible, l'Être des êtres, la Cause des causes, le Guide et le Conservateur de l'univers, le Maître et l'Ouvrier de toute l'œuvre du monde...

« Toutes les choses créées portent donc le témoignage de la sagesse et de la puissance divine, en même temps quelles sont le trésor et l'aliment de notre félicité. L'utilité qu'elles ont atteste la bonté de Celui qui les a faites, leur beauté démontre sa sagesse, tandis que leur harmonie, leur conservation, leurs justes proportions, et leur inépuisable fécondité proclament la puissance de ce grand Dieu !

« Est-ce cela que vous voulez appeler la Providence ? C'est en effet son nom, et il n'y a que son conseil qui explique le monde. Il est donc juste de croire qu'il est un Dieu, immense, éternel, que nul être n'a engendré, que rien n'a créé, sans lequel rien n'existe, qui a fait et ordonné cet ouvrage universel. Il échappe à nos yeux qu'il remplit toutefois de sa lumière ; seule la pensée le saisit, c'est dans ce sanctuaire profond que se cache cette Majesté »

devenir complice des coupables et abolir la justice divine en la désarmant.

Je cite ici ; on ne me croirait pas, si je ne citais :

« Mgr l'Évêque d'Orléans n'avait pas réfléchi que les infor-
« tunés dont il plaidait la cause, c'est Dieu lui-même qui les a
« frappés, et que, par conséquent, » — je l'avoue, je n'avais
pas réfléchi à cette conséquence, — « les aider, les reconforter
« et même les plaindre était un pur sacrilège. Qu'advierait-il,
« en effet, de la justice de Dieu, si nous allions déplorer le sort
« de ceux qu'atteignent ses punitions, et nous précipiter à leur
« secours? Nous nous inscririons contre les arrêts du Ciel; et
« ceux qu'il a marqués doivent être sacrés : ils sont des exem-
« ples ; Dieu ne peut vouloir qu'en diminuant leur peine, nous
« affaiblissions la portée des leçons qu'il nous envoie par eux.
« Les malheureux lui servent d'enseigne ! Ils marchent devant
« sa colère et la proclament ; ils en sont les hérauts. Laissons à
« terre ceux que Dieu a terrassés ; notre tâche envers eux est de
« trembler, non de compatir. La justice humaine est, dit-on,
« très-inférieure à la justice divine. Cependant, de quel nom
« appellerions-nous, et de quel œil verrions-nous le Samaritain
« qui recueillerait chez lui et déroberait à sa peine un coupable
« que le juge viendrait de condamner à la prison, au bague ou
« à l'échafaud? Il deviendrait coupable, car il abolirait la jus-
« tice en la désarmant. M. Dupanloup ne peut vouloir abolir la
« justice de Dieu : il faut donc qu'il abandonne sa théorie, ou
« qu'il cesse de plaider la cause des inondés, des familles visi-
« tées par le choléra, et de toutes les victimes quelconques des
« fléaux divins ; il faut qu'il se range et qu'il laisse passer la
« justice de Jéhovah. Point de discours de charité, point de
« souscription *en faveur des pauvres enfants, dont les parents*
« *ont été mis par l'inondation hors d'état de les nourrir et de*
« *les envoyer à l'école.* Dieu ne veut pas que les enfants man-
« gent, il ne veut pas qu'ils apprennent à lire. Retirez-vous
« donc, vous tous qui prendriez volontiers votre part de ce dé-
« sastre ; retirez-vous : ne marchandez pas à Dieu ses victimes.

« Craignez qu'on ne s'en tienne pas à cet avertissement : c'est
« le Dieu du déluge qui a parlé. » (1)

C'est-à-dire, pour résumer en quatre mots ce long discours, que, s'il y a une justice divine qui punit, la charité chrétienne est supprimée!

Il faut l'avouer, un tel aperçu est neuf; c'est la première fois, qu'on a découvert cette incompatibilité entre la charité de l'homme et la justice divine. La comparaison tirée de la justice humaine est d'ailleurs par trop étrange! Oublie-t-on que, si la loi providentielle est certaine, son application aux individus demeure pour nous mystérieuse! Quand je vois un homme qui souffre, je le soulage, d'abord parce qu'il souffre, ensuite parce que Dieu qui frappe en ce monde pour avertir, aime que nous comprenions sa justice, sans oublier sa bonté, et que nous apaisions l'une en imitant l'autre. Est-ce qu'un père qui a châtié l'un de ses fils s'offensera, si le frère visite, console et conseille son frère? Trouvera-t-il mauvais que celui-là soit bon, parce que l'autre a été coupable?

Quelle tristesse d'avoir à relever de tels arguments!

§ 5.

Autre preuve que Dieu ne peut pas être la cause des fléaux :

Si Dieu pouvait être la cause des fléaux, et s'il y fallait voir quelquefois des châtiments de nos impiétés et de nos crimes, Dieu alors aurait « inondé M. Renan, envoyé un choléra bien
« conditionné à M. Taine, des sauterelles à M. Littré, un bou-
« let décisif à Garibaldi, un tremblement de terre à M. Pelle-
« tan, et quelques autres menus fléaux à « tous ces jeunes et
« élégants philosophes, à tous ces beaux écrivains qui distillent
« le poison d'une main blanche, et le présentent dans des

(1) *Le Temps*, 18 octobre 1866.

« coupes dorées à la jeunesse... » il aurait « frappé en plein congrès les étudiants rassemblés à Liège (ce qui eût été « probant), foudroyé d'un coup les ouvriers réunis au congrès « de Genève (ce qui eût été si facile.....). » Il ne l'a pas fait !
Donc...

C'est toujours le même journal qui parle.

Donc, puisque Dieu n'a pas fait cela : châtié M. Renan par l'inondation, M. Taine par le choléra, M. Littré par les saute-relles, Garibaldi par un boulet, M. Pelletan par un tremblement de terre, et frappé en plein congrès les étudiants à Liège, etc..., il faut en conclure avec évidence que Dieu n'est pour rien dans les fléaux, et ne regarde pas à nos péchés pour en faire justice.

C'est-à-dire, selon ces messieurs, que si Dieu ne punit pas tel homme, pour tel crime, à telle heure précisément et en la manière qu'il plaira aux journalistes d'imaginer, il faut en conclure que Dieu est indifférent aux crimes des hommes, et qu'il n'y a pas de justice divine.

Comme si Dieu devait détruire la liberté morale, — cette nécessaire liberté du bien et du mal, qui est la condition de notre épreuve ici-bas, — en se montrant à chaque heure visiblement, et en frappant chaque coupable au moment même qu'il commet son crime !

Non : Les voies de Dieu ne sont pas telles.

Il se tait pour vous laisser libres.

Il se tait, faut-il vous le dire ? parce qu'il est sûr de vous retrouver, dans sa bonté ou dans sa justice. Il est patient, et peut vous attendre, parce qu'il est éternel, *Patiens quia æternus!*

§ 6.

Ce serait à tort, a-t-on dit encore, qu'on prétendrait voir en ces fléaux des châtiments divins :

Nous n'avons pas mérité d'être si sévèrement punis : « s'il y

« a du mal dans notre siècle, est-ce qu'il n'y a pas aussi du bien...? » Témoins, « les progrès de l'industrie et de l'agriculture ; les chemins de fer, le télégraphe électrique, le percement de l'isthme de Suez, les traités de commerce, et « l'exposition universelle » qu'on nous prépare.

C'est-à-dire que les progrès industriels et agricoles, les chemins de fer, le télégraphe électrique, le canal de Suez, les traités de commerce, et l'exposition universelle, et toutes les grandes découvertes du génie de l'homme, que je célèbre aussi bien que vous, empêchent que le mal ne soit le mal, ou sont des vertus et des œuvres satisfaites, pouvant faire contre-poids aux vices et réparer les péchés !

Péchons donc, péchons hardiment désormais et tant qu'il nous plaira ! Nions Dieu ; prenons le bien d'autrui ; livrons-nous à toutes les misères de la chair ! Nous avons les banquiers, les agents de change, les machinistes et de bons ingénieurs pour tout expier et tout sauver !

§ 7.

Voici qui n'est pas moins fort :

« Votre Dieu est matérialiste au premier chef, puisqu'il applique des châtimens matériels à des fautes morales ! »

Puissans raisonneurs ! Comme si, dans la société humaine, les magistrats, sans être matérialistes, n'appliquaient pas chaque jour à des crimes moraux des peines matérielles ; et, pour aller encore plus au fond, comme s'il était de l'essence de la peine d'être de même nature que le crime, et s'il ne suffisait pas à la justice qu'elle atteigne le coupable, et le châtie selon sa culpabilité !

§ 8.

Mais quoi ! n'y a-t-il pas eu des fléaux, aussi nombreux et terribles, dans les siècles de foi ?

Donc les fléaux ne sont pas les châtimens du péché.

Comme si les siècles de foi n'avaient pas eu eux aussi leurs péchés, et méritant d'autant plus d'être châtiés, qu'ils étaient en opposition plus flagrante avec la foi de ces siècles !

Vous savez si bien nous parler des crimes du moyen âge, et vous ne voudriez pas que cette époque, dont nos propres histoires ne dissimulent pas les désordres, ait eu aussi ses châtimens à côté de ses crimes ?

Comme si nous étions de ces sectaires, flétris par l'Église, qui disaient que la foi suffit à tout et dispense au besoin de la vertu !

§ 9.

Et encore :

Dieu n'est pas l'auteur des calamités dont nous souffrons ; car, dit-on, si Dieu en était l'auteur, il serait injuste, cruel, puisqu'il aurait frappé des innocents.

Comme s'il n'y avait pas d'autres péchés que ceux de MM. Renan et Taine, des congrès de Liège et de Genève, des francs-maçons et de Garibaldi !

Et comme si, dans ces grandes calamités publiques, ce qui est châtiment pour les uns, ne pouvait pas être épreuve, exercice de vertu, avertissement et occasion de mérite pour les autres (1) !

(1) Le *Moniteur*, au mois dernier (7 octobre), nous citait un curieux exemple :

— On écrit de Pékin, le 4^{er} août :

« Depuis onze mois, il n'est pour ainsi dire pas tombé de pluie à Pékin ni

§ 10.

Mais non : Voici comment Dieu, apparemment, aurait dû procéder pour être juste, à la manière dont vous l'entendez :

La Loire, en se débordant, aurait dû distinguer entre champs et champs, inonder le champ du pécheur et laisser à sec le champ du juste ; les sauterelles, pareillement ; le choléra, de même, frapper l'impie et épargner le croyant ; et les balles de Sadowa se détourner de leur chemin, pour n'atteindre aucun des soldats en état de grâce... Et la Providence, enfin, devrait appliquer dès ce monde la justice définitive et absolue, qui est réservée aux bons et aux méchants dans l'autre vie.

Il faut l'avouer : ce serait un spectacle curieux à voir que cette manière de justice ici-bas. Et, toutefois, cet étrange argument est au fond des raisonnements de vingt journaux.

Et ce sont les hommes à qui le miracle fait peur, ou qui s'en moquent, ce sont eux qui voudraient que Dieu exerçât ses châtiments de cette étrange sorte !

Ne leur disons pas à ces hommes que Dieu, en agissant ainsi, montrerait sa justice trop à découvert ; qu'il détruirait

dans les pays environnants. Les moissons ont séché sur pied, et les cultivateurs sont réduits à la plus grande détresse. L'absence de pluie en été et de neige en hiver constitue une véritable calamité publique, qui préoccupe au plus haut point le gouvernement chinois. En pareil cas, c'est l'usage dans le Céleste Empire d'ordonner des jeûnes, des prières générales, des cérémonies expiatoires. Pendant l'été de 1864, une sécheresse prolongée ayant sévi, la *Gazette de Pékin* publia un décret par lequel le jeune empereur faisait le vœu « de rectifier sa conduite et de s'occuper plus activement des besoins de son peuple. » Il exhortait en même temps les fonctionnaires « à ne pas s'écarter de la voie de la justice et de la vérité, » et il ordonnait aux magistrats « d'adoucir les peines que les lois infligent aux coupables, de mettre en liberté les gens injustement incarcérés, et de terminer promptement les procès en litige. » — Voilà probablement pourquoi on m'accuse de renouveler les superstitions chinoises, lesquelles d'ailleurs, on le sait, sont aussi les superstitions de l'Angleterre et de l'Amérique, et même celles de la France.

l'état de foi et de liberté nécessaire à l'épreuve de la vie ; que la liberté du bien et du mal ne saurait subsister, si celui qui fait le mal était frappé à l'instant même, par un châtement visible, terrible, immédiat ; ou si ces grandes calamités publiques, les inondations, les pestes, la guerre, distinguaient entre les justes et les pécheurs, frappant ceux-ci, épargnant ceux-là ; — ces hommes ne nous comprendraient point.

Ne leur disons pas que Dieu, qui est tout-puissant, bon et juste, a des compensations admirables ; qu'en enveloppant l'homme de bien dans ces calamités communes qui frappent les coupables, il fait expier ses fautes présentes et ses fautes anciennes ; qu'il le sanctifie par l'épreuve de la patience et par l'humble et filiale soumission à sa volonté ; et qu'il lui fait trouver enfin dans l'exercice de ces grandes vertus des trésors de mérites, qui seront récompensés éternellement par des trésors de gloire et d'immortelles félicités, — ces hommes ne nous comprendraient pas davantage ! Pour eux, ces nobles et hautes pensées d'expiation, d'épreuve, de patience, de mérites récompensés ailleurs qu'ici-bas, d'immortalité, de gloire et de félicité céleste, ce sont des chimères !

Ne leur disons pas non plus que le juste, en souffrant avec les pécheurs, apprend la compassion et la charité pour des misères dont il a lui-même à souffrir ; qu'il est ainsi soustrait à l'orgueilleuse tentation de mépriser ses frères, avec lesquels il est en société de maux ; qu'il offre à Dieu, avec Jésus-Christ, un sacrifice d'autant plus pur, qu'il est présenté par un cœur innocent, à l'image du grand sacrifice de la Croix, — ces hommes nous comprendraient moins encore ici. Cette philosophie chrétienne est trop haute pour eux et les surpasse, quoique Platon, dont le génie l'avait entrevue, l'ait admirée.

Non : notre grand Dieu, s'il veut avoir quelque droit à leurs hommages, doit renoncer à exercer jamais sa justice autrement qu'il ne leur plaît ; il faut qu'il adopte leurs procédés, et laisse là les siens ; défense à lui de punir par des calamités générales les péchés des hommes — qui, plus ou moins, sont tous pé-

cheurs. — S'il ne change, voici comment ces hommes le traiteront. Je répugne à reproduire de tels blasphèmes ; mais il le faut pour avertir les âmes honnêtes.

« Si tel était Dieu, disent-ils, s'il lui plaisait de nous con-
« fondre par de tels moyens, le moindre d'entre nous gardant
« une lueur d'équité lui serait supérieur, et pour trouver des
« égaux à ce Dieu-là, il faudrait le mesurer aux despotes les
« plus fantasques, aux tyrans les plus cruels. Dieu serait le
« MONSTRE SUPRÊME, et tout ce qu'il y a de sain, de bon et de
« sensé, dans l'humanité, n'aurait plus qu'à se lever en masse
« contre lui, à le mettre en accusation, et à placer sur son
« trône usurpé et souillé d'injustice le grand juge des hommes
« et des dieux : la conscience humaine..... (1). »

Voilà donc ce qu'on nous oppose. Et c'est avec de tels blasphèmes, et de tels sophismes, qu'on prétend ébranler la foi des siècles en ces grands dogmes de la Providence de Dieu et de sa justice !

IV

LES IMPIÉTÉS.

On a vu, dans ce que nous avons déjà cité, plus d'un exemple des impiétés que ces écrivains mêlent à leurs arguments.

En voici d'autres encore, prises dans la masse, et où la déraison et le blasphème vont à l'envi :

« Si j'étais un de ces malheureux frappés par les fléaux
« célestes, dépouillé et vaincu, mais sentant en moi la force de
« l'innocence, je dirais, nouveau Job, à votre Dieu : Je suis

(1) *Le Temps*, 18 octobre 1866.

« au-dessus de toi, et, si tu existes, tu es toi-même le plus
« grand fléau, le plus mortel ennemi du genre humain, le dé-
« vastateur et le destructeur par excellence; car tu détruis la
« justice dans l'homme...

« A ce Dieu nous répondrons toujours : Tu ne peux pas être,
« parce que le besoin de raison et de liberté habite dans l'homme,
« et qu'il ne peut pas venir d'une source de déraison et d'ini-
« quité (1). »

Un autre écrit : « Les doctrines professées par les libres
« penseurs, c'est peut-être la *religion de l'avenir qui commence*,
prenant la place « de la religion du Nazaréen..... de la re-
« ligion catholique en décadence *et qui tombe en lam-*
« *beaux* (2). »

Ces libres penseurs sont d'avis qu'il n'y a pas de Dieu, ou
que, s'il y en a un, il ne se mêle pas des affaires de ce monde.
Et voilà qu'ils prétendent fonder une *religion*, et ils donnent
à cette religion sans Dieu, l'avenir, et ils la destinent à rem-
placer le christianisme !

D'autres, par un blasphème peut-être encore plus impie,
rattachent cette religion nouvelle à Jésus-Christ, et n'y voient
qu'un développement du christianisme :

« La libre pensée a le fondateur du christianisme pour
« modèle sublime (3); » elle serait le christianisme consommé

Entendons maintenant le *Siècle* : Notre Dieu, s'il y en a un,
est un Dieu trop bon pour être juste. C'est un excellent Dieu,
un bon père, le meilleur de tous, jusqu'à permettre, comme
chose la plus simple, de se moquer de lui, de se révolter contre
ses lois et de lui faire LA GUERRE; et il est tout à fait enclin,
ce Dieu si bon, à ne voir en tout cela que peccadilles et gentil-
lesses de ses enfants, ne mettant pas la moindre différence entre

(1) *Le Temps*, 18 octobre 1866.

(2) *Le Progrès de Lyon*, 16 octobre 1866.

(3) *Courrier du Gers*, 16 octobre 1866.

ceux qui le servent et ceux qui le blasphèment. Je cite M. Havin :

« *En admettant*, dit-il *que la GUERRE A DIEU grandisse*,
« en quoi cette guerre mériterait-elle que nous fussions punis
« par l'invasion de tant de fléaux!... Dieu est le meilleur des
« pères, la miséricorde et la bonté suprême... Un Dieu bon et
« miséricordieux, qui étend SES AILES PROTECTRICES sur toute
« l'humanité ! »

On aurait bien tort, en vérité, de ne pas se mettre avec un si bon Dieu tout à fait à l'aise, et de se refuser l'agréable plaisir de faire, chaque matin, dans le *Siècle*, l'esprit fort ; de braver Dieu, et de lui faire la guerre... Du reste, ce genre de blasphème n'est pas nouveau : M. Havin, qu'il me permette de le dire, se souvient ici de son Béranger, et sa philosophie est à la hauteur de la philosophie du chansonnier, dont on me citait hier ces deux vers :

Le verre en main, gaiement je me confie
Au Dieu des bonnes gens.

Journal de bonnes gens en effet ! doux et accommodant avec les puissances de la terre,

Hardi contre Dieu seul !

Oui, contre Dieu seul ! et dès le lendemain, le *Siècle* nous en donnait une nouvelle preuve, en prenant la peine de nous dire que Dieu n'est qu'une *hypothèse*... Comme *l'âme*, d'ailleurs, comme la *vie future*... Hypothèses admettant parfaitement des hypothèses contraires :

« Dieu, personnel ou impersonnel, le Dieu des chrétiens, le
« Dieu des panthéistes, l'âme humaine, son existence, son
« immortalité, les destinées de l'homme après sa mort, sont
« des hypothèses, douces, consolantes, fortifiantes, si vous vou-
« lez, mais enfin ce ne sont que des hypothèses (1). »

(1) *Le Siècle*, 28 octobre.

Quand on songe à quels lecteurs vont de telles choses, dans tous les cafés et cabarets de villes et de campagnes, quels ravages elles peuvent faire parmi le si grand nombre de ceux qui sont serfs de leur journal, et ne savent pas défendre la liberté de leur esprit contre de tels docteurs, comment n'être pas effrayé pour l'avenir de ce pays ?

M. Havin nous dira tout à l'heure que l'Église ne doit plus avoir la direction morale des intelligences, et que c'est même là un fait accompli.... Mais que signifie ce fait accompli ? Tout simplement que le peuple, s'il devient *libre penseur*, comme on l'en flatte, changera de maître : de l'enseignement de Dieu et de l'Évangile, il tombera sous l'enseignement du *Siècle* et de ses confrères.

Le *Journal des Débats*, adoptant sous la plume de M. Renan, la terminologie des athées, emploie aussi, à propos de la question divine, le mot d'*hypothèse*, comme on peut le voir dans un sophistique article sur Marc-Aurèle, du 8 juillet 1866 (1). Après avoir dit que toutes les croyances, même le *déisme*, n'étaient pour Marc-Aurèle que des *hypothèses*, M. Renan ajoute que, « sans avoir professé aucun des dogmes de ce qu'on appelle « la religion naturelle, » Marc-Aurèle fut toutefois « éminemment religieux. »

Du reste, il est un point sur lequel tous ces messieurs sont de même avis : ils ne veulent plus entendre parler de la justice de Dieu dans le monde ! Il n'en veulent plus absolument : c'est sans doute encore un fait accompli.

Admettre que Dieu châtie les hommes par des fléaux, par des calamités publiques, « c'est accuser Dieu d'injustice et de « cruauté (2) ; » c'est « faire renaître les terreurs d'un autre « temps... tout à fait puérides aujourd'hui (3). » C'est renou- « veler des préjugés de bonnes femmes (4). »

(1) Voyez encore les *Débats* du 23 avril 1866, article de M. Deschanel.

(2) *Courrier du Gers*, 46, 17 octobre 1866.

(3) *Le Temps*, 15 octobre 1866.

(4) *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, octobre 1866.

La justice... les hommes sont bien avertis qu'il n'y en aura plus d'autre à craindre désormais que celle des cours d'assises, des gendarmes et du bourreau!

A son tour, le *Journal des Débats* se moque agréablement de « cette crainte salutaire qui est le commencement de la sagesse (1). »

Le Dieu que nous adorons, qu'ont adoré nos pères, avant comme depuis Jésus-Christ, le Dieu personnel, créateur, législateur, gouvernant le monde par sa Providence, récompensant la vertu, châtiant le crime, ces messieurs l'appellent :

« Le Dieu de l'arbitraire, Dieu extérieur et matériel, fait à la ressemblance de nos passions et de nos ignorances (2). »

Ce Dieu : « il a eu son temps, il s'en va, il fond à vue d'œil. »

Il est remplacé par « le Dieu intérieur, bien autrement profond, saint et respectable (3). »

Et ce nouveau Dieu, ce Dieu profond, seul saint et seul respectable, destiné à remplacer l'ancien Dieu qui a eu son temps, quel est-il donc?

C'est « la loi vivante des mondes et des âmes, reconnue et respectée : voilà le Dieu qui se dévoile à la science, le Dieu qui, dans l'homme, s'appelle d'un seul mot, L'HUMANITÉ. »

« L'humanité n'est pas Dieu, mais elle est la révélation de Dieu dans l'homme. »

Comprenne qui pourra.

Ou, plutôt, nous vous comprenons : Pour qui connaît la langue des panthéistes, on reconnaît ici leur GRAND TOUT.

Ils appellent notre Dieu, *extérieur*, parce qu'il est distinct du monde, et le Dieu du panthéisme s'appelle le Dieu *intérieur*, parce qu'il est inséparablement, identiquement engagé dans les choses, dans la nature et l'humanité, de telle sorte

(1) *Les Débats*, 23 octobre.

(2) *Le Temps*, 18 octobre 1866.

(3) *Ibid.*

que, si la nature et l'humanité n'existaient pas, ce Dieu ne serait pas.

C'est le Dieu duquel on peut dire : il est tout et il n'est rien ; tout ce qui est, tout ce qui vit, la nature, le monde, vous et moi, c'est lui ; et il n'y en a pas d'autre. En un mot, il est le GRAND TOUT. Et, pour eux, « tout est Dieu, » comme disait Bossuet, « excepté Dieu lui-même. »

Continuons :

Le *matérialisme* nous envahit, il inonde notre littérature, il déborde de plus en plus dans nos mœurs ; c'est la plaie du présent et le redoutable fléau de l'avenir. Voici avec quelle indulgence on le traite :

« Certaines personnes, dans une ardeur d'émancipation fort sincère, cherchent à rendre au MATÉRIALISME la direction du mouvement moral et politique (1). »

Celui qui écrit cela, n'est pas, ajoute-t-il, de l'avis de ces personnes : vous croiriez peut-être que c'est par horreur du matérialisme ? Point du tout ; c'est simplement parce que « nous ne savons ce que c'est que matière, » pas plus que « nous ne savons ce que c'est qu'esprit. »

Et que savez-vous donc, Messieurs, si, après tant de siècles de philosophie et de progrès, vous en êtes venus à ne savoir plus ce que c'est que *matière*, ce que c'est qu'*esprit*, ce que c'est que *Dieu*, ni s'il y a une différence entre les choses que ces mots expriment !

Et c'est avec de telles ignorances que vous prétendez gouverner le monde et diriger la marche de l'humanité ! Mais alors, où nous menez-vous ?

Et il nous sera interdit de nous effrayer de ce progrès ! Et nous ne pourrons dénoncer ces doctrines grosses de toutes les révolutions sociales, comme des attentats !

Non : « On ne saurait donner le nom d'*attentats*, ni au congrès de Liège, ni à la réunion de Genève, ni à la délibération d'une trentaine de francs-maçons parisiens : *manifes-*

(1) *Le Temps*, 15 octobre 1866.

« tations demeurées toutes les trois sans résultats matériels (1). »

SANS RÉSULTATS MATÉRIELS ! Ce ne sera donc que quand ces doctrines auront détruit tout culte, toute autorité, tout ordre public, établi l'anarchie et relevé peut-être la guillotine, c'est alors seulement que ces doctrines commenceront à être un attentat !

Et toutes les théories les plus abominables, les plus impies, les plus effrontées, les plus subversives de tout ordre et de toute société, jetées parmi la jeunesse et parmi le peuple, ne seront rien que d'innocent, tant qu'on ne prendra pas la hache pour abattre les trônes et les têtes : jusqu'alors, il ne faudra voir là que l'exercice légitime et sacré de la *libre pensée*, de la *libre conscience*, préparant la religion et la société de l'avenir !

Eh bien ! de tout cela, je fais mon compliment à l'avenir et à mon pays.

V

ACCORD DU GENRE HUMAIN AVEC LE CHRISTIANISME

· SUR LA QUESTION.

I

Fatigué des sophismes et des blasphèmes qui venaient de passer sous mes yeux, j'ai voulu respirer un moment, et, avant d'entrer dans le dernier fond de la lutte que je soutiens contre la presse antireligieuse de ce pays, je me suis souvenu, on ne s'en étonnera pas, de ces grands esprits de l'antiquité, de ces classiques, qu'autrefois j'ai défendus, parce que j'é savais tout ce que Dieu avait conservé en eux de raison na-

1) *Le Temps*, 15 octobre 1866.

turelle et de hautes lumières ; je me suis tourné vers eux, j'ai voulu revoir quelques-uns de ces grands hommes, anciens amis de ma jeunesse, illustres témoins de la foi des peuples et de la sagesse des premiers temps : j'ai redemandé les traditions de l'antiquité, soit à ses poètes, soit à ses philosophes ; et, je l'avoue, j'ai été saisi d'admiration... mais aussi d'humiliation pour mon siècle et pour ma patrie, en voyant, chez ces hommes doués de raison, ce grand langage religieux qui relève si noblement les âmes du côté du ciel, et chez nous ces tristes et ténébreuses négations qui abaissent la pensée et glacent le cœur.

Qu'on me permette donc, pour soulager ma tristesse, et faire naître, s'il se pouvait, une secrète pudeur au fond des âmes touchées par l'impiété contemporaine, de placer ici, en regard des pauvretés blasphématoires que nous venons d'entendre, le grand langage du bon sens antique.

Car, sur ces capitales questions, — Dieu, la Providence, la justice divine, — le Créateur ne s'est jamais laissé sans témoignage dans le monde, comme le dit saint Paul : il n'a pas permis que ces grandes vérités périssent ; l'antiquité, les sages comme les peuples, les ont toujours inséparablement proclamées, et elles constituent ce qu'un philosophe ancien, Cicéron, appelait admirablement « la philosophie éternelle, *perennis* » « *quædam philosophia*, » ce qu'un philosophe contemporain, M. Cousin, a nommé dans le même sens « le patrimoine commun du genre humain. » En les répudiant, on tombe non-seulement au-dessous des sages des vieux âges, mais on recule au delà même du paganisme ; on rompt d'un seul coup avec toutes les traditions de l'humanité.

Certes, si je suis triste en écrivant ces choses, qu'on me le pardonne ; il y a plus de deux mille ans que Platon vieillissant se sentait atteint d'une tristesse semblable à la mienne, lorsqu'à la seule idée de l'athéisme, il s'écriait dans son livre des Lois :

« Comment se voir, sans indignation, réduit à démontrer « Dieu ? Nous éprouvons malgré nous, pour ceux qui nous

« y forcent, je ne sais quel sentiment de colère. Faisons taire
« cependant notre émotion, et nous adressant à quelqu'un de
« ces infortunés, disons-lui avec douceur et compassion :

« O mon fils, tu es jeune ; le temps, dans son cours rapide,
« t'apportera d'autres opinions, contraires à tes pensées d'au-
« jourd'hui. J'ose te dire que pas un de ceux dont la jeunesse
« professait l'athéisme, n'a gardé jusqu'au dernier âge sa fu-
« neste erreur..... Nous voyons les Grecs comme les Barbares,
« dans le malheur comme dans le bonheur, se prosterner et
« adorer la Divinité, sans que jamais aucun peuple l'ait révo-
« quée en doute. »

Platon ajoutait, avec un accent digne de sa grande âme et de son génie :

« Si je voulais ramener à la vérité celui qui croit des Dieux
« mais des Dieux aveugles et indifférents au bien et au mal :
« Mon fils, lui dirais-je..., ni toi, ni personne ne pourra se
« vanter d'échapper à la justice divine : elle te surveille. Le
« législateur suprême en a fait la plus vénérable, la plus
« sacrée de ses lois. En vain tu pourrais cacher ta petitesse
« dans les profondeurs de la terre, ou sur des ailes rapides
« t'envoler dans les cieux : tu satisferas toujours à la justice
« divine, ou dans ce monde, ou dans l'autre... O jeune témé-
« raire, ignorer cette condition de la vie, c'est ignorer la vie
« elle-même... O mon fils, puissé-je avoir persuadé à ton cœur
« ces trois vérités : l'existence de Dieu, la Providence, et la
« justice divine. »

Après la sagesse grecque, écoutons la sagesse romaine ; nous y trouverons, sinon l'âme et l'accent de Platon, du moins ce clair et ferme bon sens qui est le fond du génie de Rome :

« La Providence gouverne le monde et les choses humaines,
« le monde entier, et chaque créature, dit Cicéron (1). »

« Tout homme doit être convaincu de cette vérité, que Dieu
« est le souverain maître de toutes choses ; qu'il voit au fond

(1) *De Divin.*, num. 447.

« des cœurs, et qu'il tient compte à chacun du bien et du mal ;
« qu'il discerne les justes et les impies (1). »

« Si la foi en ce Dieu périssait, la société du genre humain
« périrait tout entière (2). »

Ainsi parlait le prince des philosophes et des orateurs romains ; Sénèque tient le même langage :

« Le premier devoir de l'homme, c'est de croire en Dieu ;
« le second, c'est de croire qu'il gouverne le monde, que sa
« Providence veille sur le genre humain, et prend soin de
« toutes choses (3). »

Et ailleurs, entrant au fond et dans les entrailles mêmes de cette grande question de la Providence, dans la question et le mystère du mal, de la souffrance ici-bas, — mystère pour quelque doctrine que ce soit, mais bien plus pour nos adversaires que pour nous, — Sénèque s'élève à comprendre la grandeur de la conscience humaine, aux prises avec la souffrance, avec le malheur, quand surtout l'homme est allé généreusement au-devant de la lutte !

Ecce par Deo dignum ! Vir fortis cum mala fortuna compositus. . . . utique si et provocavit.

« Voyez le grand homme aux prises avec l'infortune ! ces
« deux lutteurs sont dignes d'occuper les regards de Dieu. »

Voilà le langage de la sagesse antique, dans quelques-uns de ses plus illustres représentants.

Je pourrais citer encore, parmi les historiens éminents de l'antiquité, Hérodote ; et parmi les moralistes, Épictète, et surtout Plutarque : ses deux écrits sur *les Délais de la justice divine dans la punition des coupables*, et sur la *Lecture des poètes*, sont connus ; on peut voir là, dans de nombreuses citations, à quel degré ces trois capitales vérités, Dieu, sa providence, sa justice, étaient au fond des croyances de l'antiquité.

(1) *De Legibus*, num. 25.

(2) *De Officiis*, num. ult.

(3) *Épit.* 95.

Si maintenant sur ces mêmes vérités, — Dieu, la Providence, la justice divine, — nous écoutons ces grands poètes, qui étaient aussi des philosophes, et dont les chants, échos des traditions anciennes, nous transmettent à leur manière la foi du genre humain, nous retrouvons, moins pures, il est vrai, mais toutefois reconnaissables, malgré les erreurs et les voiles poétiques qui les enveloppent, les mêmes croyances. Car, pour qui sait aller au fond des choses, les chants épiques, lyriques, tragiques de l'antiquité, rendent tous témoignage à ces dogmes sacrés que nous croyons.

Homère, qui possédait toute la science de son temps et avait recueilli toutes les traditions des vieux âges, comment ouvre-t-il son poème immortel ? Par le dogme de la providence et de la justice divine. Le chef de l'armée grecque a outragé un dieu : Que fait le dieu ? « Le dieu irrité contre le roi, dit le poète, envoie une peste au camp des Grecs, et les peuples plus mouraient. »

Sous cette fiction qu'y a-t-il ? Qu'y aurait vu l'auteur du *Traité sur les Délais de la justice divine*, sinon la foi en cette justice même ?

Ces traditions de l'épopée antique sont aussi les profondes doctrines cachées dans les chants lyriques et tragiques de la Grèce : Le religieux Pindare les reproduit partout.

C'est ainsi que, parlant des descendants de Labdacus : « Le meurtre paternel, dit-il, les a fait tous périr par la main les uns des autres, depuis que le fatal fils de Laïus le rencontra et le tua. La rapide Erynnis vit ce crime, et le vengea (1). »

Et cet autre religieux génie, contemporain de Pindare et si semblable à lui, Eschyle, fait des mêmes croyances, altérées, il est vrai, par l'erreur antique sur le Destin, le fond de son austère et émouvante tragédie.

« Quels accents religieux ne remplissent pas les drames d'Eschyle ! » s'écrie M. Villemain, dans ses belles pages sur

(1) II^e Olympique.

ce poète. — Un évêque des premiers âges chrétiens ne craignait pas de citer les vers du grand tragique aux hommes de son temps : je puis bien les redire à mon siècle, et couvrir de cette grande voix la clameur d'impiété qui monte de plus en plus vers le ciel !

Dans sa belle tragédie des *Perses*, rappelant les sacrilèges de ces envahisseurs de la Grèce, Eschyle s'écriait : « Ils n'ont pas craint, dans la Grèce envahie, de dépouiller les dieux, d'incendier les temples. Déjà ces crimes ont reçu leur salaire, mais tout n'est pas fini. Laissez germer l'insolence impie : ce qui pousse, c'est l'épi du crime ; on moissonnera une moisson de douleur ! »

Dans une autre tragédie :

« Tu vois la justice muette, inaperçue pendant le sommeil, le voyage, le séjour. Mais elle suit le coupable, marchant à côté, quelquefois en arrière, sans interruption. Ce que tu fais, songe que les dieux le voient ! »

Et si cette justice vengeresse laisse un moment de sommeil au coupable, écoutez, au réveil, comme elle le poursuit :

« Debout ! éveille-toi ! éveille-toi ! — Ah ! la bête s'est échappée du filet ! mais je saurai l'atteindre ! Fuirait-il sous la terre, le coupable, il ne serait point libre encore. Parricide, là, un supplice vengeur s'appesantirait encore sur ta tête ! »

Nous retrouvons les mêmes croyances dans tous les drames de Sophocle. Contemplez l'admirable scène par laquelle le grand poète ouvre sa tragédie d'*OEdipe roi*. Thèbes est frappée d'un fléau : Où sont les habitants de Thèbes ? A genoux, sur les degrés du temple, devant le palais du roi, des rameaux à la main, et des couronnes de suppliants sur la tête Et que répond l'oracle consulté ? Qu'un grand crime a souillé cette terre, et que le fléau qui la désole est un châtiement.

CRÉON : « L'oracle nous ordonne clairement de purifier cette contrée, souillée par un crime qu'elle nourrit dans son sein, et de ne pas laisser ce crime impuni.

OEDIPE : « Quel crime a-t-on commis ?

CRÉON : « Le sang versé cause les malheurs de cette ville. »

Le même poète reproduisait les mêmes croyances dans son *Antigone*. Le chœur chante :

« Heureux ceux qui n'ont jamais senti l'infortune ! Car, « lorsque la main des dieux frappe une famille, les maux se « succèdent sans cesse. »

L'autre partie du chœur répond, dans l'antistrophe :

« Ainsi dans la famille des Labdacides, sur les antiques « malheurs de ceux qui ne sont plus je vois s'accumuler des « malheurs nouveaux ; ils se perpétuent d'âge en âge, et sous « la main du dieu qui les frappe, ils ne trouvent aucun re- « lâche. » Et Antigone s'écrie : « Tu as réveillé pour moi les « plus cruels souvenirs, le malheur d'un père qui a frappé « trois générations. »

Comme Eschyle et comme Sophocle, Euripide, le poète philosophe, prête aux mêmes croyances les accents de sa noble poésie ; c'est ainsi que, dans son *Oreste*, il montre les Pélopidés victimes des crimes de leurs pères :

« De là, s'écrie la fille du roi d'Argos, vient la malédiction « lamentable lancée sur notre maison. »

Cette foi à la Providence et à la justice divine n'était certes pas pure de toute erreur, dans l'antiquité, je l'ai dit ; le paganisme y avait mêlé plus d'une altération : mais si, sous ces erreurs on sait discerner, comme l'ont fait les Pères, le dogme fondamental, qui ne voit que les poètes de l'antiquité rendent témoignage à nos grandes vérités philosophiques et chrétiennes, comme Eusèbe l'a si savamment démontré dans son beau livre de *la Préparation évangélique* ?

Ecartons l'idée du fatalisme antique, et dans ces mystérieuses conduites de la Providence divine atteignant les fils et les petits-fils des grands coupables, nous verrons combien la fin que Dieu se propose est sage, et souverainement digne de lui : c'est en effet de maintenir dans le genre humain le respect des éternelles lois de l'ordre moral, en rendant la sanction de ces grandes lois plus éclatante, et en inspirant aux hommes, par l'éclat même du châtement, une plus profonde horreur des

grands crimes. Dieu, maître et dispensateur universel, a d'ailleurs des ressources admirables pour mettre toujours les arrangements de sa providence en parfait accord avec tous ses attributs, avec sa sagesse, sa justice et sa bonté, soit en épargnant des maux personnellement mérités, soit en dédommageant amplement par des biens plus grands, en cette vie ou en l'autre.

Et qui donc, après tout, est si innocent ou si peu homme, qu'il ne veuille accepter sa part des souffrances qui sont le commun partage de l'humanité ?

M. Saint-Marc Girardin a parfaitement compris et éloquemment exprimé dans une belle page que nos lecteurs seront heureux de retrouver ici, les idées antiques sur ces grandes questions :

« Tout dans l'*OEdipe* rappelle l'idée de la sainteté du droit paternel... C'est pour avoir tué son père qu'*OEdipe* est chassé ; c'est pour avoir chassé leur père qu'*Etéocle* et *Polynice* périssent misérablement : terrible enchaînement d'expiations successives.

« On est parfois tenté, dans une autre tragédie, de regretter la violence et les emportements de ce superbe roi de Thèbes. Mais ici, c'est un père, et un père outragé par des enfants ingrats : sous ce caractère sacré, ses crimes disparaissent... Il accomplit lui-même sur ses fils sacrilèges la vengeance des dieux... Il les maudira donc, mais avec la voix et le langage d'un juge et d'un vengeur, plutôt que d'un père offensé et furieux. Il songe à la majesté paternelle outragée en sa personne, et s'il renouvelle ses imprécations contre ses fils, c'est afin, dit-il, qu'ils apprennent à respecter les auteurs de leurs jours et à ne pas insulter aux malheurs d'un père. Voilà la loi sainte imposée aux enfants, et quiconque la viole périra avant le temps. Ils tomberont donc percés l'un par l'autre, ces deux fils d'*OEdipe* qui l'ont fait mendiant et vagabond. Ils périront l'un par l'autre, maudits et détestés dans la mort même, afin de vérifier les divines paroles du *Sinaï* : « Tu honoreras ton père et ta mère, afin d'avoir une longue vie sur la terre, que Dieu t'a donnée. »

« Une fois les expiations accomplies, une fois l'outrage fait à la majesté paternelle vengé par la mort d'*OEdipe* et de ses fils, le tombeau de ce même *OEdipe*, qu'avait poursuivi la colère des dieux, deviendra pour la terre qui le possédera un gage de grandeur et de puissance. Telle est la force attachée à l'expiation et à la victime expiatoire : vivante, on la frappe sans pitié au nom de Dieu, car elle représente le mal que sa mort doit abolir ; morte, on la révère comme

« le symbole de la justice rétablie. » (M. Saint-Marc Girardin, *Cours de Littérature dramat.*, t. I.)

Aux accents de la poésie grecque répondent les chants de la muse latine, et, pour ne citer ici que le moins religieux des poètes :

*Delicta majorum immeritus lues,
Romane, donec templa refeceris!*

Et encore :

*Di multa neglecti dederunt
Hesperix mala luctuosæ!*

s'écriait Horace lui-même.

Corrélatif au dogme de la Providence, le dogme de la prière se retrouve aussi partout dans l'antiquité. Le même poète, que nous citons tout à l'heure, demande au Ciel, dans son *Chant séculaire*, la fertilité de la terre et la prospérité de l'État :

« Que la terre fertile se couronne d'épis : que des pluies salutaires, et un air pur fécondent les germes dans son sein!

« O Dieux, donnez à la jeunesse des mœurs honnêtes, à la vieillesse des jours tranquilles, et à Rome la puissance, la fécondité et la gloire. »

*Di, probos mores docili juventæ,
Di, senectuti placidæ quietem,
Romulæ genti date, remque prolemque,
Et decus omne!*

Ainsi la philosophie des poètes, si on la dégage de son enveloppe mythologique, si on va jusqu'au dogme caché sous les fictions et les erreurs poétiques, s'accorde avec les grandes vues des sages ; et tous, poètes et philosophes, s'accordent avec le Christianisme lui-même, pour proclamer ces trois dog-

mes tutélaires qui n'en font qu'un : Dieu, sa Providence dans les choses humaines, et sa Justice.

Voilà cette philosophie éternelle, ce patrimoine impérissable de l'humanité, que les sophistes et les athées ont entrepris de détruire.

Le Christianisme, en illuminant et épurant ces grands dogmes, les a enracinés plus profondément encore dans les entrailles du genre humain. Ce qui s'y mêlait d'étranger, dans la foi obscure des anciens peuples, a disparu ; ils ont resplendi d'une lumière divine au Calvaire, là où la justice de Dieu et sa miséricorde, selon la sublime expression des saints livres, se sont rencontrées et embrassées.

La Croix, où est mort attaché le Juste suprême, a fait comprendre l'expiation et l'épreuve, et, comme on l'a si bien dit : « Elle a donné un sens à la douleur. »

Et puisque le souvenir de cette parole me revient, qu'on me permette de citer tout entière la belle page où elle fut dite :

« La Religion allant plus loin que la philosophie, la Religion
« tirant des besoins de l'âme humaine une sublime conjecture,
« qui est un désir pour celui qui ne croit pas complètement,
« une certitude pour celui qui a la foi entière, la Religion vous
« dit : Souffrez, souffrez avec humilité, patience, espérance,
« en regardant Dieu qui vous attend, et vous récompensera.
« — Elle fait ainsi de toute douleur l'une des traverses du long
« voyage qui doit nous conduire à la félicité dernière.

« Et alors la douleur n'est plus qu'une des peines de ce
« voyage inévitable, et si elle fait souffrir, elle est suivie d'une
« consolation immédiate, qui est l'espérance. Aussi cette puis-
« sante religion qu'on appelle le Christianisme, exerce-t-elle
« sur le monde une domination continue, et elle le doit, entre
« autres motifs, à un avantage que seule elle a possédé entre
« les religions.

« Cet avantage, savez-vous quel il est ? C'est d'avoir *seule*
« donné *un sens à la douleur*.

« La religion qui vint et qui dit : Il n'y a qu'un Dieu, il a

« souffert lui-même, souffert pour nous ; celle qui le montra
« sur une croix, subjuguera les hommes, en répondant à leur
« raison par l'idée de l'unité de Dieu, en touchant leur cœur
« par la déification de la douleur.

« Et, chose admirable ! ce Dieu souffrant, présenté sur une
« croix dans les angoisses de la mort, a été mille fois plus adoré
« des hommes, que le Jupiter calme, serein, et si majestueux
« sement beau de Phidias (1). »

Je n'ajouterai à cette belle page que la haute et touchante
raison de cette étonnante intervention divine. Ici, comme dans
tous les mystères chrétiens, « pour tout entendre, dit Bossuet.
« il ne faut qu'entendre la bonté de Dieu. Une bonté incompré-
« hensible produit des effets qui le sont aussi. » Le Christianisme
n'est que la foi à l'infinie bonté de Dieu : *Credidimus
charitati* (2). Et voilà pourquoi les sophistes, quoi qu'ils fas-
sent, ne chasseront pas Jésus-Christ du cœur des hommes. Il
possédera toujours l'humanité par la bonté et par l'amour.

VI

LA VRAIE DOCTRINE.

I

Les belles et religieuses paroles que je viens de citer m'a-
mènent à dire brièvement ici quelque chose sur le fond même
de la doctrine chrétienne, relativement à la Providence.

(1) M. Thiers, dans son livre *De la Propriété*, p. 380, 382.

(2) S. Jean, *Épit.* I, ch. II, v. 16.

« De toutes les perfections infinies de Dieu, dit Bossuet, celle
« qui a été exposée à des contradictions plus opiniâtres, c'est
« sans doute cette Providence éternelle qui gouverne les choses
« humaines. Rien n'a paru plus insupportable à l'arrogance des
« libertins, que de se voir continuellement observés par cet œil
« toujours veillant de la Providence divine. Il leur a paru, à
« ces libertins, que c'était une contrainte importune de recon-
« naître qu'il y eût au ciel une force supérieure qui gouvernât
« tous nos mouvements, et châtiât nos actions déréglées avec
« une autorité souveraine. Ils ont voulu secouer le joug de cette
« Providence qui veille sur nous, afin d'entretenir dans l'indé-
« pendance une liberté indocile, qui les porte à vivre à leur
« fantaisie, sans crainte, sans retenue et sans discipline. »

« Telle était la doctrine des Épicuriens, laquelle, toute bru-
« tale qu'elle est, tâchait de s'appuyer sur des arguments tirés
« de la distribution des biens et des maux. »

Telles sont aussi les difficultés et les arguments que nous
trouvons aujourd'hui dans les paroles de nos adversaires.

On dirait vraiment à les entendre, que le problème du mal
physique, de la douleur ici-bas, ne se pose que pour nous, et pas
pour eux. Le grand problème se pose pour tous.

Car, enfin, le mal physique existe : il y a les maladies, la
mort, toutes les souffrances, toutes les misères qui affligent la
nature humaine. C'est un fait. Vous ne pouvez pas plus le nier
que nous.

Nous, nous donnons de ce fait des explications ; vous les
combattez : donnez-nous les vôtres. Vous n'en avez aucune.

Il n'y a pas de milieu : Il faut ou que vous parliez comme
nous, ou que vous vous déclariez athées.

Si vous n'êtes pas athées, si vous croyez en Dieu : eh bien !
pourquoi sous un Dieu bon, ce déluge de maux qui tous les
jours inonde la terre ? Nous disons, nous : « châtiments,
« épreuves, remèdes à nos passions et à nos vices, moyens
« d'expiation et de mériter, source d'éternelles récompenses. »

Non, dites-vous : Il n'y a rien de tout cela : c'est l'effet des
lois naturelles !

Mais cette réponse n'explique rien.

La question reste tout entière : Pourquoi le Dieu bon, auteur du monde et des lois de la nature, a-t-il établi un monde et des lois dont l'humanité devait tant souffrir ?

Cette question est pour vous absolument insoluble. Il faut dire comme nous, ou vous jeter dans le fatalisme comme vous le faites, et vous plonger en cet abîme de l'athéisme, dont Bossuet disait que c'est *mettre son repos dans une fureur qui ne trouve presque point de place dans les esprits* : et alors les *absurdités où vous tombez deviennent insoutenables, vous suivez l'une après l'autre d'incompréhensibles erreurs*, et descendez au-dessous du paganisme lui-même.

Sans doute, je l'ai dit, l'antiquité païenne, en conservant une certaine tradition de ces grands dogmes de la Providence et de la justice divine, était loin de les entendre et d'en pénétrer les saintes obscurités aussi bien que nous pouvons le faire aujourd'hui, dans la pleine lumière du Christianisme.

Toutefois le haut bon sens des anciens leur faisait voir que Dieu, Créateur et Souverain Maître, peut sans injustice, dans cet ordre du monde, mélangé pour tous de biens et de maux, envoyer des maux sur un peuple ou sur une famille, à la suite de quelque grand forfait commis par leur chef ; que ces grands coups, dont frappe quelquefois la justice divine, ont ce but très-haut et cet effet très-digne de Dieu, d'imprimer aux hommes une plus grande horreur des grands crimes, quand ils voient le mal vengeur se précipiter à la suite, et s'étendre quelquefois sur tout un peuple, ou sur plusieurs générations dans la famille du coupable.

Les anciens pouvaient entrevoir aussi quelque chose des dédommagements et des récompenses, par lesquels Dieu couronne, dans une vie meilleure, le mérite de la résignation et de la patience.

Mais que nos lumières à nous, chrétiens, sont plus vives, et combien, dans le splendide horizon du dessein total de la Providence, que le Christianisme nous découvre, ces grands

et difficiles problèmes de la justice divine, reçoivent pour nos esprits un éclaircissement plus parfait !

Le Christianisme nous éclaire d'abord sur la suprême grandeur de Dieu, et sur la culpabilité de l'homme, lorsqu'il ose s'attaquer à une majesté si haute ; et quand notre apparente innocence se trouve enveloppée dans ces terribles châtimens publics envoyés pour punir les crimes des hommes, chacun de nous peut convenir sans peine qu'il n'y a rien, dans la part qu'il a de ces châtimens, qui surpasse les expiations et les épreuves dont il a lui-même besoin ; et nous disons : Si quelqu'un se croit ici de meilleure condition que ses frères, qu'il se lève et jette la pierre aux autres.

Et de plus, quand le chrétien se place à ces grands et lumineux points de vue que la foi lui offre : sa destination à une immortelle félicité ; sa vie ici-bas, imperceptible point dans la durée totale d'une existence qui ne doit point avoir de terme, courte épreuve de quelques jours destinée à lui faire mériter, par le noble et laborieux exercice de la vertu, des trésors de gloire et d'impérissable félicité ; combien alors la mystérieuse question du mal physique s'illumine à ses yeux, et comme l'éternelle récompense qui doit couronner bientôt une vie humble, résignée, vertueuse et souvent devenue meilleure par la souffrance même, lui paraît compenser surabondamment tout ce qu'il peut souffrir de maux sur la terre !

C'est ce que voyait, par le profond regard de sa foi et de sa haute intelligence du Christianisme, l'apôtre saint Paul, quand il s'écriait : « Non, toutes les souffrances et tous les labeurs de ce monde ne sont pas dignes d'être mis en comparaison avec cette gloire céleste qui brillera un jour en nous : *Non sunt condignæ passionés hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam quæ revelabitur in nobis* (1). »

Et c'est ce que voyait aussi le grand génie chrétien de Bossuet, quand il disait :

« Par conséquent, ô homme de bien, si parmi tes afflictions

(1) Rom., VIII, 48.

il t'arrive de jeter les yeux sur la prospérité des méchants, que ton cœur n'en murmure point ; car la prospérité des méchants ne mérite pas d'être désirée. Si cependant le fardeau de tes malheurs s'augmente, ne te laisse pas accabler ; et reconnais, dans la douleur qui te presse, la main de Dieu qui te guérit ! Enfin si tes forces se diminuent, soutiens ton courage abattu, par l'attente du bien que l'on te propose, qui est la bienheureuse immortalité (1). »

Je le dirai donc à ceux qui se révoltent contre la Providence et la justice divine :

Vous croyez vous insurger contre un juge : vous vous révoltez contre un père. Ce n'est pas seulement la crainte salutaire, c'est l'espérance aussi que vous repoussez, l'espérance consolatrice, soutien de la vie. Le Dieu juste, Jéhovah, est le Dieu qui punit les coupables, mais il est aussi le Dieu qui éprouve et récompense les justes, et qui accueille les repentants, le Dieu qui console, le Dieu qui bénit.

Sans doute, notre Dieu est l'arbitre de la vie et de la mort, mais il est le Dieu de la vie. « Dieu n'a pas fait la mort, dit « l'Écriture, et il ne se réjouit pas en la ruine de ses créatures. « Dieu a créé toutes choses pour qu'elles fussent ; et il a fait « guérissables toutes les nations de la terre (2) ; » et quant à la mort, c'est le péché qui l'a introduite dans l'humanité ; mais c'est Jésus-Christ, Sauveur et Libérateur du monde, qui nous en délivre ; il sauve nos âmes par sa grâce, et même nos corps par la résurrection glorieuse.

Et si les maux publics que sa main envoie aux méchants atteignent aussi les bons, c'est que, châtimens pour les uns, ils sont épreuves pour les autres : et toujours il faut les accepter avec soumission de sa justice et de sa bonté, comme il les donne ; châtimens ou épreuves, il ne tient qu'à nous de les

(1) Bossuet, *Sermon sur la Providence*.

(2) Deus mortem non fecit, nec lætatur in perditione vivorum ; creavit enim ut essent omnia, et sanabiles fecit nationes orbis terrarum. (Sag., c. XII, v. 4.)

tourner en mérites et de les changer en biens, de même que la Providence tire le bien du mal, dans le gouvernement du monde.

C'est ce que disait avec une énergique précision saint Jérôme :

« Des deux, choisissez ce qui vous conviendra ; si vous êtes juste, c'est une épreuve ; si vous êtes pécheur, c'est une expiation. » Et il ajoutait : « Vous vous plaignez injustement ; vous souffrez moins que vous ne méritez. » *Et tu e duobus elige quod velis : aut sancta es et probaris ; aut peccatrix, et injuste quereris, minora sustinens quam mereris* (1).

« S'il y en a qui jugent autrement, dit Leibnitz, tant pis pour eux ; ce sont des mécontents dans les États du meilleur de tous les monarques, et ils ont tort de ne point profiter des échantillons qu'il leur a donnés de sa sagesse et de sa bonté

(1) *Epist. ad Paulam.*

La plupart des gens qui raisonnent sur cette grande question des souffrances se placent ordinairement à l'unique point de vue de la responsabilité individuelle ; mais il y a aussi le point de vue de la responsabilité commune et de la solidarité : grand principe de la plus jeune et de la plus populaire des sciences, l'économie politique. Et au fond, tant le Christianisme est loin de contredire les vérités naturelles, le dogme chrétien appelé la *Communion des saints* n'est pas sans analogie avec ce principe de l'ordre naturel.—Sur cette question, voici d'un éminent économiste, M. F. Bastiat, des paroles que nous offrons ici à la méditation de nos lecteurs :

« Si l'homme avait été destiné par la nature à la vie et au travail solitaires, la responsabilité serait sa seule loi. Mais il n'en est pas ainsi ; l'homme est sociable. La famille, la commune, la nation, l'humanité sont des ensembles avec lesquels chaque homme a des relations nécessaires. Il résulte de là que les actes et les habitudes de l'individu produisent, outre les conséquences qui retombent sur lui-même, d'autres conséquences bonnes ou mauvaises qui s'étendent à ses semblables ; c'est ce qu'on appelle la loi de solidarité, qui est une sorte de responsabilité collective.

« La loi de solidarité éclate en traits si nombreux dans l'individu et dans les masses, dans les détails et dans l'ensemble, dans les faits particuliers et les faits généraux, qu'il faut pour la méconnaître tout l'aveuglement de l'esprit de secte, ou toute l'ardeur d'une lutte acharnée. » (*Harmonie, etc.*, p. 560, 1^{re} édition.)

« infinies, pour se faire connaître non-seulement admirable,
« mais encore aimable au delà de toutes choses (1). »

II

Grâce à Dieu, malgré les athées qui renaissent, les peuples, préservés par leur bon sens, n'ont pas encore rompu avec ces grandes traditions de l'humanité et du Christianisme; et je félicite en particulier ma patrie d'affirmer sans cesse, dans les grands actes de sa vie publique, sa foi en Dieu, en la Providence, en la Prière.

Dans toutes les solennelles circonstances, nous prions. La République, comme la Royauté, comme l'Empire. Nous n'avons pas encore eu un seul gouvernement qui n'ait senti le besoin du secours de Dieu; tous ont demandé à la religion des prières.

« La Constitution est votée, disait aux Evêques de France le
« ministre des cultes en 1848; l'Assemblée a voulu que la
« religion intervînt pour consacrer ce grand acte. L'Assemblée
« a terminé son œuvre dans le même sentiment qu'elle l'avait
« commencée, en invoquant la Providence, qui inspire et sou-
« tient les institutions humaines. Dans toutes les circonstances
« solennelles de la vie des nations, c'est vers Dieu que doit s'é-

(1) Leibnitz, *Théodicée*, § 434, p. 55.

Parlant « des grands traits que la Providence forme dans la conduite du
« monde entier pendant la longue suite des siècles, » Fénelon a écrit de son
côté les belles paroles que voici : « Il n'y a que le tout qui soit intelligible, et
« le tout est trop vaste pour être vu de près. Chaque événement est comme
« un caractère particulier, qui est trop grand pour la petitesse de nos orga-
« nes, et qui ne signifie rien, s'il est séparé des autres. Quand nous verrons en
« Dieu, à la fin des siècles, dans son vrai point de vue, le total des événements
« du genre humain, depuis le premier jusqu'au dernier jour de l'univers, e
« leurs proportions par rapport aux desseins de Dieu, nous nous écrierons :
« Seigneur, il n'y a que vous de juste et sage. » (*Exposition des principales
vérités de la Foi.*)

« lever la première pensée ; et la consécration religieuse de
 « l'acte qui va régir les destinées d'un grand peuple est à la
 « fois un hommage de reconnaissance et une demande de pro-
 « tection. » — Je suis heureux de rappeler ces paroles.

Mais aujourd'hui encore, quand le pays commence une guerre, ne nous demande-t-on pas de prier ? Ne nous demande-t-on pas des *Te Deum* après les victoires ? Tous les dimanches ne prie-t-on pas pour l'Empereur et pour le pays ?

Il y a peu de jours, je chantais le *Veni Creator*, et j'assistais à la messe du Saint-Esprit, avant l'audience solennelle de rentrée et la reprise des travaux de la Cour impériale d'Orléans. Dans toutes les Cours impériales de France, tous les magistrats français ont inauguré leurs travaux par le même acte religieux, proclamant ainsi Dieu et sa justice, source sacrée d'où émane la justice humaine.

Mais en vérité, vous, qui faites de Dieu une *hypothèse inutile*, de sa Providence un conte de *bonnes femmes*, et de sa justice un chimérique *épouvantail*, vous croyez donc que nous sommes tous des imbéciles ou des hypocrites ! Les magistrats, les assemblées du pays, les gouvernements, tout ce qu'il y a de plus sérieux parmi les hommes, tout cela n'est donc qu'une comédie ! Tous, nous ne faisons donc que nous moquer, tout à la fois, et des peuples et de Dieu ! Car enfin, que signifie la prière avant ou après une guerre, si le Dieu des armées est un vain mot ? Que signifient des prières pour une nation, pour un souverain, pour des Cours de justice, si Dieu n'a rien à voir dans les choses et les sociétés humaines ?

Non, non, les hommes graves de notre pays ont d'autres pensées ; et ceux mêmes qui n'ont peut-être pas encore complètement la foi chrétienne, ceux-là du moins la respectent, la désirent peut-être ; et en tout cas, ils ont l'horreur de l'athéisme ; et, hommes d'État, gardiens des lois, pères de famille, ils sentent tous que le sacerdoce de la magistrature, de la paternité, de la souveraineté, n'existerait pas, s'il n'y avait plus haut, au-dessus de nos lois, au-dessus de nos tribunaux, au-dessus même du foyer domestique, un Législateur Suprême et

un Père, duquel descendent tout droit, toute justice et toute paternité sur la terre.

Et voilà pourquoi, je l'ajouterai, nous voyons tous les jours, tant et de si consolants retours à Jésus-Christ. Vient un moment dans la vie, où les intelligences élevées et les cœurs honnêtes, après avoir beaucoup vu les hommes et beaucoup médité sur les choses divines et humaines, se sentent mystérieusement attirés et touchés par les profondeurs de bonté et de sagesse qu'on trouve dans la Religion, et qu'on ne trouve que là : récompense peut-être des services rendus par eux à la cause de Dieu, sous l'inspiration secrète de ce Christianisme latent qui est au fond des cœurs droits, et auquel ceux dont je parle ont dû peut-être les meilleurs sentiments de leur vie, peut-être les plus grandes illuminations de leur éloquence, leurs plus hautes pensées d'hommes d'État. Et puis se lève le jour, où voyant plus clair au fond d'eux-mêmes et de toutes choses, ils reconnaissent et adorent ce Jésus-Christ qu'ils portaient en eux sans le savoir.

Mais ce n'est pas seulement la France, cette pauvre France, dont 93 nous a appris ce que certains hommes feraient, si on les laissait faire, ce n'est pas elle seulement qui tombe encore dans cette faiblesse, de témoigner, par la prière publique, sa foi en Dieu et en la Providencé. La libre et protestante Amérique priait et jeûnait naguère, au temps de ses calamités. La libre et protestante Angleterre donne le même exemple.

Mais que vous importe à vous? Rompant, non pas seulement avec le christianisme, avec le catholicisme, avec le protestantisme, mais avec la foi de tous les peuples, et avec l'humanité tout entière, vous reculez par-delà le paganisme même jusqu'à l'athéisme; vous déclarez que *Dieu et l'immortalité de l'âme* ne sont que des *hypothèses* et des *chimères*, et vous ne voulez *d'aucun culte, d'aucune religion*, quelle qu'elle soit.

Eh bien ! permettez-moi de vous le prophétiser : il arrivera probablement de grands malheurs avant que ma prophétie ne s'accomplisse, mais elle s'accomplira : vous deviendrez une

secte que l'humanité prendra en horreur, et les noms des athées modernes, comme ceux des Chaumette, des Hébert, des Marat, des Robespierre, — qui, pourtant, lui, proclama un jour l'Être Suprême, — ne recueilleront que les malédictions de l'avenir !

Car, qu'êtes-vous, enfin, pour la plupart, sinon des athées, et que nous préparez-vous, sinon des désastres ? C'est ce que je dois maintenant montrer et mettre dans une lumière qui puisse ouvrir les yeux des plus aveugles.

SECONDE PARTIE

LE PÉRIL RELIGIEUX

Oui, qu'êtes-vous et que nous préparez-vous? Le moment est venu de le dire.

Jusqu'ici, dans ce travail, qu'avons-nous fait? Nous avons rappelé les injures, signalé la tactique, posé la question, répondu aux arguments, mis à découvert quelques impiétés de détail : cette polémique était nécessaire; mais elle n'est que l'accessoire de cet écrit.

Il s'agit ici des doctrines les plus fondamentales; de l'état actuel des esprits au point de vue de ces doctrines sacrées; des positions respectives de la religion et de l'impiété; de la guerre faite à Dieu, et du péril social qui est au bout de cette guerre.

On en est arrivé à ce point de la lutte religieuse, prévu et annoncé par nous à l'avance, où, les intermédiaires étant franchis, l'erreur totale et la vérité totale se trouvent en présence, et se livrent un décisif combat, dont l'enjeu est tout l'avenir de la société. La lutte est en ce moment, d'une part, entre la religion, *toute religion*, et d'autre part, l'athéisme et les auxiliaires, conséquents ou non, de l'athéisme. La question est solennelle, je le sens. Je dois à mon pays d'exposer toute ma pensée avec une entière franchise. Il faut que les voiles tombent, et que la lumière se fasse.

Je traiterai ici des deux formes principales de la guerre faite à Dieu :

De l'athéisme ;

Et de la morale indépendante, — qui est l'athéisme pratique.

I

L'ATHÉISME

Depuis longtemps en Europe, en France surtout, l'indépendance de l'esprit humain, qui ne le sait? s'est exaltée, et le joug de la foi et des antiques croyances a été rejeté par une foule d'hommes.

Le protestantisme, — nos frères séparés peuvent voir aujourd'hui où cela les a conduits; Luther, qui ne pleurait guère, pleurerait, s'il assistait aux luttes actuelles du protestantisme, — le protestantisme a commencé l'œuvre d'incrédulité en Europe; le philosophisme impie du XVIII^e siècle l'a continuée; notre siècle l'a vue renaître, depuis dix années surtout, avec une ardeur nouvelle, et aux vieilles objections plus ou moins flottantes dans les esprits ont succédé des attaques plus radicales que jamais.

Le protestantisme attaquait surtout l'Église, le voltairianisme attaquait surtout le Christianisme : aujourd'hui, on attaque tout, et les dogmes surnaturels, et les vérités rationnelles; toute philosophie, comme toute religion; toute raison, comme toute foi.

Et ce qui rend, à l'heure présente, plus redoutables même qu'au XVIII^e siècle, toutes ces attaques de l'irréligion déchaînée, ce sont les immenses moyens de propagande dont elle dispose, et qui lui permettent de pénétrer partout, de se faire entendre partout, d'agir chaque jour avec une opiniâtreté sans relâche

sur le pays, de l'enlacer de toutes parts, et d'atteindre ainsi jusqu'aux dernières couches populaires.

La guerre à Dieu, l'athéisme et ses auxiliaires, tel est aujourd'hui le péril.

Ce nom d'athéisme fait horreur, je le sais, et personne n'en veut. On le repousse comme une injure ; et, selon l'éternelle méthode des sophistes, on sait se faire ici une langue à part, pour tromper les esprits. Dieu, on retient encore le mot, et on ruine le dogme : on retient le mot, parce que, dit-on, il faut ménager encore « *les simples* ; » mais du dogme, on s'en moque : c'est un bon vieux mot un peu lourd ; mais qu'on raffinera de plus en plus, jusqu'à ce qu'il ne signifie plus rien ; et après cela on s'irrite contre « ceux par la grâce desquels, « dit-on, on est panthéiste, matérialiste, athée, sans le savoir (1). »

Ne nous laissons pas prendre à de telles habiletés. Il est vain de se payer de mots : allons au fond des choses, et prenons les doctrines pour ce qu'elles sont.

Nous définissons l'athéisme : la négation de Dieu, du Dieu distinct du monde, du Dieu personnel, vivant et créateur : et nous appelons nettement athée quiconque nie ce Dieu, quelle que soit la formule dans laquelle, pour ménager les « simples » et leur en imposer, il enveloppe son athéisme.

Eh bien ! je dis qu'il se fait aujourd'hui parmi nous un travail profond et audacieux d'athéisme ; qu'il y a en France, à l'heure qu'il est, sous différents noms, plusieurs écoles d'athéisme : — écoles philosophiques : qui veulent chasser Dieu de la raison et de la pensée ; — écoles scientifiques : qui veulent chasser Dieu de la nature et de la science ; — écoles de morale indépendante : qui veulent chasser Dieu de la conscience et de la vie ; — écoles fatalistes : qui veulent chasser Dieu de l'histoire ; — enfin écoles socialistes. On veut chasser Dieu de la société ; on veut chasser Dieu de partout.

Et l'athéisme contemporain a cela de remarquable, qu'il

(1) M. Renan, *Études d'Histoire religieuse*, préface.

n'est plus une simple spéculation, mais qu'il aspire à passer dans la pratique ; il veut tout refaire, tout réformer, tout réorganiser sans Dieu et sans religion, bien plus, contre Dieu et contre toute religion ; tout : la science, l'éducation, la morale, la société. Voilà le caractère et les entreprises de l'athéisme contemporain.

J'étonne peut-être ici les personnes peu attentives à suivre le mouvement des esprits et la marche des idées. La vérité est néanmoins, et j'affirme :

Qu'il y a en France, présentement, sous différents noms, plusieurs grandes écoles d'athéisme, dont les conséquences pratiques sont absolument les mêmes ;

Que ces écoles sont vivantes, actives, ardentes, en possession des plus puissants organes de la publicité ; qu'elles ne reculent pas, qu'elles avancent ;

Et j'ajoute qu'à côté des écrivains qui propagent par la plume ces doctrines d'athéisme, et qui, sciemment ou non, aident à leur triomphe, et travaillent ainsi à la dissolution de toutes les croyances, il y a les hommes d'action, qui s'occupent avec non moins d'ardeur à organiser l'athéisme et à détruire en fait toute religion.

Voilà la situation que je dénonce.

I

LES ÉCOLES D'ATHÉISME.

J'ai écrit, il y a trois ans, un *Avertissement aux Pères de famille* pour signaler ce péril : mais déjà, avant moi, dès 1857, un écrivain, dont le style est aussi distingué que ses appréciations et ses polémiques sont modérées, M. Caro, écrivait avec effroi cette parole dans la *Revue contemporaine* : « L'IDÉE
« DE DIEU EST EN PÉRIL. »

Et depuis, un autre écrivain, qu'on ne peut accuser d'exa-

gération, un professeur de philosophie à la Faculté des Lettres de Paris, M. Janet, faisait, il y a deux ans, l'aveu significatif que voici :

« Il est inutile de le cacher, l'école spiritualiste subit UNE
« CRISE REDOUTABLE. S'il ne s'agissait que d'une école, on
« pourrait s'en consoler; mais il y a ici plus qu'une école; il y
« a l'idée, l'IDÉE SPIRITUALISTE. C'est cette idée dont les des-
« tinées sont aujourd'hui *menacées par le flot le plus formidable*
« *qu'elle ait essuyé depuis l'Encyclopédie*, et qui emporterait
« avec elle, si elle venait à succomber, LA LIBERTÉ ET LA
« DIGNITÉ DE L'ESPRIT HUMAIN. »

Un peu plus loin, le même écrivain parlait de la *recrudescence* DU MOUVEMENT ATHÉE ET RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE, ne séparant pas, non plus que nous, le progrès des doctrines athées du progrès des doctrines révolutionnaires.

Eh bien ! je le demande à tout homme tant soit peu attentif à la marche des choses dans notre pays, la situation dénoncée par M. Janet s'est-elle depuis améliorée ou aggravée ? J'affirme qu'elle s'est aggravée. Le mouvement athée et révolutionnaire s'est-il ralenti ? J'affirme qu'il s'est accéléré.

Peu de temps après M. Janet, M. de Rémusat disait, de son côté, dans un volume de philosophie religieuse, qu'*un effort agressif a été tenté*, dans ces dernières années, contre les PRINCIPES FONDAMENTAUX DES CROYANCES COMMUNES A TOUTES LES NATIONS, en faveur de *ce qu'il faut bien appeler brutalement du nom d'athéisme* (1).

« Le matérialisme, disait la *Revue médicale*, dans son
« numéro du 15 février 1866, *envahit la science moderne*. Sa
« doctrine, c'est qu'il n'y a PAS PLUS DE DIEU DANS LE MONDE,
« QUE D'ÂME DANS L'HOMME. »

Et hier encore un écrivain cité par le *Siècle* (2) disait : « Des
« doctrines malsaines sont dans l'air; l'athéisme tend à
« s'introduire en France. De toutes parts on le constate avec
« douleur. »

(1) *Philosophie religieuse*, p. 401, 402.

(2) 22 octobre.

Je le répète : L'effort suprême de l'impiété la plus ardente aujourd'hui est là, à ce point capital, l'existence de Dieu.

On ne veut plus de Dieu, ni de la Providence, ni de la prière, ni d'aucune religion. « La question, dit l'*Avenir national*, n'est pas ici entre la religion catholique et la religion protestante, mais entre les libres penseurs et les sectateurs de toutes les religions positives (1). »

« Les vieilles institutions religieuses, dit M. Renan dans le *Journal des Débats*, ont le choix entre *fléchir* ou *mourir* (2).

Ainsi, ce n'est pas seulement le Christianisme, c'est Dieu, Dieu lui-même qu'on veut chasser du monde entier, de la raison, de la science, de la conscience, de la société. Voilà le but de l'athéisme contemporain.

En un mot, le monde sans Dieu, l'homme sans âme, l'éducation sans croyances, la société sans religion, tel est le programme, selon l'épigraphe d'un livre publié cette année-ci même en Hollande : *Exstinctis diis, exstincto Deo, successit Humanitas* (3).

Et maintenant, cette grave situation, il faut que je la mette, dans le détail et dans le vrai des choses sous les yeux de mes lecteurs.

Je ne connais rien de plus dangereux, et parmi le clergé, et parmi les chrétiens, et parmi les honnêtes gens, quels qu'ils soient, que l'ignorance, l'aveuglement ou l'apathie devant une telle situation.

Rien ne doit détourner de pareilles questions, plus vitales que les plus graves questions politiques.

Je rappellerai donc quel fut, quel est encore tous les jours le langage des maîtres dans les grands organes de la publicité ; comment ce langage est compris et traduit par les disciples ; et à quel degré ces doctrines d'athéisme sont propagées et descendent des sommets de la société dans les masses populaires.

(1) 23 octobre 1866.

(2) Préface des *Apôtres*, 13 avril 1866.

(3) *Revue médicale*, 15 février 1866.

Les trois foyers ardents d'athéisme, les trois écoles auxquelles on peut ramener toutes les autres, sont en France : l'école positiviste, l'école panthéiste et l'école matérialiste. Je les appelle des écoles d'athéisme parce que, avec quelques nuances dans leurs formules, elles s'accordent toutes à nier le Dieu vivant, distinct du monde, le Dieu personnel, le Dieu créateur, le Dieu que l'humanité a toujours adoré. Voici mes preuves, et les textes : je demande à mes lecteurs de les lire courageusement jusqu'au bout.

Quant aux écrivains dont je cite les textes, si, malgré tous mes soins, je ne les avais pas bien compris, si j'avais exagéré leurs paroles, si, à mon insu, je leur faisais dire ce qu'ils n'ont pas voulu dire, qu'ils me détrompent : j'accepte, je sollicite toutes les rectifications : on ne pourra pas me faire un plus grand plaisir ici qu'en me montrant que je me suis trompé.

1° *Le Positivisme.*

Cette école, dont je ne veux parler qu'au point de vue qui m'occupe, l'athéisme, professe, malgré ses étranges protestations, la plus complète négation de Dieu.

En théorie, elle rejette Dieu absolument ; elle le déclare une fiction, une hypothèse, c'est-à-dire une pure supposition, sans certitude, ni réalité ;

Une hypothèse, soit théologique, soit métaphysique, comme ils disent : car les positivistes repoussent la philosophie rationnelle comme la Religion, tout dogme philosophique comme tout dogme religieux ;

Une hypothèse inutile, qui n'explique rien, ni l'origine du monde, ni celle de l'homme ;

Une hypothèse impossible, que la science contredit et détruit.

Pour eux Dieu n'est pas seulement en dehors de la science,

il est antipathique et contradictoire à la science; l'idée de Dieu ne correspond à rien d'existant : Dieu n'existe pas.

En conséquence, ils introduisent l'athéisme, et, par suite, le matérialisme le plus absolu, dans toutes les sciences humaines, et après avoir ainsi fait l'éducation et l'esprit humain athées, ils veulent faire la société tout entière athée, en détruisant toutes les religions, pour substituer au culte de Dieu le culte, disons mieux, l'idolâtrie de l'Humanité : l'Humanité qui est, selon eux, LE GRAND ÊTRE, LA SUPRÊME EXISTENCE, LE SEUL OBJET DU CULTE.

Tel est le dogme nouveau qu'ils apportent au monde, et qui doit servir de base à une réorganisation complète de la société.

Le fondateur de cette école, en ce qu'elle a de neuf, car l'athéisme et le matérialisme sont bien vieux, c'est M. Auguste Comte, ancien répétiteur et examinateur à l'École polytechnique, mort il y a quelques années seulement. Les disciples du positivisme l'avouent hautement pour leur chef. « Nous sommes
« disciples d'Auguste Comte, nous le proclamons aussi haut
« que possible. C'est à lui que nous rapportons ce que nous
« sommes, si nous sommes quelque chose; ce que nous pou-
« vons, si nous pouvons quelque chose (1). »

« Auguste Comte est le chef de cette doctrine (2). »

« Il n'y a qu'un positivisme, celui d'Auguste Comte (3). »

« Quiconque a des prétentions à la philosophie, doit absolu-
« ment connaître au moins l'essence et l'esprit de l'œuvre
« fondée par Auguste Comte (4). »

Or, l'œuvre fondée par M. A. Comte, le positivisme, se résout dans le plus radical athéisme, et dans le plus complet matérialisme. Malgré l'étrange obscurité de la langue qu'il s'est faite dans les nombreux écrits qu'il a publiés et que son école traduit et réédite chaque jour, cela du moins est parfaitement clair.

Au mois d'octobre 1851, il y eut au Palais-Royal une grande

(1) *Paroles de philosophie positive*, p. 57.

(2) M. le docteur Bourdet, p. VII. Paris, 1863.

(3) *Lettre de M. le docteur Robinet à M. Frédéric Morin*, 24 sept. 1866.

(4) *La libre Pensée*, 11 novembre 1866.

réunion positiviste, où M. Comte exposa, pendant cinq heures, la doctrine de son école. Quelle fut sa grande formule ?

« Au nom du passé et de l'avenir, » il déclara exclus irrévocablement de la direction des affaires, comme ARRIÉRÉS ET PERTURBATEURS, tous ceux qui croient en Dieu, *catholiques, protestants, déistes.*

Quant au Dieu du passé, M. Comte reconnaît « qu'il a rendu des *services provisoires.* » Mais c'est fini : L'HUMANITÉ *se substitue à DIEU.* »

« L'HUMANITÉ doit seule réparer L'IMPUISSANCE DE DIEU. »

Voici cette formule : Je cite les paroles mêmes de M. Comte.

« Au nom du passé et de l'avenir, *les serviteurs* théoriques et les serviteurs pratiques *de l'Humanité* viennent prendre DIGNEMENT la direction générale des affaires terrestres, en excluant irrévocablement de la suprématie politique *tous les divers esclaves de Dieu, catholiques, protestants, ou DÉISTES, comme ARRIÉRÉS ET PERTURBATEURS.* »

Cette formule est si capitale dans le système, qu'elle a été rééditée en tête du *Catéchisme positiviste*, traduit en anglais par MM. Congrève et Bridges, dans une *Étude de philosophie positive*, et en tête du *Système de politique positive.*

Et ces jours-ci même un disciple de M. Comte la répétait en ces termes :

« L'IDÉE DE DIEU est devenue aujourd'hui AUSSI ANARCHIQUE QUE RÉTROGRADE (1). »

Un autre, après avoir présenté L'IDÉE DE DIEU comme déjà BIEN ÉBRANLÉE, ajoute : « Cela ne suffit pas, il faut lui porter LES DERNIERS COUPS (2). »

Les derniers coups ayant été portés, *extincto Deo*, il faut le remplacer.

Dans un des derniers ouvrages du maître, celui qui couronne l'œuvre par « la construction décisive de la religion posi-

(1) *Étude de philosophie positive*, p. 183.

(2) M. A. Naquet, *Revue encyclopédique de la méthode*, p. 52.

« tive (1), « dans l'*Appel aux conservateurs* je lis ces paroles :
« Le positivisme a définitivement construit la religion de
« l'Humanité, seule capable de consacrer et de régler l'ordre
« et le progrès compromis par le *téologisme épuisé* (2). »

« En un mot : L'HUMANITÉ se substitue définitivement à
« DIEU, sans oublier jamais ses services provisoires (3). »

« L'HUMANITÉ doit seule réparer l'impuissance de DIEU (4). »

Il faut donc laisser le culte de Dieu pour adopter le culte de l'Humanité.

Mais qu'est-ce que cette Humanité? C'est « le Grand-Être. »
Et qu'est-ce que le Grand-Être? « Le Grand-Être est l'en-
« semble des êtres passés, présents, futurs. » Non pas de tous
les êtres passés, présents, futurs, car il n'entre dans la com-
position du Grand-Être que les humains; et encore pas tous,
mais seulement ceux « qui concourent librement à perfection-
« ner l'Être universel. » Ceux-là, on les nomme « des êtres
« convergents. » Et le positivisme définit l'Humanité « l'en-
« semble continu des êtres convergents. »

Voilà ceux dont le culte sera substitué au culte de Dieu.
Mais ce culte sera toute leur immortalité, car l'homme n'a pas
d'âme.

Ainsi, bien qu'il n'y ait pas de Dieu dans la doctrine positi-
viste, il y aura cependant une religion, la religion de l'Humani-
té. Il y aura « le culte individuel de l'Humanité, d'après
« l'INTIME ADORATION DE SES MEILLEURS REPRÉSENTANTS (5);
« et le culte public de l'Humanité, exigeant pour ses déve-
« loppements des temples (6), » le fondateur du positivisme
va même jusqu'à réclamer l'église Sainte-Geneviève pour y

(1) Sixième circulaire annuelle adressée par l'auteur du *Système de philo-
sophie positive*, et du *Système de politique positive*, à chaque coopérateur du
libre subsidé institué pour le sacerdoce de l'Humanité, Paris, 15 moïse 67 —
15 janvier 1855.

(2) Préf., p. XIII.

(3) *Catéchisme positiviste*

(4) *Appel*, p. 30.

(5) *Appel aux conservateurs*, p. 41.

(6) *Ibid.*, pag. 118.

introniser cette religion : « aucun scrupule, dit-il, ne peut empêcher de consacrer le Panthéon à sa vraie destination (1). »

En résumé, c'est l'adoration de l'homme substituée à l'adoration de Dieu. L'apothéose antique imaginée par la bassesse romaine est renouvelée par le positivisme. Des hommes san-

(1) *Appel aux conservateurs*, p. 449. — Si l'on veut voir du reste quel sera, dans sa réalisation, ce culte de l'humanité, et, comme disent les positivistes, « la solennelle idéalisation du grand Être, » on peut consulter le calendrier positiviste (4^e édition).

Voici un extrait de ce calendrier.

CULTE ABSTRAIT DE L'HUMANITÉ.

LIENS fondamentaux.	}	1 ^{er} mois . . . L'Humanité	{ Fêtes hebdomadaires de l'Union	{ Occidentale. Nationale. Provinciale. Communale.	
		2 ^e mois . . . Le Mariage.			
		3 ^e mois . . . La Paternité.			
		4 ^e mois . . . La Filiation.			
		5 ^e mois . . . La Fraternité.			
		6 ^e mois . . . La Domesticité.			
ETATS préparatoires.	}	7 ^e mois . . . LE FÉTICHISME.			
		8 ^e mois . . . Le Polythéisme.			
		9 ^e mois . . . Le Monothéisme.			
FONCTIONS normales.	}	10 ^e mois . . . La Femme, ou la vie affective	{ Fêtes hebdomadaires.	{ La Mère. La Sœur. L'Épouse. La Fille.	
		14 ^e mois . . . Le Sacerdoce, ou la vie contemplative.			
		42 ^e mois . . . Le Proletariat, ou la vie active	{ Fêtes hebdomadaires.		{ Banque. Commerce. Fabrication. Agriculture.
		43 ^e mois . . . L'Industrie, ou le pouvoir pratique.			

Les jours de la semaine, dans la religion positiviste, seront ainsi nommés :

- Lundi Maridi.
- Mardi Patridi.
- Mercredi Filidi.
- Jeudi Fratridi.
- Vendredi Domidi.
- Samedi Matridi.
- Dimanche Humanidi.

Je me borne à ce fragment : je fais grâce aux lecteurs des modèles, des êtres adorés.

guinaires et voluptueux, tels que César, Auguste, Adrien il n'y manque qu'Antinoüs... puis Cromwel, Louis XI; Boccace, Rabelais, l'Arioste, ont place dans ce Panthéon.

Est-ce impiété? Est-ce folie? C'est l'une et l'autre.

C'est l'impie punie par la folie.

Quelques personnes s'imagineront peut-être que de telles indignités sont rendues inoffensives par leur absurdité même, et ne sauraient devenir contagieuses. Qu'elles se détrompent.

On m'avait dit aussi, lorsque j'ai publié mon *Avertissement aux Pères de famille*, que je m'exagérais le péril, que de si abominables doctrines étaient mortes en naissant, qu'elles ne feraient point de progrès... Eh bien! non, elles marchent, elles avancent, elles gagnent chaque jour du terrain parmi les ouvriers et dans la jeunesse.

Depuis que mon *Avertissement* a paru, ces jours-ci même, je lisais, dans une lettre du disciple et exécuteur testamentaire de M. Comte, M. le docteur Robinet, médecin de Paris, lettre adressée à un rédacteur de l'*Avenir national* et de la *Morale indépendante*, M. Morin, et ainsi datée, conformément au calendrier positiviste, « Paris, 17 Shakespeare, 78 (24 septembre 1866), » je lisais, dis-je, dans cette lettre, les détails instructifs que voici : « Depuis la mort d'Auguste Comte, le positivisme continue à se développer non-seulement en Europe, en France, et en Angleterre, mais aussi en Amérique, dans l'Amérique du Nord et dans l'Amérique du Sud, tant par la propagation de sa doctrine, que par le maintien de ses institutions (1). »

Et en France de nombreux écrits paraissent chaque jour, publiés dans des librairies célèbres par des hommes qui ne sont

(1) M. le docteur Robinet cite à l'appui de son dire une partie des nombreuses « publications politiques et sociales faites en 1856 et 1866, par MM. Congrève, Magnin, Bridges, Hutton, Harrisson, Beesly, Parber, Cookson, etc., et qui sont toutes des applications de la doctrine positiviste; » et aussi les écrits de MM. Edger et Hale, sur la philosophie, la politique et la religion positivistes, et ceux de M. Brandaô, dans l'Amérique du Sud. » *Journal de Belfort*, 3 novembre 1866.

pas sans culture d'esprit, et où l'athéisme caché sous l'enveloppe de la doctrine positiviste, est hautement professée au nom de la science ; et voilà pourquoi je suis obligé de revenir tristement sur toutes ces choses.

J'ai sous les yeux un volume d'éducation, publié il y a trois ans par un disciple fervent de M. Auguste Comte, un médecin de Paris, M. le docteur Bourdet, et qui, dès sa première page, déclare nettement que l'athéisme, qu'il qualifie de régime scientifique, remplace aujourd'hui la croyance en Dieu, qu'il appelle le régime théologique.

Et l'athéisme enivre tellement ce disciple de M. Comte, qu'il s'imagine que les hommes une fois délivrés de la croyance en Dieu, et de ses *caprices autocratiques*, seront délivrés par là même de ce que M. Bourdet appelle *les dernières résistances de la fatalité cosmique*.

« Le régime scientifique, essentiellement antagoniste du régime théologique, va remplacer ce dernier... *L'hypothèse* que Laplace dédaigne (*l'existence de Dieu*), ne peut prendre place dans les résultats encyclopédiques dus AU RÉGIME NOUVEAU : elle sera encore quelque temps le *partage* et le *refuge* des *gens timorés, rétrogrades ou ignorants* (1). »

On ne l'a pas oublié d'ailleurs : celui que la plupart des positivistes regardent aujourd'hui comme leur chef, et que M. le docteur Bourdet appelle « un interprète de la doctrine autorisé par le savoir et l'habileté (2), » a exprimé l'athéisme de la doctrine positiviste, dans des textes, s'il est possible, plus formels encore :

« L'idée *d'un être théologique quelconque*... c'est, comme « le disait Laplace, *une hypothèse* désormais *inutile* (3). »

« Si, par une satisfaction purement individuelle, on retenait « l'idée d'un être théologique quelconque, *multiple ou unique*, « il n'en faudrait pas moins aussitôt le concevoir *réduit*

(1) P. V, VI.

(2) P. VII.

(3) *Conservation, Révolution, Positivisme*, p. 298.

« à la nullité et à un office *nominal et surérogatoire* (1). »

Puisque Dieu n'existe plus et ne servirait à rien, il ne faut donc plus parler de Dieu, ni dans les sciences, ni même dans l'éducation de la jeunesse, et M. Bourdet écrit un livre d'*éducation positive*, précisément parce que « la *philosophie nouvelle* se propose de *remplacer* la pédagogie fondée sur les « *abstractions théologiques ou métaphysiques* » (Dieu, et l'âme), « par une éducation basée sur des principes positifs et « concrets (2), » c'est-à-dire en langage français, par une éducation athée, et matérialiste ; car M. Bourdet repousse l'hypothèse de l'âme comme l'hypothèse de Dieu : et à quel degré matérialiste, on peut le voir à la page 93, que je n'ose citer.

Cet athéisme toutefois et ce matérialisme n'empêchent pas l'auteur de parler religion, comme M. Comte ; parce que, « comme on le disait bien avant la systématisation biologique, « l'homme est un *animal adoreur* (3). »

L'éducation positiviste donnera donc au jeune homme une religion ; on lui apprendra à adorer, non pas Dieu, mais l'Humanité. « Le dogme positif, en dépit de son nom, appelle un culte, « et ce culte qu'il désigne pour nous captiver et enchaîner nos « aspirations, c'est l'*Humanité* ! (4) « ce Dieu là même, dont M. Guérout disait un jour assez finement aux positivistes : « Je « le connais trop bien, pour avoir envie de l'adorer. »

Ce Dieu toutefois, les positivistes font tout ce qu'ils peuvent pour établir sa divinité et son culte ; il faut redire leurs paroles :

« Le dogme nouveau nous révèle *une grande et suprême existence, L'HUMANITÉ* (5).

« Le dogme nouveau *élimine positivement* toutes les vo-
« lontés surnaturelles, connues sous le nom de *Dieu...* et de
« *Providence* (6). »

(1) *Conservation, Révolution, Positivism*, p. 297.

(2) P. VII.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 84.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 350.

(5) *Conserv., Révol., Posit.*, p. XXXI.

(6) *Conservation, Révolution, Positivism*, p. XXVI.

« *L'humanité* devient SA PROVIDENCE A ELLE-MÊME, après
« avoir longuement souffert pour avoir trop longtemps compté
« sur d'autres *providences imaginaires* (1). »

« Il ne nous reste qu'à retirer les derniers voiles, et à prendre
« déterminément l'HUMANITÉ pour idéal de nos pensées, pour
« OBJET de nos fêtes (2). »

« Poètes, elle vous demandera des chants ; peintres et sculp-
« teurs, elle vous demandera des toiles et des marbres ; archi-
« tectes, elle vous demandera des TEMPLES (3) : » — entre au-
tres le Panthéon.

En même temps que le livre de M. Bourdet se publiait à Paris, une revue positiviste, appelée la *Revue du Progrès*, qui professait l'athéisme avec une juvénile audace, s'écriait : « La
« théodicée et une vaine spéculation qui n'a plus qu'un intérêt
« historique... L'âme est une chimère, et son immortalité un
« non-sens (4). »

Cette revue, me dit-on, a cessé de paraître ; mais les doctrines subsistent ; j'ai le devoir de la citer.

Tout récemment, l'*Étude de philosophie positive*, dont j'ai déjà rappelé le mot : *l'idée de Dieu est aussi anarchique que rétrograde*, allait jusqu'à dire que l'on peut regarder « comme
« autant d'ennemis publics » tout Dieu quelconque, « jus-
« qu'au Dieu de Rousseau. » — Et ailleurs l'auteur ajoute :
« Les idées dites *religieuses*, sous quelque forme qu'elles se
« produisent, sont des *causes permanentes* de DIVISION DANS
« LA FAMILLE, et de DÉSORDRE DANS L'ÉTAT (5). »

J'ai le regret d'ajouter que cette *Étude* est précédée d'une préface complètement approbative sur le fond des doctrines par le chef actuel du positivisme.

Un autre dit sans hésitation que l'argument connu de Vol-

(1) *Dictionnaire des Sciences médicales*, art. *Mort*.

(2) *Conserv., Révol., Positiv.*, p. 427.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 284.

(4) janvier 1864, pp. 409 et 412.

(5) P. 484.

taire en faveur de l'existence de Dieu, est « une vieille niaiserie » que Voltaire « rabâcha toute sa vie (1). »

Après de telles déclarations, si une chose doit surprendre, c'est la prétention des positivistes à ne vouloir pas être accusé d'athéisme.

Écoutons-les exposer cette prétention :

« La philosophie positive ne nie rien et n'affirme rien sur les causes premières et finales. Nous ne savons RIEN sur la cause de l'univers. » Pas même si cette cause existe. — « Ce qu'on en raconte ou imagine est idée, conjecture, manière de voir... la philosophie positive ne s'occupe ni des commencements, si l'univers a des commencements, ni de ce qui arrive aux êtres vivants, après leur mort (2). »

Ces messieurs ne veulent pas s'avouer athées, par cette étrange raison que l'athéisme pose la question de Dieu, et qu'à cause de cela, disent-ils, « l'athée n'est pas un esprit véritablement émancipé. C'est encore à sa manière un théologien (3). »

L'athée théologien ! l'union de ces deux mots est-elle assez étrange ? Mais le positivisme veut en vain mettre ici de son côté de frivoles apparences ; entre sa doctrine qui supprime la question de Dieu, et celle de l'athée qui la résout négativement, il n'y a aucune différence pour la raison et la croyance humaine.

Mais, quand vous ne feriez que mutiler ainsi et abaisser l'esprit humain, en lui enlevant le trésor de sa croyance en Dieu, en lui défendant d'aborder ces grandes et fondamentales questions d'origine et de fin qui, pour notre honneur, solliciteront à jamais l'esprit de l'homme, ne feriez-vous pas déjà l'œuvre la plus désastreuse, et ne serait-ce pas l'athéisme pratique le plus complet, sur la ruine de toute religion, même naturelle ? Car, il s'est aisé, « il est honteux, dit M. de Rémusat, de se complaire à ne pas même savoir qu'on ne sait pas, et de

(1) *Revue encyclopédique*. Mai 1866, p. 88.

(2) *Paroles de Philosophie positive*, p. 34.

3) *Ibid.*, p. 30, 34.

« se détourner de toute réflexion sur le premier intérêt de
« l'humanité (1). »

Mais il y a plus que cela ; et par une contradiction formelle, dans laquelle vous ne pouviez pas ne pas tomber, vous avez des négations très-positives sur l'origine et la fin des choses, sur Dieu, l'âme, et l'immortalité de l'âme.

Voici un homme qui, assurément, n'est pas des noirs, un violent ennemi du Christianisme, mais qui, du moins, croit en Dieu, M. Patrice Larroque, qui vous le dit comme nous :

« Les écrivains de l'école actuelle qui s'appelle *positiviste*,
« disent qu'ils n'affirment et ne nient rien sur les dogmes indé-
« montrables et sans objets, sur de pures chimères, et qu'ils
« ne leur font même pas l'honneur de s'en occuper. Parler en
« ces termes de Dieu, de l'âme humaine et de ses destinées, ce
« ne serait pas seulement ne pas s'en occuper, ce serait évidem-
« ment en nier la réalité de la façon la plus expresse (2). »

Et, en effet, quand les positivistes disent :

« Les sciences se montrent de plus en plus *contradictoires*
« et *incompatibles* aux conceptions du *surnaturalisme* » (3) ;
c'est-à-dire à l'idée de Dieu. « Les sciences ont défait toute
« théologie » et toute métaphysique : n'est-ce pas là une négation formelle de Dieu (4) ?

Quand je dis : cet homme est mort, j'affirme bien qu'il n'est plus vivant. Vous affirmez les sciences, et vous ajoutez : la science est *contradictoire* et *incompatible* avec l'idée de Dieu. Vous niez donc positivement l'idée de Dieu.

(1) *Philosophie religieuse*, p. 101.

(2) *La libre conscience*, octobre 1866.

(3) *Conservation*, etc., p. 297.

(4) Et encore : « La philosophie positive met hors la cause les théologies qui supposent une action surnaturelle, » c'est-à-dire un Dieu, — » et les « métaphysiques, » c'est-à-dire la philosophie spiritualiste qui aboutit à la même conclusion. — « L'esprit positif a successivement fermé toutes les issues à l'esprit théologique et métaphysique. » (*Ibid.*, p. 64.)

« Le régime théologique qui fut le régime initial de l'humanité touche à sa fin. » (*Ibid.*, p. 184.)

« La société passe, pour ses dogmes, ses mœurs et ses institutions, sous

Quand vous dites encore : « les êtres théologiques, *tenus*, « est vrai *pour réels*, par le fait *n'ont d'existence que dans l'esprit* ; » « les *idéalisations* théologiques ne furent jamais que *fictives* (1) ; »

Que faites-vous, dans tous ces textes et dans mille autres, que nier Dieu, aussi positivement qu'on le peut faire : n'est-ce pas là une doctrine, et très-formelle, sur l'origine et la fin des choses ?

Ne recourez donc plus à ce vain subterfuge qui ne peut en imposer à personne. Ne dites plus : la philosophie positive ne nie rien et n'affirme rien sur Dieu, l'âme et la vie future.

Ne dites plus : « Nous permettons de croire là-dessus ce qu'on voudra. » Et comment feriez-vous pour le défendre ? Mais il s'agit de ce que la logique de votre doctrine permet. Or, si vous dites vrai, elle défend absolument de croire à Dieu.

Dites, comme ce jeune homme au congrès de Liège : « l'athéisme est une affirmation. » Dites, comme cet auteur dont vous recommandez le livre, que l'idée de Dieu est *anarchique* ; et comme cet autre, *qu'il faut lui porter les derniers coups*. En un mot, déclarez-vous ce que vous êtes, des athées, et sur votre drapeau inscrivez le vrai nom de votre doctrine, l'athéisme.

2° *Le panthéisme.*

La seconde école d'athéisme, le panthéisme, ne proscrie pas le nom, mais elle nie absolument le dogme de Dieu. « Dieu, providence, âme, immortalité, autant de bons vieux mots, dit-il, un peu lourds peut-être, que la philosophie inter-« prétera dans des sens de plus en plus raffinés (2). »

« les lois de l'immanence (*Paroles de Philosophie positive*, p. 34) ; » l'immanence, c'est-à-dire de la doctrine qui explique le monde sans Dieu ; l'athéisme.

(1) *Conservation, Révolution, Positivisme*, p. XXVIII, 286.

(2) M. Renan, *Études d'histoire religieuse*, p. 419.

Or, cette interprétation raffinée, c'est que Dieu n'est pas ; c'est que le Dieu vivant, personnel, distinct des choses, créateur de l'homme et du monde, le Dieu que l'humanité adore, ce Dieu n'existe pas.

Nulle ambigüité de parole, nulle explication sophistique, ne sont capables d'ôter leur signification à des textes tels que ceux-ci :

« Les sciences supposent qu'IL N'Y A PAS d'être libre, supérieur à l'homme, auquel on puisse attribuer une part appréciable dans la *conduite morale* pas plus que dans la *conduite matérielle* de l'univers (1). »

M. Renan a écrit ailleurs : « Pour moi, je pense qu'il n'est pas dans l'univers d'intelligence supérieure à celle de l'homme... (2). »

Là-dessus un journaliste, M. Guérault, qui devient de jour en jour moins suspect, posa à M. Renan, avec bon sens et précision, l'objection suivante :

« Cher Monsieur... il faut bien appeler les choses par leur nom. S'il n'y a pas d'être libre supérieur à l'homme, IL N'Y A PAS DE DIEU, IL N'Y EN A PAS D'AUTRE QUE L'HOMME (3). »

M. Renan osa dire dans sa réponse à M. Guérault :

« Toutes les difficultés que le DÉISME VULGAIRE attribue à Dieu N'ONT JAMAIS EXISTÉ sans un cerveau. Il n'y a jamais eu de *prévoyance*, de *perception des objets extérieurs*, DE CONSCIENCE ENFIN, SANS UN SYSTÈME NERVEUX (4). »

Alors, de deux choses l'une : ou Dieu n'est pas, ou c'est un Dieu matériel, ou, à tout le moins, uni à la matière ; à moins que ces messieurs n'admettent un Dieu sans *prévoyance*, ni *perception*, ni *conscience de lui-même*.

Il y a si bien l'athéisme dans ces paroles, que je les retrouve presque identiquement dans un poëme franchement athée et

(1) M. Renan, *Explications à mes collègues*, p. 24.

(2) *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, janvier 1860, p. 374.

(3) *Opinion nationale*, 23 août 1862.

(4) *Opinion nationale*, 4 sept. 1862.

matérialiste, dont je reparlerai tout à l'heure, et qui dit exactement comme M. Renan :

Sans forme extérieure
Point de volonté libre, et sans corps point d'esprit.

Et, en effet, le Dieu, dont le panthéisme consent encore à prononcer le nom par égard pour « les simples, » ne mérite en aucune façon ce nom auguste ; car ce n'est pas le Dieu vivant, le Dieu créateur : l'homme et le monde n'ont pas été faits par lui : ils se sont faits d'eux-mêmes.

Ce Dieu du panthéisme n'existe pas en dehors de l'homme et du monde ; il n'en est pas distinct.

En dehors de l'humanité, il n'est qu'une abstraction ; il n'a de réalité que dans le monde et l'humanité.

Qu'est-ce donc que ce Dieu ? C'est tout ce qu'on voudra ; tout ce qui est : la pierre et la plante, l'animal et l'homme, vous, moi, le monde entier ; TOUT, tout et rien !

Ce Dieu n'est pas créateur : « Un certain jour, en vertu des lois naturelles qui jusque-là avaient présidé au développement des choses, sans intervention extérieure, l'être pensant est apparu (1). » — Comme un champignon !

Et comment ce Dieu serait-il créateur, puisque « la vie a son point de départ » non pas en lui, mais « dans la force et le mouvement, et sa dernière résultante dans l'humanité (2). »

Dieu n'a donc pas fait l'homme, l'homme n'est pas le fils de Dieu. C'est un animal comme un autre ; l'origine de l'homme, c'est simplement : ce *phénomène étrange* en vertu duquel une espèce animale (l'humanité) prit sur les autres une supériorité décisive (3). » Ainsi l'humanité n'est qu'une espèce animale, qui, par un *phénomène étrange*, sans que Dieu y soit

(1) *Études d'histoires religieuses*, p. 217.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 15 octobre 1863.

pour rien, prit sur les autres espèces animales une supériorité décisive! L'homme n'est qu'un animal perfectionné.

Et, en effet, je viens de lire dans une revue, fondée il y a un mois à peine, sous ce titre : *la libre Pensée*, que l'homme n'est qu'un *singe perfectionné*; et que « l'explication » qui nous donne cette noble origine, est « *la plus simple*, celle qui « est appuyée par le plus grand nombre d'observations (1). »

Et le poète matérialiste et athée, dont je rapprochais tout à l'heure les vers de la prose de M. Renan, dit dans la même revue :

Si les bêtes parlaient, l'homme aurait des égaux.

Selon ces messieurs : l'*être vivant* est le terme ultime de « *l'évolution des éléments matériels*... un agrégat de fibres et « de cellules absorbant et sécrétant, c'est-à-dire vivant (2). » Voilà l'homme : de Dieu, Père de l'homme, d'âme immortelle, il n'en est plus question.

Et il est bien clair que le Dieu qu'a toujours adoré l'humanité, ne pouvant être *un agrégat de fibres absorbant et sécrétant, c'est-à-dire vivant*, ce Dieu ne vit pas!

De même que le Dieu du panthéisme n'a pas créé le monde, il ne le gouverne pas.

« Aucun agent surnaturel ne vient troubler la marche de « l'humanité. Cette marche est la *résultante immédiate* de la « liberté qui est dans l'homme ET DE LA FATALITÉ *qui est* « *dans la nature* (3). » Ainsi point de Providence. Voilà Dieu réduit, comme disent les positivistes, « à la nullité, et à un « office purement nominal et surrogatoire ; à n'être plus « qu'une hypothèse inutile (4). »

Et c'est dans ce sens que M. Renan disait :

(1) *La libre Pensée*, 1 novembre 1866.

(2) *La libre Pensée*, 21 octobre 1868.

(3) *Opinion nationale*, 4 septembre 1862.

(4) *Conservation, Révolution, Positivisme*, p. 297, 298.

« Les sciences supposent qu'il n'y a pas d'être libre, supérieur à l'homme, auquel on puisse attribuer une part appréciable dans la conduite morale pas plus que dans la conduite matérielle de l'univers (1). »

Ce Dieu des panthéistes, qui n'a pas fait l'homme ni le monde, qui par conséquent ne les gouverne pas, que dis-je? qui ne perçoit pas, qui ne prévoit pas, *n'ayant pas de système nerveux*, qui même ne vit pas, puisque la dernière résultante de la vie, c'est l'humanité, et puisque d'ailleurs *l'être vivant n'est qu'un agrégat de fibres et de cellules, absorbant et sécrétant*, ce Dieu-là, s'il est quelque chose, n'est pas distinct des choses : si vous le distinguez des choses, c'est une pure abstraction ; il n'est pas.

Qu'est-ce donc alors que Dieu, puisque le panthéisme parle de Dieu ? « C'est la catégorie de l'idéal (2). »

Ne dites pas qu'il est parfait ; le panthéisme vous répond : « La perfection absolue, à serrer rigoureusement les choses, sera t le néant (3). »

Ne dites pas qu'il est infini ; le panthéisme vous répond : « L'infini n'existe que quand il revêt une forme finie (4). »

« Qui sait si l'infini réel est aussi vaste qu'on le suppose (5)? »

Ne dites pas que ce Dieu existe en dehors de l'humanité, le panthéisme vous répond qu'il n'a de réalité que dans l'humanité : « L'absolu de la justice et de la raison, envisagé hors de l'humanité, n'est qu'une abstraction ; envisagé dans l'humanité, il est une réalité (6). »

Il vous dit encore :

(1) M. Renan, *Explication à mes collègues*, p. 24.

(2) C'est « le résumé transcendant de nos besoins supra-sensibles, la catégorie de l'idéal, c'est-à-dire la forme sous laquelle nous concevons l'idéal, comme l'espace et le temps sont les catégories des corps, c'est-à-dire les formes sous lesquelles nous concevons les corps. » (M. Renan, *Liberté de penser*, t. VI, p. 348.

(3) M. Renan, *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 15 octobre 1860.

(4) Le même, *ibid.*, 15 janvier 1860, p. 384.

(5) Le même, *ibid.*, p. 384.

(6) *Ibid.*, p. 385.

« Philosophe, » ce n'est pas connaître Dieu : « c'est connaître l'univers. L'univers se compose de deux mondes, le monde physique et le monde moral, la nature et l'humanité. L'étude de la nature et de l'humanité est donc TOUTE la philosophie. » Et Dieu n'entre pour rien dans ce cadre (1).

Ne dites pas que ce Dieu *est* ; le panthéisme vous répond qu'il n'est pas, qu'il se fait tous les jours, QU'IL DEVIENT, qu'il n'est que l'*universel devenir* :

« La vraie théologie, » ce n'est pas la science de Dieu ; « c'est la science de la nature et de l'humanité, la science de l'*universel devenir* (2). »

Cette idée d'un Dieu *qui devient, qui se fait* tous les jours, qui n'est que l'*universel devenir*, est fondamentale dans le panthéisme, et décisive sur le point qui nous occupe, à savoir, que le panthéisme n'est qu'une forme de l'athéisme. Cette idée, M. Renan la développe dans une page prodigieuse, où il expose ceci : que c'est la science qui un jour *complétera* Dieu. « Dieu alors sera complet. » Il ne l'est pas encore aujourd'hui ! « Dieu alors sera complet, si l'on fait du mot Dieu le synonyme de la totale existence ; » comme le fait effectivement M. Renan. « En ce sens, DIEU SERA, PLUTÔT QU'IL N'EST. Il est *in fieri*, il est EN VOIE DE SE FAIRE. » Ce qui n'empêche pas M. Renan de dire que Dieu « envisagé d'une autre sorte, » comme « le lieu de l'idéal, » est « sans progrès, ni devenir (3) ! »

Jamais le mot de saint Paul sur ces pauvres esprits fut-il plus vrai : « *Evanuerunt in cogitationibus suis* : ils se sont évanouis dans leurs pensées. »

Qu'est-ce donc enfin que cet étrange Dieu du panthéisme, qui n'est pas, qui devient, qui se fait ; qui n'est que relatif et n'a rien d'absolu, rien d'infini, ni de parfait ; qui n'est qu'une forme de nos conceptions, qui n'a rien de réel en dehors de l'humanité, qui n'est pas distinct des choses ; qu'est-ce que ce dieu ? Nous l'avons dit : C'est le *grand tout*, la substance des

(1) *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 45 janvier 1860, p. 378.

(2) M. Renan, *ibid.*, p. 385.

(3) *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 1863, t. XLI, pp. 772-73.

choses, mais nullement distinct des choses, inséparable de l'humanité et de la nature, si inséparable que, la nature et l'humanité n'étant pas, ce Dieu ne serait pas.

« En dehors de la nature et de l'homme, y a-t-il donc quelque chose, me demandez-vous ? Il y a... » Que va-t-il répondre ? Dieu ? Non : « Il y a TOUT. La nature n'est qu'une apparence, l'homme n'est qu'un phénomène (1). »

C'est crûment la formule matérialiste et athée que nous verrons tout à l'heure : « Il n'y a qu'un être unique, indivisible, dont tous les êtres sont membres. »

Voilà ce que c'est que le panthéisme. Le panthéisme au fond n'est donc qu'une nuance de l'athéisme. « Ce n'est pas là, écrit Fénelon, une secte de philosophes, mais de menteurs. » Je me bornerai à dire : c'est l'athéisme, moins la franchise.

C'est, du reste, ce que ne craignent pas de dire, plus francs que leur maître, les disciples de l'écrivain panthéiste :

La *libre Pensée* se moque, et justement,

De ce tendre esprit fort, qui par de faux liens,
Aux erreurs qu'il détruit obstinément s'attache,
Et substitue à Dieu le sentiment divin (2).

Et la *Revue du Progrès* reprochait durement à M. Renan de « reculer devant les qualifications d'athée et de matérialiste, » et de « vouloir à tout prix les éluder par des phrases évasives, » par des contradictions, qui lui font des ennemis parmi les « libres penseurs (3). »

Si donc le panthéisme avait de la sincérité, il se dirait matérialiste et athée, puisqu'il l'est.

3° Le Matérialisme.

Le troisième grand foyer d'athéisme, c'est l'école qui s'ap-

(1) M. Renan, *Opinion Nationale*, 4 septembre 1862.

(2) *Libre Pensée*, 4 novembre 1866, p. 23.

(3) Décembre 1863, p. 288.

pelle franchement matérialiste, et qui préfère ce nom à celui de positiviste, comme plus clair et plus juste :

« Nous ne sommes pas positivistes, dans la complète acceptation de ce mot. Mais cette qualification ne saurait nous déplaire.

« Positivisme, matérialisme, sont deux formes de la vraie méthode scientifique... Nous préférons la dénomination de matérialistes à celle de positivistes, qui ne correspond qu'à un système et à une époque (1). »

« Il ne faut pas, dit de son côté l'auteur de l'*Etude de philosophie positive*, citée par nous plus haut, que l'on s'effarouche si, dès le début, nous nous déclarons franchement matérialiste (2). »

Et en effet, le même écrivain formule un peu plus loin son matérialisme en ces termes : « *Il n'y a de réel que les corps* (3). »

Au reste, les rapports les plus intimes existent entre ces deux écoles et l'école du panthéisme : les négations sont au fond absolument les mêmes, quant au Dieu distinct du monde, nous l'avons vu ; et quant à l'âme et à l'immortalité de l'âme, nous allons le voir.

Le matérialisme, comme le positivisme dont il n'est qu'une nuance, et comme le panthéisme, nie Dieu, le Dieu personnel, le Dieu créateur, le Dieu providence. Il traite Dieu d'hypothèse, — d'hypothèse impliquant contradiction, puisque, selon le matérialisme, il ne peut y avoir de substances immatérielles ; et il explique l'homme et le monde sans Dieu, par le développement nécessaire et fatal des lois naturelles, par la vertu des propriétés élémentaires des choses : il n'existe dans ce système qu'un être unique, dont chaque chose est une partie, et cet être unique, c'est le monde, l'univers, « la matière éternelle et sans cause (4). »

La philosophie doit renoncer absolument à chercher une

(1) La *Revue encyclopédique* citée par la *libre Pensée*, 41 novembre.

(2) p. 25.

(3) P. 423

(4) *Revue du Progrès*, novembre 1863, p. 176.

autre explication à l'existence du monde et de l'homme que le monde et l'homme lui-même :

« La cause ne diffère pas de l'effet, dit M. Taine; les puissances génératrices ne sont que les propriétés élémentaires des choses; la force active par laquelle nous figurons la nature, n'est que la nécessité logique... Par là nous tenons la puissante formule qui, établissant la liaison invincible et la *production spontanée* des êtres, pose dans la nature le ressort de la nature (1)... Et par cette hiérarchie de nécessités, le monde forme *un être unique, indivisible, dont tous les êtres sont membres*... Au suprême sommet des choses... se prononce l'axiome éternel, et le retentissement prolongé de cette formule créatrice compose par ses ondulations inépuisables l'immensité de l'univers (2). »

Sans discuter ce passage absolument dénué de sens, il faut bien dire au moins que, s'il n'existe qu'*un être unique, indivisible, dont tous les êtres sont membres*, il est clair qu'il n'y a pas de Dieu, de Dieu distinct du monde, personnel, créateur.

Tous ces messieurs ont représenté ce qu'ils appellent le *régime théologique*, c'est-à-dire la croyance en Dieu, comme l'état initial, comme l'enfance de l'humanité, et le régime où l'on ne croit plus en Dieu, comme l'âge adulte de l'humanité : *La libre Pensée*, cette jeune revue qui s'avoue si franchement matérialiste, dit de même :

« Partout l'humanité a rêvé avant de penser. Après tout, mieux vaut encore créer DES CHIMÈRES que de ne rien créer.

« Mais aujourd'hui la science a grandi. Déjà nombre d'esprits hardis ont répudié à toujours vos entités métaphysiques (le Dieu de Platon, le nôtre). Dépouillant *la réalité* DES ORISPEAUX qui la cachent à vos yeux, ils acceptent hardiment l'existence telle qu'elle est... sans regretter *un passé divin qui n'exista jamais*, sans aspirer à un futur océan de félicités. Ils se considèrent simplement comme les moyens imparfaits *des êtres organisés*. »

(1) *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 1^{er} mars 1864.

(2) M. Taine, *Philosophes français*, p. 364.

Voilà donc Dieu, l'âme, l'immortalité de l'âme, traités d'*oriepeaux* vieilliss et usés. L'article se termine par ces paroles : « O entités méthaphysiques, bulles de savon diaprées, dont « s'amuse *un moment* l'intelligence humaine dans son enfance, « et que plus tard elle s'étonne d'avoir aimées (1) ! »

Le troisième numéro de cette Revue chante la ruine, dans les esprits contemporains, de la croyance à Dieu et à l'âme, toujours, bien entendu, sous le nom d'hypothèses métaphysiques : « C'est pour le penseur un bien intéressant et encourageant spectacle, que de voir incessamment, à chaque jour, à « chaque heure, grandir et monter le flot scientifique, décroître et s'évanouir les *hypothèses métaphysiques* (2). »

Suit un poème, intitulé, comme celui de Lucrèce, *de Naturarum*. Le poète de l'ancien athéisme y est célébré pompeusement :

Moi... j'évoquerai Lucrèce...
Dégageons l'horizon, dissipons les chimères... (3).

Et l'athée moderne bafoue, comme de raison, jusqu'au déisme de Rousseau et de Robespierre :

O vicaire onctueux, bon savoyard Rousseau,
Qui toi-même instruisis Robespierre au berceau
A cueillir des bouquets POUR UN ÊTRE SUPRÊME (4).

Il se moque aussi du panthéisme onctueux de M. Renan, lequel, après avoir supprimé Dieu, chante au *divin* des hymnes mystiques.

Toute idée de Dieu étant ainsi résolûment répudiée, vient alors, exposée sans détours et sans voiles, la doctrine de l'athéisme et du matérialisme :

TOUT est MATIÈRE, force, organisme, action.

(1) *La libre pensée*, 24 octobre 1866, p. 4.

(2) *La libre pensée*, 4 novembre 1866, p. 19.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Ibid.

Et la matière et la force, que sont-elles?

L'une et l'autre est sans fin et sans commencement,...
Vous êtes votre cause. AUCUN DIEU NE VOUS FIT.
Votre coexistence à l'univers suffit.

Plus loin l'auteur salue le soleil comme

Le créateur de notre humble univers,

Qui

Du limon nourricier FIT JAILLIR NOS ANCÊTRES.

Et, immédiatement après ces vers, vient un article sous le titre : l'*Homme, singe perfectionné*. L'auteur de l'article déclare, comme nous l'avons dit, que l'explication qui fait de l'homme un singe perfectionné est « la plus simple, celle qui est appuyée par le plus grand nombre d'observations. »

L'*Opinion nationale* et le *Siècle* ont naturellement souhaité la bienvenue à leurs nouveaux confrères de *la libre Pensée*. Voici dans quels termes s'exprime le *Siècle* :

« Nous recevons le premier numéro d'un journal hebdomadaire sous ce titre : *La Libre Pensée*. Nous souhaitons la bienvenue à ce nouvel organe DE DOCTRINES QUI NOUS SONT CHÈRES (1). »

Et je lisais ce matin même dans l'*Avenir national* (2) :

L'opinion de M. Vogt, « que nous pourrions bien n'être que le fruit de modifications successives opérées sur des ancêtres beaucoup moins parfaits que nous, et MÊME VOISINS DES GRANDS SINGES, cette opinion *gagne tous les jours son terrain*. » L'auteur de l'article ajoutait que « nos chercheurs sont en chasse, nos paléontologistes furètent, » pour « trouver l'HOMME SIMIEN ; » l'animal qui, selon eux, a dû opérer la transition entre le singe et l'homme (3).

(1) Le *Siècle*, cité par la *Revue matérialiste et athée*.

(2) 27 novembre 1866.

(3) *Ibid.*

La *Revue du Progrès* avait précédé la *Libre Pensée* dans cette voie de la franche négation de Dieu, au nom du matérialisme. C'est ce qu'on rencontre à chaque page de cette revue.

Nous avons vu déjà comment elle malmenait sur ce point ce qui lui semble l'hypocrisie du panthéisme.

Ailleurs, nous lisons des phrases comme celle-ci : « Dans « l'éternelle immensité de la nature, il n'y a pas un seul « atome d'espace qui soit vide de matière. *La matière rem- « plit l'infini*. Dans cette plénitude, où y aurait-il place pour « l'immatérialité des âmes ? » à plus forte raison pour l'immatérialité de Dieu (1).

Rien sans doute n'est plus contradictoire dans les termes que de réclamer un espace matériel pour des êtres immatériels par définition : mais telle est la force philosophique de ces messieurs.

Ailleurs, je lis :

« Il y a plus de soixante ans qu'il ne devrait plus être ques- « tion de toutes ces *entités de raison* qui constituent la philo- « sophie scholastique, et de tous ces mythes sacrés qui peuplent « les cerveaux de nos femmes et de nos enfants (2), » *Entités de raison*, c'est-à-dire dans le langage dédaigneux de ces étranges philosophes, Dieu et l'âme humaine.

Voilà donc Dieu absolument supprimé par le matérialisme, comme par le positivisme et par le panthéisme.

D'autres matérialistes s'expriment ainsi :

« Le mot matérialisme implique l'*exclusion du divin* ; et « *c'est pourquoi* nous y tenons, n'en voyant pas de meilleur. »

« *Dieu, banni du domaine de la science, s'est réfugié dans la « métaphysique*. Des hommes qui se disent philosophes ont « conservé *cette hypothèse* !... L'idée de Dieu sera déjà bien « ébranlée... *il faut encore lui porter les derniers coups*, « en montrant *combien peu* CETTE VIEILLE HYPOTHÈSE est en « harmonie avec *la science moderne* (3). »

(1) Juin 1863, p. 296.

(2) Décembre 1863, p. 231.

(3) M. Naquet, *de la Méthode*, p. 52.

Tous ces textes sont d'hier.

Ces doctrines qui chassent Dieu de la nature le chassent aussi de l'histoire. Car évidemment, il ne peut pas plus gouverner l'homme que la nature. Que sera donc l'histoire? Le matérialisme, parlant clair, dit que l'histoire n'est au fond que *de la mécanique*. Et cette philosophie athée de l'histoire est aussi celle du positivisme et du panthéisme : Je rapproche les écoles, et les formules de ces messieurs, pour montrer l'identité foncière des doctrines.

Le Matérialisme.—« Dans les grands courants historiques... « il n'y a, *comme partout, que DES PROBLÈMES DE MÉCANIQUE* (1). »

Et « lorsque nous avons considéré la race, le milieu, le moment, c'est-à-dire le *ressort* du dedans, la *pression* du dehors, « et l'*impulsion* déjà acquise, nous avons épuisé non-seulement « *toutes les causes réelles*, mais encore *toutes les causes possibles* du mouvement (2). »

Ainsi, nulle intervention providentielle possible dans l'histoire : l'histoire se réduit à des *problèmes de mécanique*.

Le Positivisme. — « Rien dans le monde ne pouvant être « effectivement soustrait à la *chaîne* des lois universelles, l'histoire n'est qu'un cas particulier, bien que le plus complexe « de ce vaste enchaînement.....

« Il faut admettre sans restriction que l'évolution graduelle « du genre humain... est un phénomène naturel et aussi soumis à ses lois propres que l'est l'*évolution du chêne* depuis « le gland jusqu'au moment où il couvre le sol environnant de « son vaste ombrage (3).

« L'histoire est un ensemble de faits qui se succèdent dans « un *ordre nécessaire*, par *enchaînement inévitable*, par une « *évolution logique*, par une *genèse indispensable* (4). »

(1) M. Taine, *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, *ibid.*, XXXI.

(2) *Ibid.*, XXXIII.

(3) *Nouvelle exégèse de Shakespeare*, Revue des Deux-Mondes, 15 novembre 1860.

(4) M. le docteur Bourdet, p. 199 et 200.

Encore la mécanique du matérialisme.

Le Panthéisme. — « Le problème de la cause suprême se
« résout en poèmes, non en lois ; ou, s'il faut parler ici de lois,
« ce sont celles de la physique, de l'astronomie, de l'histoire,
« qui SEULES sont *les lois de l'être*, et ont *une pleine réalité.* »
« Tout ce qui s'est passé dans le *monde des phénomènes* a été
« le développement régulier *des lois de l'être*, qui ne consti-
« tuent qu'un *seul ordre de gouvernement qui est la nature*(1). »
Toujours la mécanique du matérialisme, et l'histoire athée.

Les rapports ne sont pas moins évidents, et cela devait être, entre les doctrines de ces trois écoles, sur la nature même de l'homme et sur la fin des choses, sur l'âme et l'immortalité de l'âme.

Écoutons encore les chefs, nous verrons ensuite comment les disciples comprennent et répètent les choses :

Je commence par le *Dictionnaire des sciences médicales*, ce manuel classique des jeunes étudiants en médecine, et je choisis quelques définitions entre mille. Il est indispensable de les mettre de nouveau sous les yeux du public :

« Il faut réserver le nom d'âme à l'ensemble des facultés du
« *système nerveux central*, en sa totalité.

« Le mot d'âme exprime, considéré anatomiquement, l'en-
« *semble des fonctions du cerveau et de la moelle épinière*, et
« considéré physiologiquement, l'ensemble des fonctions de la
« *sensibilité encéphalique...*

« La pensée est inhérente à la *substance cérébrale* tant que
« celle-ci se nourrit, *comme la contractilité aux muscles, l'é-*
« *lasticité aux cartilages, et aux ligaments jaunes.*

« La *supposition* d'esprits, dans les doctrines spiritualistes,
« c'est-à-dire d'*êtres immatériels*, liés ou non liés à la ma-
« tière (Dieu et l'âme), est *une hypothèse*, dont l'office com-
« mence à être pleinement rempli par la conception positive
« du monde et de l'homme (2). »

(1) M. Renan, *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 15 janvier 1860. — *Liberté de penser*, t. III, p. 465.

(2) *Dictionnaire des sciences médicales*, articles *Ame, Esprit, Idée, Vie.*

L'auteur de ces définitions matérialistes les répétait toutes équivalement, quand il disait, il y a peu de jours, dans cette préface mise par lui en tête de l'*Étude de Philosophie positive* si franchement àthée et matérialiste : « L'âme est l'ensemble des fonctions morales et intellectuelles dévolues au cerveau. » (p. XIX.)

« L'âme est une fonction du système nerveux... » (p. XX.) C'est-à-dire, selon la remarque de la *Revue médicale* (1), que le mot *âme*, dans la définition positiviste et matérialiste, signifie tout juste qu'il n'y a plus d'âme dans l'homme, plus d'âme du tout.

« Une idée est le produit d'une combinaison analogue à celle de l'acide formique ; la pensée dépend du phosphore contenu dans la substance cérébrale ; la vertu, le dévoûment et le courage, sont des courants d'électricité organiques, etc. » Voilà, selon la *Revue médicale*, le dernier fond de la doctrine (2). Et c'est ce que M. Taine exprimait avec précision, lorsqu'il disait : « Le vice et la vertu sont des produits, comme le sucre et le vitriol (3). »

Ce matérialisme abject, je le retrouve dans nombre d'articles des grands journaux ou des grandes revues.

Je lisais au mois d'août dernier : « *Les manifestations intellectuelles sont à la substance nerveuse ce qu'est la pesanteur à toute matière* (4). »

« La science postérieure (à Descartes et à Leibnitz) a reconnu que, puisqu'il n'existe aucune différence anatomique absolue entre le cerveau de l'homme et le cerveau des bêtes et non plus aucune différence fonctionnelle absolue par rapport aux facultés, les phénomènes sont de même ordre, et qu'une *psychologie qui nie ce fait, une philosophie qui se fonde sur cette psychologie, SONT AVORTÉES* (5). »

(1) 15 février 1866, p. 134.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Histoire de la littérature anglaise, introduction*, p. xv.

(4) *Philosophie positive*, 15 août 1866.

(5) *Ibid.*

Donc, chez l'homme, point d'âme, substance immatérielle distincte du corps. La matière, rien que la matière et ses opérations, ou, comme ils disent, « sa résultante. »

M. Renan va jusqu'à dire : « La matière est une condition nécessaire de la pensée. » — Et « l'ancienne hypothèse de deux substances pour former l'homme, » c'est-à-dire la doctrine que l'homme est un être composé d'une âme et d'un corps, ils la rejettent, et ils ne voient dans l'âme « qu'une résultante (1). »

A cet enseignement du manuel classique médical, des grands journaux et des grandes revues, ajoutons celui des grandes chaires de faculté et des livres.

Le matérialisme moderne, dit la *Revue médicale*, dans sa méthode d'enseignement et selon le tempérament de professeurs, deux manières de procéder à l'égard de l'intelligence humaine ;

« Si le professeur est très-absolu, il enseigne nettement le plus franc matérialisme, et si le professeur est prudent ou habile, il le dissimule sous des mots transparents : ce qui fait dire à un matérialiste allemand, M. Moleschott, qui ne comprend pas les réserves de nos compatriotes : « Ou vous ignorez la doctrine matérialiste, ou vous n'avez point le courage d'avouer la dernière conséquence, sans crainte comme sans égards (2). »

Mais voici un médecin matérialiste, cité par la *Revue médicale*, et qui, lui du moins, ne dissimule rien :

« La loi de transformation universelle des diverses espèces de mouvement nous montre ce qu'il faut penser de la vieille hypothèse de l'âme humaine (3). »

Et je lisais ce matin encore (4) dans l'*Avenir national*, qu

(1) M. Renan, *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, t. XIV.

(2) *Revue médicale*, février 1866.

(3) *Revue médicale*, avril 1866.

(4) 27 novembre 1866.

ÂME à laquelle croyait le docteur Stahl, l'âme, principe supérieur et immatériel, s'en est allée « AU GARDE-MEUBLE DES VIEILLES IDÉES; et le méritait bien. » En effet : « C'est vraiment bien la peine, » ajoutait le journal, avec une étonnante logique, « que toutes choses en notre corps soient réglées par un principe d'essence supérieure et presque divine, pour voir des maladies se développer, des plaies se cicatriser de travers. »

Quant à la doctrine qui élimine l'âme, et « qui consiste à ne voir dans les phénomènes de la vie que la mise en jeu de forces purement naturelles, » c'est-à-dire purement physiques ou chimiques, l'*Avenir national* déclare que « ainsi pensent aujourd'hui MM. Robin, Berthelot, Claude Bernard, et, avec eux, plusieurs générations de disciples. »

On n'a pas oublié, du reste, ce professeur de médecine à la faculté de Montpellier, lequel enseignait qu'il n'y a pas de différence entre l'homme et l'animal. « L'intelligence est un phénomène cérébral; la preuve, c'est qu'elle est en raison directe de la masse encéphalique... On n'admet la supériorité intellectuelle de l'homme sur l'animal, que parce que l'on compare les extrêmes; mais en se tenant dans la moyenne on arrive à une conclusion différente. Ainsi un *orang-outang* est plus intelligent qu'un naturel du Van-Diemen (1). »

Le *Dictionnaire des Sciences médicales* est absolument du même avis :

« La raison n'est pas l'apanage exclusif de l'homme... Les animaux mammifères ont un cerveau fondamentalement disposé comme celui de l'homme, » et il y a « *passage* entre les deux raisons : » *la raison humaine* et *la raison animale*. (Art. *Raison*) (2).

(1) *La Gazette du Midi*, citée par l'*Union*.

(2) Et encore : « La *sociabilité* est un résultat de l'organisation... de telles et de telles ESPÈCES D'ANIMAUX, DE L'HOMME EN PARTICULIER, selon le degré et le développement de leurs instincts altruistes. » (Art. *Sociabilité*.)

Et même :

« Beaucoup d'animaux nous surpassent en énergie, en circonspection, en persévérance, et peut-être même par l'ensemble de ces qualités. »

En conséquence de ces belles découvertes de la science, voici comment l'homme est défini — comme s'il n'y avait en lui que l'animalité pure — « L'homme est un ANIMAL MAMMIFÈRE, de « l'ordre des primates (classe de singes), famille des bimanés, « caractérisé taxinomiquement par une peau à duvet ou à poils « rares, etc. (1). »

Laissons parler maintenant les disciples et les victimes de cet enseignement.

La *Libre Pensée* « répudie hautement TOUTE HYPOTHÈSE « admettant une *espèce d'âme*; » elle se moque du divin Platon qui, avec son idée de Dieu et de l'âme, « a égaré l'humanité « par de grands mots et de creuses rêveries. »

« Il n'y a, dit-elle nettement, qu'une matière toujours on- « doyante; » et elle définit l'être vivant, l'homme par consé- quent : « Un agrégat de fibres et de cellules *absorbant et sé- « crétant, c'est-à-dire vivant* (2). »

La *Revue du Progrès* ne voilait pas davantage son maté- rialisme, et ce qu'il y a de remarquable ici, c'est la docilité d'écho de ces pauvres disciples du matérialisme : ils ne se donnent pas la peine de changer les paroles des maîtres, ils les répètent mot à mot.

« Il est sûr que les animaux peuvent être comparés à l'homme « sous le rapport intellectuel, disait la *Revue du Progrès*. Cer- « tains singes sont même plus intelligents que certains hommes; « l'ORANG-OUTANG par exemple a l'entendement plus déve- « loppé qu'un naturel de Van-Diémen. »

On le voit, c'est mot à mot la leçon apprise à la Faculté de médecine de Montpellier.

M. Renan a écrit cette phrase : « Ce n'est pas d'un raison- « nement, mais de l'ensemble des sciences que sort ce grand « résultat, il n'y a pas de surnaturel. » (C'est-à-dire d'être au- dessus de la nature, de Dieu par conséquent.)

La *Revue du Progrès* répète pour son compte la même phrase : « Ce n'est pas d'un raisonnement particulier, ni d'une

(1) *Dictionnaire des sciences médicales*, art. Homme.

(2) *La libre Pensée*, 21 octobre 1866.

exposition limitée, mais bien de tout l'ensemble des sciences naturelles que ressort ce grand résultat : L'ÂME EST UNE CHIMÈRE ET SON IMMORTALITÉ UN NON-SENS (1). »

On le voit, ils ne peuvent répéter plus docilement la leçon apprise.

Ils continuent :

« L'HOMME EST UN ANIMAL *ne différant pas* ESSENTIELLEMENT *des autres.* » Même quand il est, selon l'expression de L. le docteur Bourdet : « un animal adorateur. »

« Tout esprit sérieux qui voudra réfléchir comprendra que l'existence d'une *entité immatérielle, distincte du corps, est une pure fiction, c'est-à-dire se convaincra qu'il n'y a pas d'âme.*

« C'est un matérialisme qui dépasse toute attente, va répéter en soupirant Mgr l'Évêque d'Orléans.

« Soit, mais ce n'en est pas moins un résultat incontestable, si incontestable que quiconque voudrait le récuser *ferait preuve d'UNE ABERRATION D'ESPRIT SANS NOM.* (2)

Il faut voir après tout cela avec quel dédain les doctrines spiritualistes de l'Université, sont traitées par ces messieurs :

Je lis dans l'*Etude de philosophie positive* : « La douane universitaire, digne héritière présomptive du jésuitisme... », a, par sa psychologie, énérvé, efféminé et étioilé les intelligences françaises, en se substituant jésuitiquement à la mâle philosophie des Tracy et des Cabanis ; elle a organisé UNE VÉRITABLE PROSTITUTION INTELLECTUELLE... (3).

« L'éclectisme est une décrépitude... il a abouti à MM. Victor Cousin et Jules Simon. »

Nous verrons de plus, quand nous parlerons du péril social, quel sort cette école réserve à l'Université.

Telles sont les négations de Dieu, de l'âme, de la vie future,

(1) *Revue du Progrès*, novembre 1863, p. 461, Janvier 1864.

(2) *Ibid.*, novembre 1863.

(3) *Etude de philosophie positive.*

que ces messieurs appellent : « La foi nouvelle, qui doit régé-
« nérer le monde (1). »

Comment supporter après cela la sophistique de M. Renan, osant dire : « Le matérialisme est un non-sens. L'athéisme est « une erreur de grammaire. Le matérialiste voit l'esprit à sa « manière. L'athée est un esprit timide qui recule devant les « formules élevées. (2) »

Non : si comme le disent les francs matérialistes, « il n'y a « pas d'âme ; » ou si, comme l'affirment les matérialistes recou-verts de panthéisme, « l'âme n'est qu'une résultante de l'orga-
« nisme, » par une conséquence nécessaire, l'âme périt avec l'organisme.

La *Revue du Progrès* le dit nettement : « L'âme étant re-
« connue fictive, l'immortalité de l'âme doit l'être du même
« coup (3). »

Il est donc clair que, quand matérialistes, positivistes, panthéistes, parlent de l'immortalité de l'âme, cela doit s'entendre non de l'immortalité de la personne humaine, mais simplement, selon les paroles de M. Renan, d'une immortalité idéale de l'homme dans ses œuvres, et dans le souvenir de ses semblables.

« Le sage sera immortel, *car ses œuvres* vivront... Les ŒU-
« VRES échappent SEULES à la caducité universelle... L'homme
« méchant, sot ou frivole, mourra *tout entier*. » — « Je ne
« vois pas de raison pour qu'un papou soit immortel (4). »

Et si cette doctrine paraît désolante, écoutez la réponse :
« A cela, disent les positivistes, nul remède (5). »

« Ceux-là, reprennent les panthéistes, ceux-là seuls arrivent
« à trouver le secret de la vie, qui savent étouffer leur tris-
« tesse intérieure, et se passer d'espérances (6). » Et encore

(1) *Revue du progrès*, novembre 1863, p. 459.

(2) *Revue des Deux-Mondes*.

(3) *Revue du Progrès*, novembre 1863, 469.

(4) *Préface de Job*, p. xci. — *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, janvier 1860.

(5) *Conservation, Révolution, Positivisme*, p. 303.

(6) M. Renan, *le livre de Job*, p. LXXXV.

« Si la vérité est triste, nous aurons pour consolation de l'avoir trouvée selon les règles (1). »

Et les matérialistes : « Sans doute la vie future est une espérance qui console l'humanité depuis des siècles, un dogme enseigné par beaucoup de religions, et cru par un nombre immense d'individus. Mais tout cela nous importe peu, à nous Philosophes (2). »

J'ai entendu dire que la préface de la *Vie de Jésus* commençant par ces mots : « Te souviens-tu du sein de Dieu où tu reposes, » etc., avait fait pleurer plus d'une femme sensible. Mais comment, en lisant le livre, n'ont-elles pas vu à quel degré le romancier panthéiste, par ces phrases sentimentales et autres, se moque d'elles et de tout le monde ? Car enfin si, parvenues à la page où l'auteur dit : « Qui sait si le dernier terme du progrès, dans des millions de siècles, n'amènera pas la conscience absolue de l'univers, et dans cette conscience le réveil de tout ce qui a vécu (3) ? » elles avaient compris la théorie enveloppée dans ces paroles, à coup sûr elles auraient vu que cette préface n'est autre chose qu'une moquerie. Si en effet la conscience de l'individu ne doit se réveiller, supposé qu'elle se réveille, que dans des millions de siècles, lorsque la conscience absolue de l'univers se réveillera elle-même, la conscience de l'individu mort et celle de l'univers dorment donc jusque-là : comment alors un individu mort peut-il aujourd'hui se souvenir, et se souvenir au sein de Dieu, qui lui-même, selon l'auteur, n'est pas fait encore, et n'a pas la conscience complète de lui-même ! La phrase sentimentale de M. Renan n'a donc pas d'autre sens, d'après ses doctrines, que celui-ci : Te souviens-tu — toi qui ne peux pas te souvenir — et au sein de Dieu qui n'est pas encore ? — N'est-ce pas là une trop impertinente et amère dérision ?

Que de fois, si on serrait ainsi de près la phraséologie

(1) Le même, *Discours d'ouverture*

(2) La *Revue du Progrès*, novembre 1863, p. 169.

(3) *Vie de Jésus*, p. 288

creuse de cet écrivain, on arriverait à voir qu'il se moque presque toujours de lui-même et des autres !

Je dois ajouter que ces doctrines sur la fin des choses ne sont pas les seules qui aient cours aujourd'hui en France, parmi les esprits : Les vieilles erreurs de la métempsychose et des existences successives, erreurs qu'on aurait pu croire à jamais évanouies, sont remises en circulation, comme on peut le voir notamment par le livre de M. Jean Reynaud, *Ciel et Terre*, par celui de M. Enfantin, publié récemment, *la Vie éternelle*, et par les discours très-instructifs prononcés sur certaines tombes, lesquels on peut lire de temps à autre dans les colonnes de l'*Opinion nationale* et du *Siècle*.

Il est encore une autre espèce de métempsychose, et les matérialistes l'exposaient récemment ainsi :

« *La matière* est impérissable, la mort n'est qu'une forme de la vie. Quand *le corps* se disjoint et *se dissout dans le Grand Tout*, chacun de *ses atomes*, dont la cohésion formait l'existence, s'unit par l'affinité aux atomes de même nature dispersés par la mort, cette chimiste de la vie. » Par l'affinité ou l'amour, les atomes bons se réagrègent à de bons atomes ; les atomes mauvais à de plus mauvais encore (1). Et c'est là ce qui constitue la loi du progrès pour l'humanité !

Telles sont donc les doctrines qui ont cours aujourd'hui parmi nous, non pas timidement, obscurément : non, cela est propagé hautement et marche tête levée ; et c'est le second fait qu'il importe de mettre maintenant dans une pleine lumière.

II

LA PROPAGANDE.

Cette propagande est ardente et puissante :

Je prête l'oreille aux bruits de la presse, j'écoute les écrivains en renom et en crédit, et j'affirme que ces funestes écoles

(1) *Revue du Progrès*, novembre 1863, p. 121

disposent d'une immense publicité : elles parlent dans les livres, dans les journaux, dans les revues, même dans des chaires publiques ; elles gagnent chaque jour du terrain parmi les hommes adonnés exclusivement aux sciences positives, parmi la jeunesse et les ouvriers ; en un mot, je suis forcé d'avouer qu'il se fait dans notre pays, dans le sens de l'athéisme, un effort d'impiété, dont les progrès incessants peuvent aller à des limites qu'on ne saurait dire ; car ce mouvement semble partir de haut et certainement il va loin.

Ces écoles en effet ont une tactique : elles ne comptent dans leur sein ni un savant ni un philosophe, dignes de ce nom, tous les grands scrutateurs de la nature humaine ou physique les ont désavouées avec indignation ; elles ne peuvent pas invoquer en leur faveur une seule des grandes expérimentations scientifiques de notre temps, elles ont toujours et partout été vaincues : n'importe ; elles se donnent comme le résultat de tout le travail scientifique moderne ; elles le répètent, et c'est par de tels mots qu'elles abusent les ignorants et la jeunesse légère, et tendent à leur faire croire que *les sciences*, à force de *progresser*, ont fini par découvrir et démontrer qu'il n'y a ni Dieu, ni âme ; et je vois en ce moment les défenseurs de la philosophie spiritualiste occupés à combattre des ouvrages publiés par de prétendus docteurs, qui travaillent à rendre la science athée.

Certes, nul plus que moi ne rend hommage à la science contemporaine. J'admire cette puissance donnée à l'esprit humain, de ravir à la nature ses secrets, et d'appliquer immédiatement les conquêtes de la science, en mille fécondes industries. Mais la science qui se retourne contre son auteur, qui se pénètre d'athéisme, qui s'enivre d'elle-même au point de vouloir expliquer le monde sans Dieu, et qui dit à Dieu : Retire-toi, tu embarrasses l'esprit humain, tu n'es qu'une hypothèse inutile ; j'en ai horreur, et je m'écrie : O hommes de la vraie science et de la vraie philosophie, sauvez la science contemporaine de cette dégradante et fatale apostasie.

Car ce mouvement, je l'ai dit, va loin ; la puissance de diffu-

sion de ces doctrines surpasse de beaucoup celle dont elles pouvaient disposer au XVIII^e siècle.

Il est aujourd'hui un fait capital, dont on n'est pas assez frappé, parce qu'il résulte de faits isolés et successifs; mais il importe de le constater, afin de se rendre bien compte de la situation où nous sommes et de voir où nous marchons.

Pour des motifs politiques que je ne veux, ni ne dois discuter ici, depuis dix ans, de nombreux journaux qui défendaient la religion ont été supprimés en France, dans nos diverses provinces. Et tous ceux, très-nombreux, qui ont été autorisés depuis ce temps, tous, à part quelques très-rares exceptions, sont hautement des journaux antichrétiens. De telle sorte qu'en fait, aujourd'hui, dans l'état actuel de la presse, la religion et l'impiété se trouvent en présence et en lutte dans les positions que voici: quelques défenseurs isolés restent çà et là sur la brèche, sans qu'on leur permette de recruter aucun auxiliaire nouveau; tandis que la grande masse des journaux et des revues attaque, avec un concert et une audace qui vont toujours croissant, non-seulement le Pape, mais Jésus-Christ, l'Évangile, l'Église tout entière, son Clergé, ses Ordres religieux, tout son Enseignement; avec les calomnies les plus odieuses; et cela partout, chaque jour, tous les matins, dans tous les ateliers, les restaurants, les cafés, les cabarets, les gares de chemin de fer: c'est là un des aspects de la situation présente.

En voici un second: c'est que ce sont les revues et les journaux les plus répandus, le *Siècle*, les *Débats*, la *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, l'*Opinion nationale*, l'*Avenir national*, le *Temps*, l'*Indépendance belge*, qui prêtent tour à tour leurs tribunes retentissantes aux doctrines de l'athéisme, du matérialisme, du panthéisme, et de l'antichristianisme.

La *Revue des Deux-Mondes* s'est fait ici, depuis quelques années surtout, un rôle à part. Je ne sais s'il est un seul de ses numéros qui ne contienne une attaque, voilée ou violente, mais toujours profonde et perfide, contre la religion, et si les docteurs du panthéisme et du matérialisme ont quelque part une tribune qui leur soit plus facilement ouverte, pour les aider

à pénétrer là où ni leurs personnes ni leurs doctrines ne parviendraient à s'introduire : cela, toutefois, je le reconnais, avec un mélange, singulièrement fait pour tromper les dupes, d'articles agréables et d'une tenue élégante. Aussi, mon étonnement est grand que les familles chrétiennes ne ferment pas rigoureusement leur porte à cette revue, tant qu'elle persistera dans une telle voie.

Il y a plus : dans ces derniers temps, des organes spéciaux ont été fondés pour propager ces tristes doctrines athées ou antichrétiennes, tels que la *Revue germanique*, la *Morale indépendante*, le *Courrier français*, la *libre Conscience*, l'*Alliance religieuse universelle*, la *libre Pensée*, et cette jeune *Revue du Progrès* dont l'accent avait quelque chose de si âpre et de si ardent ; puis des bibliothèques détestables, et d'autres publications encore. J'ai dû me procurer et étudier ces diverses publications : ç'a été une longue et douloureuse étude.

La *libre Pensée*, que j'ai citée bien des fois déjà, a été fondée il y a un mois, à peine, dans le but hautement avoué de propager l'athéisme et le matérialisme.

Cette revue ne fera pas de politique ; mais toutes les croyances chères au monde, toutes les doctrines qui ont toujours été l'appui des âmes et la base des sociétés, elle les attaquera à son aise, sans relâche ; et bien qu'elle s'adresse spécialement à la jeunesse des écoles, elle s'efforcera par une propagande ardente de mettre ses doctrines d'athéisme et de matérialisme à la portée de tous, c'est son expression. J'ai sous les yeux la liste de ses rédacteurs : ils sont une trentaine. Il y a des jeunes gens parmi eux ; et j'ai la douleur d'y rencontrer un nom porté par un savant illustre et respecté, ennemi de la science athée, mais dont le fils, hélas ! n'a pas marché jusqu'ici sur les traces de son père.

Ces messieurs m'ont écrit et m'ont demandé « un petit ana thème pour le prospectus et les rédacteurs de la *libre Pensée*. » Ils peuvent être tranquilles à cet égard : je n'éprouve pour eux, et surtout pour leurs dupes, qu'un sentiment, celui

d'une immense compassion : quant à leurs doctrines, je n'ai voulu qu'une chose, les *exposer*.

Ce n'est pas tout, et la presse de province, fidèle écho de la presse parisienne, répète à l'infini, distribue en menue monnaie, et met à la portée de tous les esprits, les impiétés venues de plus haut : *la Gironde, le Courrier du Gers, le Progrès de Lyon*, et bien d'autres encore (1).

Aussi, dans les nombreux articles publiés contre ma lettre, il ne m'a pas été difficile de reconnaître de quelle école, de quelle espèce d'athéisme venaient les objections : les uns m'attaquaient au nom du positivisme, les autres au nom du panthéisme, d'autres au nom du matérialisme : concert auquel se mariait parfaitement la voix de ce déisme, que le plus logicien des révolutionnaires contemporains, M. Proudhon, a si bien défini : « Un pied-à-terre nécessaire pour tous ceux qui abandonnent la religion de leurs pères. » Déisme poli envers le Christianisme, qu'il nie implicitement par ses théories erronées sur la Providence et sur la prière ; et déisme inconséquent, qui fera toujours, en politique comme en philosophie, les affaires de l'athéisme.

Ceux qui en sont là, les docteurs clairvoyants de l'athéisme les appellent leurs auxiliaires : « Notre force, disent-ils et avec « raison, n'est pas en nous. Outre les auxiliaires avoués qui sont « en petit nombre, nous avons *les auxiliaires latents et involontaires* qui sont *en grand nombre* (2). Nous rencontrons une « multitude d'esprits tout préparés, et nous avons, si je puis « ainsi parler, *des intelligences dans la place* (3). »

(1) *La libre Pensée* cite avec une joyeuse ironie le fait récent, qui est significatif en effet : « Les doctrines corruptrices sont partout professées, imprimées, publiées. Nous lisons dans le *Journal de Saint-Jean-d'Angely* du « 24 octobre un article que nous recommandons à nos lecteurs. » Et l'article le mérite ; on y lit : « La vraie science doit négliger ces spéculations impossibles (Dieu, l'âme et la vie future). Laissons là les théologies ; elles tournent dans un cercle étroit, » etc.

(2) *Paroles de Philosophie positive*, p. 54.

(3) *Conservation*, p. 55.

Et tandis que, de la sorte, pour la partie lettrée et cultivée de la nation, les mauvaises doctrines circulent, sous toutes les formes, par les livres, par les revues scientifiques, et produisent d'incalculables ravages dans les esprits, elles passent, de ces livres, de ces revues, de ces grands journaux, dans d'innombrables publications de tous genres et de tous formats, almanachs, chansons populaires, romans à 4 et 5 sous, composés et colportés exprès pour le peuple (1). Et il ne manque pas d'ailleurs, on le sait, dans les petites villes, et quelquefois dans les bourgs, de ces cabinets dits de lecture, où l'on trouve à bon marché les plus immoraux comme les plus irréligieux écrits; et presque partout aussi se rencontrent aujourd'hui de ces philosophes de cabaret, formés par le *Siècle*, l'*Avenir national* et l'*Opinion nationale* qui, le verre d'une main, le journal de l'autre, endoctrinent autour d'eux les simples, et savent leur traduire, dans un langage trop bien entendu, les arguments de l'impiété savante.

Non, j'en'avais pas tort de citer, dans la lettre qu'on a tant attaquée, comme un signe des progrès de l'athéisme contemporain, deux de ses invasions à mes yeux les plus redoutables, une invasion dans la jeunesse, et une invasion dans les masses.

J'ai sous les yeux en ce moment, sortant de la même officine, trois ou quatre *bibliothèques* composées exprès pour le peuple, par une société de PROFESSEURS et de PUBLICISTES, comme dit le libraire : ce sont de petits volumes à 60 et 25 centimes; cela s'appelle *Bibliothèque utile*, *Bibliothèque nationale*, *Ecole mutuelle*. Or, les bibliothèques rééditent les plus immorales productions du XVIII^e siècle, telles que : les *Romans* et *Contes* de Diderot, y compris le plus infâme de tous : se trouvent là aussi la *Vie éternelle* du P. Infantin, et autres écrits saint-simoniens; avec des volumes nouveaux sur l'histoire ou

(1) Un rapport officiel de la Commission de colportage au Ministre de l'intérieur, constatait expressément que, « sur neuf millions de livres vendus au public des villes, villages et campagnes, par la voie du colportage, les huit neuvièmes de ces livres, c'est-à-dire HUIT MILLIONS, étaient, avant 1862, plus ou moins des *livres immoraux*. » Où cela en est-il aujourd'hui?

sur la religion, dans lesquels le Christianisme est présenté sous les couleurs les plus odieuses, et où les passions irrégieuses les plus violentes sont soufflées au peuple; on y retrouve les expressions d'*hommes noirs*, de *parti-prêtre*, et autres, comme aux plus mauvais jours.

Des journaux applaudissent à ces publications, et ces jours derniers encore l'*Opinion Nationale* se félicitait de voir la *presse philosophique à très-bon marché* « à l'étalage des libraires et jusque dans les kiosques (1). »

Ces bibliothèques, ainsi que les organes de la presse philosophique à très-bon marché, la *Morale indépendante*, la *libre Pensée*, la *libre Conscience*, sont pour le peuple, et, comme dit l'*Opinion nationale*, pour la *foule*, pour les *simples*.

Pour montrer l'invasion active de ces doctrines dans les masses, j'ai déjà cité les paroles suivantes et très-significatives du *journal des Économistes* (2) : « Il était à croire que la doctrine positiviste n'avait pas franchi le petit cercle d'adeptes dont le chef était entouré, qu'elle avait tout au plus agi sur cette classe de demi-savants que tourmentent les idées fixes; « qu'on juge de ma surprise, » — c'est un membre de l'Institut qui parle ainsi, — « lorsqu'un jour, demandant dans une « visite à un ouvrier si les principes religieux étaient le fait dominant dans sa fabrique, j'entendis ce mot sortir de sa bouche : Nous, Monsieur, nous sommes positivistes. »

Mais si l'on veut voir quels efforts de propagande sont faits en même temps dans de plus hautes régions, que l'on compte, dans les catalogues de certaine librairie, le grand nombre d'ouvrages matérialistes et athées publiés par un seul libraire.

Même avant le congrès de Liège, quelques jours après mon *Avertissement à la Jeunesse*, j'avais lu dans la *Revue du Progrès*, les paroles que voici :

« Il fallait la voir, cette jeunesse, il fallait l'entendre ré-

(1) *Opinion nationale*, 26 novembre 1866.

(2) Mai 1858, p. 209.

« pondre par d'immenses acclamations à M. Renan... Alors
« peut-être vous seriez-vous rendu compte du souffle profond
« qui l'agite et la pousse... Vous auriez peut-être compris
« qu'il ne s'agit pas ici des obscurs débats de tel système
« philosophique, mais de l'élaboration d'une nouvelle foi (1). »

Depuis, ces doctrines ont marché, et pas seulement en France, comme nous l'avons vu tout à l'heure dans la lettre de M. le docteur Robinet.

J'en avais cité pour preuves deux faits, considérables à mes yeux comme symptômes : les manifestations impies du congrès de Liège, les déclarations du congrès de Genève.

On m'a répondu : Les étudiants de Liège n'étaient que des étourdis; les ouvriers de Genève que des délégués.

— Des étourdis, en effet, qui disaient tout haut ce que d'autres disent tout bas.

— Des délégués, sans doute, mais derrière lesquels il y a ceux qu'ils représentent.

Certes, je savais bien que ces doctrines d'athéisme sont loin d'avoir infecté toute notre jeunesse, et cette généreuse jeunesse française, comme plusieurs me l'ont écrit, le prouverait au besoin. Je sais aussi que nos ouvriers, Dieu merci, ne sont pas tous des athées.

Mais derrière eux, je le répète, il y a les maîtres en athéisme, les chefs d'écoles, les écrivains renommés, accrédités, décorés, et les journaux qui continuent ardemment leur œuvre.

Et surtout, il y a, ce qu'il faut bien voir ici, l'état des esprits, qui a rendu ces congrès possibles.

A une autre époque, dans un autre état des âmes, sans un long travail préparatoire de dissolution des croyances, l'explosion de Liège n'eût pas été possible : rien de pareil n'avait encore été dit, avec un tel cynisme, depuis le XVIII^e siècle.

Ces jeunes gens, dans leur exaltation et dans leur franchise, ont tout proclamé, et les conséquences que les habiles n'avouent pas, ils les ont tirées hautement, et se sont montrés décidés,

(1) Juin 1863, p. 349.

l'occasion donnée, à les faire passer résolûment dans les faits. Tout ce qui s'est dit là sans doute est monstrueux, et les abonnés du *Siècle* eux-mêmes s'en sont émus. Mais, d'où venaient les doctrines qui ont fait là explosion? Qui donc a formé ces jeunes gens? Quels livres, quels journaux, quelles revues lisent-ils? Qui leur a servi chaque jour une telle pâture? Est-il besoin de le dire? Qui nous les a préparés pour les catastrophes politiques à venir? Dans dix ans, peut-être, ces hommes-là gouverneront. Le congrès de Liège et les articles de certains journaux révèlent les Saint-Just, les Hébert, les Chaumette, les Carrier futurs d'une nouvelle révolution démocratique et sociale. Les hommes les plus effroyables de 93 n'étaient pas autre chose que de jeunes hommes, disciples pratiques de l'athéisme et du matérialisme le plus éhonté, arrivés aux affaires, et donnant avec l'ardeur de leur âge et la fureur de leurs passions, les fruits naturels de leurs doctrines et de leur corruption (1).

Le *Siècle* et d'autres journaux m'ont dit que ces jeunes gens ont été désavoués; à tort ou à raison, ajoutent les *Débats*. Et qu'importe, Messieurs, que vous désavouiez leur langage, si vous approuvez leur doctrine? Qu'importe, dirai-je à M. le directeur du *Siècle*, que vous répudiiez ces jeunes gens et leur athéisme, en paroles, quand vous pensez comme eux; quand le lendemain même du jour où vous me répondez cela, *Dieu*, dans votre journal, est traité d'hypothèse? d'hypothèse admettant parfaitement des hypothèses contraires?

Quoi! quand vous imprimez, quand vous faites lire dans tous les cabarets de France de telles choses, vous n'attendez pas à la

(1) La plupart des grands scélérats révolutionnaires étaient de tout jeunes hommes. Quand Saint-Just arriva à la Convention, dont il ne tarda pas à devenir président, il avait à peine vingt-quatre ans. Robespierre n'en avait que trente, quand il arriva à la Constituante; il n'en avait que trente-cinq quand il monta sur l'échafaud. Danton était du même âge. Tallien avait un an de moins que Saint-Just. Babeuf avait vingt-cinq ans en 89. Voilà les hommes sous lesquels la France trembla si longtemps, et qui firent tomber tant de têtes.

Et on dit des jeunes gens de Liège: Ce sont des enfants!

toi du peuple, vous ne travaillez pas pour l'athéisme ! Faut-il dire ici ma pensée tout entière ? Je suis moins révolté de l'athéisme qui se nomme, que de l'athéisme qui se cache, de cet athéisme cauteleux, qui ne s'avoue pas, et ne s'en étale pas moins, sans cesse sous des formules trompeuses, contre lesquelles les abonnés sont sans défense, dans le *Siècle*, les *Débats*, la *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, l'*Opinion nationale*, l'*Avenir national* et consorts. Je le répète, c'est vous autres, élégants littérateurs, qui, fidèles à la méthode de l'athée Lucrèce, dorez les bords de la coupe pour mieux faire avaler le poison.

Et quant au congrès de Genève, si un honorable membre de de l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques a été à bon droit étonné et effrayé de recueillir, dans une fabrique, de la bouche d'un ouvrier, la preuve du chemin que font ces idées et des profondeurs où elles pénètrent, comment moi ne le serais-je pas de retrouver non-seulement les idées, mais le langage même des écoles et des écrivains athées chez des ouvriers, dans un congrès international, et de voir ces ouvriers égarés essayant de résoudre sans Dieu, sans la religion et contre la religion, les vastes questions qu'ils agitent ?

Dieu n'est qu'une hypothèse inutile. Ne dites plus : formule de savant qui ne sera jamais populaire. Vous le voyez, la formule scientifique est descendue dans les masses.

Mais ici encore, ce ne sont pas tant les ouvriers qui sont coupables que leurs docteurs. Ah ! l'ouvrier laissé à lui-même, à ses naturels instincts, est, d'ordinaire, bon, honnête, religieux, digne de tous les respects et de toutes les sympathies : portant avec courage le poids du jour et de la chaleur, gagnant honorablement à la sueur de son front le pain de sa famille ; sobre, frugal, tempérant ; bon époux et bon père ; heureux même et content dans sa rude vie, quand il se sent honnête. Mais, pour ne pas fléchir sous le lourd fardeau qu'il porte, pour illuminer d'espérances son travail et ses douleurs, ah ! lui surtout, il a besoin de Dieu. Et vous le lui ravissez ! Et vous croyez que, quand il aura renié Dieu, il sera plus homme, plus vertueux, plus heureux ! qu'il verra plus clair dans ces difficiles questions

sociales, où nous tous, qui l'aimons autant que vous et mieux que vous, nous sommes avec lui pour les résoudre par les voies régulières, pacifiques et honnêtes ! Vous qui le trompez si indignement, c'est vous que j'accuse !

III

LES HOMMES D'ACTION.

Ces doctrines marchent donc, elles avancent, et nul ne peut dire où elles s'arrêteront.

Car, pendant que les écrivains écrivent, il y a des hommes d'action qui vont au fait, qui sont à l'œuvre et qui s'organisent pour mettre en pratique les théories. J'ai cité à ce sujet les francs-maçons de la loge l'*Avenir*. J'aurais pu en citer bien d'autres, soit en France, soit hors de France. La Société des *Affranchis* et celle des *Solidaires* de Belgique se proposent le même but, écarter la religion du lit des mourants, et encore ces Sociétés sont-elles trouvées trop timides ; en voici une autre, celle des *libres penseurs*, dont j'ai sous les yeux les statuts, qui va bien plus loin. Ces statuts sont précédés d'une série de propositions prétendues démontrées, commençant par une proposition sur l'évidence de l'axiome, et finissant par celle-ci :

Quatorzième proposition.

DIEU N'EST PAS.

« Dieu ne peut être : ni créateur, ni régulateur, ni bon, ni juste, ni puissant.

« Donc, puisqu'il n'a aucun attribut, IL N'EST PAS.

« PAS PLUS QU'UNE PIERRE qui n'aurait ni volume, ni forme, ni pesanteur, ni propriétés d'aucune espèce. »

Suit le *préambule* des statuts, qui s'exprime ainsi :

« Si nous avons jugé nécessaire de fonder une nouvelle Société à côté de celles qui ont déjà fait TANT DE BIEN, c'est que les Sociétés des *Affranchis* et des *Solidaires* ne repoussent le prêtre qu'au lit de mort ; il nous a paru logique de le repousser, non-seulement à la mort, mais encore et surtout dans la famille, où le *clergé* de TOUTES LES ÉGLISES ne s'insinue que pour voler nos femmes et nos enfants. »

Et par suite, moi-même, à propos des enfants de mes pauvres diocésains inondés, que j'ai adoptés, pour les nourrir et pour les envoyer à l'école, j'ai été accusé de les enlever à leurs familles, et j'ai lu dans l'*Avenir national* (1) un article où l'on détournait leurs parents de me les confier.

Le but avoué de cette Société, c'est d'entraîner les hommes du peuple dans le *sentier des libres penseurs absolus*, et ils ajoutent que « la majorité du peuple les eût suivis depuis longtemps, si quelqu'un l'eût aidé à y faire les premiers pas. »

Et tout récemment, une autre Société, se proclamant internationale, se fondait en Allemagne sur les mêmes principes et dans le même but : c'est la Société *Agis comme tu penses*. Les membres de cette Société s'ENGAGENT à ne jamais recevoir aucun sacrement d'AUCUNE religion ; ils repoussent toute bénédiction religieuse à la naissance de leurs enfants, toute consécration religieuse à leur mariage, toute prière à leur mort, et, par un acte qui a pour titre : *Ceci est mon testament*, ils constituent un ou plusieurs membres de la Société pour les représenter après leur mort, et empêcher leur famille d'appeler sur leur tombe les bénédictions de la religion.

L'Allemagne, je dois le faire remarquer, a été le premier et grand foyer de cet affreux mouvement d'impiété.

C'est une triste, mais enfin c'est une patriotique consolation

(1) *Avenir national*, 16 octobre.

de dire ici que ces systèmes de matérialisme, de positivisme et de panthéisme, sont des importations étrangères. De même que la politique allemande envahit aujourd'hui un certain nombre de prussiens-français, les aberrations des rêveurs impies d'outre-Rhin ont fait invasion en France, et elles ont trouvé parmi nous, pour les propager, des vulgarisateurs.

C'est d'abord l'hégélianisme, dont M. Renan n'a fait que traduire les formules. La gauche hégélienne, comme on l'appela, aboutit exactement, comme nos positivistes français, au Dieu-Humanité ; il y eut même des hégéliens qui allèrent jusqu'à cette incroyable formule d'athéisme : « Chacun est à soi-même son Dieu : *Quisque sibi Deus* (1). »

Puis, la spéculation hégélienne ayant été décréditée en Allemagne par ses propres excès, on vit surgir le complet matérialisme des Buchner, Virchow, Carl Vogt, Maleschott et autres dont les ouvrages sont traduits immédiatement par nos matérialistes français.

C'est M. Carl Vogt qui fait de l'homme un singe perfectionné (2).

M. Virchow a écrit : « Vivre n'est qu'une forme particulière de la mécanique. »

« Point de force sans matière, » dit le docteur Buchner : même de force éternelle et créatrice. « La toute-puissance créatrice, c'est l'affinité de la matière. »

« Une force qui ne serait pas unie à la matière, qui planerait sur la matière, serait une idée absolument vide (3). »

Mais, parmi eux, il en est un surtout qui n'écrit pas seulement pour les physiologistes ; mais qui s'est donné la tâche spéciale de propager l'athéisme et le matérialisme parmi la jeunesse et le peuple d'Allemagne ; il est passé en Italie, et le gouvernement italien s'est empressé de l'appeler à Turin, et de lui confier une chaire à l'Université de cette ancienne capitale :

(1) Voyez M. Janet, le *Matérialisme contemporain*, v. 5, 6.

(2) *Leçons sur l'Homme*.

(3) *Force et matière*.

c'est M. Moleschott ; et voici ce que ce professeur officiel enseigne à la jeunesse italienne :

« La volonté est l'expression nécessaire d'un état de cerveau produit par des influences extérieures, IL N'Y A PAS DE VOLONTÉ LIBRE. » — « Le langage et le style, les bonnes actions et les crimes, sont des conséquences NÉCESSAIRE, en proportion directe avec des causes INÉDUCTIBLES, tout comme la révolution du globe. » — « Un crime est le résultat logique, direct et INÉVITABLE, de la passion qui anime. » — « SANS PHOSPHORE POINT DE PENSÉE. » — « La pensée est un mouvement de la matière. » — « LA CONSCIENCE EST AUSSI UNE PROPRIÉTÉ DE LA MATIÈRE (1). »

Parmi les idées de M. Moleschott, il en est une qui mérite particulièrement d'être connue. Il veut abolir les cimetières chrétiens et le culte des morts. Des ossements humains, il veut faire un engrais, pour utiliser le sulfate de chaux qu'ils contiennent. Et c'est là de plus, selon lui, le moyen de mettre en circulation des pensées et de créer des hommes.

« Quel n'était pas le prix de cette poussière que les anciens déposaient dans des urnes cinéraires au fond des tombeaux ; elle contenait la matière qui donne aux plantes *le pouvoir de créer les hommes* !... »

« Il suffirait d'échanger un lieu de sépulture contre un autre après qu'il aurait servi un an, on aurait ainsi au bout de six ou dix ans un champ des plus fertiles, qui *créerait des hommes*, en même temps qu'il augmenterait la quantité des céréales (2). »

Voilà les doctrines que le professeur de l'Université de Turin entreprend de mettre « à la portée du peuple . »

Je comprends qu'avec de telles doctrines professées à Turin la présence du Pape à Rome soit gênante.

Et voilà les hommes que toute une école d'écrivains français exalte, et dont elle dit : « Leurs noms sont tout un programme. »

(1) *La Circulation de la vie*, t. II.

(2) *La Circulation de la vie*, t. I et II.

« Comme les noms du baron d'Holbach, de La Mettrie, de Cabanis, grands hommes indignement calomniés. »

J'ai dit que ces doctrines athées et matérialistes se propagent aujourd'hui d'un bout de l'Italie à l'autre. On vient de le voir pour Turin.

A Naples, c'est M. Taine qui nous donne ces détails : « Il y a à l'Université soixante professeurs, dont l'érudition et la direction sont allemandes : on lit Hegel. M. Véra, son interprète le plus zélé et le plus accrédité, a une chaire. » Les étudiants sont grands admirateurs de M. Renan ; ils le trouvent seulement trop « timide. »

Nonobstant l'exagération dont on peut suspecter ce récit intéressé, on voit combien, à la faveur de la guerre faite au Pape, l'irréligion travaille la jeunesse italienne.

Et c'est pendant que de telles choses se font à Turin, et à Naples, que Garibaldi prêche aux étudiants de Pavie la nécessité « d'extirper de l'Italie le chancre de la papauté, » et d'écraser « le vampire sacerdotal (1). »

Et voilà les fruits que porte en Italie cette guerre faite au Pape. On croit, et avec raison, que le meilleur moyen de servir la politique révolutionnaire, c'est, comme ils disent, *de déchristianiser l'Italie.*

Voilà comment l'athéisme et le matérialisme s'enseignent, se propagent, s'organisent, et se pratiquent aujourd'hui.

Mais ce n'est pas tout, et je dois signaler une autre genre d'athéisme, séduisant et redoutable, parce qu'il est dissimulé sous un nom pompeux, dont on fait aujourd'hui contre la religion, et toute religion, comme un drapeau.

Toutefois, avant d'aborder ce dernier débat, et prendre défi-

(1) On m'a accusé d'avoir mal parlé de Garibaldi. Mais, en vérité, je ne crois guère m'être trompé. Est-ce que le général Garibaldi n'est pas en activité dans une armée régulière ? Si l'un de nos généraux en France tenait de tels discours, on crierait au scandale, et le ministre sévirait. On ne touche pas à Garibaldi, soit parce qu'on ne le prend pas au sérieux ; soit parce qu'on le craint. Qu'ai-je dit de plus ? M. Rouher ne pensait-il pas un peu comme moi quand il le nommait devant le Sénat « le héros éphémère de Caprera ? (19 mars 1865).

nitivement congé des tristes écoles dont j'ai dû exposer les aberrations, je ne puis m'empêcher de le dire avec un douloureux sentiment :

Dieu, Père de l'homme, chassé de la pensée et du cœur de ses enfants; cette noble créature humaine, spirituelle et immortelle, sur laquelle le Créateur a mis sa ressemblance et comme un rayon divin, abaissée dans la matière et ravalée jusqu'à l'animalité; et au lieu de nos immortelles espérances, toute la personnalité de l'homme engloutie à jamais dans le tombeau!

Voilà donc les doctrines qu'on ose opposer à la foi des siècles et des plus grands génies de l'humanité! Voilà ce qu'on veut substituer au Christianisme...

Mais quels sont donc les hommes qui viennent ici se mettre en scène, se poser en maîtres, en chefs de la pensée, de la science, en révélateurs, parlant comme s'ils étaient seuls la critique, la science, l'histoire, l'avenir, et jetant l'insulte à toute l'humanité qui les a précédés? si on n'a jamais parlé de soi avec plus d'assurance ni élevé plus haut une voix magistrale, jamais aussi on n'a affiché un plus superbe dédain pour ce qui n'est pas.

On dirait, à les entendre, qu'il n'y a en dehors d'eux ni savants, ni historiens, ni critiques, ni philosophes, et qu'à moins d'être aujourd'hui, comme eux, panthéistes, matérialistes, athées, on ne peut plus compter en France.

« La métaphysique de Platon, Descartes, Malebranche, Bossuet, Fénelon, Leibnitz, Clarke, ne peut plus faire illusion qu'aux esprits novices; on ne la prend plus au sérieux... » disent-ils. « La critique est née d'hier. »

« Bossuet n'avait d'autre philosophie que celle de ses vieux cahiers de Sorbonne... Descartes et Pascal ont fourni les rouages rouillés de la logique de Port-Royal... qu'Arnauld construisit un jour par défi pour un enfant... L'histoire, la critique étaient inconnues à Bossuet, à Montesquieu. » Voilà comment ces messieurs traitent les anciens. Quant aux contemporains, « M. Royer-Collard ne fit que creuser de toute sa force au milieu de la route un mauvais trou... La philo-

« sophie de M. Cousin n'est qu'une décrépitude... et n'a fait
« qu'organiser une prostitution intellectuelle... M. Guizot n'est
« qu'un ministre littéraire et emphatique... M. Thiers et nos
« autres hommes d'État ne sont que *des taupes*. »

Tel est leur langage sur les hommes, et quant au fond des doctrines, ils tranchent toujours et ne raisonnent jamais.

Ils disent sans cesse, la science, la science; et moi je réponds, quelle science?

C'est vraiment chez ces messieurs comme une espèce d'enivrement scientifique. Cela va quelquefois jusqu'au délire. J'ai sous les yeux une page que je ne puis réellement appeler d'un autre nom. Elle est de l'homme qui a écrit : « Nulle limite ne
« peut être tracée à l'esprit humain... Rien n'est au-dessus
« de l'homme, » M. Renan. Ce littérateur, après avoir exposé la marche des sciences naturelles, en arrive, infatué par ce qu'il vient de dire, jusqu'à croire qu'il pourra se trouver un jour « un chimiste prédestiné qui transformera TOUTE CHOSE ;
« un biologiste omniscient qui se rendra enfin maître du secret
« de la vie, » et de plus en plus enivré, il s'écrie : « Qui sait, en
« un mot, si la science infinie n'amènera pas le pouvoir in-
« fini ! » Oui, le pouvoir infini ; car le pouvoir du savant futur omniscient peut aller jusqu'à nous ressusciter : « Nous pouvons
« affirmer que la résurrection finale se fera par la science (1). » En vérité, si on avait besoin d'être confirmé dans la foi, on le serait par le spectacle de telles aberrations.

Laissons ces rêves, et allons aux réalités. Qu'est-ce que la géométrie, la physique, la chimie, l'anatomie, etc., leur fournissent d'arguments pour leur athéisme? Pas un. Tout se réduit à cette affirmation : la science a jugé, la science a prononcé, la science condamne, bien que dans ce qu'ils allèguent, il n'y ait pas l'ombre d'un argument scientifique. Y a-t-il, chez aucun d'eux, une théorie un peu complète, une déduction logique un peu sérieuse? Il y a : *sic volo, sic jubeo*. C'est ce que veut la critique, et la critique c'est moi! La plupart, savants de troi-

sième ou quatrième ordre, ou bien gens, on dirait intentionnellement superficiels, et se moquant de leur propre pensée, comme M. Renan; ou gens, à force de vouloir systématiser, devenant fous, comme M. Auguste Comte, qui, en creusant son idée, a fini par se fêler le cerveau.

A regarder de près les choses et au fond, qu'y a-t-il? Rien que des négations : négation de Dieu, négation de l'âme, négation de la vie future, négation de la raison et de ses plus hautes puissances ; toujours des négations. Voilà ce qui leur appartient en propre ; rien de plus. Leur dogme nouveau n'est qu'un leurre. Tout le reste, tout le côté positif des sciences naturelles appartient aux savants spiritualistes. De quel droit dites-vous : la science, c'est nous? Est-ce que Copernic, Galilée, Képler, Newton, Descartes, Leibnitz, Pascal, Bacon lui-même, ces créateurs de la science moderne ; est-ce que Euler, Linnée, Volta, Herschel ; est-ce que, de notre temps, Cuvier, Ampère, Cauchy, Biot, est-ce que ces grands esprits étaient des athées? Qu'êtes-vous devant eux? A peine des pygmées.

Les savants de premier ordre parmi vous, où sont-ils? Qu'ils se lèvent! Je vois bien d'honorables rapporteurs, manipulateurs, vulgarisateurs, d'ingénieux expérimentateurs ; mais des inventeurs, des génies, des philosophes, j'en cherche, je n'en vois pas. Ceux-là, ils croient en Dieu.

Je ne vois qu'une chose égalant vos prétentions à être la science, c'est votre pauvreté philosophique. Tout ce qui vous a précédés appartient, selon vous, « à l'enfance de l'humanité. » Mais dites-nous donc, grands contempteurs du passé, quelle force nouvelle vous apportez à l'esprit humain? Aucune. Vous ne faites que le mutiler dans sa faculté la plus noble, cette raison intuitive, ce sens du divin qui est en nous ; et parce que vous demeurez comme pris et emprisonnés dans la matière, vous ne voulez pas qu'on s'élève au delà. Riches de vos seules négations, pharisiens d'une nouvelle espèce, vous fermez la porte du monde supérieur, du royaume céleste. Votre doctrine n'est

qu'une halte dans la matière, et cette halte, vous la nommez le progrès. Non, c'est abaissement, et si vous deviez l'emporter, ce serait la barbarie.

II

LA MORALE INDÉPENDANTE

La négation de Dieu, l'athéisme, ne se produit pas de nos jours sous la forme seulement du positivisme, du panthéisme et du matérialisme : la libre pensée appelait la libre morale ; et par un progrès inévitable, cette négation de Dieu devait passer du champ de la théorie dans celui de la pratique : c'est ce qui se fait aujourd'hui sous le nom de la morale indépendante.

C'est-à-dire qu'après avoir établi l'athéisme théorique, on veut en faire la règle des mœurs et de la vie.

Dans la réponse qu'il m'a adressée, M. Havin a parlé dans les termes qu'on sait de la morale indépendante :

« L'indépendance de la morale, sa séparation complète, radicale, de TOUS *les dogmes religieux*, est un fait accompli, ne vous en déplaît, Monseigneur.

« La direction morale des sociétés modernes n'appartient plus à AUCUNE Église. Il faut bien que vous en preniez votre parti. »

Quelques jours après, le *Siècle* parlait encore de « l'indépendance de la morale, » et il disait que « son existence est aussi dégagée de tout lien avec les religions ou la métaphysique, que peuvent l'être *la mécanique ou la chimie.* »

On a fait trop de bruit, en ces derniers temps, de cette prétendue morale indépendante, et elle se rattache trop intimement aux erreurs sur Dieu que je viens de flétrir, pour

que je n'en traite pas ici. La question, certes, en vaut la peine : car la morale indépendante est devenue le terrain sur lequel les athées, de quelque nuance qu'ils soient, se sont donné rendez-vous.

1° Qu'est-ce que la morale indépendante ?

2° Pourquoi se sépare-t-elle de la religion ?

Je répondrai d'abord à ces deux questions.

Puis, ces deux questions examinées, j'établirai que :

3° L'indépendance de la morale, c'est l'athéisme pratique ;

4° L'indépendance de la morale, c'est la variabilité de la morale ;

5° L'indépendance de la morale, c'est la corruption de la morale ;

6° L'indépendance de la morale, c'est une attaque à l'ordre social.

I

QU'EST-CE QUE LA MORALE INDÉPENDANTE ?

Il faut bénir Dieu, d'abord, de ce que, au milieu de ce débordement d'erreurs et de ce renversement d'idées dont nous sommes témoins, ce nom de *morale* est encore respecté.

Quelles qu'aient été, en fait de morale, les aberrations du paganisme antique, soit dans la théorie, — comme Platon malgré tout son beau génie ne l'a que trop fait voir, — soit dans la pratique, comme saint Paul le reproche si énergiquement aux philosophes de son temps, — Dieu n'a jamais voulu laisser sans témoignage la loi immortelle qu'il a gravée dans les consciences. Il a mis, comme dit Fénelon, une borne à la plus impudente folie des hommes. Il s'est trouvé là une barrière qu'ils n'ont pu franchir. Et à l'heure qu'il est, pour parler encore avec Fénelon, « les hommes, tout dépravés

« qu'ils sont, n'ont point encore osé donner le nom de vertu au vice, et ils sont réduits à faire semblant d'être justes, sincères, modérés, bienfaisants, pour s'attirer l'estime les uns des autres. »

Si ce centre immobile, si cette barrière dont parle ici Fénelon, étaient jamais renversés, nul ne peut dire ce que deviendrait l'humanité.

Aussi les athées déclarés, les matérialistes, les panthéistes, les fatalistes, ceux qui nient Dieu et l'âme, qui nient la liberté morale et la responsabilité humaine, qui nient la justice divine et la vie future, ceux-là même sont forcés de parler aussi de morale, sous peine de se mettre au ban de l'humanité.

Mais ils ont une ressource : ils veulent l'indépendance de la morale ; ils la déclarent indépendante de tout dogme philosophique et religieux.

Et c'est sous cette accommodante formule que se rallient fraternellement aux athées de toutes les nuances, ceux qui, sans être athées, veulent comme ils disent, « en finir avec les religions du passé » (*la libre Conscience*) ; et d'autres déistes, plus inoffensifs en apparence, que les moralistes indépendants ne repoussent pas, tout en les raillant sur « le petit bout de théologie » qu'ils conservent.

Il faut donc, comme on a chassé Dieu de toute science, le chasser de toute conscience, et faire la morale athée.

Leur système à tous, c'est que Dieu n'est pour rien dans la morale ; qu'elle serait quand même Dieu ne serait pas ; et bien que Dieu ne soit pas, disent les athées.

La morale indépendante se peut donc définir une morale qui a la prétention de ne relever en rien de Dieu, de l'existence de Dieu, de la croyance en Dieu ; qui s'affranchit de tout dogme, de toute croyance, de toute religion ; non-seulement de la religion positive et révélée, mais encore du déisme et de la religion naturelle elle-même. Ses partisans n'ont, comme tels, aucune espèce de religion, pas même la religion naturelle : ils ne connaissent, disent-ils, que la morale.

Voici leurs textes :

« La règle des mœurs ne doit pas dépendre des *hypothèses* théologiques et métaphysiques. » — « La morale qui ne dépend point de telle ou telle croyance?... c'est ce qu'on appelle la morale indépendante (1). »

« Nous avons regardé la théorie qui rattachait la morale à l'*idée théologique* ou *métaphysique* » à la philosophie ou à la religion, « non-seulement comme *fausse*, mais comme *pleine de dangers* (2). »

« Le jeune homme n'apprendra pas la morale dite religieuse... l'instituteur positif n'invoquera pas ce dogme absent, ... dont un ministre, homme de lettres (M. Guizot), ... dit avec une ridicule emphase, que c'est une chose grande et sainte, devant laquelle l'esprit s'incline sans que le cœur s'abaisse (3). »

« La morale est libre, indépendante de tout système religieux ou social. » — « La morale n'a son existence que dans l'humanité (4). »

« L'homme fait la sainteté de ce qu'il croit, comme la beauté de ce qu'il aime (5). »

Et M. Havin, dans les paroles que nous citons tout à l'heure, définissait l'indépendance de la morale, « sa séparation complète, radicale, de TOUS les dogmes religieux. »

La morale, la règle des mœurs, d'après ces messieurs, ne vient donc pas de Dieu.

L'homme n'a aucun besoin d'un être supérieur à lui, pour lui dicter des lois et lui imposer des devoirs.

Mais alors, d'où vient la morale ?

De l'homme, de l'homme seulement, et, pour les matérialistes, de son cerveau, de ses nerfs, de l'appareil de ses organes, car ils ne lui laissent pas autre chose ; et c'est là qu'elle trouve,

(1) M. Em. Deschanel, *Journal des Débats*, 23 avril 1866.

(2) *La Morale indépendante*, (4 novembre 1866).

(3) M. le docteur Bourdet, p. 83.

(4) *Revue du Progrès*, (novembre 1863, p. 181 et juin 370).

(5) M. Renan. *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, octobre 1864.

en dehors de toute idée religieuse, de toute croyance en Dieu, *sa force obligatoire*, et *sa sanction*.

Sa force obligatoire : la loi de la volonté humaine, c'est, disent-ils, de faire le bien : cela suffit, Dieu n'a rien à y voir.

Sa sanction ! elle n'est autre que le respect de l'homme pour lui-même ; rien de plus. D'ailleurs, ni mérite, ni démérite, ni récompense, ni châtement ; point de Dieu législateur et juge qui veille sur les actions de l'homme, pour les récompenser ou les punir, ni dans cette vie, ni dans l'autre.

C'est ainsi que positivistes, matérialistes, panthéistes, entendent l'indépendance de la morale.

Quant aux déistes inconséquents, qui, sans nier Dieu comme les athées, proclament, comme les athées, la morale « indépendante de tout dogme philosophique et religieux (1), » ils arrivent pratiquement à peu près aux mêmes conséquences : Enseigner la morale, sans faire intervenir jamais ni le nom, ni l'idée de Dieu ; n'être d'aucune religion, quelle qu'elle soit, ou tout au moins d'aucun culte.

Voilà ce que c'est que la morale indépendante.

II

POURQUOI LA MORALE INDÉPENDANTE SE SÉPARE-T-ELLE DE TOUTE RELIGION ?

Pour plusieurs raisons :

D'abord, parce que ces messieurs ne veulent avoir aucune religion.

Ensuite parce que la religion, disent-ils, divise les hommes, et que la morale ne les divise pas ! « Les vérités morales peu-

(1) Congrès de Berne, 1863.

« vent seules faire cesser les divisions... et mettre fin au scepticisme (1). »

Il n'y aura plus de sceptiques, quand on ne croira plus à aucune religion.

La *libre Conscience* dit de son côté que, les *cultes* étant ce qui divise le plus, il faut renoncer à tous les cultes : « Si ce ferment de haine venait à être extirpé, » non par la foi, mais par l'incrédulité, « l'union des esprits et des cœurs dans le même idéal » se ferait (2).

Ces messieurs ont encore un autre motif : la religion, et aussi la philosophie, qui croit à la vie future, corrompent la morale, disent-ils, en lui assignant une origine et une sanction fausses, qui l'altèrent et la détruisent.

Et quelle est cette origine fausse assignée à la morale par la religion comme par la philosophie ? Dieu. La religion et la philosophie considèrent Dieu comme la règle immuable du bien, comme le législateur suprême de la conscience : voilà ce qui *compromet* la morale, *humilie et dégrade* l'homme :

« Assigner à la morale une origine surnaturelle, en faire un corollaire de la théologie (c'est-à-dire de la croyance en Dieu), c'est la compromettre et la diminuer (3). »

« L'ascétisme chrétien conçoit le bien sous sa forme la plus mesquine. Le bien fut pour lui la réalisation de la volonté d'un être supérieur, une sorte de *sujétion humiliante pour la dignité humaine* (4). »

Et quelle est cette sanction fausse donnée par la philosophie et la religion à la morale ? C'est la croyance à une autre vie. Cette sanction est fausse, parce qu'elle est intéressée : il n'y a plus là le bien pour le bien, comme dans la morale indépendante ; mais les récompenses ou les châtimens de la vie future : c'est une erreur, disent-ils, qui change la morale en calcul et la pervertit.

(1) *La Morale indépendante*, 4 novembre 1866

(2) Octobre 1866.

(3) Em. Deschanel, *Journal des Débats*. 23 avril 1866.

(4) M. Renan, *Liberté de penser*, t. IV, p. 136.

« La croyance à une autre vie peut mêler à la conduite de la vie... une dose d'espoir ou de crainte, qui ôte à la morale le désintéressement (1). »

« Des croyances trop précises sur la destinée humaine enlèveraient tout mérite moral (2). »

« Les questions d'origine et de fin sont aussi étrangères à la morale qu'à la géométrie et à la mécanique (3). »

« Pour le chrétien, la vertu ne vaut que par ce qu'elle rapporte, elle n'est qu'un objet de spéculation et de lucre... Ce n'est pas par amour du bien, ce n'est pas par haine du mal, que le chrétien pratique la vertu. Ses actes ne procèdent pas de la vertu ; ils sont dans la légalité, non dans la moralité (4). »

Et à cet argument emprunté à d'autres, le même écrivain en ajoute un qui n'est qu'à lui. Il repousse la morale chrétienne pour ces deux autres raisons : que cette morale est l'œuvre arbitraire de Dieu ; et qu'elle n'a pas été librement sanctionnée par l'homme, ce qui eût été nécessaire pour que l'homme fût obligé envers Dieu.

Ce même écrivain, omettant de connaître le sens des mots dont il use, soutient en effet qu'il n'est pas possible que Dieu juge et punisse « une créature qui N'A PAS SANCTIONNÉ la loi TOUT ARBITRAIRE qu'il a plu à ce Dieu de lui imposer. »

Et voilà pourquoi ces étranges philosophes déclarent que le dogme de l'existence de Dieu, ou, comme ils disent, la supposition de l'existence de Dieu, est « incapable de produire une morale naturelle (5). »

Si l'on me demande mon impression sur tout cela, je dirai simplement que tous ces messieurs me font l'effet de bondir contre la barrière éternelle dont parlait tout à l'heure Fénelon.

(1) Em. Deschanel, *Journal des Débats*, 23 avril 1866.

(2) M. Renan, *Journal des Débats*, 9 juillet 1864.

(3) M. Deschanel, 23 avril 1866.

(4) M. Bouteville.

(5) M. Taine, *Philosophes français*, p. 274.

III

L'INDÉPENDANCE DE LA MORALE, C'EST L'ATHÉISME PRATIQUE.

Mais enfin que faut-il penser de cette morale indépendante, qui porte contre la morale chrétienne de si bizarres accusations?

Je réponds : Proclamer la morale indépendante de Dieu, c'est l'athéisme, l'athéisme pratique; pas autre chose.

Car, devant le bon sens du genre humain, si Dieu est, il est créateur; s'il est créateur, il est législateur suprême; et, s'il est législateur, il est juge : il est cela, ou il n'est pas.

Ces messieurs n'oublient qu'une chose : c'est le sens du mot Dieu. Dieu est la justice essentielle, éternelle, nécessaire, absolue.

Y a-t-il aujourd'hui un chrétien ou un déiste qui ne sache pas cela?

Est-ce là, oui ou non, le sens de ce grand mot dans le langage du genre humain? Si cela est, dire la morale indépendante de Dieu, c'est dire qu'elle est indépendante de la justice essentielle, éternelle, nécessaire, absolue.

C'est ne pas attacher de sens aux mots que l'on emploie.

Donc, il faut être athée, ou reconnaître que la morale, c'est-à-dire la règle de la vie humaine, ne peut pas être indépendante de Dieu, parce qu'elle ne peut pas être indépendante de la justice.

Est-ce à dire que la morale dépend de Dieu, comme le disait tout à l'heure ce sophiste, d'une façon *tout arbitraire*?

Il n'y a pas d'arbitraire en Dieu, dans le sens odieux et ridicule où il vous plaît de prendre ce mot, ni dans aucun

sens. Même dans les lois *positives divines*, il n'y a pas de fantaisie ni de caprice. Les lois positives divines, comme les lois positives humaines émanées d'un sage législateur, ne contredisent pas les lois naturelles, et n'ont pour but que d'en mieux assurer l'application. Toute morale dépend de Dieu, en ce sens qu'elle vient de lui, et retourne à lui.

Quoi ! vous voudrez que Dieu demeure étranger à la morale, indifférent au bien et au mal, c'est-à-dire qu'il n'ait aucun souci de l'âme humaine, du cœur humain, de la conscience humaine, de ce qui fait l'homme moral, de ce qui nous fait hommes, de ce qui fait notre dignité et notre honneur, notre liberté, notre responsabilité, notre vertu et l'ordre du monde !

Je le répète : la morale indépendante, c'est l'athéisme, ou c'est une contradiction. — Cela soit dit surtout pour ces hommes inconséquents, qui croient pouvoir concilier la morale indépendante avec le déisme absurde, lequel hélas ! n'est dans beaucoup de cas qu'un *athéisme déguisé*.

Vous répondez que la morale est une science. Eh ! sans doute. Et nous le disons comme vous : car il est élémentaire que ce qui est objet de croyance peut être aussi objet de science. Mais à quelle condition la morale sera-t-elle une science ? A la condition qu'on ne la mutilera pas, qu'on ne la séparera pas de son premier principe, et de sa racine, qui est Dieu. La morale indépendante de Dieu, la morale athée, est un corps sans tête, un arbre sans racines, un édifice sans fondement.

Tout homme qui proclame la morale indépendante de Dieu, doit nier Dieu, ou il est inconséquent. De même que tout homme qui nie Dieu et reste honnête homme est meilleur que ses principes.

Vainement dirait-on avec le *Siècle* : « L'homme qui n'est d'aucune religion *peut* être moral ; l'homme qui a une religion *peut* ne l'être pas. »

Pur et bizarre paralogisme.

Eh ! sans doute, un homme peut être meilleur que ses principes, et c'est là, pour le dire en passant, un des bienfaits du

Christianisme, que, dans la société dont il a fait les mœurs, il conserve toujours quelque empire même dans la conscience de ceux qui l'oublent. Mais là n'est pas la question. Il ne s'agit pas de la conduite de tel ou tel homme, mais de la morale en elle-même ; il ne s'agit pas des inconséquences de votre conduite ou de la mienne, mais des conséquences de votre doctrine. Je dis que, *logiquement*, c'est-à-dire sans se contredire et se nier, l'athéisme ne peut pas constituer une morale. Une morale indépendante de Dieu, une morale athée, ne se comprend pas et n'est pas. C'est une loi sans législateur.

Un effet sans cause. Cela ne se comprend pas plus que le monde sans Dieu, ou qu'un ouvrage sans ouvrier.

C'est la conscience, dit-on, qui oblige. Eh ! sans doute, s'il y a une loi de la conscience et un Dieu qui a fait la conscience et sa loi ; si la conscience enfin est la voix de Dieu. Sinon, non.

L'erreur et le crime de la morale indépendante ne sont pas de proclamer la loi morale, mais de la séparer de Dieu, de sa racine essentielle, et de croire qu'elle subsistera par elle-même ; que l'athéisme ne la mutile pas, ne la ruine pas.

Certes, nous aussi, nous proclamons hautement cette loi intime, gravée par Dieu dans nos consciences.

N'est-ce pas saint Paul qui a dit : « Les peuples qui ne connaissent pas la loi révélée ont la loi naturelle, et portent en eux-mêmes la loi : *Ipsi sibi sunt lex.* » Mais saint Paul ne séparait pas la loi du législateur ; il ajoutait : « Dieu rendra à chacun selon ses œuvres. »

Et le prince des théologiens, saint Thomas, n'a-t-il pas défini la loi naturelle, une participation à la loi éternelle, de même qu'il définissait la raison, une participation à la raison divine ? *Quædam participatio divini luminis.*

Il proclamait ainsi la loi morale, et, du même coup, la rattachait à sa vraie source qui est Dieu.

La loi morale est dans l'homme, Dieu l'y a mise ; mais elle n'est pas de l'homme, elle est de Dieu. Elle est naturelle, oui ; mais elle a son principe en Dieu, auteur de la nature

des êtres et de leurs rapports ; en Dieu législateur, sa force obligatoire ; en Dieu souverain juge, sa sanction dernière.

Ce qui n'empêche pas que Dieu n'ait attaché à certains crimes des conséquences pénales naturelles, et que la nature outragée ne se venge de celui qui l'outrage.

Certes, il n'est pas nécessaire d'avoir la sainteté et le génie de saint Paul, pour proclamer ces vérités d'éternel bon sens. M. Portalis et le premier Consul ne prétendaient pas autre chose, lorsqu'ils disaient : *Une morale sans dogme, c'est une justice sans tribunaux*. Il n'y a pas plus de morale sans religion, qu'il n'y a de religion sans morale : la religion, c'est l'ensemble des devoirs, comme l'ensemble des croyances. L'athéisme veut en vain séparer ce qui est inséparable.

Vous ne voulez pas d'une loi imposée par « une volonté « souveraine, principiante et causatrice (1), » comme vous dites dans votre langage. Vous déclarez la morale affranchie de Dieu ; c'est là, dites-vous, « un fait accompli. »

Le *fait accompli* vous domine tellement, vous vous êtes tellement accoutumés à vous moquer, au nom du *fait accompli*, de tout droit, de toute autorité, de toute puissance, faible et écrasée, que vous osez porter le même langage dans les régions de la vérité éternelle, et en face de Dieu, comme s'il avait abdiqué entre vos mains.

Vous déclarez de même, et il faut voir de quel ton, ces grandes idées de Dieu, d'âme, d'immortalité de l'âme, « en « réalité *mortes*, à l'état de locutions, ne continuant plus à « avoir cours que sous la protection de la routine. » Cela est écrit dans le prospectus de ce journal dont le *Siècle*, tout en faisant une assez vaine réserve, a dit : « Ses doctrines nous « sont chères ; sa profession de foi est la nôtre. »

Ainsi, parce qu'ils les ont niées, ces éternelles vérités, ils s'imaginent que c'est fini, et qu'elles ne subsistent plus !

Et que font à ces vérités immuables vos fragiles négations, écrivains d'un jour, qu'un flot amène, qu'un flot emporte, qui

(1) *La Morale indépendante*, 7 août 1865

parlez aujourd'hui et qui vous tairez demain : pareils à ces éphémères qu'on voit tournoyer comme une poussière dans un rayon de soleil, et qui le soir ne sont plus !

Il est une revue qui s'est constituée gravement l'organe officiel de la morale indépendante, dont elle a pris le nom, et qui, répète chaque semaine avec solennité ses vagues formules. Et parmi les étranges prétentions de cette revue, il en est une particulièrement singulière, celle de rester neutre, avec une morale athée, entre le déisme et l'athéisme, entre la foi à l'âme et à l'immortalité de l'âme, et la négation de ces grandes vérités.

« La morale indépendante, disent-ils, se garde de toucher à l'une quelconque des croyances religieuses... Nous n'intervenons à aucun titre entre le déisme et l'athéisme, entre ceux qui pensent que l'âme survit à la décomposition du corps, et ceux qui n'en croient rien (1). »

Mais sur ces capitales questions, c'est oui ou non ; et par votre abstention déjà vous soufflez le doute dans les âmes et vous prêchez la vie athée.

Mais on ne peut se tenir dans une position illogique, et la *Morale indépendante*, pas plus que les moralistes indépendants du matérialisme, du positivisme et du panthéisme, ne s'y tient pas. Ce n'est pas seulement le doute et l'athéisme pratique qu'elle propage, c'est la réelle négation de Dieu. Car voici ce que je lis dans des pages que je trouve citées dans ce journal :

« Nous ne rejetons pas l'idée de Dieu, nous en prononçons même souvent *le nom* ; mais nous ne cherchons guère à savoir *ce que ce nom veut dire* ; nous nous arrêtons à une *idée vague* de cause universelle, où nous ne distinguons presque AUCUN DES ATTRIBUTS QUI CARACTÉRISENT LA PERSONNALITÉ ET LA VIE (2). »

(1) *La Morale indépendante*, 6 août 1865.

(2) 11 novembre 1866.

Mais qu'est-ce qu'un Dieu dont on prononce *le nom*, sans savoir *ce que ce nom veut dire*? Qu'est-ce qu'un Dieu où l'on ne distingue AUCUN DES ATTRIBUTS QUI CARACTÉRISENT LA PERSONNALITÉ ET LA VIE ?

L'écrivain cité ajoute : « Nous ne sommes pas *athées*, mais « nous sommes un peu *panthéistes*, quoique *nous refusions* « *d'en convenir*. » L'aveu est remarquable. « Ce qu'il y a de « *certain*, c'est que *nous ne prions guère le Dieu* en qui nous « *avons la prétention de croire*, c'est que *nous ne nous in-* « *quiétons guère de savoir comment il faut agir pour lui* « *plaire et pour obtenir ses bonnes grâces* (1). »

Qu'est-ce que cela, sinon l'athéisme pratique? Est-ce là aussi votre pensée, Messieurs de la *morale indépendante*? Je le crains; car à chaque page vous niez la certitude de Dieu, de l'âme, et de l'immortalité de l'âme. Sur de telles questions, dites-vous, on ne sait rien, on ne peut rien savoir : ce sont là des « *hypothèses indémonstrables, invérifiables, des spécula-* « *tions impossibles.* »

Que dis-je ! Ces dogmes ne sont pas seulement, selon la *Morale indépendante*, dénués de *toute certitude, invérifiables, indémonstrables*; ils sont *ruinés*, définitivement ruinés par la science : ILS ONT FAIT LEUR TEMPS.

« Le criticisme d'une part, la science d'une autre, ont POUR « JAMAIS RUINÉ *le mysticisme* dans SA BASE. L'imagination sous « *cette forme a fait son temps* (2). »

Ils citent ces vers :

« Les Dieux désormais sont passés.
« Allons, relevez-vous, peuples; c'en est assez ! »

Et ils appellent le poème d'où ils les citent « un acte de « *foi, une affirmation du nouveau monde, et une glorification* « *de la personne humaine* (3). »

Exactement comme, selon la *libre Pensée*,

(1) *Ibid.* 14 novembre 1866.

(2) *Ibid.* 6 août 1865.

(3) *Ibid.*, 29 octobre 1865.

Les prêtres et les rois...

Embaumeurs conjurés de la terre endormie (1),

Sont morts.

Parler ainsi de Dieu, de la religion, de l'âme et de l'immortalité de l'âme, c'est « ne pas y toucher ! » Mais pensez-vous vous duper avec des mots ? Que disent de plus les francs athées ?

Quel est d'ailleurs le fond et la pratique du système ? Mettre absolument de côté, et dans la théorie, et dans la pratique, la religion, toute religion. Le moraliste indépendant ne s'occupera même pas des questions religieuses : elles sont « hors science (2). » Il ne sera d'aucun culte : car la religion n'oblige pas : c'est « une opinion *ad libitum* (3), » à laquelle on peut rester attaché par faiblesse, mais dont le progrès veut qu'on s'affranchisse, pour vivre et mourir sans culte et sans Dieu.

Comment ne voyez-vous pas que si la religion n'oblige pas, elle n'est pas ; que si elle n'est « qu'une opinion *ad libitum*, » elle n'est rien ? *Ne refusez donc pas d'en convenir* ; et rayez ce grand mot du vocabulaire des langues !

Tromperie encore que cette autre prétention, de constituer « une morale commune aux déistes et aux athées, aux spiritualistes et aux matérialistes, acceptable également aux uns et aux autres (4). »

Il est impossible de laisser passer de pareils sophismes.

Comment ne pas voir la contradiction qui est à la racine même d'une telle prétention ? Mais pour un spiritualiste, pour un homme qui croit en Dieu, les devoirs envers Dieu sont les premiers devoirs de la morale. Pour un matérialiste, pour un athée, ces devoirs n'existent pas ! La morale commune que vous rêvez pour les uns et les autres est donc, dès le point de départ, et sur un point capital, inacceptable aux uns et aux autres ; c'est une morale décapitée.

(1) *La Libre Pensée*, 11 novembre 1866.

(2) *La Morale indépendante*, 4 nov. 1866.

(3) *Ibid.*, 11 novembre 1866.

(4) *Ibid.*, 6 août 1865.

Non, la règle des mœurs ne se peut mutiler ainsi.

Et maintenant, quelle sanction ces indépendants ont-ils trouvée à la morale sans Dieu, à leur morale athée?

Une sanction illusoire manifestement, et à jamais insuffisante pour faire contre-poids aux deux grands et éternels ennemis de toute morale, l'intérêt et les passions.

L'intérêt est dans la nature; les passions aussi sont naturelles; surtout quand on professe, comme les partisans de la morale indépendante, que la nature humaine est sainte, et ne connaît nul mal en soi. Dans ce cas, pourquoi sacrifier un côté de la nature à l'autre? L'homme étant, hélas! ce qu'il est, espérez-vous faire parler la froide voix du devoir, d'un devoir abstrait, isolé de Dieu, plus haut que l'entraînante voix des intérêts et des passions! Comment cela se fera-t-il, s'il n'y a pas au-dessus de l'homme, au-dessus de l'intérêt et des passions, une autorité qui commande le sacrifice?

Vous parlez de dignité personnelle; vous dites: violer la loi, c'est déchoir; voilà la sanction de la loi!

Et qu'importe à l'égoïsme, et qu'importe à la passion, cette sanction que l'égoïsme et la passion peuvent braver?

Est-ce une sanction, que celle dont je puis, au gré de mes intérêts et selon les besoins du moment, fouler aux pieds la menace?

N'avons-nous pas vu des voleurs se faire devant les tribunaux une morale, en vertu de laquelle ils prétendaient avoir parfaitement le droit de voler, et volaient avec la tranquillité de conscience la plus parfaite?

Ne venez pas non plus nous dire ce que je ne saurais vraiment appeler qu'une indignité ou une niaiserie, à savoir que la croyance à l'immortalité de l'âme change la morale en « calcul » et la vertu en « lucre. » Qui ne sait que le chrétien fait le bien pour le bien, aime Dieu pour Dieu: voilà sa loi, et le précepte formel de la charité, que Jésus-Christ appelle le premier et le plus grand des commandements. La récompense éternelle, il est vrai, ne peut lui manquer, c'est justice;

la récompense est la conséquence du mérite : ces deux choses, la morale chrétienne les unit, parce que, loin de se détruire, elles sont inséparables ; c'est là, dans cette justice divine, que se concilient admirablement la loi morale du bien pour le bien, et la tendance invincible de la nature humaine au bonheur : et c'est ainsi que la morale chrétienne répond aux aspirations intéressées comme aux instincts les plus généreux de notre âme, et qu'elle est dans une complète harmonie avec la nature, parce qu'elle vient de Celui qui a fait l'homme, et qui l'a fait pour être heureux par le devoir.

Mais c'est ce dont ne veulent pas les athées.

IV

L'INDÉPENDANCE DE LA MORALE, C'EST LA VARIABILITÉ DE LA MORALE.

Et ne voyez-vous pas encore que votre morale indépendante, en séparant de Dieu la loi morale, la ruine radicalement, lui ôte son caractère de loi, parce qu'elle lui enlève sa fixité et son universalité, la rend *variable* et *corruptible*?

Variable : car, si elle ne vient pas de Dieu, de la raison, de la sainteté, de la justice absolue et éternelle, qui est Dieu, mais de l'homme, uniquement de l'homme : ou elle n'est qu'une pure abstraction, c'est-à-dire, rien ; ou, en définitive et dans la pratique, elle reste absolument soumise aux variations, aux défaillances de l'individu : le bien n'est plus rien de fixe et d'absolu, mais quelque chose d'essentiellement relatif, variable ; et cette morale se devra définir : *une morale libre que chacun se fait comme il l'entend.*

C'est-à-dire, qu'en somme, la distinction essentielle entre le bien et le mal est pratiquement anéantie.

Du reste, les aveux des moralistes prétendus *indépendants* sont décisifs sur ce point, et vont à la racine de tout.

« L'homme, dit l'un, FAIT la sainteté de ce qu'il croit,

« comme la beauté de ce qu'il aime (1). — Une belle pensée
« vaut une belle action (2). »

Un autre : « L'intelligence humaine MODÈLE « à son gré »
« l'idéal (3). »

Le même affirme que « dans l'intelligence humaine il n'y a
« rien d'*absolu*, tout est relatif. »

Un troisième : « Il y a eu une morale pour chaque siècle,
« chaque race et chaque ciel. » Et il *entend* par là que « le
« modèle idéal VARIE selon les circonstances qui le FAÇON-
« NENT (4). »

Et cela est logique et rigoureux, exactement déduit du sys-
tème, à savoir que la loi morale vient de l'homme seulement,
et ne se rattache à aucun principe, à aucune volonté supérieure
à l'homme, éternelle, immuable, absolue.

Cela est logique dans le système, et cela ruine le système,
de l'aveu même des adversaires.

Car le principe de la morale indépendante ayant été exposé
en ces termes par un de ces messieurs : « La morale n'a rien
« d'immuable et d'éternel ; c'est une création incessante et in-
« cessamment variée de notre intelligence ; » que répond à
cette déduction si logique de l'idée mère du système, un autre
moraliste indépendant ? Le voici : « Ces paroles, trop claires,
« hélas ! sont la négation sincère, mais absolue, de la morale.,.
« La société ne durerait pas un siècle, orientée sur un idéal qui
« varierait d'heure en heure, de peuple à peuple, de classe à
« classe, presque d'individu à individu (5). »

Sans doute ! et c'est cela même qui vous condamne, vous qui
ne voulez pas rattacher la morale à son premier principe, Dieu ;
vous, partisans d'une morale dans laquelle, forcément, par suite
de cette mutilation, la loi morale est *variable*, chacun se fai-

(1) M. Renan, *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, octobre 1862, p. 938.

(2) Même revue, janvier 1860, p. 384.

(3) *Conservation*, p. 286.

(4) M. Taine, *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 15 octobre 1862.

(5) *La Morale indépendante*, 30 septembre 1866.

sant sa morale comme il l'entend, de même que chacun se fait, comme il l'entend, ses opinions.

Vous dites naïvement que les hommes ne se disputeront plus sur le terrain de la morale? Mais n'êtes-vous pas vous mêmes une preuve qu'il y a des systèmes en morale, comme en tout le reste? Est-ce qu'il n'y a pas la morale de l'intérêt, la morale du plaisir? la morale de l'habileté et de la force? la morale de vos faits accomplis?

La morale ne confine-t-elle pas par cent endroits à la politique? Quelle sera la morale politique, la morale sociale? Y en aura-t-il une, oui ou non? soit pour les princes, soit pour les peuples?

Il n'est rien vraiment de plus ridicule et de plus vain que cette prétention de la morale indépendante à faire, comme ils disent tous, cesser les divisions et le scepticisme, à faire « l'unité spirituelle et cordiale du genre humain (1), » l'unité dans la vertu sur la terre. ¶ La vérité est que, dès qu'on descend des hauteurs de l'axiome aux applications pratiques, on se divise sur les questions de morale les plus importantes, les plus délicates, comme sur toutes les autres questions.

Séparons, dites-vous, la morale de la religion, parce que la religion divise et que la morale unit.

Et vous êtes forcés vous-mêmes d'écrire :

« Il y a eu au XVIII^e siècle TROIS GRANDES ÉCOLES DE MORALISTES. Ces trois écoles ont ÉNERGIQUEMENT LUTTÉ L'UNE CONTRE L'AUTRE (2). »

Ce n'est pas tout : vous démontrez-vous-mêmes que ces luttes étaient nécessaires. « Le champ de la *raison* est MOINS ARDU que le champ de la *conscience*, et c'est ce qui fera que les progrès de *celle-ci* seront *plus lents*, LES ERREURS PLUS FACILES (3). »

Il n'y a pas absurdité qui n'ait été soutenue par quelque

(1) Le *Journal des Débats*, 23 avril 1863.

(2) *La Morale indépendante*, 9 septembre 1866.

(3) *La Morale indépendante*, 30 septembre 1866.

philosophe, dit Cicéron. Voilà la faiblesse de l'esprit humain ; voilà l'histoire. Vous le savez, vous avouez que les questions de morale sont plus difficiles, *plus ardues* encore que les questions spéculatives ; que les erreurs y sont *plus faciles*, les progrès plus lents ; et vous venez nous dire que la morale indépendante fera l'accord des intelligences et l'unité spirituelle et cordiale de l'humanité ! N'est-ce pas dérisoire ?

Mais voici bien mieux : « L'adhésion la plus formelle à l'indépendance de la morale, » n'empêche pas celui qui vous donne cette adhésion, de tomber, selon vous, dans « *la négation sincère, mais absolue, de la loi morale.* » Voici, en effet, un moraliste indépendant qui n'admet pas, lui, votre prétention de constituer une morale universelle, et qui vous écrit :

« Nous sommes d'accord sur l'indépendance de la morale..

« Quant à *la constitution de la science morale*,...

« Je suis en désaccord avec vous *sur la base* que vous voulez assigner à la morale...

« Une morale fondée sur cette base, *trop étroite à mes yeux*, sera nécessairement une morale incomplète, et qui ne pourra comprendre qu'une aristocratie intellectuelle...

« Je ne vois pas *comment pourrait se réaliser cette unité à laquelle vous aspirez*..

« Les termes de *bien* et de *mal*, de *juste* et d'*injuste*, il n'y en a guère de plus vagues et qui puissent être pris dans des acceptions plus diverses..

« Ces mots bien et mal, en qui se résume toute la morale, sont susceptibles des sens les plus différents ; *leur sens peut varier du blanc au noir*, en suivant les nuances possibles de développement moral et intellectuel.

« Le mot morale lui-même n'est pas moins indécis... *il y a autant de morales que de systèmes moraux, autant que de moralités particulières*..¶

« Par conséquent, je ne crois pas à l'unité morale que vous espérez pour tous les hommes (1)... »

(1) *La Morale indépendante*, 26 août 1866. Du reste, le correspondant de *la Morale indépendante* n'est pas le seul à penser ainsi. M. le docteur Bourdet dit dans le même sens : « Nous ne croyons pas à une morale dont les principes seraient, comme on dit, gravés au fond de toutes les consciences. » Et il se moque de « la prétendue morale que certains philosophes natu-

Voilà ce qu'on vous écrit, et rien n'est plus vrai que tout cela, si la morale ne vient pas de Dieu, et si c'est l'homme qui se la crée, comme ses opinions ;

Et vous, avec non moins de raison, vous appelez cela « la négation sincère, mais absolue, de la loi morale ; » et vous ajoutez, effrayés : « Malgré l'adhésion formelle donnée par M. Véron à l'indépendance de la morale, je me demande, avec quelque effroi, si notre accord va bien loin (1). »

Quoi ! vous êtes effrayés vous-mêmes de vos désaccords sur la base, sur la conception même de la morale ; vous déclarez que l'adhésion donnée à l'indépendance de la morale n'empêche pas un homme *sincère* de tomber immédiatement dans la *négation absolue de la loi morale* ; et vous voulez nous faire croire que vous vous entendrez parfaitement entre vous et avec tout le monde, quand il s'agira de descendre des formules générales, d'entrer dans les détails de la morale, et de déterminer précisément les devoirs de la vie privée et de la vie sociale ? Mais c'est une pitié.

La morale indépendante, dites-vous, en écartant les questions de Dieu et de l'âme, fera cesser le scepticisme.

Étrange manière en vérité, dirai-je d'abord, de faire cesser le scepticisme, que de supprimer les croyances !

Comme si l'homme, d'ailleurs, pouvait à son gré supprimer les questions que posent invinciblement l'esprit et le cœur humains ; comme si tous les efforts pour emprisonner la raison dans la matière, pouvaient jamais prévaloir contre cette profonde et sublime inquiétude, qui est à la fois le tourment et l'honneur de l'âme humaine, selon ces belles paroles de saint Augustin, citées récemment au Corps législatif par M. Jules Favre : *Fecisti nos ad te, Deus, et irrequietum est cor nostrum, donec resquiescat in te.*

Vous ne voulez plus, dirai-je ensuite, des questions d'origine

« ralistes prétendent univoque et identique dans tous les cœurs humains !... »
P 101, 102.

(1) *La Morale indépendante*, 30 septembre 1866.

et de fin ; mais si vous ne savez rien sur l'origine et sur la fin de l'homme, c'est-à-dire sur le point de départ et sur le point d'arrivée. comment espérez-vous connaître le chemin qui conduit au terme ?

Vous dites que la morale indépendante vous mettra tous d'accord !

Et comment pouvez-vous espérer qu'on s'entendra au moyen de la morale indépendante, quand vous nous présentez, vous-mêmes, le spectacle des plus flagrantes contradictions, sur tout, et sur la morale comme sur le reste ?

Mais commencez donc par vous entendre sur quelque chose qui ne soit pas une négation.

Sur les plus fondamentales questions, sur la conception même du monde, sur le relatif, sur l'absolu, sur Dieu, sur l'âme, sur la vie future, je vous entends vous faire mutuellement les adjurations les plus solennelles, mais les plus contradictoires :

La libre Conscience s'écrie : Athées, matérialistes, « vous reculez, loin d'aller en avant, et les ennemis du progrès n'ont qu'à vous laisser faire. Ce n'est pas en procédant de la sorte qu'on en finit avec les religions du passé, dont le déisme rationaliste peut seul avoir raison (1). »

Mais, dit la *Morale indépendante* : « Ce vague déisme sans forme, qu'on appelle religion naturelle, ... qui, s'il veut se définir d'une manière sérieuse, ne peut aboutir qu'au catholicisme, ... et alors *nous voilà tournant dans le cercle* (2). »

La libre Conscience continue : Si vous niez Dieu et l'âme, « vous venez en aide aux religions du passé. » Vous leur fournissez « un sophisme, mis en honneur par Bossuet : « Voyez, disent-elles, où l'on aboutit quand on a cessé d'être chrétien ; on finit par ne plus croire ni à Dieu ni à l'âme (3). »

(1) Octobre 1866.

(2) 19 août 1866.

(3) *La libre Conscience*, n° 4^{or}, octobre 1866.

Et la libre Pensée répond à la libre Conscience : Eh quoi ! vous voulez retenir « l'humanité à l'état d'enfance ! » Non, non, « répudiez hautement toute hypothèse admettant une « espèce d'âme ; » pour « en finir avec les religions du passé, » il n'y a qu'un moyen, le nôtre : « affranchir l'esprit humain « des hypothèses et des superstitions (1). »

Et vous venez nous dire, Messieurs de la libre Pensée, de la libre Conscience, et autres, que la morale indépendante vous mettera d'accord et fera « l'union des esprits et des cœurs : » — « l'unité spirituelle et cordiale du genre humain ! »

Mais, vous vous moquez !

Vous dites que vous laissez chacun libre d'être à sa guise matérialiste ou spiritualiste, déiste ou athée, que cela ne fait rien à la morale : « Matérialisme, spiritualisme, théologisme « quelconque, question d'origine et de fin, sont, à nos yeux, « hors morale, comme elle sont hors science (2). »

Et on vous répond avec raison : « Le matérialisme n'est « bon à rien qu'à ôter à la vie humaine tout sérieux et toute « valeur.. et qu'à donner raison à ces hommes, les plus mépri- « sables de tous, qui font consister l'habileté à exploiter le « plus sûrement possible les misères physiques et les défaut- « lances morales de leurs semblables. » (M. Larroque).

Voilà comment votre commun drapeau de la morale indépendante vous met tous d'accord les uns avec les autres.

Je pourrais pousser bien plus loin ces contradictions : c'est assez.

Ainsi donc, ces hommes qui rejettent la religion pour arriver à l'unité des intelligences commencent par ne s'entendre sur rien ; et ils prétendent, avec leur principe individuel suivi d'inévitables divisions, arriver à réunir tous les esprits et tous les cœurs !

Ah ! ce besoin d'union, d'unité, de foi universelle, c'est un noble besoin de l'âme ; aussi, n'est-ce pas une chimère, et Dieu

(1) *La libre Pensée*, n° 1^{er}, octobre 1866.

(2) *La Morale indépendante*, 6 novembre 1866.

qui ne nous l'a pas donné pour nous tromper, a pris soin de le réaliser lui-même. Elle existe, elle existe cette unité. Il y a une doctrine sur la terre qui rassemble dans un lien commun, dans l'unité admirable d'une société vivante et universelle, toutes les âmes, tous les cœurs qui adhèrent à son symbole, dans tous temps, à tous les degrés de la civilisation. C'est l'Eglise catholique : une, et seule UNE sur la terre, parce qu'elle a, seule, un principe d'unité. Et vous la repoussez ! Aussi errez-vous à toutes les fluctuations du doute et de la négation, étalant la contradiction sur les points les plus fondamentaux, au moment même où vous vous vantez de faire l'unité des âmes.

V

L'INDÉPENDANCE DE LA MORALE, C'EST LA CORRUPTION DE LA MORALE.

La morale indépendante est donc une morale *variable*, mais, de plus, *corruptible*.

Le fait est là, évident, irrécusable.

L'écrivain que je citais tout à l'heure, qui déclare la religion *incapable de produire une morale*, qui parle d'une morale « pour chaque siècle, chaque race et chaque ciel, » ce même écrivain proclame que *le vice et la vertu sont des produits, comme le vitriol et le sucre*.

Et il a raison de conclure ainsi, puisque l'*homme*, selon cet écrivain, n'est lui-même qu'*un produit*, comme toute chose.

Lisez, et dites-moi ce que vous pensez de la morale que va déduire de ce principe le moraliste indépendant que je cite :

« L'homme est un produit comme toute chose, et à ce titre, « il a raison d'être comme il est. Son imperfection innée est « dans l'ordre, comme l'avortement constant d'une étamine

« dans une plante. » Cela étant, « le vice est un produit. Et ce qui nous semblait le renversement d'une loi est l'accomplissement d'une loi. La raison et la vertu humaines ont pour matériaux les instincts et les images animales... comme les matières organiques ont pour éléments les substances minérales. Quoi d'étonnant si la vertu ou la raison humaine... comme la matière organique, parfois défaille ou se décompose? » Puis, après avoir parlé des forces maîtresses, des lois indestructibles qui CONTRAignent, l'auteur ajoute : « Qui est-ce qui s'indignera contre la géométrie : surtout qui est ce qui s'indignera contre une géométrie vivante (1)? » Puis, il faut voir bientôt après l'application de ce principe à l'adultère, et comment le moraliste indépendant bafoue ceux qui seraient tentés d'avoir une pensée de blâme ; lui, il s'égaie et plaisante.

Le même demande ailleurs, à propos d'un passage de lord Byron sur les amours d'Haydée, comment on peut refuser de reconnaître le divin, non-seulement dans la conscience et dans l'action, mais DANS LA JOUISSANCE ! « Qui a lu les amours d'Haydée, s'écrie-t-il, et a eu d'autre pensée que de l'envier et de la plaindre? Qui est-ce qui peut, en présence de la magnifique nature, qui leur sourit et les accueille, imaginer pour eux AUTRE CHOSE QUE LA SENSATION TOUTE PUISSANTE qui les unit (2)!... »

Voilà donc les jeunes gens bien avertis que la jouissance est divine comme la conscience ; qu'en de certains moments, il n'y a pas à imaginer pour eux autre chose que la sensation toute-puissante qui les entraîne, et que, dans de tels cas, on ne peut avoir d'autre pensée que de les envier et de les plaindre, puisqu'ils sont sous l'empire de lois indestructibles qui les contraignent, lois absolument innocentes, après tout, l'homme ayant raison d'être comme il est, et étant une géométrie vivante !

(1) M. Taine, *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 13 octobre 1862.

(2) *Ibid.*

Vous qui réclamez la direction morale des âmes, prêchez cette morale à la jeunesse, elle se chargera de l'appliquer !

C'est dans la même inspiration que l'auteur de *Lucrezia* écrivait : « Quand tu verras deux époux, excellents l'un pour l'autre, s'aimer d'une manière paisible, tendre et fidèle, dis que c'est de l'amitié ; mais quand tu te sentiras, toi, noble et honnête homme, violemment épris d'une misérable courtisane, sois certain que ce sera de l'amour, ET N'EN ROUGIS PAS ! »

Et n'est-ce pas dans le même sens que, dans un autre roman, je vois les deux principes que voici : « Un sentiment *accepté en nous-mêmes* devient aussitôt *un devoir*. » — « Mon amour ne peut être qu'une religion. »

Je le répète : Prêchez à la jeunesse cette morale, et par les journaux de toute sorte, faites-la descendre dans le peuple : et vous verrez ce que deviendront les mœurs d'un pays.

Ah ! laissez-moi vous le dire : Je me sens ici révolté par votre morale, autant que par vos blasphèmes contre Dieu !

Cette jeunesse française que vous abreuvez de ces corruptions, elle ne cessera jamais de nous être chère. On donnerait mille vies comme une goutte d'eau pour la sauver. Et voilà pourquoi, quand vous vous attaquez à elle, dans vos livres et dans vos chaires, je me sens blessé au cœur, et je ne puis m'empêcher de pousser des cris !

M. Taine, du reste, et l'auteur de *Lucrezia* ne sont pas les premiers à entendre ainsi la morale indépendante. Une école n'avait-elle pas essayé avant eux de se livrer à « la recherche hardie et sainte de *la loi morale nouvelle* ? » Et qu'elle était cette morale nouvelle ? *La réhabilitation de la chair*, comme ils le disaient eux-mêmes : « Il s'agit entre nous de *morale*, de *la réhabilitation de la chair* sous le *point de vue moral*. » (Paroles du P. Infantin.)

Et leur réhabilitation de la chair allait jusqu'à ceci. L'un disait : Le divorce doit être *glorifié et sanctifié*, « et pour-
« quoi ? Parce que les *êtres aux affections vives et passagères*

« ont tout autant de droits que les êtres aux affections profondes, et durables. »

Qu'on ne me dise pas que toutes ces doctrines-là sont mortes. Non, elles sont vivantes ; la morale indépendante relève leur drapeau en relevant leur principe ; et qu'on veuille bien remarquer ceci et me dire s'il n'y a pas là un symptôme significatif de l'état des esprits : les ouvrages où ces doctrines sont enseignées, se réimpriment à l'heure qu'il est, et la *Vie éternelle* du P. Infantin fait partie d'une bibliothèque, dite *Bibliothèque UTILE*, dont j'ai déjà parlé : feront-ils aussi partie, demanderai-je, de ces bibliothèques populaires, que M. Havin, me dit-on, propage avec ardeur (1) ? Et si M. Havin devient un jour ministre de l'instruction publique, feront-ils partie des bibliothèques des écoles ?

Comment osez-vous proclamer la morale indépendante des doctrines, quand il est si manifeste que les doctrines influent, et si décisivement, sur la morale ?

Vous ne donnez pas à l'homme Dieu pour auteur ; mais vous lui donnez la matière : vous parlez en effet de « la formation lente de l'humanité, ce phénomène étrange en vertu duquel « *une espèce animale* (l'humanité) prit sur *les autres* une supériorité décisive » (M. Renan.)

(1) Il existe, du reste, sur la manière dont certains partisans de la morale indépendante, entendent former des bibliothèques populaires des aveux précieux. Au congrès de Berne, où cette question de la morale indépendante fut si orageusement discutée, des orateurs prétendirent que, la voix du peuple étant la voix de Dieu, il n'y avait aucun inconvénient à lui donner en pâture toute la mauvaise littérature du XVIII^e siècle, si cela lui convenait. Un membre, M. Marguerin, ayant avancé que les hommes de cœur qui s'associent pour instruire le peuple doivent lui fournir un aliment intellectuel sain et bienfaisant, et qu'il est de leur devoir strict d'écarter des bibliothèques formées par leurs soins les livres dangereux : « Ah ! lui fut-il répondu, vous voulez tenir le peuple en lisières. Non : les ouvriers ne veulent plus de lisières. Que l'ouvrier choisisse lui-même ses lectures sans tuteur ! » Un autre membre ayant déclaré qu'il fallait refaire au plus tôt pour le peuple l'histoire de la révolution française, et lui signaler sans ménagement tous les crimes commis au nom du prétendu salut public, au lieu d'en faire une immortelle apologie, de vives réclamations se firent entendre.

Croire que l'homme n'est qu'une espèce animale, est-ce qu'une telle doctrine est sans influence sur la morale?

Vous avez une doctrine sur l'âme : vous niez l'âme, vous lui substituez l'organisme, vous regardez l'âme comme la résultante de l'organisme. Est-ce qu'une telle doctrine est sans influence sur la morale?

Vous avez une doctrine sur la vie future : vous la niez ! Est-ce que la négation de la vie future, l'opinion que tout finit pour nous avec le corps, est sans influence sur la morale ? Est-ce qu'il n'y a pas au bout de ces négations des conclusions pratiques ? « Mangeons et buvons, car demain nous mourrons : » *Manducemus, et bibamus, cras enim moriemur*. Que de gens en resteront à ces conséquences !

Vous parlez de la conscience : « Conscience ! conscience ! « dites-vous avec Rousseau : auguste instinct, voix immortelle ! »

Et voilà des moralistes indépendants qui vous répondent :

« L'analyse ne trouve dans cet auguste instinct et cette voix « immortelle qu'un mécanisme très-simple, qu'elle démonte « comme un ressort (1). »

« La conscience est une propriété de la matière » (M. Moleschot).

Et, dans ce mécanisme matériel, « la forme machinale de « chaque pièce est toujours là, prête à entraîner chaque pièce « hors de son office propre, et à troubler tout le concert. *Il n'y « a point dans l'homme de puissance distincte et libre*. Lui-même n'est qu'une série d'impulsions précipitées et di' « nations fourmillantes (2). »

Voilà l'homme de la morale indépendante.

Et cet homme, en qui il n'y a point de puissance libre, qui n'est qu'une série d'impulsions précipitées, comment voulez-vous, quand la violence de la passion ou un grand intérêt l'entraînent, qu'il sacrifie l'intérêt ou la jouissance au devoir, *la jouissance aussi divine que la conscience ?*

Ah ! le ciel nous préserve de voir jamais régner votre morale !

(1) M. Taine, *Philosophes français au XIX^e siècle*, p. 276.

(2) Encore M. Taine.

Le jour où elle viendrait s'asseoir au foyer des familles, entre le père et l'enfant, entre l'époux et l'épouse, serait le plus néfaste des jours dans les annales de l'humanité.

Pères de famille, qui que vous soyez, je vous le crie : une telle morale est plus qu'impuissante à protéger votre foyer, à garantir les mœurs de vos fils, la pudeur de vos filles, la fidélité de vos femmes, la probité de vos serviteurs, et votre propre vertu.

La vie humaine n'est donc pas protégée par la morale indépendante.

La société, l'est-elle davantage? Hélas! non.

VI

CETTE PRÉTENDUE MORALE ÉBRANLE LES BASES DE LA SOCIÉTÉ.

Avec la morale indépendante, les lois sociales manquent de fondement et d'autorité. Tout ce que cette morale objecte contre la loi émanée de Dieu retombe à plus forte raison, qui ne le sent? contre toute loi émanée des hommes. L'homme seul, évidemment, ne peut obliger l'homme.

L'Assemblée républicaine de 1848 comme l'Assemblée constituante de 89 l'avaient compris, quand elles proclamaient « en « présence et sous les auspices de Dieu, de l'Être suprême » l'une, la Constitution de 1848; l'autre, les Droits de l'homme et du citoyen : reconnaissant implicitement que la loi humaine dérive de la loi divine.

Si votre loi ne vient pas de plus haut que vous, on s'y soumettra, si on y est forcé; on la violera, quand on pourra. Je défie, si on supprime l'idée de Dieu, si les lois humaines ne puisent pas leur autorité à cette source, si on ne dit pas avec un poète antique : « Dans ces lois immortelles, est un Dieu qui ne vieillit pas, » je défie de constituer les lois humaines sur une autre base que la force, et là se montre la vérité profonde de ce mot de Benjamin Constant, qu'il y a une *secrète solidarité entre le despotisme et le matérialisme.*

Ne voyez-vous pas qu'avec la morale indépendante, un antagonisme redoutable est établi entre l'individu, ses passions, ses intérêts, et la société? Les gens qui rêvent une *nouvelle société*, où les penchants de la nature ne seront plus contrariés par les lois, ne rêvent-ils pas aussi une *morale nouvelle*?

N'y en a-t-il pas parmi eux qui raisonnent, en partant du principe de la morale indépendante, avec la rigueur que voici ?

« Nous n'avons pas le droit de nier ni de proscrire *ce que la nature a mis en nous*. Nous devons, au contraire, développer « TOUTES nos facultés, les affranchir, les déblayer de TOUTS « préjugés. »

Et ce qu'ils veulent dire, *et disent expressément*, par ce que la nature a mis en nous, c'est ce que je ne puis me permettre d'exposer ici.

Mais les conséquences sociales qu'ils tirent de tout cela, c'est *l'homme libre et la femme libre*, en dépit de la société :

« Le souvenir du bonheur est mélancolique... Je t'en veux, ô « société! Je t'en veux profondément... Certes, sans toi, ce « bonheur n'eût pas cessé. Tu as voulu qu'il ne fût qu'inter- « mittent, et c'est pour cela que je t'en veux. »

« Qu'est-ce qui fait que la société actuelle nous mécontente « tellement? C'est qu'on ne satisfait ni notre raison, ni notre « sentiment. C'est que l'homme n'est pas encore affranchi, « et que la femme est encore esclave (1). »

Les mêmes moralistes indépendants font à l'Église l'application suivante de leur morale :

« Ah! prenez-y garde, Messieurs les cléricaux, ... nous saurons « s'il le faut, vous confondre, nous saurons, si le lent travail « de la science ne suffit pas, inscrire sur nos étendards, *et « mettre à exécution la grande pensée du siècle dernier : écri- « sons l'infâme (2).* »

C'est au nom de cette morale indépendante qu'on ébranle la

(1) *La Revue du Progrès*, novembre 1863.

(2) *Ibid.*, janvier 1864.

amille : son indissolubilité par le divorce, et sa sainteté par l'adultère, nous l'avons vu, et qu'on ne craint pas de dire : Qu'en dehors et au-dessous du mariage peuvent subsister entre les deux sexes des unions encore respectables, *légitimées par la nature, sinon par la loi sociale.*

Que l'on « proteste, au nom des droits de l'amour, contre le préjugé chrétien, » qui condamne « la femme galante, la courtisane (1); » que dis-je ? que l'on préfère quelquefois la courtisane à l'épouse, comme « plus chaste et plus fidèle (2); et qu'enfin on ajoute : « Ce n'est pas à la nature à se plier aux règles souvent arbitraires ou erronées de la société civile, mais c'est à la société civile de se conformer aux lois de la nature (3). »

Et voilà un auteur et un livre que de grands journaux à Paris, à Lyon, ont célébré ! Un livre que la *libre Pensée* a nommé *indispensable* pour quiconque s'intéresse aux grandes questions morales et religieuses ; dont la *Morale indépendante*, d'accord avec la feuille matérialiste et athée, a dit de son côté : « Voilà un livre dont nous conseillons la lecture à nos adversaires comme à nos amis. »

Est-ce donc là cette morale indépendante, qui peut seule, comme parle le *Journal des Débats*, « fonder et assurer l'unité spirituelle et cordiale du genre humain ? »

C'est encore au nom de la morale indépendante qu'on a dit : « La propriété, c'est le vol ; » c'est un droit de convention substitué au droit de nature ; et qu'on ébranle la société.

C'est au nom de la morale indépendante enfin qu'on a dit : « Guerre à Dieu ! » c'est le tyran de la pensée, de la conscience, de la nature, de la vie. « Dieu c'est le mal ! »

Le monde est son caprice, et l'homme son jouet...

Notre révolte est due aux chaînes qu'il nous tisse.

Le mal partout l'accuse : il ne se défend pas.

C'est qu'à vouloir parler il serait par trop las (4) !

(1) M. Bouteville.

(2) M. Proudhon.

(3) M. Bouteville.

(4) *La Libre Pensée*, 11 nov. 1866.

Séparez la morale de la Religion, dans la société, dans la famille, dans l'école, voilà où vous arriverez.

Concluons : la morale vient de Dieu, ne se peut séparer de Dieu.

La morale indépendante de tout dogme, religieux et philosophique, n'est pas la morale, c'est l'athéisme, conséquent ou inconséquent, l'athéisme pratique.

Et ceux qui, croyant en Dieu, proclament cependant la morale indépendante de Dieu, et de tout dogme philosophique et religieux, subsistant par elle-même, parce qu'elle est, disent-ils, un principe, un idéal, ceux-là, ici comme partout, font les affaires de l'athéisme.

Mais c'est assez, et en laissant là, j'allais dire avec dégoût, cet athéisme, conséquent ou inconséquent, mais pratique, qui s'appelle la morale indépendante, je résume ce triste débat en adressant aux docteurs de cette morale un dernier mot :

Que prétendez-vous définitivement et qu'entendez-vous avec votre indépendance de la morale et de la conscience humaine ?

Entendez-vous que le décalogue éternel est gravé dans vos cœurs comme sur des tables plus saintes encore que les tables de pierre de l'antique loi ?

Entendez-vous proclamer les Commandements de Dieu ?

Tu ne tueras point,

Tu ne déroberas point,

Tu ne mentiras point,

Tu ne porteras point de faux témoignages,

Tu ne convoiteras point la femme de ton prochain :

Si c'est cette morale-là que vous déclarez immuable, universelle, indépendante, je l'admets : indépendante, non pas de Dieu, mais de nos faiblesses, de nos passions, de nos ignorances, de nos erreurs, de nos disputes : car, selon la grande parole de saint Augustin : *Divino intonante præcepto, obediendum est, non disputandum* ;

En un mot, indépendante de l'homme et venant de Dieu :

Si c'est cela, oh ! alors, nous sommes d'accord.

La ferme conscience qui, le regard invariablement fixé sur la loi, sur le devoir, ne fléchit pas et se tient toujours debout dans l'honneur et la vertu, voilà notre liberté de conscience, notre morale indépendante, à nous ;

Mais, si vous voulez nous dire que vous êtes *le plus noble des hommes*, lorsque vous êtes *violemment épris d'une misérable courtisane...* et que vous *n'avez pas à en rougir* ;

Que la fille de mauvaise vie est *préférable à la plus fidèle épouse* ;

Que la prostituée vaut *la sœur de charité* ;

Que la *jouissance* est *DIVINE* comme la conscience ;

Que le *vice et la vertu* sont des produits comme le sucre et le vitriol ;

Qu'il y a *une morale pour chaque siècle*, et, *pour chaque race* ; et « *des mesures différentes pour la sincérité* ; »

Qu'il faut livrer l'indissolubilité du mariage et la sainteté de la famille aux entraînements *des êtres à affections vives et passagères* ;

Que *la propriété, c'est le vol* !

Que *Dieu, c'est le mal* !

Et qu'il faut enfin faire plier les lois arbitraires et erronées de *la société civile* aux caprices du cœur et des sens appelés par vous les *lois de la nature* ;

Oh ! alors, nous n'avons pas dans notre cœur assez d'horreur et dans nos paroles assez d'énergie pour repousser votre morale !

Et quand vous appelez cette morale-là *indépendante*, ce mot nous fait frémir, parce qu'il ne signifie plus autre chose que la suppression de tous les liens et de tous les freins.

Une telle morale, nous n'en voulons pas, ni au foyer domestique, ni dans les écoles où s'élève notre jeunesse, ni dans la société où nous vivons.

Et nous vous dirons, ou plutôt nous laisserons le divin Platon vous dire ce qu'il disait jadis aux corrupteurs de la morale dans Athènes :

« Retirez-vous, et ne venez pas nous dépraver !... »

« Nous faisons une grande œuvre... nous cherchons, nous
« tous qui voulons être vertueux, à représenter en nous-
« mêmes, et dans le drame de la vie humaine, la loi divine et
« la vertu... »

« Ne comptez donc pas que nous vous laissions entrer chez
« nous sans résistance, dresser votre tribune sur la place pu-
« blique, adresser la parole à nos femmes, à nos enfants, à
« tout le peuple, et leur débiter des maximes dissolvantes de
« toute vertu. »

TROISIÈME PARTIE

LE PÉRIL SOCIAL

Où allons-nous, je le demande, où allons-nous, si tout ce travail d'impiété et d'immoralité continue? Je réponds avec une profonde conviction : Nous marchons à un cataclysme social.

Car toutes ces doctrines, qu'on le remarque bien, ont des conséquences sociales inévitables : les principes religieux et moraux, bon gré mal gré, sont la base des sociétés ; qui les ébranle, ébranle tout.

Voilà ce qu'il est nécessaire de mettre maintenant en lumière.

J'examinerai donc ici les graves conséquences sociales des doctrines que je combats.

Je traiterai ensuite des préoccupations de l'heure présente.

I

CONSÉQUENCES SOCIALES DES DOCTRINES D'IMPIÉTÉ :

QUE CEUX QUI TRAVAILLENT A LA DISSOLUTION DES CROYANCES
TRAVAILLENT A LA DÉMOLITION DE LA SOCIÉTÉ.

On dira que je suis ému, trop ému, en écrivant ces choses, mais qui ne le serait comme moi? Qui pourrait sans émotion

à l'heure où je parle, jeter un regard interrogateur vers le redoutable inconnu qui est devant nous, vers les événements qui tout à coup peuvent surgir, et dont nul ne saurait mesurer les incalculables conséquences ?

Mais non : il y a des hommes qui ne voudraient rien voir, rien prévoir, et qui sont tranquilles.

Moi, je ne le suis pas ! Je le suis encore moins pour la société que pour l'Église, moins pour vous et vos enfants que pour moi-même.

Ah ! je ne puis me défendre de cette douloureuse réflexion : Combien notre nature est corrompue ! Il y a six mille ans que l'homme est sur la terre. Il y a dix-huit cents ans que l'Évangile est prêché. Dieu, l'âme, la vertu, le ciel, devraient être des vérités acquises, incontestées, le pain quotidien, le premier trésor de tous les hommes. Nullement, ce trésor, on nous le dispute encore ! Et que de funestes esprits viennent contester ces vérités premières à la face de notre vieille et légère société, et notre société, sans s'inquiéter un moment, sans se demander où ces docteurs d'impiété et d'immoralité la mènent, continue avec insouciance ses affaires et ses plaisirs, et, ce qui est plus triste, elle réserve à ces doutes impies l'attention et quelquefois la faveur, la célébrité qu'elle refuse si souvent à ceux qui ne lui parlent que le langage du bon sens, de la vertu et du respect !

Toujours las de la vérité ancienne, jamais attristé de l'erreur nouvelle, et ne prévoyant jamais les abîmes où il court, voilà l'homme ! Et il lui faut des coups de tonnerre, et quelquefois un siècle entier de douleurs effroyables, pour lui faire retrouver le bon sens et l'honnêteté perdue !

Il est donc nécessaire que je dise ici la raison de mes craintes, et que j'essaie de suivre, dans leurs conséquences, en achevant ce travail, les doctrines que je viens d'exposer.

Ces doctrines ne peuvent manquer d'avoir leurs contre-coups dans l'ordre social pour les raisons que voici :

1° Parce que telle est la nature même des choses et la logique des faits ;

2° Parce que tel est le but avoué des chefs ;

3° Parce que ces doctrines peuvent facilement devenir populaires ;

4° Et enfin par le fond même des questions sociales pendantes.

I

LA NATURE DES CHOSES ET LA LOGIQUE DES FAITS.

La libre pensée devait amener la libre morale ; la libre morale n'amènera-t-elle pas la libre action, l'action révolutionnaire ? Devant la libre pensée et la libre morale, il y a la résistance des lois et la société. Mais quand ce sera le peuple qu'on aura fait libre penseur et libre moraliste, n'attaquera-t-on pas bientôt les lois et la société elle-même, au nom de la libre pensée et de la libre morale ? Je le crains et je le crois.

Et je songe avec effroi au lendemain que nous préparant ces excès, comme on n'avait pas encore vus, de la libre pensée et de la libre morale, affranchies de toute croyance, de toute religion, de toute autorité, de tout ce qui avait fait jusqu'ici la sécurité de l'ordre social.

Car, s'il est une chose certaine, démontrée par l'irrécusable expérience de tous les temps, c'est ce qu'on a appelé la logique des faits : quand un principe a pris une fois possession des esprits, il ne tarde pas à développer ses conséquences. Il y a des logiciens timides qui restent en route, mais il y en a d'autres, en France surtout, pays d'action, qui vont résolûment jusqu'au bout : « Le peuple, disait un des hommes de 1848, M. Félix Pyat, dans un discours très-instructif, que je revoyais ces jours-ci, sur le *droit au travail*, « le peuple est un grand logicien « qui ne manque jamais de conclure. »

M. Pyat a raison dans son audacieuse franchise, et je la préfère mille fois à ce sophisme hypocrite, l'un des plus répugnants de la méprisable sophistique contemporaine.

« La qualité des doctrines, c'est M. Renan qui parle, importe
 « assez peu (1)... Le savant ne poursuit qu'un but spécula-
 « tif, de paisibles et inoffensives recherches (2)... le penseur
 « ne se croit qu'un bien faible droit à la direction des affaires
 « de sa planète; la pensée pure ne demande que le royaume
 « de l'air; semblables à de purs esprits, placés en dehors des
 « intérêts, des passions, des événements de leur époque, les
 « chefs de la pensée abstraite *ne se doutent pas qu'il y ait une*
 « *société humaine, ou du moins ils spéculent comme s'il n'y*
 « *en avait pas* (3). »

M. Taine continue: « Mais vous êtes mariés, leur dit Reid.
 « — Nous, pas du tout. — Mais, répond M. Royer-Collard, vous
 « établissez la révolution dans l'esprit des Français! — Nous
 « n'en savons rien. *Est-ce qu'il y a des Français* (4)? »

D'autres sont plus francs et disent sans détour :

« Un dogme nouveau amène un régime nouveau.

« Un nouvel état mental appelle un nouvel état social.

« La réforme mentale aura pour conséquence la réforme
 « matérielle; il en a été toujours ainsi.

« Une autre *éducation*, une autre *vie morale*, une autre
 « *société* sont en enfantement... La révolution n'est pas une pure
 « et simple insurrection de l'esprit contre les incompatibilités
 « théologiques (l'existence de Dieu) : elle a pour aboutissant
 « nécessaire *une régénération radicale* qui, changeant les
 « *conditions mentales*, changera parallèlement *toutes les con-*
 « *ditions matérielles* (5). »

Et il n'y a que quelques mois, je lisais, du même écrivain,
 les paroles que voici, et dont il est impossible de ne pas tenir
 compte :

« Une croyance, dit M. Mill, qui a gagné les esprits cultivés

(1) *Essais*, p. VII.

(2) *Etudes d'histoire religieuse*, p. XXI, XXIII.

(3) *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 1^{er} avril 1858.

(4) *Philosophes français*, p. 36.

(5) *Conservation, Révolution, Positivisme*, p. XXX, 444, 470. — *Paroles de Philosophie positive*, p. 22.

« d'une société, est sûre, ou plus tôt ou plus tard, à moins que
« la force ne l'écrase, DE PARVENIR A LA MULTITUDE. *Cette opi-*
« *nion*, qui a été celle de M. Comte, et qui est aussi la mienne,
« *dissipe les illusions qu'on se fait quelquefois, quand on croit*
« *que, sur le domaine historique, philosophique ou scientifique,*
« *les recherches peuvent demeurer encloses dans les livres et*
« *dans les écoles. Non ; quelque intention qu'on ait, elles vont*
« *inévitablement PORTER COUP à l'ancien ordre intellectuel,*
« *MORAL, SOCIAL. »*

« Les partisans de cet ancien ordre ne s'y trompent pas,
« et s'indignent des vaines protestations dont on se couvre.
« Jamais la philosophie positive n'en a fait ni n'en fera, car
« elle sait et professe, *qu'on ne peut pas avoir une conception*
« *du monde différente de celles qui régnèrent et qui règnent*
« *sans que TOUT, s'en ressentant, SE MODIFIE ET SE TRANS-*
« *FORME.*

« C'est au bruit néfaste du canon que j'ai achevé ce travail
« médité depuis plusieurs mois, et j'ai éprouvé un véritable
« malaise à philosopher si impersonnellement, tandis que près
« de nous le sang coulait à torrents. Certes, cette jonchée de
« corps allemands sur le sol de la patrie allemande, excitant
« une juste horreur et ne s'en faisant pas moins, témoigne
« *combien l'ancien ordre INTELLECTUEL, MORAL, SOCIAL, QU'ON*
« *ATTAQUE, EST JUSTEMENT ATTAQUÉ (1).* »

Voilà du moins qui est sincère.

Voilà la vérité ! voilà la logique ! D'ailleurs, le sophiste dont
j'ai cité plus haut les paroles, et qui se fait un jeu moqueur de
la contradiction et du paradoxe sur les questions les plus gra-
ves, M. Renan, a dit lui-même :

« La question de l'avenir de l'humanité est tout entière une
« question de doctrine. La philosophie seule est compétente
« pour la résoudre. La révolution réellement efficace, *celle qui*
« *donnera la forme à l'avenir*, ce sera une révolution *religieuse*

(1) *La Philosophie positive.*

« *et morale*. Le rôle va de plus en plus passer aux hommes de la pensée (1). »

Et M. Taine, cet autre sophiste cité plus haut, dit également de son côté :

« Dans cette conception du monde (la conception matérialiste), il y a *une morale, une politique, une religion* nouvelles : et c'est notre affaire aujourd'hui de les chercher (2). »

Ainsi, par la nature et la logique même des choses, les doctrines ont fatalement leurs contre-coups dans l'ordre social.

Les idées subversives sont élaborées d'abord par les écrivains ; puis, bientôt elles descendent dans les masses, et quand elles ont fait leur chemin, et que leur diffusion est plus ou moins consommée, alors elles éclatent dans les faits et se traduisent en catastrophes.

« Il y a toujours de grands désordres, disait M. de Bonald, là où il y a de grandes erreurs, et de grandes erreurs là où il y a de grands désordres ; » de telle sorte que les erreurs sont tout à la fois une cause et un signe des perturbations sociales.

Quand donc on voit des doctrines détestables en possession d'une publicité immense et d'une propagande organisée, je dis, si on ne veut marcher les yeux fermés à l'abîme, qu'il y a lieu enfin de se demander : Où allons-nous ?

Moi, je le sais, si cela dure ; et c'est parce que je le sais et le vois, que je pousse un cri, et voudrais réveiller et éclairer, s'il était possible, ceux qui sont dupes, et qui, sur le bord de tels abîmes, trouvent commode de ne rien entendre et de ne rien voir.

Certes, je ne fais injure à personne, parce que je tiens la presse aujourd'hui pour une puissance formidable : et je ne manque pas de respect envers ceux qui écrivent, enseignent et parlent dans notre pays, quand je les regarde comme très-responsables du bien ou du mal immense qu'ils peuvent faire,

(1) *Liberté de penser*, t. IV, p. 439.

(2) *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 15 octobre 1862.

et quand je leur rappelle que, parmi ceux qui les écoutent, il y a le peuple, et il y a un Dieu.

Que dire cependant de la légèreté et de l'assurance avec laquelle ils tranchent sans sourciller, d'un trait de plume, au courant de l'improvisation, les plus hauts et plus délicats problèmes? On a souvent flétri déjà la témérité avec laquelle certains jeunes écrivains, journalistes de la veille, arrivés au bureau de leur journal avec un si mince bagage d'études, s'improvisent hommes politiques, et immédiatement traitent avec un suprême dédain nos hommes d'État les plus expérimentés, et jouent pour ainsi dire, sans douter un seul instant d'eux-mêmes, sans se poser une seule minute la question de compétence, avec les plus difficiles et les plus graves questions: Rien ne les arrête; ils savent tout, et décident de tout, avec un ton d'infailibilité qui n'appartient qu'à eux. Mais quand cette témérité se produit, comme nous en avons aujourd'hui le spectacle, dans les choses sacrées, sur les vérités les plus hautes et qui demandent le plus, comme disaient les anciens, une science blanchie par le temps, oh! alors la légèreté trop proverbiale de l'esprit français ne peut servir d'excuse; et au lieu de la déplorable confiance que tant de gens, serfs de leur journal, leur donnent, ces vains et criminels parleurs n'ont droit qu'à l'indignation et au mépris.

II

LE BUT AVOUÉ DES CHEFS.

Du reste, s'il y a aujourd'hui une chose évidente à quiconque a des yeux pour voir et des oreilles pour entendre, c'est que, de l'aveu même des chefs, la guerre acharnée qu'ils font, depuis dix ans surtout, à la religion, n'est qu'un préliminaire de celle qu'ils méditent contre l'ordre social.

L'auteur de l'article sur la *Philosophie positive*, dont je

viens de citer les paroles, écrivait encore, le 15 août dernier :
« L'ancien ordre intellectuel, *moral, social*, n'a pas d'*adver-*
« *saire plus déterminé*, plus effectif, *plus radical*, que la phi-
« losophie positive. »

Et il faut ajouter que le positivisme n'est pas seulement dans les livres. Il parle, il enseigne. Il a des chaires, des *cours publics et gratuits, tous les dimanches* : c'est ce que la *Morale indépendante* annonçait dans un de ses derniers numéros.

Je lisais, ces jours-ci même, cet autre aveu significatif dans une revue nouvelle :

« La société européenne traverse en ce moment une période
« de transition ; mais la *régénération complète* ne s'effectuera
« que *par la rénovation religieuse*. » On avu plus haut ce qu'ils entendent par rénovation religieuse et par religion de l'avenir.

Mais il faut écouter ici et regarder en face les aveux qui sont les mots d'ordre du parti ; en voici quelques-uns :

« Le dogme nouveau appelle un régime nouveau » disent-ils. Mais quel régime ? Le Socialisme, dernier mot, selon eux de la révolution : « Clore la révolution occidentale est le but du SOCIALISME, et *ne se peut que par lui*. »

Et s'adressant au peuple, ils ajoutent : « Le peuple est directement intéressé au triomphe de la philosophie positive ; ou, « pour mieux dire, ce triomphe est le sien, C'EST TOUT UN (1). »

Et d'où vient la philosophie positive, le positivisme ? Du génie de la convention. « Le génie philosophique de la convention ne fut pas inférieur à son génie politique. Le positivisme en est l'héritier direct... La convention, le seul gouvernement vraiment progressif que nous ayons eu depuis « soixante ans (2). »

Et, pour arriver à cette grande révolution sociale, la ruine de la religion est le préliminaire indispensable.

« Un nouveau *dogme*, un nouveau *culte* doivent surgir, afin
« qu'une nouvelle société prenne la place de l'ancienne. »

(1) *Conservation, Révolution, Positivisme*.

(2) *Ibid*, XVII, XVIII, 154.

« Les réformes sociales ne peuvent être obtenues que par
« l'extinction des croyances théologiques (1). »

« Il n'y a d'idée neuve et efficace que celle qui prétend rem-
« placer la vieille doctrine théologique par une *doctrine sociale*.
« Mais qui maintenant promet une doctrine, sinon LE SOCIALISME (2)? »

Ainsi le socialisme, tous les progrès de la libre pensée athée,
et de la libre morale antichrétienne, accélèrent son avènement;
ce n'est pas moi, ce sont les chefs mêmes du socialisme qui le
disent avec l'orgueil d'un succès déjà assuré :

« Les choses marchent, et si l'on prend contre nous les posi-
« tions officielles, en revanche, nous prenons les *positions*
« *réelles*, à savoir les *convictions*, les *sentiments*, les *cons-*
« *ciences*. Quel plus éclatant succès peut désirer le SOCIALISME,
« que de gagner, avec une aussi prodigieuse rapidité, les esprits
« et les cœurs? »

« Telle est la situation. Quelle qu'en soit l'issue, notre rôle
« à nous, *socialistes*, est tout tracé : continuer NOTRE PROPAGANDE INFATIGABLE, en France et hors de France, par la pa-
« role, par la presse, par l'exemple (3). »

Et M. le docteur Bourdet dit de même :

« Le symbole de l'amélioration nécessaire, sous le nom
« de SOCIALISME, tient en éveil les peuples et les rois. Le
« grand acheminement vers l'émancipation du prolétariat
« est commencé, et se poursuivra, en dépit des terreurs in-
« sensées (4). »

Les théoriciens de l'athéisme — positivistes, panthéistes,
matérialistes, — et je dirai même, dans un sens, les déistes
inconséquents qui les aident à insulter le Christianisme, sont
donc, bon gré mal gré, les théoriciens du socialisme ; ce sont

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 400.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 498.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 472 et 228.

(4) M. le docteur Bourdet, p. 351.

eux qui forment ces *convictions*, ces *sentiments*, ces *consciences* dont on nous parle.

L'athéisme, quel que soit son nom et sa nuance, donne la main au socialisme.

Au reste, l'Allemagne peut encore nous offrir ici de utiles leçons. « En *politique*, comme en *philosophie*, la jeune école hégélienne professa les *doctrines les plus radicales*. 1848 arriva : *l'extrême gauche hégélienne devint l'extrême gauche révolutionnaire* ; L'ATHÉISME ET LE SOCIALISME SE DONNÈRENT « LA MAIN (1). »

La religion est si bien, aux yeux des coryphées du parti, l'obstacle au socialisme ; en attaquant la religion, ils ont si bien pour but et pour objectif, comme on dit aujourd'hui, la société, qu'avant tout ils veulent, une fois les maîtres, mettre la main sur l'éducation tout entière, et supprimer du même coup l'université et le clergé, absolument indignes d'en être chargés, attendu que l'un et l'autre perpétuent la foi en Dieu ; et, cette éducation de la jeunesse française, on la donnera à un pouvoir éducateur, créé spécialement à cet effet, et qui héritera de cet important ministère.

Il y a « nécessité de ne pas entretenir aux frais de l'État le « clergé et l'université, une éducation et une instruction qui « sont un obstacle direct à *toute réorganisation des croyances et des mœurs* (2). »

Toujours le renversement des croyances comme préliminaire du renversement de la société.

« Supprimer le budget ecclésiastique, faire cet acte de saine « politique et de haute moralité, sans supprimer le budget « universitaire, ce serait manquer le but ; les deux suppressions « sont connexes (3). »

Et pourquoi renverser ainsi l'éducation donnée par l'Église et celle donnée par l'université ? La raison en est simple :

(1) M. Janet, *le Matérialisme contemporain*, p. 7.

(2) *Conservation, Révolution, Positivisme*, p. 15.

(3) *Ibid.*

« Le régime mental auquel on soumet les générations actuelles, régime à moitié théologique, à moitié métaphysique, régime aussi dangereux pour l'ordre que pour le progrès, est trop mauvais pour être soutenu par l'État, dès que l'État sera en des mains vigoureuses et intelligentes (1). »

Et quelles seront ces mains vigoureuses et intelligentes ? « Les prolétaires, que leur nombre, leur pauvreté, et leur dégage- ment de la plupart *des préjugés métaphysiques* appellent à ce rôle. Les prolétaires montent comme un flot grossissant. Les autres classes n'ont plus que des peurs ou des regrets ; eux seuls ont des aspirations et la fermeté du cœur. *Ceux qui ont entamé la révolution ne peuvent la finir : cette tâche est dévolue aux prolétaires* (2). »

Et en effet :

« Pour gouverner, aucun apprentissage n'est requis, et quelques-uns de ces prolétaires, qui gèrent avec tant de capacité les associations ouvrières, fourniraient dès à présent des instruments bien autrement sûrs que tous ceux qu'à notre dam nous prenons dans les hautes classes (3). »

Et pour faire arriver au pouvoir les prolétaires, le suffrage universel lui-même sera mis de côté comme suspect ; on fera voter non la France, mais Paris.

« Pour que les prolétaires mettent directement la main au gouvernement, le suffrage universel doit être écarté, car il ôte à Paris la prépondérance que cette grande cité a eue sur la transmission du pouvoir... Le positivisme recherche où est la véritable action électorale dans nos grandes péripéties, et la trouve dans Paris qu'il propose d'investir de la fonction d'élire pour toute la France le pouvoir exécutif ; et sans doute

(1) *Ibid.*, p. xv.

« Puisque l'éducation a surtout besoin d'un but social et d'un sens moral que les traditions universitaires ou cléricales ne possèdent plus... l'éducation doit cesser d'appartenir au clergé ou à l'université, *tous deux caducs.* » M. le docteur Bourdet, p. 334. — L'auteur de l'*Etude de Philosophie positive* est dans les mêmes pensées. C'est le but bien arrêté de ces messieurs.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 157.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. xx, xxi.

« Paris appelé à cette grande fonction électorale ne tarderait pas à confier l'autorité à des prolétaires (1); et le pouvoir central » à un triumvirat.

Je veux espérer que ce ne sera pas Rohespierre, Saint-Just et Couthon.

Voilà qui est clair.

Et voici qui ne l'est pas moins.

J'ai parlé des petits volumes à sept sous, à cinq sous, et de certaines bibliothèques populaires. J'ai sous les yeux un petit volume de la bibliothèque dite UTILE, intitulé : *Histoire populaire de la philosophie*. J'y lis que :

« L'ÉVANGILE n'est que LE TESTAMENT D'UNE SOCIÉTÉ « AGONISANTE... »

— On reconnaît, dans tout cet écrit, les blasphèmes qu'on a lus dans la *Vie de Jésus*, de M. Renan, et dans les articles plus odieux encore publiés dans la *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, par M. Havet, professeur, dit-on, au Collège de France. —

Et après avoir présenté sous de tels traits l'Évangile au peuple, quand l'auteur de l'*Histoire populaire de la philosophie* arrive aux théories contemporaines destinées à remplacer cette religion du passé « par des transformations PLUS RADICALES ENCORE que celles de 89, » il ajoute :

« Les masses intelligentes sont et se disent SOCIALISTES... »

« Avec son admirable instinct, le peuple ne voit pas dans LE « SOCIALISME un parti, il y voit UNE RELIGION... » C'est le mot connu : « Le Socialisme est la religion des classes déshéritées. »

L'auteur de l'*Histoire populaire de la philosophie* continue : « IL EST IMPOSSIBLE qu'une grande révolution sociale ne soit « en même temps une grande révolution religieuse (2). »

Et l'écrivain qui enseigne ainsi le peuple lui dit en lui dédiant son ouvrage :

« Les peuples, aujourd'hui... ne veulent plus de pasteurs... »

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 22, 23.

(2) P. 88, 187, 188, 189.

« Ils ont assez longtemps vécu du lait des fables et des symboles... « Suivez le conseil de notre Rabelais. Vous avez de
« bonnes dents ; cassez l'os que je vous présente pour en sucer
« la moelle. C'EST DE LA MOELLE DE LION ; qui en goûte, DEVIENT
« INDOMPTABLE (1). »

Peut-être après cela comprendra-t-on la portée de ces paroles de Leibnitz : « Il y a des hommes qui, se croyant
« déchargés de l'importune crainte d'une Providence surveil-
« lante, tournent leur esprit à séduire les autres ; et s'ils sont
« ambitieux, ils seront capables de mettre le feu aux quatre
« coins de la terre ; j'en ai connu de cette trempe.

« Je trouve même, ajoute Leibnitz, que des opinions appro-
« chantes s'insinuant peu à peu dans l'esprit des hommes du
« monde, qui règlent les autres, et dont dépendent les affaires,
« et se glissant dans les livres à la mode, DISPOSENT TOUTES
« CHOSES A LA RÉVOLUTION GÉNÉRALE DONT L'EUROPE EST ME-
« NACÉE. »

Voilà des paroles que je prie le *Journal des Débats*, la *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, et autres, de méditer.

Que les hommes dont parle Leibnitz ne veuillent pas qu'on crie au feu et s'irritent contre ceux qui poussent le cri d'alarme, je le conçois.

Mais ce que je ne comprends plus, ce sont les honnêtes gens, qui tiennent à conserver à tout prix leur quiétude et à ne s'apercevoir de l'incendie que quand la conflagration sera universelle.

III

LES DOCTRINES MATÉRIALISTES ET ATHÉES PEUVENT FACILEMENT DEVENIR POPULAIRES.

Dira-t-on que ces théories d'impiété et d'immoralité sont trop savantes pour être accessibles aux masses, et ne pourront jamais devenir populaires ?

(1) *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. 6.

Grande erreur que de le penser.

Ces théories ne sont pas du tout savantes, et rien ne devient plus aisément populaire que ce qui lâche la bride à toutes les passions.

Nous avons déjà cité des faits qui jettent une triste lumière sur ce point ; et nous ne voyons d'ailleurs que trop tous les jours, nous qui touchons le peuple de près, combien, non-seulement par ses défauts, mais par ses qualités mêmes, le peuple donne des prises contre lui aux écrivains qui travaillent à le perdre.

Des hommes politiques ont pensé quelquefois qu'ils pouvaient, tout en s'affranchissant eux-mêmes de la foi religieuse, maintenir le peuple dans la religion : cette erreur ne peut plus tromper personne.

Le peuple comprend aujourd'hui que, s'il n'y a pas de religion pour les lettrés et pour les riches, il n'y en a point pour lui, et que, si la religion n'oblige pas tout le monde, elle n'oblige personne.

Et dans ce sens, la logique de M. Proudhon avait tout à fait raison : « *Il faut une religion au peuple. Et pourquoi ? Parce qu'il faut que le peuple serve et apprenne par la religion à être content de sa servitude. — Voilà, ajoutait le rude logicien, tout le secret de ce charabia académique.* »

Non : si la croyance à Dieu, à l'âme, à l'immortalité de l'âme, si la religion n'est qu'un instrument de police, personne n'en voudra.

Mais, grâce à Dieu, elle est autre chose. La religion est la première sauvegarde des sociétés, parce qu'elle est, pour les riches et pour les savants comme pour le peuple et pour les pauvres, la première des vérités et le premier des devoirs.

Qu'on ne se fasse donc plus d'illusion. Tout se tient dans une nation.

Lorsque les hautes classes de la société et la jeunesse française lisaient d'Holbach et Diderot, on pouvait prévoir que le *Père Duchesne* serait bientôt crié dans les rues, et que lui et

ses pareils ne tarderaient pas à être les maîtres de la France, et à la gouverner selon leurs principes.

L'athéisme des lettrés et des riches appelle l'athéisme du peuple, et l'on sait comment l'un traduit l'autre, en quel style et en quels actes.

Et je le demande, que pourrait-il rester de raison, de bon sens public, de dignité, de vie honnête, de civilisation véritable, chez un peuple à qui l'on aurait persuadé :

Que l'homme n'a pas d'autre Dieu à adorer que lui-même ;

Pas d'autre âme à ennoblir qu'un cerveau plus ou moins semblable à la cervelle des brutes ;

Pas d'autre religion à pratiquer que celle dont ses caprices lui donnent la fantaisie ;

Pas d'autre distinction entre le bien et le mal que celle qu'il lui plaît de décider ;

Pas d'autre vie future que le souvenir de la postérité ;

Pas d'autre providence enfin que la nécessité des lois fatales, avec je ne sais quelle liberté humaine réduite à n'être pas autre chose que l'alternative des mouvements contraires et prépondérants de l'activité cérébrale ?

Certes, tout cela, le peuple le traduit bientôt en des phrases auxquelles on ne peut du moins reprocher, comme à celles de certains philosophes, de manquer de clarté. La traduction populaire des doctrines positivistes, panthéistes, matérialistes et sensualistes, ne l'entendons-nous pas tous les jours, chez certains hommes de nos villes et de nos campagnes ? — « Quand on est mort, tout est mort. » — « Il n'y a pas d'autre Dieu que le soleil. » — « La religion a fait son temps. » — « Personne n'est revenu de l'autre monde. » — « Tout cela ce sont des bêtises ! » — « Les prêtres font leur métier. — Les rois sont des tyrans. » — « La grande propriété c'est un vol ; nous voulons partager. » — « Il n'est pas besoin qu'il y ait des riches, et il ne faut pas qu'il y ait des pauvres. »

Et les actes sont bientôt d'accord avec le style. Cela doit être.

Et c'est ce que disait, il y a peu de jours, à un historien illustre, à un de nos premiers hommes d'État, dans une conversation familière au milieu des champs, un paysan des environs de Paris : — « Va-t-on encore à l'église, chez vous ? lui demandait son interlocuteur. — Pas beaucoup, Monsieur ; et « c'est malheureux, car tout ce qu'on enlève à la religion, on « l'enlève à la moralité. »

La vérité est que ceux qui, dans nos campagnes, désertent l'église, ne savent bientôt plus les commandements de Dieu. Ceux-là ont beau dire dans le même grossier langage : « Je « n'ai pas besoin d'aller à confesse, j'en'ai ni tué, ni volé, » bientôt il s'en rencontre qui violent toutes les lois de la probité et de la pudeur, et ne reculent pas au besoin devant le meurtre.

Les négations dogmatiques conduisent inévitablement aux négations morales : l'erreur raffinée sur les lois morales ne tarde pas à colorer la tromperie dans les affaires et à justifier toutes les fraudes, tous les mensonges intéressés. Qui ne sait où tout cela en est aujourd'hui ?

Et puis, une révolution étant donnée, on sait aussi jusqu'où vont, dans ces temps d'explosion, les violences meurtrières de la cupidité et de toutes les passions qui éclatent.

Une nation sans Dieu, sans religion, sans foi ; ne croyant plus à l'âme, ni à la loi de Dieu, ni à la vie future, mais seulement au temps et à la matière !... Je ne crains pas d'affirmer qu'une telle nation deviendrait en dix ans un peuple effroyable : on n'y peut arrêter un moment sa pensée sans frémir.

« Philosophiez tant que vous voudrez entre vous, disait Voltaire ; mais, si vous avez une bourgade à gouverner, il faut « qu'elle ait une religion. » Et ailleurs : « Je ne voudrais pas « avoir à faire à un gouvernement athée, — prince ou peuple, « — qui trouverait son intérêt à me faire piler dans un mortier ; je suis bien sûr que je serais pilé. »

« Celui qui craint la religion et qui la hait, disait Montesquieu, est comme les bêtes sauvages qui mordent la chaîne « qui les empêche de se jeter sur ceux qui passent ; celui qui

« n'a point du tout de religion est cet animal terrible qui ne sent sa liberté, que lorsqu'il déchire et qu'il dévore. »

A-t-on oublié le sanglant commentaire donné en 1793 à cette parole de l'éloquent publiciste ?

Vous chassez Dieu de la société ; est-ce donc pour la livrer aux bêtes sauvages ?

Dieu me garde de méconnaître jamais les mérites du peuple. Ah ! le peuple, le vrai peuple, les classes laborieuses, les modestes et respectables familles, où vivent encore les croyances, gardiennes des mœurs, et, avec la foi et les mœurs, toutes les vertus, ce sont les profondes assises sur lesquelles repose une nation ; c'est là comme le cœur d'un pays. Tant que le mal n'est pas descendu jusque-là, tant que le peuple demeure sain d'esprit et de cœur, quelques progrès qu'aient faits dans d'autres régions les idées subversives, il y a là encore une source de vie dans la société : mais, si cette source même vient à être corrompue, que restera-t-il ? je le demande, que restera-t-il ?

Et voilà le grand mal, voilà le crime de lèse-majesté sociale et humaine, dont j'accuse la presse qui s'est vouée à populariser l'impiété : elle fait descendre les doctrines dissolvantes jusqu'au plus profond du corps social ; et voilà ce que j'appelle un affreux malheur et un affreux péril.

Car enfin, ce peuple, dont vous tuez la religion et les croyances, s'il a ses vertus natives, il a aussi ses penchants ; s'il a son travail protecteur, il a aussi ses souffrances, mauvaises conseillères. En le pénétrant d'athéisme, de sensualisme, et de morale indépendante, ne voyez-vous pas que vous lâchez chez lui la bride à toutes les fougueuses convoitises ; vous lui soufflez au cœur la soif ardente des jouissances matérielles, vous lui enlevez la résignation et l'espérance ; vous lui rendez intolérables ses souffrances ; vous prêtez des arguments terribles à son envie, vous surexcitez ses plus dangereuses impatiences : osez-vous soutenir que par là vous travaillez à la paix sociale ? Non, c'est la guerre que vous préparez.

IV

LES QUESTIONS SOCIALES PENDANTES RENDENT PLUS FORMIDABLE ENCORE LE DANGER DES DOCTRINES IRRÉLIGIEUSES.

S'il y a toujours péril à laisser corrompre un peuple par l'impiété, combien ce péril n'est-il pas plus grand encore aujourd'hui, que des questions sociales si redoutables sont suspendues sur nos têtes !

Certes, je ne veux pas dire qu'il faille négliger les intérêts populaires, et prêcher uniquement au peuple la résignation dans le malheur, réservant les améliorations de son sort à la vie future. C'est une des calomnies ordinaires contre l'Eglise, je le sais, et c'est par là qu'on cherche à faire prendre en haine au peuple, à certains moments, son alliée naturelle, son amie la plus vraie et la plus sûre, la religion ; et c'est là encore un de mes grands griefs contre ceux que je combats.

Mais non : précisément parce qu'il est du devoir des gouvernements de s'occuper toujours des intérêts du peuple, et qu'aujourd'hui, par le cours des choses, les plus formidables questions sociales se trouvent posées, — les grèves ouvrières, chaque matin, nous le rappellent, — il importe de ne pas enlever à l'étude de ces problèmes les lumières et les conseils des doctrines religieuses, de la foi chrétienne, et de n'en pas livrer la solution à l'athéisme et au matérialisme.

Le congrès international des ouvriers à Genève m'a attristé, non-seulement à cause de l'esprit irréligieux qui s'y est manifesté, mais encore par son origine : c'est à Londres que ce congrès a été imaginé, décidé, organisé : *timeo Danaos...* surtout par les moyens qu'on veut employer pour résoudre les questions qui ont été posées là : *ces grèves immenses, invin-*

cibles, entre tous les ouvriers européens, de telle sorte que, quand les ouvriers d'une industrie se seront mis en grève à Londres, il faudra que les ouvriers de la même industrie se mettent aussi en grève à Paris, à Lyon, à Vienne, à Berlin, à Saint-Pétersbourg, dans toute l'Europe : je vois bien ce qu'à de telles grèves les ouvriers anglais peuvent gagner ; mais je vois aussi ce que la société européenne peut perdre.

N'est-ce pas là évidemment une sorte d'assaut organisé pour faire capituler la société ?

Je sais, d'ailleurs, ce qui s'est dit à Londres, en 1857, par les délégués des ouvriers. Ils veulent l'égalité avec le maître.

Mais, si tout le monde devient patron, personne ne le sera ! Au fond, c'est une formule de partage ! C'est la ruine de la richesse, et ce n'est pas un remède à la pauvreté ! C'est tarir la source, afin que tout le monde puisse mieux boire !

Voilà ce qui s'est dit à Londres, à l'exposition universelle de 1857. Est-ce ce qu'on nous fera entendre à Paris, à l'exposition de 1867 ?

Qui ne voit, qui ne sent tous les gouffres qui se creusent sous les pas devant de telles questions ? Faudra-t-il donc désormais que l'intelligence, les droits acquis, l'héritage séculaire du travail, de l'habileté, de l'économie, de la probité, de la considération publique, que la civilisation en un mot abdique devant le nombre et la force ?

Eh quoi ! c'est quand de telles questions sont pendantes, des questions qui naguère ensanglantaient vos rues et mettaient la société française à deux doigts de sa perte, quand de pareils périls vous menacent, quand ce peuple, flatté par de tels docteurs, excité par de telles perspectives, peut devenir demain votre maître, c'est alors que vous, qui vous prétendez conservateurs, prêtez les mains à la destruction de ses croyances, à la corruption de ses idées, et travaillez de gaieté de cœur à en faire un peuple irréligieux, remplaçant toute religion par cette *religion des classes déshéritées*, qui s'appelle le socialisme !

Eh bien ! voilà le danger que j'ai voulu signaler dans ma

dernière lettre. On m'a dit : « Vous attaquez la démocratie tout entière. »

Non, ce n'est pas la démocratie que j'attaque.

Pourquoi aurais-je voulu attaquer la démocratie?

« La démocratie, » s'écriait il y a cinquante ans un éloquent ministre, « la démocratie coule à pleins bords. » Or, ce fait, en lui-même, n'inspire à l'Église aucune frayeur : catholique dans le temps et dans l'espace, l'Église est faite pour vivre avec toutes les formes possibles de gouvernement et de société.

Si la démocratie c'est le peuple, l'Église bénit le peuple, comme elle bénit la bourgeoisie, comme elle bénit les vieilles races : l'Église n'a de malédiction pour personne.

Si la démocratie c'est l'ascension des races populaires, des paysans, des ouvriers, à une plus grande somme d'instruction, de bien-être, de moralité, de légitime influence, l'Église est avec la démocratie.

Mais, si la démocratie c'est la tyrannie sans frein de la multitude, et avec cette tyrannie, l'impiété, l'athéisme, la guerre à Dieu et à l'Église, la guerre sociale, la suppression de la religion, le bouleversement de tout ordre public et des principes fondamentaux de la société, oh ! non, l'Église n'est pas et ne peut pas être avec cette démocratie-là.

J'ai parlé de ceux qui creusent gratuitement des abîmes entre la démocratie et nous, et font croire au peuple, par un profond et lamentable malentendu, que l'Église est son ennemie : ceux-là, qui sont-ils ? Ce sont ceux qui veulent faire de l'impiété matérialiste l'inséparable alliée de la démocratie.

Ceux qui, le 3 novembre, à l'ouverture des cours de la Faculté de médecine, ont crié simultanément : *Vive le matérialisme ! vive la démocratie !* Voilà ceux qui font à la démocratie, au vrai peuple, la plus sanglante injure.

Et ceux-là ne travaillent pas seulement contre l'Église, ils travaillent plus encore contre la société. La démocratie impie serait un socialisme dévastateur.

Je sais bien que l'athéisme, Dieu merci, n'a pas encore envahi le cœur de notre pays; mais je le vois agir audacieusement, gagner du terrain et s'étendre. Je vois des savants et des gens de lettres se mêler à la jeunesse et aux masses populaires pour leur prêcher l'athéisme, et je dis : Il y a là un péril social immense, en même temps qu'un péril religieux.

Vous me répondez : Ce sont des emportés, que leurs excès mêmes condamnent à n'être qu'une minorité impuissante.

Grande illusion que la vôtre.

Sans doute que les hommes que j'ai désignés ne représentent pas la France, mais ils la pervertissent.

Cavete a fermento ! Gardons-nous d'un tel levain; car, selon la parole évangélique, il suffit d'un levain corrompu pour corrompre toute la masse.

Il n'y aurait là qu'un ferment, qu'il faudrait encore veiller. Mais ici, ce n'est pas seulement un peu de levain caché, c'est toute la presse antichrétienne, c'est-à-dire presque toute la presse, qui éclate.

On sait d'ailleurs, et l'histoire de toutes les révolutions est là pour me l'apprendre, que toujours les majorités modérées ont été subjuguées et entraînées par les minorités extrêmes.

Les Jacobins n'étaient pas la Convention, et cependant ils ont dominé la Convention.

La Convention n'était pas la France, et cependant son règne éphémère a suffi pour couvrir la France de sang et de ruines.

La Convention avait été élue sous l'affreuse pression de 6,000 clubs, et de milliers de comités révolutionnaires, et elle ne le fut, je crois, que par 1,500,000 votants; et sur ces 1,500,000 votants, la moitié avait élu des hommes qui n'étaient pas des scélérats. Et on sait ce que fut la Convention.

Mais ce qui est positivement certain, et ce qui peut donner l'idée du reste, c'est que, sur 80,000 électeurs inscrits pour nommer un maire de Paris, celui qu'on appela le roi de Paris, Pétion, fut nommé par 6,600 voix seulement.

Sur le même nombre d'électeurs inscrits, 80,000, Danton fut

nommé substitut du procureur syndic de la commune par 1,662 voix !

Hébert et Chaumette furent élus à la Commune, dans leurs sections l'un par 56 voix et l'autre par 53 ! Et on sait ce que firent Pétion et Danton, Hébert et Chaumette (1).

Ne parlez donc pas de minorité impuissante.

D'ailleurs, cette majorité qu'on n'a pas, on travaille à la conquérir, et on y réussit trop souvent.

On travaille avec ardeur en ce moment à pénétrer les masses d'impiété : eh bien ! qu'on le sache, une telle œuvre, aujourd'hui, c'est la guerre à Dieu. Demain, ce sera la guerre à la société.

Et c'est pourquoi, je le dis avec une profonde tristesse, ceux qui ne voudraient pas aller jusqu'à faire la guerre à la société, et qui font la guerre à la religion, qui dissolvent les croyances, qui tuent toute foi dans les âmes, sont les plus coupables, mais aussi les plus aveugles des hommes : Auxiliaires aujourd'hui de ceux qui les renverseront demain.

Et ceux qui s'imaginent ne pas attaquer Dieu, en n'attaquant que l'Église, qui croient faire œuvre de bonne politique en jetant l'Église comme une proie à ses ennemis, ceux qui parlent de séparer l'Église de l'État, et même dans l'école la morale de la religion, c'est-à-dire d'élever les jeunes générations sans Dieu ; ceux qui, dans toute cette guerre contre le Pape, ont été les auxiliaires de l'impiété, ceux qui croient que les blessures faites au droit et à la justice sont sans conséquence dans l'Europe révolutionnaire, tous ceux-là sont dans une erreur inconcevable. Car enfin n'est-il pas manifeste que c'est surtout depuis la guerre faite au Pape, et commencée il y a

(1) *Histoire de la Terreur*, par M. Mortimer Ternaux. — Les deux prêtres apostats que Robespierre réserva pour accompagner Louis XVI à l'échafaud, n'avaient été nommés à la Commune que par 24 et 46 voix.

L'abstention des honnêtes gens, au temps des révolutions sociales, a toujours été la calamité des calamités.

juste dix ans par M. de Cavour, que le mouvement athée et révolutionnaire a redoublé d'intensité et de violence?

C'est depuis ce temps que des livres qu'on n'osait imprimer en France, et qu'on allait éditer en Belgique, ont été publiés à Paris; d'autres, que le mépris public ensevelissait chez le libraire, sont devenus tout à coup des livres importants; enfin les journaux et les revues ont été plus que jamais des tribunes ouvertes à ces docteurs d'athéisme et de matérialisme qui « empoisonnent la nouvelle génération, » disait naguère un homme peu suspect. Le Pape une fois attaqué, on s'est cru tout permis, et après la catastrophe, si elle se consomme, jusqu'où l'audace n'ira-t-elle pas?

Mais quoi! dirai-je à ceux de ces hommes qui semblent avoir encore quelque souci d'eux-mêmes, vous voyez que le flot monte, monte toujours; vous voyez se faire, en même temps, sous vos yeux, d'immenses efforts pour pénétrer d'athéisme le peuple : et vous ne voulez pas comprendre que, si la démocratie, qui sera peut-être maîtresse demain, est antichrétienne, irréligieuse, athée, elle vous fera une société effroyable?

Ou, si vous le comprenez, quelle folie n'est pas la vôtre?

Croyez-moi, je viens de le voir sur les rives de nos fleuves, quand les digues sont rompues, les inondations deviennent un fléau dont nul ne peut plus calculer ni arrêter les ravages. Si la digue de la Religion vient à être brisée, tout sera emporté dans un désastre social également incalculable.

Donc considérer la guerre à Dieu et à l'Église comme une sorte de dérivatif contre la révolution, laisser inonder la Religion pour préserver la société, c'est la plus coupable, mais aussi la plus dangereuse des politiques.

Voir là une soupape contre d'autres périls, c'est une aberration fatale : la soupape emportera la chaudière.

Expédient d'un jour ; trahison de l'avenir.

II

LES PRÉOCCUPATIONS DE L'HEURE PRÉSENTE.

Je suis habitué aux pièges de la publicité, et je m'attends à trois accusations :

On dira, on répétera :

1° Que j'attaque la société moderne ;

2° Que je fais appel à la force et à la peur ;

3° Que je veux effrayer les esprits au profit de la question romaine.

Je ne dois point laisser ici de place à l'équivoque, et sur ces trois points je vais dire exactement ma pensée.

J'ATTAQUE LA SOCIÉTÉ MODERNE ?

Banale, mais puissante calomnie.

Non ! je n'attaque pas la société moderne. Si vous voulez désigner par ce mot ce qu'il a toujours signifié pour moi, savoir l'égalité civile et les justes libertés, le pouvoir respecté, la paix européenne et ses féconds travaux, l'amélioration morale et matérielle de la condition des ouvriers, des paysans et des pauvres gens, la dignité des mœurs, l'honneur, et la grandeur de la France, le rapprochement des esprits et des cœurs dans la civilisation chrétienne ; j'accepte et je vous remercie. Bien que tout n'y soit point parfait assurément, non, je n'attaque pas la société moderne, mais je tremble pour la société future. Je suis pour les progrès utiles de la société moderne, mais je

n'honore pas de ce nom celle qui a failli naître dans les journées de juin 1848.

Je me demande pourquoi ce mot : *société moderne*; malgré l'abus qu'on en fait, conserve tant de prestige, et d'empire et de charme, sur les esprits les plus divers, et je me l'explique ainsi.

Nous avions tous fait un beau rêve ! Nés avec ce siècle, ou aux différentes phases de son cours agité, nous avons jeté sur notre temps et notre patrie un regard de tendresse et d'orgueil. La France nous était apparue avec les admirables dons qu'elle a reçus de Dieu, assise sur deux mers, glorieuse dans l'univers entier, et portant, sur un sol fertile et charmant, une population vaillante, intelligente et fière. Nous entrions dans la vie à un moment où, après d'horribles événements et des luttes grandioses, la paix semblait pour longtemps désirée et certaine; paix entre les nations garantie par des relations équitables; paix entre les citoyens et l'autorité garantie par des lois justes; paix entre les hommes appelés tous à l'égalité, à la liberté; paix avec Dieu, servi dans nos églises anciennes par un clergé rajeuni dans la pauvreté, l'épreuve, l'expérience, profondément national et parfaitement orthodoxe. Cette société, avide de paix, de travail et de justice, couronnée de gloire, fille de l'Évangile et descendante du plus illustre passé, recevait en ce siècle, comme par surcroît, des dons, des instruments merveilleux, et, avant tout, la science, le crédit, la parole : la science qui venait féconder le travail; le crédit, qui appuyait sur la confiance des hommes les uns pour les autres le levier puissant d'une prospérité nouvelle; la parole qui semblait destinée à rapprocher les esprits, mettant chaque jour en communication tous les hommes de tous les pays, tenus par elle au courant de leurs intérêts, de leurs droits, de leurs devoirs, de leur commune et dramatique histoire.

Il n'était pas un de ces instruments dont la religion n'ait senti et béni l'utilité; pas une de ces espérances qui ne lui fût chère. Nous semblions tous, quelle que fût notre origine, quels que fussent nos penchants, naviguer ensemble vers une

terre merveilleuse, promise à nos efforts, et que nous appelions le XIX^e siècle et la société moderne. Oui, je vous prends à témoin, mes contemporains et mes successeurs dans la vie, c'est ce noble idéal que vous avez cru réalisé, vous, royalistes fidèles, dans la monarchie; vous, républicains honnêtes, dans la république; vous, impérialistes désintéressés, dans l'empire : le même idéal sous des formes diverses, et il est demeuré au fond de vos âmes; rien ne saurait l'en arracher. Lorsqu'on vous dit que quelqu'un en veut à cette société moderne, à ce que vous avez salué de ce nom, vous frémissiez, vous résistez, vous l'accusez d'attenter à votre plus chère et plus intime affection.

Et moi aussi j'accuse; je demande aux puissants ce qu'ils ont fait de la liberté; et aux sophistes comment ils l'interprètent; je demande aux enrichis ce qu'ils ont fait du crédit je demande à la jeunesse opulente et aux favoris de la fortune ce qu'ils ont fait de la dignité des mœurs; je demande à la presse corruptrice ce qu'elle fait de la parole, et si elle lui a été donnée pour pervertir ou pour éclairer; je demande à tant de gens qui se prétendent les représentants de la société moderne, pourquoi ils la font solidaire de leurs chimères et de leurs impiétés; je demande à tous les grands esprits, ce qu'est devenu notre idéal : et bien loin d'attaquer, dans ce qui fait sa gloire légitime, la société moderne, que nous avons tous aimée, puisqu'elle est, en définitive, notre famille, nos frères, nos enfants, nos amis, tous ceux que la nature, la religion, et la patrie nous ont rendus chers, je la cherche tristement, je l'appelle, et je me consume pour sauver, s'il se peut, et garder à mon pays les débris de ses meilleures affections et des ses espérances obstinées.

Et je crie et je vous accuse, vous, qui avez changé mon rêve en un affreux cauchemar.

Car voici un nuage épais qui se lève à l'horizon sur nos têtes; voici l'athéisme et les plus funestes doctrines, l'impiété, le sensualisme, l'immoralité, qui menacent de s'abattre sur ce beau pays, et d'étendre au loin sur lui une ombre malfaisante. Tout ce qui fait sa gloire, l'Évangile, la religion, la philoso-

phie, l'honneur éternel de la morale, est bafoué par d'impudens sophistes, et menace de livrer bientôt cette brillante et généreuse société française à une troupe d'athées et de matérialistes.

Voilà ma réponse sur la société moderne. Je l'aime et vous la pervertissez. Vous l'attaquez et je la défends.

Mais je la défends avec le cœur plein d'espoir.

Ah ! sans doute, notre siècle a ses misères et ses périls ; mais il a aussi, malgré vous, je veux le proclamer, ses vertus et ses puissances pour le bien.

Il y a, aujourd'hui surtout, en France, à l'encontre des progrès du mal, les progrès vigoureux du bien, qui frappent tous les yeux : des aspirations vives vers les grandes choses, une étonnante fécondité d'œuvres sociales, et de surprenants retours aux vérités et aux vertus chrétiennes ; comment ne pas le reconnaître ? Tout ce qui, dans l'ordre moral, se fait avec courage, suite et sincérité, lutte avec avantage contre la force des courants contraires, et relève tous les jours les défaillances publiques par de solides et vaillants succès. C'est là même ce qui fait frémir et rugir l'impiété.

Il me semble parfois, quand je considère les ressources admirables de ce temps et de ce pays, qu'il ne faudrait que des circonstances heureuses, un souffle favorable, une magnanime impulsion, pour faire voir à ce siècle, si travaillé par l'incrédulité, des résurrections merveilleuses.

Non, nous n'accusons pas notre temps ; mais nous osons lui dire, quand il le faut, la vérité, parce que nous espérons en lui ; et aussi parce que nous nous sentons au cœur une résolution invincible de nous dévouer à son salut, et d'y travailler courageusement, en dépit de tous les efforts ennemis. Les maux à guérir, les défaillances à relever, les périls à conjurer, ne sont-ils pas l'honneur et la raison même de notre ministère, le but même de l'Église ?

Et enfin, pourquoi ne le dirais-je pas pour relever tous les courages, et le mien, même à la veille des maux les plus extrêmes ?

Est-ce qu'il n'en a pas toujours été ainsi, plus ou moins Est-ce que le bien et le mal n'ont pas toujours été en lutte, en lutte ardente, sur la terre? Est-ce que le bien n'y a pas souvent semblé vaincu? Est-ce que l'Église, au milieu même des plus grandes luttes, et des plus désespérées, n'a pas toujours conservé, sur son front, chargé de nobles cicatrices, la sérénité de la victoire?

Et toutefois, ne nous endormons pas sur les malheurs et les dangers qui menacent ceux que nous devons sauver, non plus que dans ces vaines prophéties qui nous promettent des âges d'or, des prospérités temporelles, des temps nouveaux, où tout nous sourira, où, toutes les erreurs et tous les vices étant vaincus, les chrétiens n'auront plus qu'à fleurir en ce monde. Non ! Dieu me garde d'oublier jamais la belle parole du grand évêque d'Hippone : *Numquid christianus factus es, ut in sæculo isto floreres?*

II

JE FAIS APPEL A LA FORCE ET A LA PEUR?

A la force ! appelons les choses par leur nom : vous voulez dire à la rigueur des lois, et au bras séculier ! Faut-il donc pour échapper à une telle accusation, se résigner à se taire, quand on a le devoir impérieux de parler ? Mais alors la liberté serait vraiment pour vous trop commode : elle deviendrait la porte ouverte d'une citadelle désertée. Non, la vérité peut se passer d'être protégée ; mais il faut qu'elle soit toujours défendue.

Le bras séculier ! Pour moi, je n'y ai jamais eu grande confiance. Il ne s'est guère sauvé lui-même ni en 1830, ni en 1848. Et je redis d'ailleurs avec Fénelon : Le protecteur a trop souvent opprimé.

Et définitivement, je préfère, avec une alliance convenable,

la liberté dans la justice. Je dis avec une alliance convenable ; car la société et la religion ne sont pas faites pour vivre étrangères l'une à l'autre, mais pour s'aider l'une l'autre dans la justice et la liberté. Tel est le principe tutélaire des concordats.

Si c'est faire appel à la force que de gémir devant les plaies morales du pays, je l'avoue, je suis coupable. Mais qui peut m'accuser ? Ce que j'ai fait, je suis chargé par Dieu, par l'Église, et par mon pays de le faire. Qui pourrait blâmer ma parole ? Qui ne blâmerait pas mon silence ?

J'ai signalé le matérialisme des doctrines : que n'aurais-je pas à dire si je voulais toucher ici une autre de nos plaies vives, le matérialisme des mœurs ? On s'en est ému jusque dans nos assemblées politiques. Et certes, avec raison, car le matérialisme, qui détourne des intérêts spirituels et éternels, détourne également des nobles soucis de la chose publique et des luttes viriles de la liberté. « Athéisme et servitude, a dit éloquemment M. Villemain, vont très-bien de compagnie (1). » Mais il y a plus encore, au bout de ces doctrines énervantes, que l'abaissement des âmes et des mœurs publiques : il y a les abîmes que j'ai montrés.

La presse irrégulière et antichrétienne, qui est le grand moyen de propagande pour toutes ces doctrines, est la grande coupable ici, je l'ai dit. Mais la presse aujourd'hui, en France, est-elle soumise à un régime qui permette de combattre à armes égales les maux qu'elle nous cause ? Poser une telle question, ce n'est pas faire un appel à la force, mais à la justice, à l'impartialité et aux libertés promises.

Que d'autres, sous une constitution perfectible, signalent les défauts du régime actuel de la presse, à leurs points de vue spéciaux. Moi, évêque, je les signale au nom de la morale et de la religion.

(1) *La Tribune* : M. de Châteaubriand. — M. Villemain ajoutait : « On se tromperait d'espérer, à défaut de la liberté civile, la liberté philosophique... Cette liberté philosophique ne serait bientôt plus qu'un impuissant scepticisme, toléré par sa faiblesse même, à peu près comme cet athéisme chinois, qui porte également tous les jongs. »

Soyons francs. Il n'y a de largement permis à la presse que deux terrains de discussion, l'économie sociale et la religion. Vous êtes semblables aux magistrats d'une ville exposée à l'incendie qui aurait fait assurer les palais en oubliant de faire assurer les greniers à blé et les poudrières. Vous avez voulu défendre, et c'était votre droit, la dynastie, la constitution, les formes politiques, et vous avez livré aux disputes les questions économiques qui mènent droit à la discussion du prolétariat, et les questions religieuses, qui mènent droit à la discussion de l'Église et de Dieu. Or, qu'est-ce qui se passe? Dans le premier chemin, on rencontre les propriétaires, et on les calomnie; dans le second, on rencontre le clergé, et on le livre aux haines aveugles. Ce mal est fait, et s'accroît tous les matins. Je rencontre parfois des articles qui rappellent l'accent des journaux révolutionnaires avant le 2 septembre.

Eh bien! dans cet état des choses, quand l'attaque des vérités religieuses, philosophiques, sociales, est si largement permise, la défense l'est-elle également?

Pour moi, je sais des journaux et revues catholiques qui n'ont pas même pu obtenir la périodicité moins restreinte qu'ils réclamaient.

Aucun moyen pour les catholiques (et je n'ai le droit de parler que pour eux) d'organiser des facultés, des cours, des conférences, et un enseignement supérieur catholique. Cette grande question vaudrait à elle seule un mémoire.

Mais parlez de l'Opéra, des cafés et des courses, appelez-vous *la Lune* ou *le Hanne-ton*, parlez d'agiotage et de bourse, appelez-vous *le Crédit*, *l'Actionnaire*, vous avez liberté, gratuité, facilité.

Je sais les dangers de la liberté de la presse, mais rien ne surpasse à mes yeux les dangers du régime actuel, assurément contre l'intention de ceux qui l'ont établi. On voulait défendre la société, on a livré la morale. On voulait diminuer la puissance de la presse, on l'a rendue tout à la fois plus basse et plus forte; tout lui a été permis, sauf l'indépendance. En établissant des monopoles, et des exclusions, on a enrichi et grandi les

favorisés, ruiné ou bâillonné les exclus. Or je ne sais comment il se fait que, à Paris et en province, la plupart des exclus sont de notre côté.

Sans plus discuter, car je ferais un autre volume, je demande que le gouvernement s'éclaire et que le régime de la presse soit impartial.

On dit encore : La peur ! je fais appel à la peur ! — Je suis de ceux qui croient qu'en 1848 la peur a dépassé le mal, et qu'en tous cas le mal a abouti à des remèdes qui ne l'ont pas bien guéri. Mais au moins c'était alors la peur du mal. Aujourd'hui, nous avons la peur du bien.

Nous n'osons pas être hautement pour Dieu, pour l'Église, et pour l'âme, contre les empoisonnements de l'athéisme. Je le connais, je le qualifie, et je le signale à l'opinion de mon pays. Si je me suis trompé, et si les coupables sont meilleurs que je pense, qu'ils me démentent, jamais je n'aurai eu de plus grande joie.

III

J'AI VOULU EFFRAYER AU PROFIT DE LA QUESTION ROMAINE ?

On dira enfin que j'ai soulevé la question religieuse et sociale pour détourner les esprits ou les épouvanter, et masquer ainsi la défense de la question romaine.

Non, je ne veux rien masquer : quand j'ai voulu parler de la question romaine, dont mon esprit ne se détourne pas un instant, j'ai su le faire nettement, et pas n'était besoin de lire entre les lignes de ma lettre, comme l'a dit agréablement le *Journal des Débats* ; et je le ferai nettement encore une fois ici. Ce sont mes contradicteurs, bien plus réellement, qui voudraient cacher sous la question romaine la question divine. En frappant le Pape, ils prétendent ne frapper ni la religion, ni Dieu. Ils le

disent, et beaucoup de gens le croient. J'ai voulu, c'était mon devoir, démasquer cet artifice, et montrer que le dernier terme, le grand intérêt, et l'enjeu qui passionne dans la guerre au Pape, c'est la guerre à Dieu!

Sur cette grande question, tout ce qui se devait dire a été dit. Et si je ne me trompe, les ennemis de Rome ont eu beau endormir, lasser ou fausser l'opinion, préparer les voies, convenir du jeu, et aboutir à leurs fins avec un art profond soutenu par de puissants secours, il s'élève en ce moment du fond de toutes les âmes honnêtes, même les moins chrétiennes, une insurmontable répugnance, une honte et une indignation générales; on souffre et on rougit, à l'approche du jour, choisi et désigné d'avance, qui verra un auguste, saint et infortuné vieillard, délaissé par la France, qui pourrait, mais qui ne veut plus le défendre, et livré à tous les hasards, entre la détresse et la révolte, entre la dépendance et l'exil, sous la garde de la sincérité, de l'honnêteté, et de la modération du Piémont.

Le cabinet de Florence se fait en ce moment modeste et pieux. Les circulaires de M. le baron Ricasoli sont des homélies; cependant l'homme se montre sous le diplomate, et certaine phrase diplomatique ressemble à un poignard sous un manteau.

Quoi! cette souveraineté que vous avez juré de garder, vous l'appelèz : *une principauté sans analogue dans le monde civilisé*. Voilà la victime! Cette souveraineté qui va s'exercer sur la foi de votre parole, vous la nommez : *une expérience*. Voilà la sentence! A ce peuple que vous devez apaiser, vous dites que sa situation est intolérable, en *contradiction avec tous les progrès accomplis de la civilisation*, et vous le poussez formellement à la révolte. Voilà l'exécuteur! Et en face de ce Souverain, auprès duquel la France, avec qui vous traitez, laisse un ambassadeur, vous parlez de *vos droits*. Voilà la main tendue pour profiter du coup.

Et à nous enfin, afin que rien ne manque à notre humiliation, vous parlez de *votre immanquable triomphe*; et la comédie se mêlant à la tragédie, selon l'usage des pièces italiennes, notre bon *Moniteur* du soir ou du matin, sans y rien

comprendre, trouve tout cela très-bien, et proteste que l'on n'attente pas, que l'on n'attentera pas à la puissance spirituelle du Saint-Père. Je le crois bien. Je ne m'attends pas à voir M. Ricasoli bénir le peuple, M. Cialdini chanter les vêpres, et M. Garibaldi nommé cardinal (1). Mais je vous connais, vous et vos *aspirations morales*. Si l'on se révolte demain à votre profit, c'est le principe qui triomphe ! ce sont des frères, illuminons les villes ! Si l'on se révolte demain contre vous, ce sont des ennemis, bombardons sans pitié !

Oh ! je sais que l'arrangement fait sera habilement exécuté ; sauf l'imprévu, je ne m'attends guère à rien d'immédiat ; on laissera partir nos vaillants soldats, on tâchera même d'incliner les esprits à penser à autre chose, on imposera trois mois de silence et de bonne tenue ; et nous, évêques, nous aurons eu l'air de crier dans le désert et sans raison. Mais, l'époque est calculée, comme un mouvement de la marée ; et ce qui rend l'acte plus odieux, c'est précisément l'art et la puissance de la préméditation. C'est ici une spéculation à terme, et une révolution à crédit. Seulement le jour de l'échéance embarrasse.

En ce moment donc quelle est au juste la situation ?

Des enfants de ce saint Pontife attaquaient le trône de leur père ; d'autres le défendaient, et ne permettaient à personne de le défendre avec eux. Eh bien ! que voyons nous ?

Ceux qui attaquaient ont tout pris jusqu'ici, sauf le trône ; ceux qui défendaient ont tout laissé prendre, sauf le trône aussi : et aujourd'hui, ceux qui défendaient vont partir ; ceux qui attaquaient vont avancer.

Ce n'est pas ici, comme on s'obstine à le dire, comme le ministre italien le répète, *une souveraineté placée dans la condi-*

(1) Le langage de M. Ricasoli n'est pas autre chose que le fameux décret de Mazzini et Garibaldi.

Art. 4^{er}. La papauté est déchue en fait et en droit du pouvoir temporel des États romains.

Art. 2. Le Pontife romain aura toutes les garanties nécessaires à son indépendance dans l'exercice de son *pouvoir spirituel*.

ion de toutes les autres souverainetés. Cela est absolument faux et absurde. C'est une souveraineté placée, depuis dix ans, par les spoliations, les invasions, le massacre de son armée, les menées révolutionnaires de toute sorte, les attaques et les dénonciations incessantes de tous les révolutionnaires de l'Europe, *dans la plus exceptionnelle des situations* ; — si exceptionnelle, que pas un gouvernement ne tiendrait dans une situation pareille, et que le gouvernement qui paraît le plus fort en Europe, attaqué et cerné comme l'est celui du Pape, disparaîtrait en un instant, s'il n'avait pas une armée de 600,000 hommes (1).

Dans de telles conjonctures, donc, la chute est inévitable ; tout le monde la prédit, tout le monde l'annonce. Ce trône, miné depuis dix ans, ébranlé tout autour, et soutenu à cette heure par un seul appui, il s'agit, par un dernier coup et un dernier abandon d'en consommer la ruine, avec la chute du vieillard : et les moments pour Pie IX sont comptés ; chaque jour qui s'écoule le rapproche du terme.

Pour moi, j'ai fait dans cette question tout ce que j'ai pu pour sauvegarder, autant du moins qu'il était en moi, l'honneur de la France et de l'Italie elle-même : j'ai tout dit, une chose exceptée ; j'en écartais ma pensée, et je ne voulais pas la pré-

(1) Le *Moniteur du soir* dit encore, à propos de la circulaire de M. Ricasoli, que l'Italie, qui a promis à la France et à l'Europe « *de ne pas s'interposer entre le Pape et ses sujets, MAINTIEN ET ENGAGEMENT FORMEL.* » Je répondrai encore au *Moniteur du soir*, que le gouvernement italien maintient si peu cet engagement formel que, par l'acte même si amicalement interprété par le *Moniteur du soir*, IL INTERVIENT de la manière la plus odieuse entre le Pape et ses sujets, et *contre le Pape*. Quand Victor-Emmanuel déclare que l'Italie est faite, MAIS N'EST PAS ACHEVÉE, et M. Ricasoli que *le Pape à Rome est une anomalie dans la civilisation européenne, et une contradiction avec tous les progrès accomplis*, n'est-ce pas là une attaque formelle contre le Pape ? Est-ce que le ministre italien se permettrait impunément de parler en de tels termes du czar ou du gouvernement anglais, d'un gouvernement quelconque ? Et si un ministre quelconque osait dire que la dynastie impériale est *en contradiction avec le progrès accompli par la France*, est-ce que sa parole ne serait pas immédiatement suivie d'une rétractation ou d'une guerre ?

voir; mais il faut bien en subir la vue, aujourd'hui que nous approchons du terme et touchons à la dernière extrémité.

On a écrit le *dernier Jour d'un condamné*. Eh bien ! une convention malheureuse, intervenue entre ceux qui attaquaient et ceux qui défendaient le saint Pontife, l'a mis à ce supplice, lui et ses enfants. Il connaît le jour et l'heure.

Spectacle inouï !

Voilà un vieillard, un pontife, un roi, assis depuis mille ans sur un trône dix fois séculaire.

En ce moment, le monde contemple son agonie.

Le coup de lance, le fiel et le vinaigre ne lui manquent pas.

Sa mansuétude, sa patience, sa magnanimité ont été sans bornes.

C'est à peine si la plainte du Crucifié a été sur ses lèvres :
Ut quid dereliquisti me ?

Les scribes qui l'ont accusé, sont là tous autour de lui, pour l'accuser encore dans cette extrémité, pour s'offenser de sa douleur, pour s'indigner si ses paroles sont émues, pour élargir, après l'avoir creusé, le fossé qui l'entoure, pour envenimer, après l'avoir faite, la plaie de son cœur, enfin pour amener contre lui le peuple.

Et cependant, là, comme dans la Passion, on hésite. La main tremble et n'ose porter le dernier coup : c'est à qui le fera porter par un autre. Le Piémont lui-même n'ose pas.

Les meneurs cherchent, et ils trouveront, pour tout consommer, ce qui se trouve toujours pour les grands forfaits, des êtres inconnus, des *bravi* innomés, dont l'histoire ne porte aux générations futures que le crime, et dont elle ne sait pas redire le nom vil et abhorré.

On a besoin de ces auxiliaires. Ils sont dignes de la cause. On les trouvera; sauf à dire, on le dit déjà, pour se donner le droit d'intervenir contre le Pape, que c'est lui qui fait faire l'émeute.

Quelquefois, quand des chasseurs ont longtemps poursuivi une proie, si elle est redoutable, si c'est un lion du désert

quand il est forcé, on l'entoure, mais on hésite à lancer contre lui le dernier trait.

Ici, ce n'est pas un lion, c'est un agneau. Et cependant, ils tremblent tous d'une secrète horreur devant leur forfait.

Cependant, que fait l'Europe? L'Europe contemple, effrayée, mais silencieuse, cette lente agonie.

La victime, sur son Calvaire, jette de tous côtés ses regards, et nulle part le secours : *Circumspexi, et non erat auxiliator!*

La stupeur les a tous glacés.

Mais où sont donc tous ces aigles dont l'Europe se vante et qu'elle déploie sur ses étendards?

La Pologne est déchiquetée par l'un;

L'autre dépèce l'Allemagne surprise et trahie;

Je ne vois là que des vautours.

J'enaperçois un autre qui a laissé récemment casser son aile.

Il y en avait un, plus fort que les autres, planant librement sur l'Europe.

Ah! celui-là devait mourir pour défendre l'agneau : car c'est l'aigle de la France.

Mais, non, on ne lui demandait pas de mourir : il lui suffisait d'un regard et d'un cri pour dissiper les meurtriers, mais il plie son aile et s'en va.

Et toi, sainte Victime, grand Pontife, qui t'appuyais si confiant sur les fils de la France, ne te reste-t-il donc plus qu'à te couvrir la tête de ton manteau, et à jeter à la nation très-chrétienne, en tonnant, ce cri éternellement accusateur : *Tu quoque, fi!i!*

Ah! que l'avenir, que Dieu et les hommes nous pardonnent! Sans doute, il y a des voix françaises parmi les clameurs qui montent contre vous; mais ce n'est pas la France, non, ce n'est pas elle qui vous a condamné, saint Pontife! Ce n'est pas non plus cette Italie que vous avez tant aimée, et que vous auriez voulu faire libre, glorieuse et fidèle!

Je le répète, à l'honneur de mon pays : tous les esprits honnêtes sont dans la stupeur, et les fronts rougissent.

Et je ne vois chez nous que les scribes et les séides à qui il reste une voix pour crier le *Crucifigatur*.

Messieurs, vous avez été trop loin, et vous vous réjouissez trop; vous commencez à inspirer l'horreur. Et ici, mes paroles contre vous sont inutiles; vos actes suffisent.

Vous triomphez. Soit, un tel triomphe vous va bien. Mais après?

Tout sera fini, dites-vous? Non; tout ne fera que commencer.

Le Pape est faible, et on croit pouvoir tout contre lui.

Mais sachez-le, cette faiblesse est plus forte que vous! Il y a dix-huit siècles qu'elle tient.

Il est vrai, vous croyez la tenir à votre tour, et la broyer enfin. Non; celui-là, c'est la pierre qu'on ne broye pas.

Et quand vous aurez spolié et détrôné le Pontife, qu'en ferez-vous? Je l'ai dit: « Ce serait là un de ces événements qui retiennent dans l'histoire et caractérisent une époque. Les princes qui l'auraient consommé seraient nommés et jugés sur cet acte. Quelle que soit leur carrière, ils n'auraient mis la main à aucun événement dont les conséquences puissent être plus prolongées après leur mort, et dont ils porteraient une responsabilité plus redoutable devant l'histoire, devant leurs enfants, et devant Dieu. »

Mais que vous importent à vous, ennemis au fond de tout gouvernement, que vous importent les alarmes des consciences, le long trouble des âmes dans toute la chrétienté; formidables embarras du pouvoir ajoutés à tant d'autres?

Ce n'est là, je le sais, que le préliminaire des renversements que vous méditez: et vous ne serez satisfaits que quand vous aurez fait de Rome arrachée au Pontife la capitale de tous les révolutionnaires de l'Europe.

Et quant à vous, politiques plus graves, qui ne vous dites pas révolutionnaires, mais qui avez secondé si aveuglément à Rome la révolution, et favorisé cette unité italienne, mère si prompte et si menaçante, on vous l'avait prédit, de cette unité allemande qui vous inquiète justement, vous croyez que, dans notre

Europe si agitée, on peut impunément porter la main sur la plus haute autorité religieuse et morale qui soit dans le monde ! et que de telles spoliations, de telles violations de tout droit, un tel écrasement de la faiblesse, un tel triomphe de la force, sont de nulle conséquence !

Vous nous répétez chaque jour que, si l'Église n'a plus le pouvoir temporel, elle aura, ce qui vaut mieux, la liberté ! Nous prenons acte de votre parole, mais si l'auguste Pontife, qui couvre depuis vingt ans de la majesté de sa vertu personnelle un trône si violemment attaqué, si Pie IX se levait, et, vous prenant au mot, s'il interpellait les rois et les partis, et demandait que la France, l'Italie, l'Angleterre, la Prusse, la Russie, donnant l'exemple au reste du monde, accordent la liberté à l'Église sur leur territoire, et déchirent les lois surannées qui entravent sa libre et bienfaisante action sur les hommes, s'il tenait ce langage, s'il vous prenait au mot, je le répète, que verrions-nous ?

Un refus, un déni de justice, un maintien universel des vieilles entraves si chères aux partis qui se disent les partis de l'avenir.

En sorte que vous nous prenez ce que nous avons, sans nous donner ce que nous n'avons pas.

Sur un point du monde, et dans son Chef, l'Église était libre, et partout ailleurs entravée. Désormais, ni le Chef ne sera libre, ni les membres. Liez la tête après avoir lié les bras, puis reprochez à ce grand corps de ne plus marcher assez vite !

Les faits démentent ici les paroles, les actes désavouent les promesses, et quelque confiance que j'aie pour ma part dans les ressources de la vraie liberté, nous ne saurions être dupes d'un projet d'échange où je vois bien ce que l'on nous prend sans avoir jamais pu apercevoir ce que l'on nous donne.

Les vrais libéraux de l'Europe, ceux qui nous tiendraient ce langage sincèrement sont d'ailleurs ici dans la même situation que les vrais chrétiens ; ils sont battus, et sans aucun pouvoir de tenir leurs promesses.

Ils assistent avec nous à ce grand événement qui déjà ressemble au naufrage d'un illustre navire dont on entendrait de

loin retentir le canon de détresse, pendant que des pirates épient le moment où ils se partageront ses dépouilles. Un autre navire, hélas ! pendant ce temps, rentre au port tranquillement, ayant recommandé les naufragés aux forbans de la côte. Et les gens habiles qui se promènent sur le rivage, dirigeant de ce côté leurs longues vues, affirment que tout se passera bien.

Ce serait un miracle, mais ceux qui nous reprochent de croire aux miracles, ont foi dans celui-ci.

D'autres ajoutent que, si le navire est coulé bas, désemparé, englouti, ce sera l'affaire d'un instant pénible, mais court, après lequel les flots continueront à couler, le ciel bleu à sourire, et les hommes distraits se détourneront et n'y penseront plus.

Oui, il en sera ainsi un jour sur votre tombe ! Mais le navire en ce moment criblé est la barqué sur laquelle le Sauveur du monde a planté son drapeau. Pour le bonheur des hommes, elle ne périra pas sous leurs coups ; mais, hélas ! ces coups retomberont sur eux. On ne se moque pas de Dieu. *Deus non irridetur.*

Et maintenant, qu'ajouterai-je?

Après avoir exposé, dans ce douloureux écrit, la triste situation de l'heure présente, le mouvement d'impiété radicale qui se fait en France et en Italie, le progrès des doctrines athées et matérialistes, et, à la faveur des coups portés contre le Pape, la guerre à la religion et à Dieu grandissant chaque jour, préliminaire menaçant de la guerre à l'ordre social; faut-il nous décourager?

Non, je l'ai dit, le découragement n'entre jamais dans les cœurs chrétiens. Ils espèrent toujours; *contra spem, in spem*.

Sur ce qui fait aujourd'hui la grande préoccupation de tous les esprits et de tous les cœurs, sur ce point fixe et menacé vers lequel sont tournés en ce moment avec anxiété les regards de tout l'univers, je n'ai qu'une parole à dire, et elle n'est pas de moi :

L'EMPEREUR VEUT QUE LE CHEF SUPRÊME DE L'ÉGLISE SOIT RESPECTÉ DANS TOUS SES DROITS DE SOUVERAIN TEMPOREL (1).

ABANDONNER ROME, OUBLIER LA POLITIQUE SUIVIE PAR LA FRANCE DEPUIS DES SIÈCLES!

« NON, CE N'EST PAS POSSIBLE (2)! »

Ce n'est pas possible. Non! car je veux croire à l'honneur!
Voilà sur Rome mon dernier mot.

Et quant à Pie IX, que fait-il à cette heure suprême?

Il reçoit dans ses bras cette pauvre cliente de la France, l'impératrice du Mexique, défaillante à ses pieds. Il bénit les généraux et les drapeaux français, au moment où on les rappelle. Il bénit les pavillons qui flottent dans les eaux de Civita-Vecchia. Voilà un évêque qui le quitte pour retourner à Naples: écoutez le langage dont il reçoit à Rome, du Saint-Père, l'inspi-

(1) Lettre aux Evêques de France, 4 mai 1859.

(2) Discours au Corps législatif, 22 mars 1861.

ration : « *Pax vobis*, la paix soit avec vous. *Ego sum* ; c'est moi, votre évêque. Ne craignez pas, *nolite timere*. J'aime même les méchants : Je désire couvrir leurs plaies et les guérir (1). »

Voici un autre évêque qui, dans une ville de France, combat les ennemis de Dieu ; Pie IX l'encourage. Comme ce général frappé du même boulet que Turenne, qui disait à son fils : « Ne pensez pas à moi soyez tout à lui ; » Pie IX semble dire à cet évêque : « Avant de songer à ceux qui envahissent Rome, allez à ceux qui envahissent les âmes. Ne pensez pas à moi ; soyez tout à la défense de Dieu et au salut de votre peuple (2). »

Et quant à cette guerre faite à Dieu et à toutes les croyances religieuses, eh bien ! une dernière fois j'en appelle au bon sens, à la prévoyance, au courage, à l'intelligente énergie de tous les honnêtes gens, pour qu'ils défendent leurs enfants, leurs familles, leurs âmes, contre l'invasion des doctrines athées.

Oui, « il faut convier tous les hommes de cœur et d'intelligence à consolider quelque chose de plus grand qu'une charte, de plus durable qu'une dynastie : les principes éternels de la RELIGION et de la MORALE. » (Discours du prince Louis-Napoléon, à l'Hôtel-de-Ville de Paris, 10 décembre 1849.)

Et certes, pour accomplir une telle œuvre, je le répète, les ressources en France ne manquent pas.

Il y a en France une jeunesse généreuse, qui répugne aux abaissements du matérialisme, et sent encore battre son cœur pour les grandes et saintes choses ; c'est à elle que je dis : Repoussez, repoussez les doctrines abjectes, restez fidèle aux nobles croyances, et sachez les honorer et les défendre : à vous qui êtes l'avenir, de sauver l'avenir.

(1) Lettre du cardinal-archevêque de Naples, revenant de l'exil, à ses diocésains, Rome. 23 novembre 1866.

(2) *Perge omnes tui ingenii vires ad pestiferos errores prostigandos atque ad tui gregis salutem procurandam.* — Bref du 8 novembre 1866.

Il y a un peuple honnête et droit, sincère et bon, dont la foi, grâce à Dieu, est intacte comme les mœurs, fidèle à la religion comme à la patrie, force et cœur du pays, ouvrier de la grandeur nationale par l'industrie et par la guerre ; c'est à lui encore que je dis : Fermez l'oreille à ces sophistes, ne les laissez pas chasser Dieu de votre foyer et vous dérober, à vous et à vos enfants, le trésor de votre foi et de vos espérances. Oui, ces hommes vous trompent : fuyez-les. Leurs dupes aujourd'hui, et leurs instruments demain, vous seriez bientôt leurs victimes.

Il y a une philosophie spiritualiste, une science spiritualiste parmi nous. Ah ! dirai-je aux vrais philosophes et aux vrais savants : La barbarie intellectuelle nous menace. Debout ! à l'étude, au travail : sauvez l'honneur et la dignité de l'esprit français.

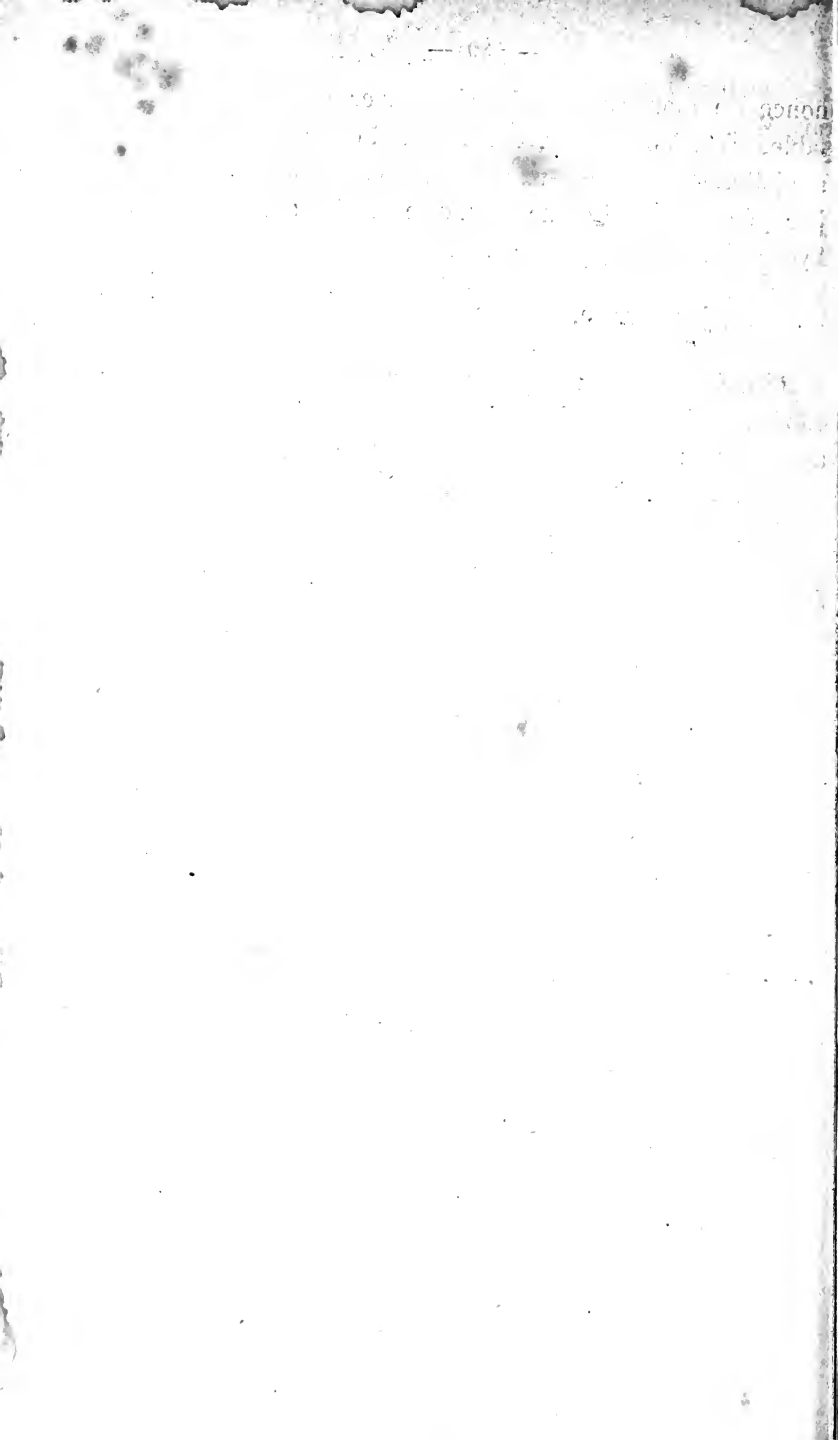
Il y a même en dehors de nous, disciples de cette religion chrétienne qu'on outrage, il y a des hommes qui, sans avoir encore peut-être notre foi tout entière, en comprennent du moins les bienfaits, l'influence, la nécessité sociale, « et ne voient « aucun intérêt public à diminuer volontairement ce qui reste « de foi dans le monde. » Voilà ceux aussi à qui je fais appel, pour cette nécessaire ligue de toutes les forces honnêtes du pays, contre l'envahissement toujours croissant des idées subversives de toute société comme de toute religion.

Et je voudrais faire appel aux journalistes eux-mêmes et aux écrivains, à tous ceux qui ont le privilège d'enseigner, d'éclairer, d'émouvoir ; à ceux dont les paroles tombent tous les jours dans nos villes et nos villages, sur des esprits à peine entr'ouverts à l'intelligence et à l'instruction, à ceux qui disposent chaque matin du pauvre petit quart d'heure que les hommes condamnés au travail peuvent consacrer à la lecture et à la chose publique ; je demande à ces précepteurs de sentir le poids d'une telle responsabilité, de respecter le peuple, de se respecter eux-mêmes, de ne pas déchirer l'Évangile entre les mains de mes prêtres, de ne pas abattre la croix de Jésus-Christ dans les sentiers où les Evêques viennent bénir les pauvres. Je

dénonce de monstrueuses doctrines avec une rigueur impitoyable, c'est mon devoir. Mais, quand ce devoir est rempli, je me jetterais volontiers aux genoux de ceux que j'ai combattus et je répéterais ce cri d'une femme de 1793, pour ses enfants : « Ayez pitié, Monsieur le bourreau. »

J'ai fini, je m'arrête.

Quoi qu'on pense de ce nouvel acte auquel j'ai été condamné, la voix que je viens de faire entendre n'est pas la voix d'un ennemi : nul ne peut s'y tromper. Je ne suis l'ennemi de personne, pas même de ceux que je combats : encore moins de la société que je défends.



TABLE

L'ATHÉISME ET LE PÉRIL SOCIAL.

Bref adressé par N. S. P. le Pape à Mgr l'Evêque d'Orléans au sujet de la lettre sur les malheurs et les signes du temps.

PREMIÈRE PARTIE.

LA RÉCENTE CONTROVERSE.

I. Que s'est-il donc passé ?	41
II. La tactique des adversaires.	46
III. Les arguments.	20
IV. Les impiétés.	32
V. Accord du genre humain avec le Christianisme sur la question.	38
VI. La vraie doctrine.	48

SECONDE PARTIE.

LE PÉRIL RELIGIEUX.

I. L'athéisme.	59
1° Les écoles d'athéisme. — Le positivisme, le panthéisme et le matérialisme.	61
2° La propagande.	96
3° Les hommes d'action.	401
II. La morale indépendante.	445
1° Qu'est-ce que la morale indépendante ?	446
2° Pourquoi la morale indépendante se sépare-t-elle de toute religion ?	420
3° La morale indépendante, c'est l'athéisme pratique.	423
4° La morale indépendante, c'est la variabilité de la morale.	434
5° La morale indépendante, c'est la corruption de la morale.	436
6° La morale indépendante, c'est une attaque à l'ordre social.	443

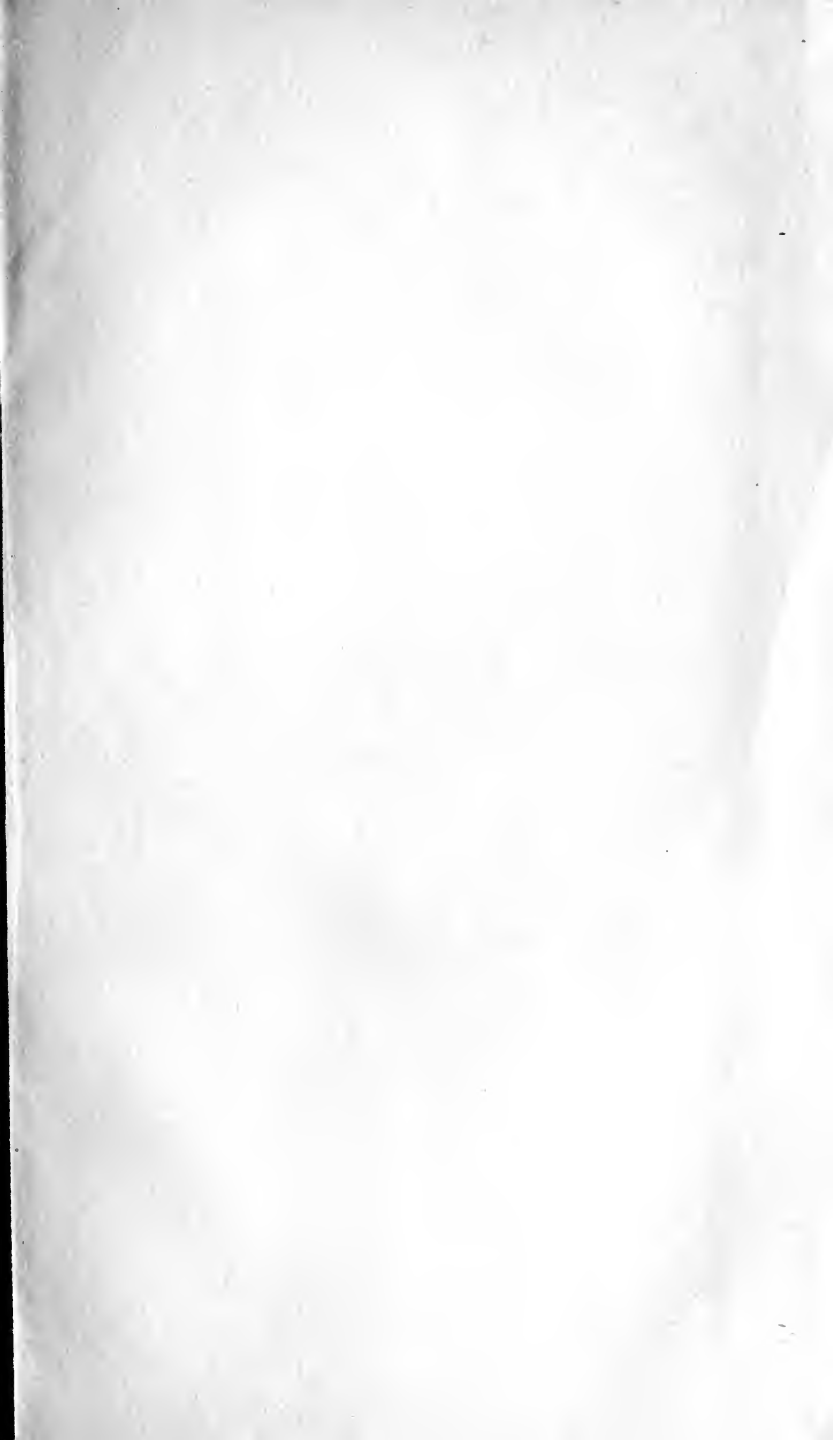
TROISIÈME PARTIE.

LE PÉRIL SOCIAL.

I. Conséquences sociales des doctrines d'impiété. Que ceux qui travaillent à la dissolution des croyances travaillent à la démolition de la société	449
--	-----

1° La nature des choses et la logique des faits.	159
2° C'est le but avoué des chefs.	153
3° Les doctrines d'impiété peuvent facilement devenir populaires.	159
4° Le danger de ces doctrines est rendu plus grand encore par les questions sociales pendantes.	164
II. Les préoccupations de l'heure présente.	170
1° J'attaque la société moderne?	170
2° Je fais appel à la force et à la peur?	174
3° J'ai voulu effrayer au profit de la question romaine?. . .	177
Conclusion	186

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