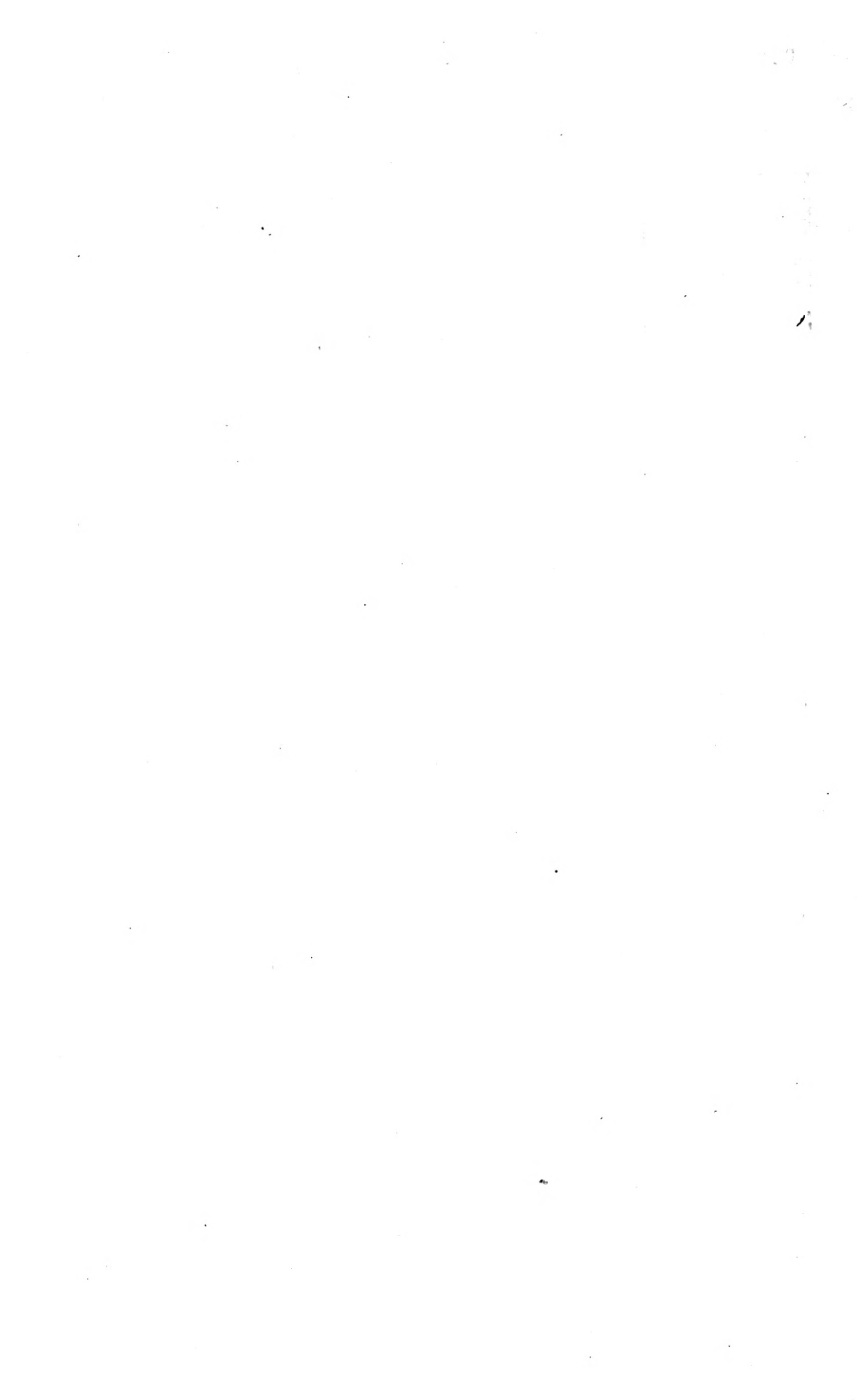




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S P E E C H

OF THE RIGHT HON.

B. DISRAELI, M.P.,

AT THE

FREE TRADE HALL, MANCHESTER,

APRIL 3, 1872.

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Mr. Disraeli said—Your chairman has correctly reminded you that this is not the first time that my voice has sounded in this hall, but it was on occasions very different from that under which we now assemble together. It was nearly thirty years ago, when I endeavoured to support the flagging energy of an institution in which I thought there were the germs of future refinement, and much intellectual advantage to the rising generation of Manchester, and since I have been here on this occasion I have learned with much gratification that it is now accounted amongst your most flourishing institutions. There was also another and more recent occasion, when the gracious office fell to me to distribute, among the members of the Mechanics' Institution, those prizes which they had gained by pursuing their studies in letters and in science. Gentlemen, these were pleasing offices, and if life consisted only of such offices, few would have to complain of it; but life has its masculine duties, and we are assembled here to fulfil some of the most important when, as citizens of a free country, we are assembled together to declare our determination to maintain and uphold that constitution to which we are indebted, in our opinion, for our freedom and our welfare. Gentlemen, there seems at first something incongruous that one should be addressing the population of so influential and intelligent a county as Lancashire who is not locally connected with them; and I frankly admit that that circumstance did for a long time make me hesitate in accepting your cordial and generous invitation. But, gentlemen, after what occurred yesterday; after receiving more than 200 addresses from every part of this great county; after the welcome which then greeted me; I feel that I should not be doing justice to your feelings, and not doing duty to myself, if I any longer considered it to be an act of presumption. Gentlemen, although it may not be an act of presumption, it still is, I am told, an act of great difficulty. Our opponents assure us that the Conservative party have no political programme, and therefore they must look with much satisfaction to one whom you honour to-night by con-

sidering as the leader and representative of your opinions when he comes forward at your invitation to express to you what that programme is. Gentlemen, if a political programme is a policy to despoil Churches and plunder landlords, I confess that the Conservative party has no political programme. If a political programme is a policy which attacks or menaces every interest and every institution, every class and every calling in the country, I confess that the Conservative party has no political programme. But if, gentlemen, a policy which has a distinct aim, and such as deeply interests the great body of the people—if this be a becoming political programme, I, for a great party, am here to assert and to vindicate it—here or elsewhere—as one not unworthy of those with whom I act in political life. Gentlemen, the programme of the Conservative party is the same and unchangeable; it is a policy that would maintain the monarchy limited by the co-ordinate authority of the Estates of the Realm, and popularly known as Queen, Lords, and Commons. The fundamental principles of that Constitution have been recently impugned and assailed. The flag of the Republic has been raised, and therefore gentlemen, I think it is not inappropriate to the present hour and situation if I make to you one or two brief remarks on the character of those institutions. Gentlemen, it is now nearly two centuries since that Constitution was settled, and during that period England has not known a revolution, although during that period our country has experienced, perhaps, more considerable changes than any other country in the world. What is the cause of this? Why have you for so long an interval not experienced a revolution in this country? Because, gentlemen, the wisdom of your forefathers placed the prize of supreme power without the sphere of human passions. Whatever the struggle of parties—whatever the strife of factions—whatever the excitement and exaltation of the public mind, there was ever something in England round which all parties and all classes could rally—which represented the majesty of the law and the administration of justice; which was at the same time the guarantee of all our present rights, and which was the fountain of honour. Gentlemen, it is well to realise what is meant by a country not experiencing a revolution in so long an interval. It means the continuous enjoyment and exercise of human ingenuity; it means the unbroken application of scientific discoveries to your welfare, and the comfort and convenience of men; it means the accumulation of capital; it means the elevation of labour; it means those fabrics of invention and power which cover the district in which you live, and which supply the requirements of the world. It means that indefatigable application of skill to the cultivation of the soil which has extracted in this country from a somewhat reluctant glebe harvests more abundant than are furnished by lands nearer the sun. It means, above all, that long established order which is the only parent

of personal liberty and political rights. And all this, gentlemen, you owe to the throne. Gentlemen, there is another view of this question which I wish to place before you on this occasion. I am myself a party man, and probably the vast majority of you who are present may be enrolled in the same category. I am a party man, because I do not see how Parliamentary Government is possible without party. I look upon a Parliamentary Government as the noblest government in the world, and certainly the one most suited to England; but without the recognised discipline of political connection animated by the highest private honour, I cannot understand how a numerous and popular assembly could long resist the force of seductive arts in a Minister. But, gentlemen, though I am a party man, I am not insensible to the defects to which party is liable. I know that it has a tendency to warp the intelligence. I am sure that there is no Minister, when he gives his consideration to some great measure which he believes the exigencies of the State require, who does not feel that it is an effort altogether to emancipate himself from the political prejudice under which he may have long acted. But, gentlemen, what an immense advantage it is in the English Constitution that no Minister can present to Parliament any measure without first submitting it to an intelligence entirely superior to party feeling, and that one placed in the most exalted position in the State. I know there are some who will say that this is only a beautiful theory of the English Constitution, and that the personal influence of the Sovereign is now absorbed in the responsibility of the Minister. Permit me to observe that I believe that opinion involves a great fallacy. For example, the observations, I need not say, I am now making on this subject refer not particularly to the time in which we live, but to the history and constitution of our country. Take a case not uncommon—take George the Third's reign: he came to the throne at the earliest period of life which the laws of his country would permit, and he enjoyed a long reign. Conceive the position of the Sovereign under these circumstances. From the first moment of his accession he is in constant communication with the most able statesmen of the period, and with the most eminent men of his country of all parties. It is impossible that any individual, even of only average ability, under such circumstances, will not gain a degree of political information and political experience which must have an influence on public events. Gentlemen, information and experience, whether they are possessed by the Sovereign or the meanest of his subjects, are irresistible in life. No man, with the fearful responsibility which devolves on an English Minister, can dare to treat with indifference a suggestion on public affairs which does not occur to him, or information on political matters which had not previously reached

him. But pursue the situation which I have indicated—the longer such a Sovereign reigns, the greater must be that influence. The principles of the English Constitution do not contemplate the absence of such influence on the part of the Sovereign ; and if they did, the principles of human nature would render the establishment of such a condition impossible. As that Sovereign continues to reign, all the great Ministers of his youth gradually disappear, and a new generation of statesmen rise up. Some political contingency occurs. The Ministers are perplexed, but the Sovereign says, “ Thirty years ago I remember a similar state of affairs,” and then he states the course taken by the people who advised him on the difficulty, and successfully advised him. And though he may maintain himself within the strictest limits of the Constitution, who can suppose that, when such suggestions are made by the most exalted person in the country, they can be without effect? The Minister who would treat such information and such experience with indifference would not be a constitutional Minister, but an arrogant idiot. Gentlemen, I maintain when such observations are made they are, in my mind, made by the creatures of ignorance. I think it right to call your attention to these suggestions, because I think they have some meaning in them, and when we are separated you can muse over them, as I think, with profit. Gentlemen, the influence of the Monarchy in England must always be considerable. England is a domestic country. It is a country where home is revered, and the hearth is sacred. Such a country is properly represented by a family—by a Royal Family. If the members of that family have been educated with a sense of their duty to their people and their responsibility, it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the position which they occupy in our social system. Gentlemen, it is not merely a question of their influence over manners, not merely that they may offer a type of all that is elegant, and a model of religion and propriety. A nation—at least such a nation as England—has a heart as well as intelligence, and in moments of national adversity, in moments of great public and political peril, it is something that we have an institution in this country round which the affections of the people may rally. Gentlemen, there is one observation more which I should like to make, with your permission, upon our Monarchy. It is one which a year ago would have been unnecessary, nor is it one which is agreeable to touch upon now ; but there are duties which ought to be performed, and the time is come, in my opinion, when this office should be fulfilled. You know, gentlemen, that persons—and some of them persons of note—have been travelling about the country inveighing against this central institution—on account of the expenses which it occasions. Now, gentlemen, if my views, such as I have suggested, of the importance and beneficial influence of the Monarchy upon your welfare be correct—and I infer from the symptoms of sympathy I have received that they represent

yours, if my views are correct, I am certain the English people would be humiliated if the chief family in the country—a family that represents the nation—should not be maintained with becoming dignity, or should be placed in a position secondary or subordinate, perhaps, to some of the Sovereign's own nobles. But, gentlemen, I am not going to dwell upon that consideration, which I throw aside as a view of the case with which you are familiar, and I do so because you are familiar with it, and I won't remind you that her Majesty had a good and a considerable estate in the country, on which, if she chose, she might live with becoming splendour, and which is, in its revenue, as considerable as the Civil List which was voted by Parliament on condition of her giving up this estate to the country. That estate has been given up, and its revenues have been paid over to the Exchequer. I also throw that aside. I come here to-night, and I take this opportunity of expressing that which I have expressed in the House of Commons, though I have not had a becoming occasion on which to enter into details upon the subject—I express my opinion here in Lancashire—that there is not a sovereignty of any first-rate country in the world so (I will use a mean epithet) cheap as the sovereignty of England. Gentlemen, I will not compare the expenditure of our Throne with other great countries, because it might be said I was taking an unfair advantage of a few exceptional instances, because I know in Lancashire I am addressing an audience tolerably well acquainted with public affairs, and you know that the Civil Lists of the least of these continental empires are double, treble, and in one instance quadruple of what is the Civil List of our Sovereign. But I will take the Civil List of the sovereignty of a Republic. I will compare the cost of the sovereignty of England with the sovereignty of a Republic, and that a Republic with whose affairs the public of Lancashire are tolerably well acquainted. I will deal with the cost of sovereignty in the United States of America. Gentlemen, there is no analogy, as is drawn by these wandering politicians, between the position of Queen Victoria and the President of the United States. The President of the United States is not the Sovereign of the United States. There is some analogy between the position of the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of England, and they are both remunerated much at the same rate, which is about what is obtained by a second-rate professional man. Gentlemen, the Sovereign of the United States is the people, and I want to shew you what is the cost of the sovereignty of the people. It is a very short and simple story, but it is one pregnant with instruction. You know the constitution of the United States—it is a great advantage when addressing so large a meeting as this not to have to explain every step as you proceed; you know that in North America there are thirty-seven sovereign States with their Assemblies. You know also there is another constitution of these thirty-seven sovereign States by which they

enter into a confederation, and are represented by a House of Representatives and a Senate. Now, gentlemen, by the last returns that I have obtained—and you may rely upon it they are authentic, for if I made a mistake on such matters I think the Lancashire lads would soon find me out—by the last official accounts that I have received, there were in the confederate constitution in the House of Representatives 275 representatives and 10 delegates; so that there are, in effect, 285 members of the House of Representatives. There are also 74 members of the Senate, making altogether 359 members. Now these 359 members receive what in sterling is one thousand per annum. They receive more than that; they have an allowance called mileage, which is a very convenient allowance, as those who have tickets on railways are perfectly aware. The aggregate cost of this is about £30,000 per annum. Therefore the House of Representatives and the Senate receive exactly in sterling money £389,000 a year; about the sum of the Civil List of her Majesty. But that will give you only a very imperfect idea of the sovereignty in the United States. The sovereign people is not satisfied by a Civil List of that amount. Every member of the Assembly of the Legislature, and of the Assemblies of the 37 States, is also paid, and he is paid at about 350 dollars per annum. To guard myself lest this statement should be questioned, I wish to tell you that all returns on this head (though I have been furnished with the great majority of them) are not complete. Some estimate of the New States must, as to numbers and so on, be arrived at by a logical process that will not materially affect the calculations; and in order that I may not be charged with overstating, I have left out of the calculation the item which must be placed against every one of the Assemblies of the sovereign States, and that is mileage. There are, as far as I can calculate, about 5,010 members of the sovereign States; their cost at 350 dollars, which would be 1,753,500 dollars, is equal to £350,700 per annum, and therefore the direct cost of the sovereignty of the United States is between seven and eight hundred thousand per year exactly, or nearly double the amount of our Civil List. Gentlemen, perhaps these facts have not been publicly announced before. It is very much to be regretted that a little more accurate information on the subject was not obtained. I could go through the subject to-night, but I will not, because even with your indulgence I should weary you. But there is one point on which I can assure you, and that is, if I were to pursue the consequences of the sovereignty which is the fountain of honour compared with the sovereignty which acts upon the principle of strict economy you would be astonished at the result. But, gentlemen, it is no use to have these meetings if we only assemble together to exchange sympathy and cheer each other. I hoped that in coming here I might learn much and communicate something, and therefore you will allow me, I am sure, one

moment upon the subject, not to exalt it, but only to suggest how very difficult it is to understand the question when we hear the trash that is talked in England by men who ought never to occupy the position of instructors of the people. Now, gentlemen, the most difficult thing in the world is to govern a country like this, and every Minister feels, from the increase of business every day, that it is difficult to devise means by which the country, if properly governed, would have its affairs satisfactorily administered. There is one means of which the Ministers of England have of late years largely availed themselves, which has been a great advantage to the country, and that is the use of Royal Commissions. You know what a Royal Commission is. The Queen of England can appeal to the most experienced statesmen, if there is a knotty subject which no Cabinet can solve, upon which they want the most careful and authentic information; and the Queen of England can appeal to men of the highest rank and fame to give their intelligence to the subject. She can appeal to the great scholars of the country if the subject demands erudition. If it is a matter which involves questions of art and science, she can at once appeal to the services of the greatest artists and greatest philosophers. No one for a moment hesitates to respond to the appeal of Queen Victoria when she summons them as her trusty and well-beloved counsellors. These counsellors are not paid. And if, as not unfrequently happens, a subject arises to which some individual devotes extraordinary powers of intellect, and the nation feels there ought to be some reward for labours so eminent and consummate, and there is bestowed upon him a decoration, he is proud of the approbation of the Sovereign and the esteem of his fellow-countrymen. Now, gentlemen, the Government of the United States—very clever men, no doubt—no one disputes their ability, their energy, or their acuteness—have also largely availed themselves of these commissions. Their commissioners are paid, but their commissions have failed. And why? Because theirs is a Government in which there is no fountain of honour. Now, gentlemen, I have rather exceeded the bounds to which I had intended to confine myself upon this subject, but it is, as they say in fashionable circles, the subject of the hour; and when I find young gentlemen can rise up in a large assembly of what I hitherto considered intelligent men in an English city, and talk nonsense by the hour against the fundamental principles of the English Constitution, and hold up the sovereignty of England as intolerable on account of expense, it was my duty, when the occasion offered—and I think my friend the Chairman told us to-night that the occasion, somehow or another, always came to every man—to express my views upon it. Gentlemen, the English Constitution is by no means the unimportant and

obsolete thing some persons would attempt to persuade you it is, and therefore I ask your patience for a moment while I make a few remarks upon another institution of the country that has been lately very much inveighed against, and which, we are told, ought to be either abolished or reformed—that is the House of Lords. I will not stop now one moment to endeavour to prove to you that no representative Constitution can last without the Second Chamber. I will not do that because it is a question which for more than one hundred years—or at least for one hundred years—has occupied consideration, and the controversy of most eminent men of all countries, ever since, in fact, the establishment of the North American Republic; and they have all agreed—statesmen have agreed—American, French, German, and Italian—that representative institutions without a second Chamber are impossible. Of late years it has been significantly noted by very great authorities in these matters that the frequent failure of the arrangement called the French Republic is mainly to be attributed to that want. But, gentlemen, although statesmen of all countries have expressed their conviction that representative institutions without a second Chamber are impossible, they have found the utmost difficulty, almost the impossibility, of creating the second Chamber. How is it to be created? Is it to be created by the sovereign power? Well, we know what a chamber of nominees is—it is the proverb for general disregard and general disrespect. Are they to be elected? Are they to be chosen by the same constituency as the popular body? If so, what moral right would they have to criticise and control the representatives in the popular body? Will you escape from the difficulty by electing them by a restricted and more exclusive constituency, with a higher franchise, and chosen, as you may suppose, from superior elements? The question then immediately arises, Why should the majority be governed by the minority? Gentlemen, our cousins in the United States settled the question of a second Chamber well. They had elements at their command which never before existed in the world, and so far as I can form any opinion, never will again. They summoned their representative from their thirty-nine sovereign States. In England, gentlemen, we had a House of Lords. It had developed from the historical constitution of an ancient country, and had always adapted itself to the circumstances of the age which it had to encounter. What is the first element of this second Chamber, deemed, and rightly deemed, so indispensable by the greatest political authorities? Its indispensable element you will all agree in a moment is Independence. What is the soundest basis of independence? I think you will all agree with me when I say that it is Property. Well, the Prime Minister of England—and though I do not agree with him in all points, I agree with him entirely in this—has recently informed the Houses of Parliament that the average income of the House of Lords is £20,000 a year,

making with its number a revenue of £9,000,000 per annum. So far as property—I do not say that is the only element—but so far as property is concerned as a necessary element of a second Chamber, all will agree that the House of Lords fulfils that condition. At the same time that there is a partial outcry against the Throne, there is also an attack upon the House of Lords on the ground of its hereditary character. Before I refer to that I would call your attention to this circumstance: that the property of the House of Lords is of a peculiar character. In the first place, it is visible property, and therefore it is responsible property—as I should suppose many of the ratepayers in this large assembly must know to their cost. Gentlemen, it is not only visible property, but it is, generally speaking, territorial. A great mass of property of the House of Lords is derived from land; and one of the elements of landed property is that it must be representative. I will illustrate the observation if you will permit me. Suppose, for example, there was no House of Commons—which God forbid—but, gentlemen, suppose there was none, and take an Englishman in any part of the country—say Cumberland and Cornwall as the two extremes, so that we may be impartial—and he had a grievance. The Cumberland man would say, “This is a great oppression I am suffering from, but I know a Cumberland man in the House of Lords—perhaps the Earl of Lonsdale or Lord Carlisle—and he will see that I am righted.” And the Cornishman, too, if he had a grievance—if he thought there was some maladministration of justice, and that he was the victim of oppression, would naturally say, “I will go to the head of the family at Port Eliot. His family have sacrificed themselves before this for the liberties of Englishmen, and he will not see a Cornishman treated in this way.” So it is that if there were no House of Commons, and there were a House of Lords, there is no part of England where an Englishman when in trouble would not remember that there was a representative of landed property in the House of Lords who could take the initiative in having his grievance removed. But, gentlemen, the charge against the House of Lords is that the dignities are hereditary; and we are told that if we have a House of Peers they should be peers for life. There are persons of great authority who are in favour of life peerages. There is my noble friend near me, with whom I seldom differ upon any subject. Even he the other day gave a limited kind of admission of the principle on grounds which are highly deserving of consideration. Gentlemen, I must say one word about peers for life. In the first place let me observe that every peer is a peer for life, as he cannot be a peer after his death; but some peers for life are succeeded in their dignities by their children. The question arises, who is most respon-

sible—a peer for life whose dignities are not descendible, or a peer for life whose dignities are hereditary? Now, gentlemen, a peer for life is in a very strong position. He says, “Here I am; I have got power and I will exercise it.” I have no doubt that, on the whole, a peer for life would exercise it for what he deemed was the public good. Let us hope that. But, after all, he might, and could, exercise it according to his own will. Nobody can call him to account; he is independent of everybody. But a peer for life whose dignities descend is in a very different position. He has every inducement to study public opinion, and feels it just to yield; because he naturally feels that if the order to which he belongs is in constant collision with public opinion the chances are that his dignities will not descend to his posterity. Therefore, gentlemen, I am not prepared myself to believe that a solution of any difficulties in the public mind on this point is to be found by creating peers for life. I know there are some philosophers who believe that the best substitute for the House of Lords would be an assembly formed of ex-Governors of Colonies. I have not sufficient experience on that subject to give a decided opinion upon it. When the Muse of Comedy threw her frolic grace over society a retired Governor was generally one of the characters in every comedy; and the last of our great actors—who, by the by, was a great favourite at Manchester—Mr. Farren, was celebrated for his delineation of the character in question. Whether it be the recollection of the performance or not, I confess I am inclined to believe that an English gentleman—born to business, managing his own estate, administering the affairs of his county, mixing with all classes of his fellow men, now in the hunting field, now in the railway direction, unaffected, unostentatious, proud of his ancestors, if they have contributed to the greatness of our common country—is, on the whole, more likely to form a senator agreeable to English opinion and English taste than any substitute that has yet been produced. Gentlemen, let me make one observation more, on the subject of the House of Lords, before I conclude. There is some advantage in political experience. I remember the time when there was a similar outcry against the House of Lords, but much more intense and powerful; and, gentlemen, it arose from the same cause. A Liberal Government had been installed in office, with an immense Liberal majority. They proposed some violent measures. The House of Lords modified some, delayed others, and some they threw out. Instantly there was a cry to abolish or to reform the House of Lords, and the greatest popular orator that probably ever existed was sent on a pilgrimage over England to excite the people in favour of this opinion. What happened? That happened, gentlemen, which may happen to-morrow. There was a dissolution of Parliament. The great Liberal majority vanished.

The balance of parties was restored. It was discovered that the House of Lords had behind them at least half of the English people. We heard no more cries for their abolition or their reform; and before two years more passed England was really governed by the House of Lords, under the wise influence of the Duke of Wellington and the commanding eloquence of Lyndhurst; and such was the enthusiasm of the nation in favour of the Second Chamber that at every public meeting its health was drunk, with the additional sentiment for which we are indebted to one of the most distinguished members that ever represented the House of Commons, "Thank God, there is the House of Lords." The main power of the House of Commons depends upon its command of the public purse, and its good use of the public expenditure; and when power is enjoyed by a large majority, and is so exercised, the power of the House of Commons increases, and under some circumstances it may be predominant; but this great power is not the creation of the legislation of the last forty years; it is not the Reform Bill of Earl Derby which has given this great power to the House of Commons; they have enjoyed it for centuries; they have often asserted, they have sometimes tyrannically exercised it. What is the House of Commons? They are the representatives of the constituencies of England. Is there anything which has occurred with regard to the constituencies of England which alters the House of Commons in relation to the Throne or the House of Lords? I will ask you to-night that question, we can discuss it with very great advantage now, for we have in our possession a document which if I had accepted your invitation last year I should not have possessed, and therefore there must have been a wiser influence than we both could have supposed at work when I declined that flattering appeal. We have now the census of the population of this country, and we have also another important and still more recent document—the return of the constituencies of the United Kingdom, and from the registration of last autumn the population of the United Kingdom may be fairly stated at this moment at about 32,000,000, and the number of the constituencies of the United Kingdom, and I am taking in everything, after making those deductions which hitherto have always been made in parliamentary returns on that subject, which were made in the return of 1865, are not made in the present, but which I will certainly not overstate. Generally speaking we make for rather double returns, and so on, a deduction of 10 per cent. I will not even say so much as that, but I may fairly say the amount of the constituencies of the United Kingdom is 2,200,000. Well, gentlemen, you will at once perceive that there must be 30 millions of the population of this country that are represented as much by the House of Lords as by the House of Commons, and who for the protection of their rights must depend upon them and the Majesty of the Throne. Now, gentlemen, I will tell you what was accomplished by the last Reform Act. When Lord Grey

introduced his Bill—no doubt a great and statesmanlike measure—he committed an immense political mistake, and one which for a long time appeared irretrievable. He fortified the legitimate influence of the aristocracy, and gave the franchise to the middle classes. But the working classes were omitted in the Act, and, what was worse, no provision was made for them, and those ancient franchises were abolished which they had enjoyed from time immemorial. Gentlemen, that was the origin of the electoral disturbance and inconvenience which for 30 years annoyed and perplexed the community. The Liberal party, I feel it my duty to say, had not acted fairly by this question. In their adversity they held out hopes to the working classes; but when they had a strong Government they laughed their vows to scorn. Lord Derby, the father of my noble friend, my colleague in public life for twenty years, under probably a series of difficulties such as no two public men ever had yet to encounter, and between whom and myself I can say with honour there was never a coldness—Lord Derby had to encounter great difficulties—difficulties impossible to exaggerate. When Lord Derby became Prime Minister it was absolutely necessary that he should deal with this question, and he dealt with it in a manner which was conclusive, because it placed the franchise on a distinct principle and basis. What was the result of the measure? I will tell you in a sentence. In 1848 there was a revolution in France, and the French Republic was created. What effect had that on England? I can tell you. In my own experience no woman was allowed to quit her house in London, and artillery was planted on Westminster-bridge. Last year there was another French Revolution, and an infinitely more threatening Republic established, yet not five men were found to meet together in Manchester and grumble. And why? Because the people had got what they wanted, and they got more than they wanted. They were content, and were grateful. Gentlemen, I have been asking some of my friends to inform me of the degree of patience of a Lancashire audience; but remember this is an invitation which has been extended for a long time, and if I trespass upon your patience you may attribute it to right motives. I wish to speak to you truthfully and frankly on public affairs. I don't do it for the purpose of receiving a cheer; but when I am gone you may have what I have stated tested by your experience. If it be the right thing, cling to it; if it be not right in its conclusions, you are too 'cute men not to reject it. Gentlemen, the constitution of England is not merely a constitution in State. I have touched on Queen, Lords, and Commons; but we must remember that the constitution is Church and State. The wisest sovereigns and statesmen have always been anxious to connect authority with religion. They have felt that it gave a sanction to power, and the most enlightened have believed that it mitigated its exercise. But the same difficulty has been experienced in effecting this union which has been experienced in forming a

Second Chamber—either the spiritual power has usurped upon the civil and established a sacerdotal society, or the civil power has invaded successfully the rights of the spiritual and the ministers of religion have been degraded into stipendiaries of the State and instruments of the Government. In England we accomplish this great result by an alliance between Church and State, between two originally independent powers. I will not go into the history of that alliance, which is rather a question for those archæological societies which occasionally amuse and instruct the people of this city. Enough for me that that union was made and has contributed for centuries to the civilisation of this country. Gentlemen, there is the same assault against the Church of England and the union between the State and the Church as there is against the Monarchy and against the House of Lords. It is said that the existence of Nonconformity proves that the Church is a failure. I draw from these premises an exactly contrary conclusion; and I maintain that to have secured a national profession of faith with the unlimited enjoyment of private judgment in matters spiritual is the solution of the most difficult problem and one of the triumphs of civilisation. It is said that the existence of parties in the Church also proves its incompetence. On that matter, too, I entertain a contrary opinion. Parties have always existed in the Church; and some have appealed to them as arguments in favour of its Divine institution, because, in the services and doctrines of the Church have been found representatives of every mood in the human mind. Those who are influenced by ceremonies find consolation in forms which secure to them “the beauty of holiness.” Those who are not satisfied except with enthusiasm find in its ministrations the exaltation they require, while others who believe that “the anchor of faith” can never be safely moored except in the dry sands of reason find a religion within the pale of the Church which can boast of its irrefragable logic and its irresistible evidence. Gentlemen, I am inclined sometimes to believe that those who advocate the abolition of the union between Church and State have not carefully considered the consequences of such a course. The Church is a powerful corporation of many millions of her Majesty’s subjects, with a consummate organisation and wealth which in its aggregate is vast. Restricted and controlled by the State, so powerful a corporation may be only fruitful of public advantage, but it becomes a great question what might be the consequence of the severance of the controlling tie between these two bodies. The State would be enfeebled, but the Church would probably be strengthened. Whether that is a result to be desired is a grave question for all men. For my own part, I am bound to say that I doubt whether it would be favourable to the cause of civil and religious liberty. I know that there is a common idea that if the union between Church and State was

severed, the wealth of the Church would revert to the State; but it would be well to remember that the great proportion of ecclesiastical property is the property of individuals. Take, for example, the fact that the great mass of Church patronage is patronage in the hands of private persons. That you could not touch without compensation to the patrons. You have established that principle in your late Irish Bill, where there was very little patronage. And in the present state of the public mind on the subject there is very little doubt that there would be scarcely a patron in England—irrespective of other aid the Church would receive—who would not dedicate his compensation to the spiritual wants of his neighbours. It was computed some years ago that the property of the Church, in this manner if the union was terminated, would not be less than between £80,000,000 and £90,000,000; and since that period the amount of private property dedicated to the purposes of the Church has very largely increased. I therefore trust that when the occasion offers for the country to speak out, it will speak out in an unmistakable manner on this subject; and, recognising the inestimable services of the Church, that it will call upon the Government to maintain its union with the State. Upon this subject there is one remark I would make. Nothing is more surprising to me than the plea on which the present outcry is made against the Church of England. I could not believe that in the 19th century the charge against the Church of England should be that Churchmen, and especially the clergy, had educated the people. If I were to fix upon one circumstance more than another which redounded to the honour of Churchmen, it is that they should fulfil this noble office; and, next to being “the stewards of Divine mysteries,” I think the greatest distinction of the clergy is the admirable manner in which they have devoted their lives and their fortunes to this greatest of national objects. Gentlemen, you are well acquainted in this city with this controversy. It was in this city—I don’t know whether it was not in this hall—that that remarkable meeting was held of the Nonconformists to effect important alterations in the Education Act, and you are acquainted with the discussion in Parliament which arose in consequence of that meeting. Gentlemen, I have due and great respect for the Nonconformist body. I acknowledge their services to this country, and though I believe that the political reasons which mainly called them into existence have entirely ceased, it is impossible not to treat with consideration a body which has been eminent for its conscience, its learning, and its patriotism; but I must express my mortification that, from a feeling of envy or of pique, the Nonconformist body, rather than assist the Church in their great enterprise, should absolutely have become the partisans of a merely secular education. I believe myself, gentlemen, that without the recognition of a superintending Provi-

dence in the affairs of this world all national education will be disastrous, and I feel confident that it is impossible to stop at that mere recognition. Religious education is demanded by the nation generally and by the instincts of human nature. I should like to see the Church and the Nonconformists work together; but I trust, whatever may be the result, the country will stand by the Church in its efforts to maintain the religious education of the people. Gentlemen, I foresee yet trials for the Church of England; but I am confident in its future. I am confident in its future because I believe there is now a very general feeling that to be national it must be comprehensive. I will not use the word "broad," because it is an epithet applied to a system with which I have no sympathy. But I would wish Churchmen, and especially the clergy, always to remember that in our "Father's house there are many mansions," and I believe that comprehensive spirit is perfectly consistent with the maintenance of formularies and the belief in dogmas without which I hold no practical religion can exist. I have now made some observations to you which have ranged over the general character of our political institutions. I have touched upon the Monarchy, upon the Estates of the Realm, upon the alliance of Church and State, and the influence upon society of a public profession of religious faith, and somewhat episodically, but still I think necessarily, I have touched upon the act of recent legislation respecting the education of the people, which must deeply interest every thinking man. I have intended to speak generally and frankly; I hope I have not been misunderstood. I wish to shew upon all these subjects the conclusions at which I have arrived, and I shall be proud to hope that you participate in them. Gentlemen, I do not come here to make a party speech, but at the same time I will not restrict myself from making those observations on public affairs which become public men. I must say it is with the greatest regret and wonder, with more regret even than wonder, that on the part of the chief subject of this realm—I mean the Prime Minister of England—who is always writing letters and making speeches upon these subjects, there is ever an uncertain sound. If a member of Parliament announces himself to be a Republican, the Prime Minister of England recognises him as a fellow-labourer. If a noisy multitude demand the abolition or only the reform of the House of Lords, the Prime Minister of England says that it is a difficult business; he must think once or twice, or even thrice before he can undertake it. If a gentleman who represents a borough not far distant, Mr. Miall, brings forward a motion in the House of Commons for the disestablishment of the Church, the Prime Minister tells Mr. Miall that it must be obvious to him that the temper of the House of Commons is not at present in favour of it, and that if he wants to succeed he must act upon opinion out of doors; whereupon, Mr. Miall, like a sensible man, calls

a public meeting, and tells the public meeting exactly what the Prime Minister told him, and he says—"In consequence of his instructions I have called this meeting in order that we may petition Parliament for the disestablishment of the English Church." Gentlemen, I have spoken to you of the institutions of your country ; but, after all, the test of institutions is the condition of the nation that they influence. I want to put them to that test. You are the inhabitants of an island not of colossal size, and which certainly was geographically intended to be the appendage to some continental empire—whether of the Franks or Gauls on the other side of the Channel, or the Teutons or Scandinavians beyond the German Sea, it matters little. Your early history gives proof that England was more invaded and pillaged and conquered than any other country ; yet amid these perils and vicissitudes the English race was formed, and they have brought about very different results. Instead of being invaded, your land is the only one that has a legitimate claim to the epithet of being inviolate. It is the inviolate island of the great and the free. Instead of being pillaged, you have attracted all the capital of the world to your shores ; instead of being conquered, your flag floats on many waters, and your standard waves in either zone. You have created a society of classes which gives vigour, variety, and life to the nation, and yet there is no class that has a privilege ; all are equal before the law. You possess a real aristocracy, open to all who deserve to enter it. You have created not merely what is the boast of other countries, a middle class ; but you have created a hierarchy of middle classes, so that there is no degree of wealth, of refinement, of patience, of energy, of effort, which is not represented in those classes. And what is the condition of the great body of the people ? That is a question which must not be evaded. Gentlemen, it is a long time since I first found myself in your district, much longer, indeed, than those eight-and-twenty years which are often by your kindness referred to, and always with pride ; and, therefore, so far as the condition of the great body of the people of this important district of England is concerned, I can speak from personal experience and observation. I take the period which I took with reference to all political matters an hour ago, a period of forty years, from 1832 to 1872, and what have the working classes realised in that time ? Immense results. Their progress has not in any way been inferior to that of any other class. In that time they have gained immense results ; their wages have been raised, and their hours of daily toil have been diminished—the means of leisure, which is the great source of civilisation, have been increased. For centuries the great body of the people of this country have enjoyed a personal right and liberty not enjoyed by the population of any other country ; but of late years political rights have been largely and gradually, therefore wisely, distributed.

That the working classes of Lancashire and Yorkshire have proved not unworthy of these boons may be easily maintained; but their progress and elevation have been during this interval wonderfully aided and assisted by three causes, which are not so distinctly attributable to their own energies. The first is the revolution in locomotion, which has opened the world to the working man, which has enlarged the horizon of his experience, increased his knowledge of nature and of art, and added immensely to the salutary recreation, amusement, and pleasure of his existence. The second cause is the cheap postage, the moral benefits of which cannot be exaggerated. And the third is that unshackled press which has furnished him with endless sources of instruction, information and amusement, and has increased his ideas, elevated his self-respect, and made life more varied and delightful. Gentlemen, I think that the working classes of Lancashire—I believe that I am now speaking feebly, having addressed you so long—but I say their improvement has not only been gradual, but even rapid, during the last 40 years. Those who can remember Lancashire nearly 40 years ago will see that great results have accrued, and will feel that there is a vast increase in the intelligence, happiness, general prosperity, and self-respect of the working classes. Gentlemen, if you would permit me, I would now make an observation upon another class of the labouring population. This is not a civic assembly, although we meet in a city. That was for convenience, but the invitation which I received was to meet the county and all the boroughs of Lancashire; and I wish to make a few observations upon the condition of the agricultural labourer. That is a subject which now greatly attracts public attention. And, in the first place, to prevent any misconception, I beg to express my opinion that an agricultural labourer has as much right to combine for the bettering of his condition as a manufacturing labourer or worker in metals. If the causes of his combination are natural—that is to say, if they arise from his own feelings and from the necessities of his own condition, the combination will end in results mutually beneficial to employers and employed. If, on the other hand, it is factitious and he is acted upon by extraneous influences and extraneous ideas, the combination will produce, I fear, much loss and misery both to employers and employed; and after a time he will find himself in a similar or in a worse position. Gentlemen, in my opinion, the farmers of England, as a body, cannot afford to pay higher wages than they do, and those who will answer me by saying that they must find their ability by the deduction of rents are, I think, involving themselves with economic laws which may prove too difficult for them to cope with. The profits of a farmer are very moderate. The interest upon capital invested in land is the smallest that any property furnishes. The farmer will have his profits and the investor in land will have his interest, even though they may be obtained at the cost of changing the mode

of the cultivation of the country. Gentlemen, I should deeply regret to see the tillage of this country reduced, and a recurrence to pasture take place. I should regret it principally on account of the agricultural labourers themselves. Their new friends call them Hodge, and describe them as a stolid race. I must say that, from my experience of them, they are sufficiently shrewd and open to reason. I would say to them with confidence, as the great Athenian said to the Spartan who rudely assailed him, "Strike, but hear me." First, a change in the cultivation of the soil of this country would be very injurious to the labouring class; and, secondly, I am of opinion that that class instead of being stationary have made, if not as much progress as the manufacturing class, very considerable progress during the last forty years. Many persons write and speak about the agricultural labourer with not so perfect a knowledge of his condition as is desirable. They treat him always as a human being who in every part of the country finds himself in an identical condition. Now, on the contrary, there is no class of labourers in which there is greater variety of condition than that of the agricultural labourers. It changes from north to south, from east to west, and from county to county. It changes even in the same county, where there is no alteration of soil and of configuration. The hind in Northumberland is in a very different condition from the famous Dorsetshire labourer—the tiller of the soil in Lincolnshire is different from his fellow agriculturist in Sussex. What the effect of manufactures is upon the agricultural districts in their neighbourhood it would be presumption in me to dwell upon—your own experience must tell you whether the agricultural labourer in North Lancashire, for example, has had no rise in wages and no diminution in toil. Take the case of the Dorsetshire labourer—the whole of the agricultural labourers on the south-western coast of England, for a very long period, worked only half the time of the labourers in other parts of England, and received only half the wages. In the experience of many, I dare say, who are here present, even thirty years ago, a Dorsetshire labourer never worked after three o'clock in the day; and why? Because the whole of that part of England was demoralised by smuggling. No one worked after three o'clock in the day for a very good reason—because he had to work at night. No farmer allowed his team to be employed after three o'clock, because he reserved his horses to take his illicit cargo at night and carry it rapidly into the interior. Therefore, as the men were employed and remunerated otherwise, they got into a habit of half-work and half-pay so far as the land was concerned, and when smuggling was abolished—and it has only been abolished for thirty years—these imperfect habits of labour continued, and do even now continue to a great extent. That is the origin of the condition of the agricultural labourer in the south-western part of England. But now, gentlemen, I want to test the condition of the agricultural labourer

generally ; and I will take a part of England with which I am familiar, and can speak as to the accuracy of the facts—I mean the group described as the south-midland counties. The conditions of labour there are the same, or pretty nearly the same, throughout. The group may be described as a strictly agricultural community, and they embrace a population of probably a million and a half. Now, I have no hesitation in saying that the improvement in their lot during the last forty years has been progressive and is remarkable. I attribute it to three causes. In the first place, the rise in their money wages is no less than fifteen per cent. The second cause of their improvement is the almost total disappearance of excessive and exhausting toil, from the general introduction of machinery. I don't know whether I could get a couple of men who could, or, if they could, would thrash a load of wheat in my neighbourhood. The third great cause which has improved their condition is the very general, not to say universal, institution of allotment grounds. Now, gentlemen, when I find that this has been the course of affairs in our very considerable and strictly agricultural portion of the country, where there have been no exceptional circumstances, like smuggling, to degrade and demoralise the race, I cannot resist the conviction that the agricultural labourers, instead of being stationary, as we are constantly told by those not acquainted with them, has been one of progressive improvement ; and that in those counties—and they are many—where the stimulating influence of a manufacturing neighbourhood acts upon the land, the general conclusion at which I arrive is that the agricultural labourer has had his share in the advance of national prosperity. Gentlemen, I am not here to maintain that there is nothing to be done to increase the wellbeing of the working classes of this country, generally speaking. There is not a single class in the country which is not susceptible of improvement; and that makes the life and animation of our society. But in all we do we must remember, as my noble friend told them at Liverpool, that much depends upon the working classes themselves ; and what I know of the working classes in Lancashire makes me sure that they will respond to this appeal. Much also may be expected from that sympathy between classes which is a distinctive feature of the present day; and, in the last place, no inconsiderable results may be obtained by judicious and prudent legislation. But, gentlemen, in attempting to legislate upon social matters the great object is to be practical—to have before us some distinct aims and some distinct means by which they can be accomplished. Gentlemen, I think public attention as regards these matters ought to be concentrated upon sanitary legislation. That is a wide subject, and, if properly treated, comprises almost every consideration which has a just claim upon legislative interference. Pure air, pure water, the inspection of unhealthy habitations, the adulteration of food,

these and many kindred matters may be legitimately dealt with by the Legislature ; and I am bound to say the Legislature is not idle upon them, for we have at this time two important measures before Parliament on the subject. One—by a late colleague of mine, Sir Charles Adderley—is a large and comprehensive measure, founded upon a sure basis, for it consolidates all existing public Acts and improves them. A prejudice has been raised against that proposal, by stating that it interferes with the private Acts of the great towns. I take this opportunity of contradicting that. The Bill of Sir Charles Adderley does not touch the Acts of the great towns. It only allows them, if they think fit, to avail themselves of its new provisions. The other measure, by the Government, is of a partial character. What it comprises is good, so far as it goes, but it shrinks from that bold consolidation of existing Acts which I think one of the great merits of Sir Charles Adderley's Bill, which permits us to become acquainted with how much may be done in favour of sanitary improvements by existing provisions. Gentlemen, I cannot impress upon you too strongly my conviction of the importance of the Legislature and society uniting together in favour of these important results. A great scholar and a great wit 300 years ago said that, in his opinion, there was a great mistake in the Vulgate, which, as you all know, is the Latin translation of the Holy Scriptures, and that, instead of saying "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity"—*Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas*—the wise and witty King really said *Sanitas sanitatum, omnia sanitas*. Gentlemen, it is impossible to overrate the importance of the subject. After all, the first consideration of a Minister should be the health of the people. A land may be covered with historic trophies, with museums of science and galleries of art, with Universities and with libraries ; the people may be civilised and ingenious ; the country may be even famous in the annals and action of the world ; but, gentlemen, if the population every ten years decreases, and the stature of the race every ten years diminishes, the history of that country will soon be the history of the past. Gentlemen, I said I had not come here to make a party speech. I have addressed you upon subjects of grave, and, I will venture to believe, of general interest ; but to be here and be altogether silent upon the present state of public affairs would not be respectful to you, and, perhaps, on the whole, would be thought incongruous. Gentlemen, I cannot pretend that our position either at home or abroad is, in my opinion, satisfactory. At home, at a period of immense prosperity, with a people contented and naturally loyal, we find to our surprise the most extravagant doctrines professed and the fundamental principles of our most valuable institutions impugned, and that too by persons of some authority. Gentlemen, this startling inconsistency is accounted for, in my mind, by the circumstances under which the present Administration was formed. It is the first instance in my knowledge of a British Administration being avowedly

formed on a principle of violence. It is unnecessary for me to remind you of the circumstances which preceded the formation of that Government. You were the principal scene and theatre of the development of statesmanship that then occurred. You witnessed the incubation of the portentous birth. You remember when you were informed that the policy to secure the prosperity of Ireland and the content of Irishmen was a policy of sacrilege and confiscation. Gentlemen, when Ireland was placed under the wise and able administration of Lord Abercorn Ireland was prosperous, and I may say content. But there happened at that time a very peculiar conjunction in politics. The civil war in America had just ceased; and a band of military adventurers—Poles, Italians, and many Irishmen—concocted at New York a conspiracy to invade Ireland, with the belief that the whole country would rise to welcome them. How that conspiracy was baffled, how those plots were confounded, I need not now remind you. For that we were mainly indebted to the eminent qualities of a great man who has just left us. You remember how the constituencies were appealed to to vote against the Government who had made so unfit an appointment as that of Lord Mayo to the Viceroyalty of India. It was by his great qualities when Secretary for Ireland, by his vigilance, his courage, his patience, and his perseverance that this conspiracy was defeated. Never was a Minister better informed. He knew what was going on at New York just as well as what was going on in the city of Dublin. When the Fenian conspiracy had been entirely put down it became necessary to consider the policy which it was expedient to pursue in Ireland; and it seemed to us at that time that what Ireland required after all the excitement which it had experienced was a policy which should largely develop its material resources. There were one or two subjects of a different character which, for the advantage of the State, it would have been desirable to have settled, if that could have been effected with the general concurrence of both the great parties in that country. Had we remained in office that would have been done. But we were destined to quit it, and we quitted it without a murmur. The policy of our successors was different. Their specific was to despoil Churches and plunder landlords, and what has been the result? Sedition rampant, treason thinly veiled, and whenever a vacancy occurs in the representation a candidate is returned pledged to the disruption of the realm. Her Majesty's new Ministers proceeded in their career like a body of men under the influence of some delirious drug. Not satiated with the spoliation and anarchy of Ireland, they began to attack every institution and every interest, every class and calling in the country. It is curious to observe their course. They took in hand the Army. What have they done? I will not comment on what they have done. I will historically state it, and leave you to draw the inference. So long as Constitutional England has existed there has been

a jealousy among all classes against the existence of a standing army. As our Empire expanded and the existence of a large body of disciplined troops became a necessity, every precaution was taken to prevent the danger to our liberties which a standing army involved. It was a first principle not to concentrate in the island any overwhelming number of troops, and a considerable portion was distributed in the colonies. Care was taken that the troops generally should be officered by a class of men deeply interested in the property and the liberties of England. So extreme was the jealousy that the relations between that once constitutional force, the Militia, and the Sovereign were rigidly guarded, and it was carefully placed under local influences. All this is changed. We have a standing army of large amount, quartered, and brigaded, and encamped permanently in England, and fed by a considerable and constantly increasing Reserve. It will in due time be officered by a class of men eminently scientific, but with no relations necessarily with society; while the Militia is withdrawn from all local influences, and placed under the immediate command of the Secretary of War. Thus, in the nineteenth century, we have a large standing army established in England, contrary to all the traditions of the land, and that by a Liberal Government, and with the warm acclamations of the Liberal party. Let us look what they have done with the Admiralty. You remember, in this county especially, the denunciations of the profligate expenditure of the Conservative Government, and you have since had an opportunity of comparing it with the gentler burden of Liberal estimates. The Navy was not merely an instance of profligate expenditure, but of incompetent and inadequate management. A great revolution was promised in its administration. A gentleman, almost unknown to English politics, was strangely preferred to one of the highest places in the councils of Her Majesty. He set to at his task with ruthless activity. The Consultative Council, under which Nelson had gained all his victories, was dissolved. The Secretaryship of the Admiralty, an office which exercised a complete supervision over every division of that great department—an office which was to the Admiralty what the Secretary of State is to the kingdom, which, in the qualities which it required and the duties which it fulfilled was rightly a stepping-stone to the Cabinet, as in the instances of Lord Halifax, Lord Herbert, and many others, was reduced to absolute insignificance. Even the office of Control, which of all others required a position of independence, and on which the safety of the Navy mainly depended, was deprived of all its important attributes. For two years the Opposition called the attention of Parliament to these destructive changes, but Parliament and the nation were alike insensible. Full of other business, they could not give a thought to what they looked upon merely as captious criticism. It requires a great disaster to command the attention of England; and when the Captain was lost, and

when they had the details of the perilous voyage of the *Megæra*, then public indignation demanded a complete change in this renovating administration of the Navy. And what has occurred? It is only a few weeks since that in the House of Commons I heard the naval statement made by a new First Lord, and it consisted only of the rescinding of all the revolutionary changes of his predecessor, every one of which during the last two years has been pressed upon the attention of Parliament and the country by that Constitutional and necessary body the Opposition. Gentlemen, it will not do for me—considering the time I have already occupied, and there are still some subjects of importance that must be touched—to dwell upon any of the other similar topics of which there is a rich abundance. I doubt not there is in this hall more than one farmer who has been alarmed by the suggestion that his agricultural machinery should be taxed. I doubt not there is in this hall more than one publican who remembers that last year an Act of Parliament was introduced to denounce him as a “sinner.” I doubt not there are in this hall a widow and an orphan who remember the profligate proposition to plunder their lonely heritage. But, gentlemen, as time advanced it was not difficult to perceive that extravagance was being substituted for energy by the Government. The unnatural stimulus was subsiding. Their paroxysm ended in prostration. Some took refuge in melancholy, and their eminent chief alternated between a menace and a sigh. As I sat opposite the Treasury Bench, the Ministers reminded me of one of those marine landscapes not very unusual on the coasts of South America. You behold a range of exhausted volcanoes. Not a flame flickers on a single pallid crest. But the situation is still dangerous. There are occasional earthquakes, and ever and anon the deep rumbling of the sea. But, gentlemen, there is one other topic on which I must touch. If the management of our domestic affairs has been founded upon a principle of violence, that certainly cannot be alleged against the management of our external relations. I know the difficulty of addressing a body of Englishmen on these topics. The very phrase “foreign affairs” makes an Englishman convinced that I am about to treat of subjects with which he has no concern. Unhappily, the relations of England to the rest of the world, which are “foreign affairs,” are the matters which most influence his lot. Upon them depends the increase or reduction of taxation. Upon them depends the enjoyment or the embarrassment of his industry. And yet, though so momentous are the consequences of the mismanagement of our foreign relations, no one thinks of them till the mischief occurs, and then it is found how the most vital consequences have been occasioned by mere inadvertance. I will illustrate this point by two anecdotes. Since I have been in public life there has been for this country a great calamity and there is a great danger, and both might have been avoided. The calamity was the Crimean War. You know what were

the consequences of the Crimean War—a great addition to your debt, an enormous addition to your taxation, a cost more precious than your treasure—the best blood of England. Half a million of men, I believe, perished in that great undertaking. Nor are the evil consequences of that war adequately described by what I have said. All the disorders and disturbances of Europe, those immense armaments that are an incubus on national industry and the great obstacle to progressive civilisation, may be traced and justly attributed to the Crimean War. And yet the Crimean War need never have occurred. When Lord Derby acceded to office, against his own wishes, in 1852, the Liberal party most unconstitutionally forced him to dissolve Parliament at a certain time by stopping the supplies, or at least by limiting the period for which they were voted. There was not a single reason to justify that course, for Lord Derby had only accepted office, having once declined it, on the renewed application of his Sovereign. The country, at the dissolution, increased the power of the Conservative party, but did not give to Lord Derby a majority, and he had to retire from power. There was not the slightest chance of a Crimean War when we retired from office; but the Emperor of Russia, believing that the successor of Lord Derby was no enemy to Russian aggression in the East, commenced those proceedings with the result of which you are familiar. I speak of what I know—not of what I believe, but of what I have evidence in my possession to prove—that the Crimean War would never have happened if Lord Derby had remained in office. The great danger is the present state of our relations with the United States. When I acceded to office I did so, so far as regarded the United States of America, with some advantage. During the whole of the Civil War in America both my noble friend near me and I had maintained a strict and fair neutrality. This was fully appreciated by the Government of the United States, and they expressed their wish that with our aid the settlement of all differences between the two Governments should be accomplished. They sent here a Plenipotentiary, an honourable gentleman, very intelligent, and possessing general confidence. My noble friend near me, with great ability, negotiated a Treaty for the settlement of all these claims. He was the first Minister who proposed to refer them to arbitration, and the Treaty was signed by the American Government. It was signed, I think, on the 10th of November, on the eve of the dissolution of Parliament. The borough elections that first occurred proved what would be the fate of the Ministry, and the moment they were known in America the American Government announced that Mr. Reverdy Johnson had mistaken his instructions, and they could not present the Treaty to the Senate for its sanction—the sanction of which there had been previously no doubt. But the fact is that, as in the case of the Crimean War, it was sup-

posed that our successors would be favourable to Russian aggression, so it was supposed that by the accession to office of Mr. Gladstone and a gentleman you know well, Mr. Bright, the American Claims would be considered in a very different spirit. How they have been considered is a subject which, no doubt, occupies deeply the minds of the people of Lancashire. Now, gentlemen, observe this—the question of the Black Sea involved in the Crimean War, and the question of the American claims involved in our negotiations with Mr Johnson, are the two questions that have again turned up, and have been the two great questions that have been under the management of this Government. How have they treated them? Prince Gortchakoff, thinking he saw an opportunity, announced his determination to break from the Treaty of Paris, and terminate all the conditions hostile to Russia which had been the result of the Crimean War. What was the first movement on the part of our Government is at present a mystery. This we know, that they selected the most rising diplomatist of the day and sent him to Prince Bismarck with a declaration that the policy of Russia, if persisted in, was war with England. Now, gentlemen, there was not the slightest chance of Russia going to war with England, and no necessity, as I shall always maintain, of England going to war with Russia. I believe I am not wrong in stating that the Russian Government were prepared to withdraw from the position they had rashly taken; but suddenly her Majesty's Government, to use a technical phrase, threw over their Plenipotentiary, and, instead of threatening war if the Treaty of Paris were violated, they agreed to arrangements by which the violation of that Treaty should be sanctioned by England, and, in the form of a Congress, they shewed themselves guaranteeing their own humiliation. That Mr. Odo Russell made no mistake is quite obvious, because he has since been selected to be her Majesty's Ambassador at the most important Court of Europe. Gentlemen, what will be the consequence of this extraordinary weakness on the part of the British Government it is difficult to foresee. Already we hear that Sebastopol is to be re-fortified, nor can any man doubt that the entire command of the Black Sea will soon be in the possession of Russia. The time may not be distant when we may hear of the Russian power in the Persian Gulf, and what effect that may have upon the dominions of England and upon those possessions on the productions of which you every year more and more depend, are questions upon which it will be well for you on proper occasions to meditate. I come now to that question which most deeply interests you at this moment, and that is our relations with the United States. I approved the Government referring this question to arbitration. It was only following the policy of Lord Stanley. My noble friend disapproved the negotiations being carried on at Washington. I confess that I would willingly have persuaded myself that that was not a mistake, but reflection has convinced me that my noble

friend was right. I remembered the successful negotiation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty by Sir Henry Bulwer. I flattered myself that treaties at Washington might be successfully negotiated ; but I agree with my noble friend that his general view was far more sound than my own. But no one when that Commission was sent forth for a moment could anticipate the course of their conduct under the strict injunctions of the Government. We believed that that Commission was sent to ascertain what points should be submitted to arbitration, to be decided by the principles of the law of nations. We had not the slightest idea that that Commission was sent with power and instructions to alter the law of nations itself. When that result was announced we expressed our entire disapprobation ; and yet, trusting to the representations of the Government that matters were concluded satisfactorily, we had to decide whether it was wise, if the great result was obtained, to wrangle upon points, however important, such as those to which I have referred. Gentlemen, it appears that, though all parts of England were ready to make those sacrifices, the two negotiating States—the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the United States—placed a different interpretation upon the Treaty when the time had arrived to put its provisions into practice. Gentlemen, in my mind, and in the opinion of my noble friend near me, there was but one course to take under the circumstances, painful as it might be ; and that was at once to appeal to the good feeling and good sense of the United States, and, stating the difficulty, to invite confidential conference whether it might not be removed. But Her Majesty's Government took a different course. On the 15th of December Her Majesty's Government were aware of a contrary interpretation being placed on the Treaty of Washington by the American Government. The Prime Minister received a copy of their Counter Case, and he confessed he had never read it. He had a considerable number of copies sent to him to distribute among his colleagues, and you remember, probably, the remarkable statement in which he informed the House he had distributed those copies to everybody except those for whom they were intended. Time went on, and the adverse interpretation of the American Government oozed out, and was noticed by the press. Public alarm and public indignation were excited ; and it was only seven weeks after, on the very eve of the meeting of Parliament—some 24 hours before the meeting of Parliament—that Her Majesty's Government felt they were absolutely obliged to make a "friendly communication" to the United States that they had arrived at an interpretation of the Treaty the reverse of that of the American Government. What was the position of the American Government? Seven weeks had passed without their having received the slightest intimation from Her Majesty's Ministers. They had circulated their Case throughout the world. They had translated it into

every European language. It had been sent to every Court and Cabinet, to every Sovereign and every Minister. It was impossible for the American Government to recede from their position, even if they had believed it to be an erroneous one. And then, to aggravate the difficulty, the Prime Minister goes down to Parliament, declares that there is only one interpretation to be placed on the Treaty, and defies and attacks everybody who believes it susceptible of another. Was there ever such a combination of negligence and blundering? And now, gentlemen, what is about to happen? All we know is that Her Majesty's Ministers are doing everything in their power to evade the cognizance and criticism of Parliament. They have received an answer to their "friendly communication;" of which, I believe, it has been ascertained that the American Government adhere to their interpretation; and yet they prolong the controversy. What is about to occur it is unnecessary for one to predict; but if it be this—if, after a fruitless ratiocination worthy of a schoolman, we ultimately agree so far to the interpretation of the American Government as to submit the whole case to arbitration, with feeble reservation of a protest if it be decided against us, I venture to say that we shall be entering on a course not more distinguished by its feebleness than by its impending peril. There is before us every prospect of the same incompetence that distinguished our negotiations respecting the independence of the Black Sea; and I fear that there is every chance that that incompetence will be sealed by our ultimately acknowledging these indirect claims of the United States, which, both as regards principle and practical results, are fraught with the utmost danger to this country. Gentlemen, don't suppose, because I counsel firmness and decision at the right moment, that I am of that school of statesmen who are favourable to turbulent and aggressive diplomacy. I have resisted it during a great part of my life. I am not unaware that the relations of England to Europe have undergone a vast change during the century that has just elapsed. The relations of England to Europe are not the same as they were in the days of Lord Chatham or Frederick the Great. The Queen of England has become the Sovereign of the most powerful of Oriental States. On the other side of the globe there are now establishments belonging to her, teeming with wealth and population, which will, in due time, exercise their influence over the distribution of power. The old establishments of this country, now the United States of America, throw their lengthening shades over the Atlantic, and mix with European waters. These are vast and novel elements in the distribution of power. I acknowledge that the policy of England with respect to Europe should be a policy of reserve, but a proud reserve; and, in answer to those statesmen—those mistaken statesmen who have intimated the decay of the power of England and the decline of its resources, I express here my confident conviction that there never was a moment in our history

when the power of England was so great and her resources so vast and inexhaustible. And yet, gentlemen, it is not merely our fleets and armies, our powerful artillery, our accumulated capital, and our unlimited credit on which I so much depend, as upon that unbroken spirit of her people, which I believe was never prouder of the Imperial country to which they belong. Gentlemen, it is to that spirit that I above all things trust. I look upon the people of Lancashire as fair representatives of the people of England. I think the manner in which they have invited me here, locally a stranger, to receive the expression of their cordial sympathy, and only because they recognise some effort on my part to maintain the greatness of their country, is evidence of the spirit of the land. I must express to you again my deep sense of the generous manner in which you have welcomed me, and in which you have permitted me to express to you my views upon public affairs. Proud of your confidence and encouraged by your sympathy, I now deliver to you, as my last words, the cause of the Tory Party, of the English Constitution, and of the British Empire.

