

giving concentrated energy to the will of the Sovereign in Austin's sense, acted as a drag on its movements in every direction. At last the evil corrected itself. As royalty sank into deeper and deeper contempt, Liberal opinion organised itself spontaneously under leaders drawn from the Tory ranks, and took in hand, to begin with, the destruction of the least defensible abuses. But even the mighty genius and dauntless will of Canning proved unequal to the task of safely steering a rotten bark down a torrent beset with such rocks and shoals. A few weeks after a Bill for relaxing the restrictions on the importation of foreign corn had been wrecked in the Lords, through the blundering of his own supporters, the great statesman perished by disease, as he might have perished by the headsman's stroke under a Tudor king. His Coalition Cabinet struggled on for five months, with the pitiful Goderich as its nominal head. Under it the guns went off of themselves at Navarino, putting an end at once to the tyranny of the Turks in Greece and to the tyranny of the Holy Alliance in Europe. Then came the still feebler Ministry of Wellington and Peel. Called to office as defenders of Church privileges, they signally betrayed their trust.

Up till then dissenters from the Established Church had been formally excluded from holding political offices in England, besides being subjected to sundry other disabilities by what were known as the Test and Corporation Acts. All who wished to evade the law could do so with impunity by receiving the Sacrament according to the Anglican ritual; and Protestant Nonconformists habitually had recourse to this subterfuge. But the obligation was

felt as a stigma ; and the value of its repeal in 1828 on the motion of a young Whig, the celebrated Lord John Russell, with the consent of the Ministry, is evinced by Lord Eldon's passionate protest against such a dereliction of duty on the part of the Administration, the Lords, and the Bishops.

Next year Wellington and Peel not only conceded Catholic Emancipation, but themselves introduced and passed it as a Government measure. In the circumstances no other course was open to them ; nevertheless, they and their party remained profoundly discredited by the surrender. What had so long been refused to reason was now avowedly granted to the threat of rebellion—an indication of the method on which future reformers might most safely rely for the satisfaction of their demands. Moreover, a most unfavourable contrast suggested itself between the political morality of the Whigs, who had submitted to so many years' exclusion from office rather than sacrifice their principles, and the political morality of the Tories, who sacrificed *their* principles to prolong their twenty years' tenure of office by some uncertain and inglorious months. Most degraded of all was the attitude of the faithless old voluptuary on the throne, who, false to his duty as a son and false to his pledges as a lover, now maundered feebly about the example of his revered father and the obligations of his Coronation oath.

If George IV. made the monarchy contemptible, his brother and successor made it ridiculous. William IV., a sailor prince, had the traditional manners of a boatswain on shore, still more accentuated by what seemed a touch of hereditary

insanity. A lover of popularity rather than of power, he had just character enough to bring a reforming Ministry into office, and not enough to defeat, although he disliked, the measure by which they revolutionised the Constitution and reduced the power of the Crown to a cipher.

With the new reign came a General Election. It was held under the shadow of that Revolution which overthrew the restored Bourbon monarchy and made the French once more a free people. Even with the very limited share of power given to the popular element by the Charter of 1814, Charles X.'s Ministers were defeated in the Chamber of Deputies by a majority of forty; and, on an appeal to the country, the victory of the Opposition received a decisive confirmation. The King replied by three Decrees, dissolving the new Chamber, altering the Constitution, and destroying the liberty of the Press. Then the people of Paris rose in arms, defeated the half-hearted troops sent to put them down, and in three days overthrew the government of priests and nobles imposed on them by the Allies in 1814. The Monarchy was provisionally maintained; but Charles X.'s place was taken by an ostentatiously *bourgeois* King, who, like William IV., walked about the streets alone with an umbrella under his arm, responding affably to the salutations of the passers-by.

The news of the glorious days of July excited the wildest enthusiasm in England and gave a decisive impulse to the cause of Parliamentary Reform at the elections then in progress.¹ It is worthy of remark

¹ Harriet Martineau, *Thirty Years' Peace*, vol. ii., p. 383.

that, although Canning hated reform, the forces he had set in motion were entirely favourable to its advance. His pro-nationalist policy broke up the Tory party and created a group of statesmen who were prepared to carry that coalition with the Whigs which he had begun to the length of absolute coalescence. By winning over France to the Greek cause he had separated her government from the German despotisms, and so left it a helpless prey to the Revolution. Even his South American policy, apart from the countenance it gave to republicanism, told accidentally in the same direction. For the new openings it afforded to our trade, by stimulating the wildest speculation, caused a vast loss of capital and brought about that terrible commercial crisis in which, among other catastrophes, Scott's whole fortune was engulfed. This, again, led to a long-continued period of distress, extended over the whole country, and still further aggravated by the bad harvest of 1829. As usual, the Government was made responsible, the more so as its policy of Free Trade, inherited from Canning, had to bear the blame of the prevalent industrial stagnation. Even Catholic Emancipation told in favour of the Reformers. For the settlement of the question gave them back the alienated affections of the English middle class, whose bigotry made them unwilling to put in power a party pledged to carry that detested measure. As Macaulay observes, with its passage "the solitary link of sympathy which attached the people to the Tories was broken; the cry of 'No Popery' could no longer be opposed to the cry of 'Reform.'"¹

¹ *Miscellaneous Writings, Speeches, and Poems*, vol. ii., p. 430.

Liberalism had not a majority in the new Parliament, but the Ministerialists lost so many seats, and so many of the Tories returned were bitterly hostile to Wellington and Peel as apostates from Protestantism, that their position proved untenable, especially after the Duke had alienated the most moderate Reformers by a declaration of his belief in the unsurpassable perfection of the English Constitution, made without consulting his colleagues, of whom some would have gladly coalesced with the Canningites on the basis of a compromise with the popular demands. Thus disunited and unsupported, his Ministry fell before an adverse vote within a fortnight after Parliament met.

These details are important because they show that the constitution Wellington pronounced ideally perfect had ended by simply making it impossible for the King's Government to be carried on. Not merely a certain number of boroughs, but the whole system was rotten. A really strong aristocratic system might have resisted popular clamour with success; but such a system was incompatible with the power of the Crown on the one hand, and of the popular element in the House of Commons on the other—forces by which the nobles were permanently split into two factions, appealing to one or other of them for support. The sole remedy was to transfer sovereignty from this shifting chaos to some one part of the community sufficiently powerful and homogeneous to outweigh all the other parts put together, or at least any combination of parts ever likely to be formed in opposition to its will.

Such a body lay ready to hand in the middle classes of England, understanding by that name the whole mass of citizens who were neither obliged to maintain themselves by manual labour nor enabled to live in idleness on inherited property. In numbers a small minority of the whole people, they possessed by far the largest share of its accumulated wealth and educated intelligence, with probably on an average more than their proportionate share of its morality—advantages still further enhanced by the continual accession to their ranks of the best and ablest men from the working classes, and of those who were compelled by narrow means to descend from the aristocracy and to seek for a living in the professions. With very few exceptions, all that makes England great owed its origin to members of this class; and she would have been far richer in the elements of national well-being had not its development been repressed by the superincumbent weight of a territorial oligarchy whose acres were broader than their minds.

The leading Reformers agreed in thinking that the object of a great readjustment of the representation should be to place supreme power in the hands of the middle class. In advocating a wide popular suffrage with or without a small property qualification, James Mill, an advanced Radical, argued that the working-men electors would be guided by "the intelligence of that virtuous rank who come the most immediately in contact with them.....to whom they fly for advice and assistance in all their numerous difficulties.....to whom their children look up as models for imitation, whose

opinions they hear daily repeated and account it their honour to adopt."¹ And he had no doubt that the middle class was "that portion of the community of which, if the basis of Representation were ever so far extended, the opinion would ultimately decide." Brougham also—no Radical, but a conservative Whig—identifies the people of England with the middle classes, "the genuine depositaries of sober, rational, intelligent, and honest English feeling, looked up to by the populace as their kind and natural protectors."²

Now it was just because the middle classes were so representative of the people, so wealthy and so intelligent, that some thoughtful and far-sighted English statesmen dreaded their advent to power. They saw that the House of Commons had become, in Canning's words, "the preponderant element of the Constitution." But "if it were to add to its real active governing influence such an exclusively popular character.....as would arise from the consciousness that it was the immediately deputed agent for the whole people and the exclusive organ of their will, the House of Commons, instead of enjoying one-third part of the power of the State, would in a little while absorb the whole." Neither the House of Lords nor the Crown could "presume to counteract the supreme authority of the nation assembled" in Parliament, with the result that we should risk losing "that equality and co-ordination of powers among the three branches of our present Constitution in which its beauty, its strength, its

¹ *Essay on Government*, p. 32.

² *Speeches*, vol. ii., pp. 606-11.

stability, and the happiness of those who live under it consist."¹

So, with the prescience of genius, spoke Canning in 1822; and such doubtless was the view taken by many brought up, like young Gladstone, "under the shadow of his great name."

There was this much truth in the argument for the supreme excellence of our balanced Constitution, that a weak and even rotten Government had favoured the growth of individual enterprise and genius in England for the last two generations. But then that very development had itself created a demand for reforms which only a strong Government could carry through. The most brilliant of the newly-elected Whig members, a thoroughly middle-class man, who had won his seat—a pocket borough of Lord Lansdowne's—by attacking Bentham while himself a Benthamite as regards legal reform, the Edinburgh reviewer Macaulay, argued very truly that the value of a Legislature ought not to be estimated by the general prosperity of the country, but by the way in which its own proper work of legislation was done; and that, judged by that standard, the unreformed Parliament deserved the severest condemnation, the civil and criminal laws of England being as much a disgrace to her rulers as her material prosperity was a glory to the people.² And Brougham, also in law a pupil of Bentham, speaking for the Whig Ministry, declares that they "seek the support" of the middle classes, "by salutary reforms not merely in the representation, but in all the branches of our

¹ Canning, *Speeches*, vol. iv., pp. 354-56.

² *Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches*, ii., 408.

financial, our commercial, and our legal polity."¹

The real chief of the fallen Ministry, now Sir Robert Peel, had indeed signalised his tenure of office by some modification of the sanguinary penal statutes denounced by Macaulay, and had greatly added to public security by the creation of an efficient police. But a truly representative Parliament would have dealt with the penal laws much sooner and much more thoroughly; and the new constabulary would have been more popular had they not been identified with the machinery of aristocratic oppression. There are not many sadder things in English history than that Peel, himself sprung from the middle class, and, like Pitt and Canning, born to guide it on the path of progress, should have been separated by fate from his natural supporters, and made illustrious by deserting the positions he had been retained to defend.

The place left vacant by the collapse of Wellington's forlorn Administration was filled, in fact if not in name, by a Coalition Cabinet, a combination of Whigs and Canningites under the lead of Fox's most dignified follower, Earl Grey. Although chosen to carry out the will of the middle class, it was exceptionally aristocratic in constitution. Its only middle-class member, and also by far the ablest, Brougham, sat in the House of Lords as Chancellor. The majority of his colleagues were hereditary peers, and the Ministers who sat in the Commons were mostly lords or the sons of lords.

¹ *Speeches*, ii. 601.

Their views on Reform differed widely, but the most aristocratic were not the least advanced. The scheme ultimately agreed on was a compromise based on the principle of making the smallest change in existing institutions consistent with the nearly complete admission of the middle class to political power. For innovating purposes a more sweeping measure might have proved less effectual. It seems unlikely that Household Suffrage, vote by ballot, shorter Parliaments, or even a closer adjustment of representation to population, would have made the transfer of sovereignty more absolute ; a considerable enfranchisement of working men might even have weakened the people by dividing them against themselves and limiting their choice to candidates rich enough to contest very large constituencies. Lord Grey assured the King that his Bill was really aristocratic ; and it was so in the sense of leaving the highest class a practical monopoly of administrative power ; but in all probability any manipulation of the electorate would have had the same effect. What it did do was to institute popular sovereignty (in Austin's sense), and to destroy the power of the Crown ; but the Prime Minister, as a theoretical Republican, would view this revolution without alarm.

The first Reform Bill passed the second reading by a majority of only one, and was wrecked by an amendment in Committee. An immediate dissolution gave the country, imperfectly represented as it was, the opportunity for an unequivocal expression of its opinion. Of eighty-two English county members seventy-six were returned pledged to support the Bill, as were also all the representatives

of the cities and the great towns. In the new House the second reading of the second Reform Bill passed by a majority of 136. The Lords threw it out by a majority composed of Bishops and of peers created since the French Revolution. Riots occurred in various parts of the country, and there was some talk of refusing to pay taxes. Wellington and Peel had yielded Catholic Emancipation to avoid civil war in Ireland; yet they countenanced a policy of resistance to the will of the people in England at the risk of the same calamity, and with the certainty of ultimate failure. When the Bill passed the Commons a second time—on this occasion by a majority of two to one—Peel still advised the Lords to throw it out, his avowed object being to discourage future attempts in the same direction, by making the innovator's task as difficult and repulsive as possible.¹ This time, however, they agreed to the second reading, but soon afterwards passed a wrecking amendment in Committee. On the King's refusal to overcome their resistance by a sweeping creation of peers, the Whig Ministers resigned, and Wellington accepted office on the understanding that he was to introduce a new measure of Reform on rather more moderate lines; but Peel, whose co-operation he invited, would not be a party to any such disreputable scheme for saving the dignity of the King and the Upper House. The two chiefs had different and conflicting standards of honour. The Duke, after declaring against any sort of constitutional change as bad in itself, was ready to pocket

¹ Parker, *Sir Robert Peel*, vol. ii., p. 201.

his principles for the convenience of his royal master; Sir Robert, as a party leader, objected to making himself and his followers responsible for a disturbance in existing arrangements which they had publicly denounced as inexpedient and unjust.

The advanced Liberal leaders were confident that, if it came to a trial of strength, the people would win, as they had won in Paris and Brussels. But they dreaded the consequences of victory. It would mean the establishment of pure democracy, for which, in their opinion, the country was not ripe. At this juncture Francis Place, a Radical tailor of high organising ability, and, for practical purposes, the wire-puller of the Benthamite party, hit on an effective scheme for baffling the Court intrigues by which William IV., under the influence, as was believed, of his German consort, had been won away from the popular cause. On Sunday, May 13th, 1832, he placarded the walls of London with bills containing merely the words: "To stop the Duke, go for gold." The result was a run on the Bank which lasted a week. But long before the week was over the placards had done their work; for on Tuesday the King had sent for Earl Grey, and on Friday permission had been obtained to create as many peers as were necessary to pass the Bill. The threat sufficed to bring the Lords to their senses, and on June 4th the third reading was carried by 106 to 22.¹

In one important respect the measure that became law differed from the original plan. The county

¹ Graham Wallas, *Life of Francis Place*, pp. 305-10.

franchise, which in the first Bill had been restricted to forty-shilling freeholders, was extended, against the will of the Government, to copyholders, leaseholders, and tenants-at-will paying £50 a year. This change introduced a class of voters very much under the influence of the landowners; and, as the number of county members was simultaneously increased from 94 to 159, the landed interest obtained a great accession of strength, just at a time when the total abolition of the Corn Laws had become a leading item in the Radical programme.

Events soon showed that the Reform Bill had done precisely what was expected from it by friends and foes alike. A legislative machine had been created capable of carrying the will of the middle classes into effect. Twenty years of Parliamentary agitation had been needed to destroy such an indefensible iniquity as the slave trade. In the very first session of the Reformed Parliament West Indian slavery, a less unquestionable evil, was abolished without resistance. The work of law reform was greatly accelerated. Those sanguinary penal statutes mentioned by Macaulay as an accompaniment of the rotten-borough system were rapidly repealed; and "since 1838 no person has been hanged in England for any offence other than murder."¹ After clearing off all the arrears of Chancery business in his first year of office, Brougham proceeded to the work of reforming the civil law on Benthamite principles. He created the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; he

¹ Walpole, *History of England*, vol. iv., p. 405.

created the Central Criminal Court; he took the first step towards the creation of County Courts; by abolishing fines and recoveries he greatly simplified conveyances; his Bankruptcy Bill became the germ of future legislation on the subject. Codification, on which Bentham and Austin laid so much stress, has unfortunately not yet been applied to English law.

India, as a despotically governed dependency, presented a freer field than England for the introduction of modern ideas. One of the demands of the new democracy had been that the trade monopoly of the East India Company should be put an end to. The privilege was taken from them in framing the new Charter of 1833. That instrument completed what the philosophic statesmen of the eighteenth century had begun—the transformation of the Company into a delegated agency for advancing the greatest happiness of the greatest number in a region where the co-efficient of possible felicity rose to hundreds of millions. The era of beneficent activity had, indeed, already begun. In 1827 Canning sent out as Governor-General of Bengal Lord William Bentinck, the son of a great Whig noble, and himself half a Radical. This illustrious humanitarian abolished flogging in the native Indian army, and put down Suttee, or the religious custom of burning widows alive, with as little scruple as he put down Thuggee, or the religious custom of strangling people in general. What was more, he instituted the system of admitting educated Hindoos to posts in the judicature—a most important step, not only as opening to them an honourable career, but also as making a

provision for public order without a ruinous addition to the financial burdens of India. During Wellington's Ministry it was more than once proposed to recall the reforming Governor, but Earl Grey's advent to power finally secured his position. Two years afterwards the Act that converted the Company into a purely political body made him the first Governor-General of all India; and for several months before resigning he enjoyed the assistance of an enthusiastic admirer in the person of Macaulay, who, after eloquently defending the new system of government as Secretary of the Board of Control, had been sent out to India as a member of the Supreme Council.

Macaulay himself thoroughly reformed the higher Hindoo education by substituting the study of English for the study of Oriental literature; and he gave India a Penal Code constructed on Benthamite principles, which a high authority, Fitzjames Stephen, prefers to the codes of France and Germany, and even regards as his most lasting monument. It did not, however, come into force until some years after the Mutiny—that is to say, after the clumsy system of a dual government had been abolished.

In order that utilitarian principles might be applied to the benefit of India, it was necessary that European methods of order and progress should be put into action through the whole peninsula, with no more regard for Asiatic prejudices than prudent policy required. A different rule was required for the good government of Colonies peopled by settlers of English or European race.

Experience has shown that these had better be left to manage their own affairs, without interference from the mother country, though not without such a measure of protection as their exposed position may necessitate, and such a community of citizenship as interest and affection may demand. A crisis in Canada, brought on by a long and complicated series of events not necessary to relate here, gave the English reformers an opportunity to declare that our relations with the Colonies should henceforth be conducted on rational principles. In Upper Canada a struggle between a jobbing oligarchy and the bulk of the Colonists, in Lower Canada a struggle between the old French and the new English settlers—aggravated, both of them, by the mismanagement of the Home Government—had led to insurrection and civil war. At length, in 1838, Lord Durham was sent out to compose the strife. He was Earl Grey's son-in-law, and the most advanced member of the Reform Cabinet. Many looked on him as the future leader of the progressive party in England. But his hasty and imperious temper made him an unsafe friend and a safe mark for foes. As Canadian Governor-General his policy was so fiercely assailed and so feebly supported at home that in a few months Durham felt compelled to resign. But the work for which he went out was already in principle accomplished. The celebrated Report issued under his name, which has guided the policy of all his successors, owes its origin to Benthamite inspiration. "I," says John Stuart Mill, the intellectual head of the school, "had been the prompter of his prompters. Lord Durham's report, written by Charles Buller,

partly under the inspiration of Wakefield, began a new era ; its recommendations, extending to complete internal self-government, were in full operation in Canada within two or three years, and have since extended to nearly all the other Colonies of European race which have any claim to the character of important communities. And I may say that, in upholding the reputation of Lord Durham at the most important moment, I contributed materially to this result."¹

It is to be noticed that the personality of William IV. placed a serious obstacle in the way of Canadian reconstitution, and that the acceptance of Durham's report was probably not unconnected with the advent to the throne of his successor, a young Queen whose indifference to politics facilitated the assumption of undivided sovereignty by middle-class opinion.

Thus, alike at the centre and at the extremities of the Empire, the tendency of the English Revolution was to substitute order for chaos, progress for corruption, and, to some extent, government by consent for government by constraint. Less brilliant and impressive than the changes so far passed in review, but perhaps even more intimately related to the future reorganisation of social life, was the municipal reform effected in 1835. Till then the borough corporations had been squalid little close oligarchies, worked in the interest of their patrons, Whig or Tory, and rewarded by the conversion of the public property under their control

¹ Mill, *Autobiography*, pp. 216-17.

into sources of private emolument. A Bill, transferring the management of the boroughs from these privileged individuals to the bulk of the ratepayers, was denounced by the extreme Conservatives as an invasion of the rights of property—the favourite metaphysical figment on that side, as the rights of man had been on the opposite side forty years before, and with less reason at the bottom of it. But Peel, who was assuming more and more the part of a middle-class leader, supported the Bill in the Commons; and, when the Lords returned it amended out of recognition, he stood by the Government in restoring the original outlines of their scheme.

So far we have been concerned almost solely with the reorganisation of government. We have now to consider how the new powers thus acquired were used for the common good.

First in importance comes the new Poor Law of 1834. It has been related in a former chapter how, under Pitt's rule, an unlimited extension was given to outdoor relief, and how this measure had contributed, with other causes, to stimulate the economical speculations of Malthus. His ideas were accepted by the Benthamites, whose opposition to indiscriminate alms-giving placed them on this point in sharp antagonism to the more impulsive Radicalism represented by Cobbett, as well as to those Tories who, partly from genuine philanthropy, partly from dislike of the manufacturers, wished to protect labour against the tyranny of capital. On the other hand, they had the full support of the leading Whigs, among whom, indeed, Malthus

himself may be reckoned. But the facts of the case spoke louder than any political partisan. A Commission, appointed to investigate the working of the Poor Law in 1832, reported in 1834. It showed—to borrow Brougham's energetic language—that those laws “had succeeded in wholly disconnecting the ideas of labour and its reward in the minds of the people; they had encouraged the idle and the profligate, at the expense of the honest and industrious; they had destroyed the independence of the peasant, and given him the degradation of a beggar”—with the assurance, which a beggar had not, of receiving alms whenever he chose to demand them.¹

In one place a young man, the type of many more, was found saying: “I do not want work; I would rather have my 3s. 6d. from the parish without working than toil to get 10s. or 12s. a week.” And, as the orator added, such young men in all probability supplemented the parish allowance with the profits of crime. Nor was the demoralisation limited “to inland places and to lazy rustics.” The Kentish sailors, once renowned for their adventurousness and daring, would no longer put out to sea in winter, provided as they then were by the parish with 12s. a week.² The evil tended to perpetuate and aggravate itself by the contagion of example and by stimulating the growth of population. For every additional child the parish gave an additional allowance of 2s. a week; and as illegitimate children came in for the same privilege, a direct premium was put on

¹ Brougham, *Speeches*, vol. iii., pp. 488-89.

² Brougham, *op. cit.*, p. 495.

unchastity, the mother of a large family of bastards being eagerly sought after in marriage. Thus the burden increased more rapidly than the backs on which it was borne. The weight of pauper expenditure, in proportion to the population, at the two periods, was as seven in 1831 to four in 1801.¹

To complete the stringent logic of the verification given to economic principle by this vast economic experiment, a negative instance was forthcoming. Over the whole of Scotland, where a different system of administering relief prevailed, no such evils existed; and in some favoured English districts, where a more rational administration had been adopted, industry flourished, and the poor-rate came down, first to one-half, and afterwards to one-third.²

A system securing a pension to every man at any age on demand might have been expected to raise the rate of wages by making the labourer independent of his employer. It had the contrary effect. As doles in aid of wages were allowed, the labourers accepted less than the cost of living would otherwise have compelled them to demand, with the result of shifting the burden of their maintenance on the ratepayers who did not profit by their work.

An end was put to these ruinous abuses by the Poor Law of 1834. It provided that henceforth outdoor relief should only be given to the sick and aged. Able-bodied paupers were only supported at the public expense in buildings where they were

¹ Porter, *Progress of the Nation*, vol. i., p. 84.

² Brougham, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

set to do unpleasant work on food sufficient to support life, but studiously kept under the mark of what a labourer in receipt of moderate wages could command. Existence in these workhouses was not agreeable, nor was it intended to be so; but their popular nickname of New Bastilles (pronounced Bastyles) was singularly ill-chosen. The old Bastille was a place where persons of the higher classes were detained, against their will, in idleness and relative luxury during the King's pleasure, with permission for married couples to live together; whereas nobody need enter a workhouse or remain there for any time against his will; and one of the rules most objected to was that a strict separation of the sexes prevented the breeding of hereditary paupers.

Another merit of the new law was that it created an administrative machinery, placing the raising and distribution of parish relief under the control of Boards elected by the ratepayers, supervised themselves by a central office in London.

The new Poor Law was angrily denounced by Cobbett, and by John Walter, a moderate Liberal, in the *Times*; but it passed both Houses by large majorities, Wellington, who loved superlatives, declaring it to be "the best Bill ever devised." Its real author was one of the Commissioners, Edwin Chadwick, an intimate friend and disciple of Bentham. Chadwick also took a leading though unseen part in another work of constructive legislation, the whole credit of which has fallen to others. This was the Factory Act of 1833.

It has been shown in a former chapter how the

old English Constitution, with its fortuitous system of checks and balances, by preventing the formation of a strong government, left powerful individuals and interests free to exercise grinding oppression on the most helpless members of the community, and how the most pitiful and unpitied among these unfortunates were the little children worked to death by factory labour. The reforming movement, genuine though feeble, of the early nineteenth century did something to ameliorate their lot. A pestilence caused by the insanitary condition of the Manchester factories, where child-apprentices were employed, led to an Act reducing their hours of work to twelve a day (1802). As an unintended result the atrocious apprenticeship system was discontinued, but only to be succeeded by the direct purchase of children from their own parents for the same exhausting toil. The Act of 1802 did not apply to this new category of infant slaves, who were treated almost as brutally as their orphan predecessors.¹ Sir Robert Peel, the great statesman's father, introduced another Bill in 1816, limiting all child-labour in factories to ten hours a day, and in this form it passed the Commons; but the Lords raised the time to twelve hours, and restricted the measure to cotton mills. After all, the number of hours and the description of labour mattered little if, as we are told, the law remained a dead letter.

So matters stood until the reforming era of 1830, when a great agitation on the subject of child-labour and overwork in general sprang up, headed by representatives of all parties in the country. It was

¹ H. de B. Gibbins, *Industrial History*, p. 391.

not originally excited by any feeling of jealousy on the side of the landed interest against the manufacturers. On the contrary, the first public protest was raised in the manufacturing districts themselves. It came from the pen of Richard Oastler, who, though steward of a landed estate, had lived for many years in the heart of the factory districts, and was supplied with his facts by J. Wood, a Bradford manufacturer. Michael Sadler, an eloquent advocate of the poor, was induced by his representations to bring the subject before Parliament. Sadler was in the linen trade, and, like Oastler, a high Tory; but the first Bill for putting an end to child-labour and restricting the labour of boys and girls under eighteen to ten hours a day, was introduced by Hobhouse, a Radical, and Lord Morpeth, a Ministerial Whig. Neither is it true that political economists, as such, were opposed to legislative interference with the employment of children in factories. Malthus refers to it with approval,² and it subsequently received the support of McCulloch.

Sadler had no seat in the reformed Parliament, and the initiative passed from his hands to the abler guidance of Lord Ashley, so famous in the annals of philanthropy under his later title of Lord Shaftesbury. He was inspired by a deep religious feeling of the Evangelical cast, as also were Oastler and Sadler. But among those who deprecated hasty legislation were some whose love of humanity did not yield to theirs. Lord Althorp, the Whig leader of the House of Commons, rightly insisted

² *Essay on Population*, p. 421. Hodder, *Life of Lord Shaftesbury*, vol. i., p. 157.

on a Parliamentary inquiry into the facts of the case, and a Commission was appointed for the purpose. One of the Commissioners was Edwin Chadwick, the Benthamite. He, we are told, "was the chief author of the Report which recommended the appointment of Government inspectors under a central authority, and the limitation of children's work to six hours daily.¹.....Among other proposals in the Report was one that employers should be held responsible for accidents to their work-people—a suggestion that has only been carried into effect by the Employers' Liability Act (1898)." It may be said that this proposal, as being no more than a new provision for the redressal of injuries, still remains within the limits of that individualism with which Benthamism is commonly identified. But no interpretation of individualism will cover Chadwick's recommendation, made before a Committee of the House of Commons in 1837, that the traffic in spirituous liquors should be restricted, and that healthy recreation for the people should be provided.²

Bentham's school was, in truth, pledged to nothing but the reorganisation of individual and social life on a basis of pure reason, with the greatest possible increase of happiness for its end. As the proximate means to that end the identification of private with public interest was prescribed; and again, as a means to that secondary end, the transfer of political power from the aristocracy to

¹ By the Bill actually passed in 1833 children under nine were forbidden to work at all, the labour of children under thirteen was limited to eight hours a day, and the labour of young persons under eighteen to sixty-nine hours a week.

² *Dictionary of National Biography*, Supplement, vol. i., p. 407.

the people. To what extent the compulsion implied in every exercise of power should be carried remained a question not of principle but of detail. A good deal of reforming activity was directed towards the removal of restrictions on the open expression of opinion, on locomotion, on trade, on colonial autonomy, on the independence of foreign nations, on the personal liberty of negroes, or, again, towards the removal of disabilities connected with religious belief; and the association of Liberalism with the systematic struggle for universal emancipation led to its occasional identification, in the minds both of Liberals and Conservatives, with a rooted hostility to all restrictions on liberty as such. The nature-worship of the eighteenth century, continued far into the nineteenth, gave a sort of religious sanction to this feeling. But the Benthamites, at any rate, were inaccessible to such illusions. They no more believed in nature as a lawgiver than they believed in the Pentateuch; and, however much they may have regarded individual interest as a safe guide for the economic man, they held that man, as a lawyer and legislator, was in most instances set against the general interest by exclusive attention to his own advantage, and that this divergence would continue until the two were brought into coincidence by a new system of government and education—a theory borrowed, consciously or not, from the idealistic philosophy of Plato. And even their political economy embodied one very important exception to the general principle of letting things alone. For they fully accepted Malthus's theory of population, according to which the mass

of mankind could only be rescued from abject poverty by habitual disobedience to the most imperious of natural instincts.

The new Poor Law was in the first instance a triumph for the principle of *laissez-faire* by withdrawing the artificial encouragement previously given to the idle and improvident as well as to the multiplication of their numbers. But it also brought up the question whether, besides withdrawing bounties, artificial checks should not be imposed on the growth of population; and still wider issues were opened by the Report of the Commission on factory labour. It was no derogation from the principle of free contract that children should not be sold into slavery and worked to death; but to interfere with the contracts between their parents and the manufacturers involved the assumption of new responsibilities on the part of the State, going far beyond the mere duty of maintaining order.

Nor could the question be long argued on grounds of mere abstract metaphysical right. As a result of child-labour the population of the manufacturing districts was found to be fast degenerating; and this alone seemed to justify restrictive legislation, for any theory that forbids the State to protect the health of its citizens stands self-condemned. But if so, then the insanitary employment of women, the future mothers of the race, likewise called for State intervention, as well as their employment in trades of a demoralising character. And this, again, suggested serious doubts whether they, any more than children, were capable of contracting freely for themselves. Finally, the labour of the various

classes of operatives employed in factories was so interdependent that the hours of one set could not be abridged without bringing the others to a standstill—a circumstance which would suggest the desirability of fixing a shorter legal day for men also, thus entailing a fresh inroad on the theory of *laissez-faire*. In social as well as in physical science the applicability of metaphysical conceptions broke down under the stress of fact.

Not that the rigid economists would allow the existence of any such discrepancy between fact and theory. They claimed that the violated law of *laissez-faire* would soon avenge itself in famine. Shorter hours meant diminished production—that is, a less amount of capital available for the payment of wages. The answer was that the produce of labour would increase with its efficiency, and that this depended on the health and strength of the operatives, which would gain by their working for shorter hours. As for the children, new machines were invented to do the work from which they had been debarred. And, apart from this expedient, recourse was had to the simple device of employing them in successive shifts, so that a child, though not the same child, was always available for the office required.

Edwin Chadwick, the real author of the Factory Commission Report, had no scruples about the State regulation of labour; and his recommendation that the children should be sent to school during the time saved off their work proves that he had none as regards compulsory education either. Compulsory or not, State education signally violates

the principle of *laissez-faire*. It is therefore noteworthy that the first proposal to establish a system of national State education was made in 1837 by Roebuck, at that time a Benthamite, and seconded by Grote, who remained a Benthamite through life. Roebuck advocated a purely secular system of teaching, and wished that the cost should be defrayed out of Church property. Government took the question out of his hands, and provisionally settled it by granting £30,000 in aid of the National Society and the British and Foreign School Society. It will be remembered that these societies grew out of the systems of Bell and Lancaster respectively, one being supported by Church people and the other by Nonconformists. As the amount allotted to each body was proportioned to the local contributions it received from private sources, and as the National Society was much the richer of the two, the Ministerial plan amounted to a fresh endowment of the Church of England at the expense of the people.

Lord Brougham, as a Scotchman, was an enthusiast for education, and had more definite ideas about it than any of his party. He observed that under the voluntary system school attendance in England had more than doubled in fifteen years; and he feared that the State might do more harm than good by taking the movement out of the hands of private enterprise. But he could not conceal from himself the fact that the supply of education given fell far short of the demand, and was even more deficient in quality than in quantity. As a Scotchman, again, he was more open to French influence than his English contemporaries.

Deeply impressed by the success of the Normal schools in France, he proposed that similar institutions for the training of teachers should be established among ourselves. The cost would be trifling and the benefit immense. He also proposed to organise a system for the administration of the funds, whether charitable or public, available for educational purposes, consisting of elected committees all over the country under the direction of a Central Board in London.

When Brougham made these proposals he had ceased to be a member of the Government; but his scheme was adopted by Lord John Russell in 1839, with the omission, however, of the elected committees. Even so, the clergy were infuriated at the prospect of losing their ascendancy, and in the face of their opposition the proposal for a Normal school had to be withdrawn; while the proposal to place all the assisted schools under the inspection of emissaries from a Committee of the Privy Council could only be saved by subjecting them and their reports to the approval of the Bishops.

The failure of the middle-class Parliament and its elected agents to cope adequately with the educational question shows out more conspicuously by contrast with their energy and courage elsewhere. At this very time they were reforming the postal system by introducing a low uniform charge for the delivery of stamped letters all over the kingdom on a uniformly graduated scale of weights, at the same time abolishing the privilege, enjoyed by some among the rich, of sending their letters free. The

difference was that this and the other great reforms effected in previous years, or to be effected not long afterwards, were either accepted without distinction of party or were carried against party opposition by the overwhelming pressure of public opinion which the new representative system brought to bear directly on the rulers of the people, while giving them power to execute its will. Popular education, on the other hand, though usually demanded by democracies, was not pressed on the governing classes with any such unanimity, because it had become so associated with religion as to be fatally hampered by the religious anarchy of England. Nonconformity had contributed to the growth of English individualism, and so far must be credited with its share of whatever benefits we owe to that tendency; but it is also responsible to the same extent for that paralysis of the Government which made it nearly useless as an instrument either of order or of progress. Moreover, by the stimulus of opposition it had made the Church more sectarian; while by breeding religious rivalry it had stimulated those particular religious beliefs which are most unfavourable to the growth of science and reason.

Nonconformity has always found its strongest political basis in the middle class, and therefore its importance was greatly enhanced by the revolution which made that class supreme in the State. Advantage was taken of the change to procure the removal of some grievances under which Dissenters still suffered. They received permission to marry in their own chapels, or without any religious ceremony whatever at the registrar's office. In 1836, against the protests of Oxford and Cambridge, a Royal

Charter incorporated the University of London, enabling it to give degrees without the acceptance of any religious test or the passing of any religious examination. A Bill to abolish religious tests in the two ancient universities had passed the Commons by a large majority two years before, but had been rejected by the Lords.

Another grievance of the Nonconformists, payment of Church rates (that is, being taxed to support places of worship which they did not use, and often did not approve of), was left without a remedy by the reformed Parliament. The Whig Ministers proposed to throw the expense of keeping up Church buildings on Church property, but could not overcome the resistance excited by this most equitable arrangement.

In proportion to their grievances Irish Roman Catholics were much worse treated than English Protestant Dissenters by the English middle-class Sovereign. An alien Church, numbering but a small fraction of the Irish people among its members, was established in their midst, and supported by the labour of a peasantry who for the most part detested it, spent on lands originally devoted to the maintenance of their own clergy. Its revenues were levied under the form of tithes; and payment of them under that form, the most noxious conceivable, was resisted with every circumstance of outrage on the collectors by the aggrieved cultivators of the soil. These poor people were told with stupid pedantry that if tithes were abolished their rent would be raised to an equivalent amount, and that the money would go

into the pockets of Protestant landlords. Nothing could be truer ; but it remained equally true that if this revenue, either under the name of tithes or of rent-charge, were handed back to its original owners, the Catholic parishioners who now had to support them would henceforth be relieved from that heavy expense. If, on the other hand, it were considered inexpedient to re-endow the Roman priesthood, there was the alternative, since adopted, of secularising Church property, and devoting it in other ways to the relief or improvement of the poorer classes. Finally, there was the plan of commuting tithes into a rent-charge to be used for the payment of the clergy of the Established Church.

The last-named course was ultimately adopted by agreement between the two great political parties in 1838. The reason why it was delayed till then is so characteristic of English public opinion at the time that a reference to it will be instructive.

One of the earliest measures proposed by Lord Grey's Ministry in the Reformed Parliament dealt with the temporalities of the Irish Church. It proposed, very reasonably, that two of the four Archbishoprics and ten of the twenty-two Bishoprics then existing should be suppressed ; that the Bishops' lands should be vested in ecclesiastical commissioners, who were expected to make more out of them than their existing holders ; that the stipends assigned to future Bishops should be considerably less than the incomes received by the present Bishops ; and that the surplus revenues, if any, thus obtained should be devoted to secular uses.

This last provision, known as the Appropriation

Clause, encountered such violent opposition, even among the Whigs, that it was provisionally withdrawn, and the Bill passed both Houses without any other material alteration. Next year Lord John Russell revived the Appropriation Clause. Subsequently accepted more than once as part of an Irish Tithes Bill by the Commons, it was rejected on each occasion by the Lords, and finally abandoned by its authors. The leading Whigs were in advance of their age, but their liberality only served to drive some of their ablest men into the Tory ranks, and to prolong Irish discord by postponing the commutation of tithes.

“All the wise men were for Catholic Emancipation,” said Lord Melbourne, “and all the fools against it—and the fools were right.” If the fools were right, it was not for the right reason. What they anticipated did not come to pass. The Roman Catholic members have not used their Parliamentary position as an instrument for the destruction of Protestantism and religious liberty in England. But the wise were mistaken in thinking that Irish discontent would be appeased by a single instalment of justice. While grievances remained agitation was bound to continue, especially as, thanks to the fools, the long delay of emancipation had taught the Irish people and their great leader, O’Connell, how much could be effected by its systematic employment against rulers who yielded to violence what they would not yield to reason. Resistance to the exaction of tithes was met by a Coercion Bill substituting martial law for the ordinary processes of justice in the disturbed districts, and placing the right of meeting every-

where at the mercy of the Lord Lieutenant. It was carried with a facility offering a remarkable contrast to the difficulty of getting any sort of remedial measure through, and to the impossibility of passing the Appropriation Clause. Such proceedings very naturally confirmed O'Connell in his belief that the Irish had better be left to manage their own affairs in their own way ; but his demand for the Repeal of the Union had no immediate effect beyond exciting a bitter feeling of hostility against England among the Catholic Irish, and increasing the discredit of the Whigs, obliged as they were to accept the Parliamentary support of the great orator who habitually referred to them in terms of calculated scorn and hatred.

O'Connell privately complained that the Liberals were infidels, which, according to him, alienated from them the sympathies of the Irish people. This was very ungrateful on his part, for had the Liberals inherited the religious convictions of their political ancestors, the English Puritans, they certainly would not have supported Catholic Emancipation, nor proposed the secularisation of Irish Church property. What delayed Emancipation so long was the religious bigotry of the English middle class ; what enabled the Lords to reject the Appropriation Clause time after time was the knowledge that it excited no enthusiasm among the new electorate. We shall see hereafter that the much more sweeping secularisation carried thirty years later was only made possible by the weakening of religious animosities due to the spread of rationalism in the meanwhile.

A great instrument of enlightened legislation

had been created and used with brilliant success for realising ideas hitherto debated only within the schools of thought. But the men who wielded it could give neither education to England nor peace to Ireland, because they found themselves confronted by a force which served as a rallying-point for all the enemies of progress, and against which Bentham had flung himself three times in vain—the force of organised pietism, seeking to secure the greatest happiness of the greatest number in a world that is not ours.

Up to a comparatively recent period any Government that excited the hostility of the Church of England has been doomed to destruction. Both the Commonwealth and the Stuart monarchy had that misfortune, and both fell almost without a struggle. Even the genius of Marlborough could not uphold his friends when they dared to touch a parson. What overthrew the younger Pitt, and so long debarred the Whigs from power, was really the Church, acting through the stubborn will of George III. and the vacillating will of his successor. Wellington's fall was the Church's revenge for Emancipation; and now the Reform Whigs found themselves unequally matched against the same relentless foe. Russell's revival of the Appropriation Clause drove four of his colleagues into the Conservative ranks, Stanley, afterwards thrice Prime Minister, and Sir James Graham, an administrator of exceptional ability, being among the number. Their loss was soon followed by the retirement of Earl Grey. For want of a better chief, the incompetent Lord Melbourne had to be

put in his place. Nature had meant Melbourne for a scholarly mystic,¹ as she meant Lord Althorp, who led the House of Commons under him, for a grazier. When the death of his father, Earl Spencer, removed Althorp from that uncongenial position, the Ministry fell to pieces. The King, who sided warmly with the Church against Russell, if he did not actually drive them from office, at any rate claimed and received full credit for having done so. On Melbourne's resignation he sent for Peel, who at once dissolved Parliament. The Tories, who had counted no more than 150 in the first reformed House of Commons, won an immense number of seats, and probably would have won a majority had not the people resented the King's interference. A series of defeats in the new House compelled Peel to resign, and William IV. had to undergo the humiliation of recalling Melbourne to office. Parliamentary reform had given a mortal blow to the power of the Crown; but in its last agonies it exercised its old effect of weakening the real Sovereign. As a penalty for accepting its support, Peel, the true middle-class Minister and destined future chief, was condemned to six years more of opposition. The delay would have been shorter had not an untoward combination of circumstances allowed the royal influence to exert itself once more.

In 1837 the young Princess Victoria succeeded to the throne, and her accession was followed, in accordance with a rule since altered, by a dissolution of Parliament. The Whigs were rather

¹ See his character in Bulwer Lytton's *St. Stephen's*.

stronger in the new House than in the old; but the respite did not last long, and, after two years of weak government, Melbourne again resigned. Peel was again sent for, but made it a condition of accepting office that the great Whig ladies of the royal household should be replaced by attendants more in the confidence of his party. The young Queen, whose instincts were autocratic, showed on this occasion the temper of an Elizabeth, and declared that she would not give up her old friends. Parties were so nicely balanced that her will decided the question, and the Whigs came back, but thoroughly discredited, and with a position hardly better than caretakers for Peel and his Conservative followers. Appealing to the country from a vote of no confidence, and taking up at the last moment an insincere cry for cheap bread, they found themselves this time decisively beaten, and were condemned by a majority of ninety-one when the new Parliament met.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHURCHES AND THE WORLD

WHILE the events related in the last chapter were succeeding one another on the surface of history, a reactionary current had set in deeper down whose representatives were hardly more in sympathy with Sir Robert Peel than with his Whig and Radical opponents.

We saw how the Peace of 1814 was followed by a strong religious movement connected with the Methodist and Evangelical revivals of the previous century. So great, indeed, was the fascination exercised even on the intellectual classes that during the next twenty-five years young men of the highest and most varied ability were drawn to the Christian ministry in numbers such as had not been known since the Reformation; while even in the hands of laymen poetry and science received a distinctly religious impress, markedly contrasted with their treatment by the preceding generation. This religion had a strongly pietistic character; that is, it involved a constant reference to what was to come after death as infinitely more important than what was happening now, and a view of our present life as deriving its sole significance from the connection of what happened in it with what was to come after death. Among the more ignorant and excitable religionists, the study of what was supposed to be revealed in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures

stimulated still further their restless curiosity about a future state, and led to fantastic interpretations of ancient prophecies in the light of contemporary politics. Edward Irving, as we saw, owed his popularity to the address with which he put himself forward as the hierophant of such mysteries; and the original object of Keble's *Christian Year* was to appease the prevalent excitement by directing it towards more sober and profitable meditations.

If the millenarian visions of the religious revivalists were rooted in eighteenth-century pietism, they were no less intimately related to the revolutionary aspirations of the age. In the presence of absorbing social interests, the individual soul could no longer remain wrapped up in the contemplation of its own eternal destinies. Hence the prominence given to the social aspect of human immortality as a reign of the saints in the theology of the period. But the millennium itself had to be preceded and brought on by the conversion of the whole earth to true—*i.e.*, Protestant—Christianity, accompanied by the removal of whatever abuses still impeded that glorious consummation. Efforts in this direction demanded concert, union, organisation; and with the need of organisation came the need of a central authority. As the French Revolution had ended in the centralised despotism of Napoleon; as the Benthamite programme of reforms had substituted an undivided middle-class control for an incoherent oligarchy, and was enriching the administration with a number of new directing departments, so in various quarters efforts began to revive the idea of the Church, always an integral

element of Christianity, or rather to make it more of a reality than before.

We are accustomed to associate this idea in a rather exclusive way with the Tractarian Movement at Oxford; but the Oxford experiment was only one of a number, enjoying a unique success because it was worked on the basis of a solid existing institution. Irving founded a Church on the model of what he conceived the Apostolic community of Jerusalem to have been. His friend Coleridge, starting from the opposite pole of speculation, constructed the idea of a Church as a body holding in trust national property to be expended in promoting the interests of progressive civilisation. Such a Church need not be identified with any form of theological teaching; although, in the case of the Anglican establishment, the traditional dogmas, interpreted in the light of his own philosophy, might be allowed to live on as the centre of a vast system of culture. Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, who was in some ways a Coleridgean, meditated comprehensive schemes for uniting Churchmen and Dissenters in the same establishment, and English and Prussian Protestants in the same communion. James Mill, going further than Coleridge, proposed turning the endowed clergy from preachers of divinity into teachers of morality. Maurice, a Unitarian converted to liberal orthodoxy, and the most philosophical of all the young men that the religious movement had swept into Anglican orders, loved to exhibit Christianity on its social side as the Kingdom of Christ. Whately, the great Whig Archbishop of Dublin, strove for years to keep up a joint system of popular education

in Ireland, based on as much Christianity as could be taught in common to Catholic and Protestant children.

Among more conservative clerics the need of a stronger ecclesiastical organisation made itself primarily felt as a reaction against the rising rationalism of the age. What they called German neology—that is, scientific Biblical criticism—had begun to make its way from Hanover to England before communication between King George's insular and continental dominions had been cut by the war, and with the renewal of intercourse after the Peace the current had again set in. Rose, a High Church Cambridge theologian, sounded the alarm in a published course of lectures (1828) enumerating all the points on which German University professors had presumed to shake the faith of their classes in Scriptural infallibility. According to him, this lamentable heterodoxy was due to the abandonment of Episcopacy by German Protestantism. At Oxford, where nothing was then known of modern criticism, the triumph of Liberalism in English politics at first excited most indignation, and Peel lost his seat for the University by conceding the Catholic claims. Academic intolerance found an unexpected mouthpiece in Keble, the poet of the *Christian Year*, who had acquired great authority by his hymnology, by his learning, and by his saintly character. Chosen to preach the Assize Sermon at Oxford on July 14th, 1833, he took the opportunity of making a violent attack on what he called National Apostasy. Without actually naming the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts and Catholic Emancipation,

while admitting even that such measures might be justified on grounds of political expediency, the preacher vehemently protested against the exultation with which such lamentable necessities had been hailed as in themselves a good thing. But there were worse signs of the times than even such deluded self-congratulations. There was a general tendency to look on a difference of religious opinion as of no account in the daily business of life, to repose public confidence in the heretic or infidel, and even to make a friend of him in private as readily as if he were an orthodox believer. There was also a culpable indifference to the authority of the clergy in matters of religion. Yet the Old Testament—which Keble treats throughout as an infallible record and guide—teaches a very different lesson. It tells us that statesmen should humble themselves before the accredited ministers of religion, and bow to their decisions as to the oracles of God.

In the Preface accompanying his published Sermon Keble specifies the Irish Church Bill, suppressing certain Irish sees, as the occasion that more particularly called it forth, denouncing as impious the State's pretension to interfere with the internal economy of ecclesiastical institutions. In view of the possible disestablishment of the Church of England he and his friends fell back on the supernatural character which, according to them, distinguishes it from all other Protestant bodies, if indeed it could properly be called Protestant at all. Their claim rested on Apostolical succession, on the alleged historical fact that the power to teach revealed truth and to absolve from sin descended

by an unbroken chain of ordination from Christ and his Apostles. It was determined to issue a series of Tracts setting forth this claim, and appealing in the first instance to the clergy, whose mystical pretensions, if asserted with sufficient emphasis, would surely enable them to recover their ancient dignity and power.

Such was the origin of the Tractarian Movement. It quickly passed from Keble's guidance into the hands of a far superior leader, John Henry Newman, beyond dispute the greatest pulpit orator of the nineteenth century, and, in the opinion of many, its greatest prose writer also. A singularly magnetic personality enabled his literary gifts to tell for quite as much as they were worth, and secured for him the implicit obedience of other adherents to the Movement whose intellectual powers, as measured by logical ability and justness of thought, were superior to his own.

Newman had begun as an Evangelical; and the religious position he subsequently adopted may be more properly described as an enlargement of Evangelical principles than as a reaction against them. None of his associates was so strongly impressed by the growing rationalism of the age; indeed, his intellectual sympathies with it were so strong as to draw on him a wholly unmerited imputation of secret unbelief. And he considered that neither Evangelicalism nor, indeed, popular Protestantism in any form had a good logical case as against infidel attacks. Heartily accepting the Bible as an infallible authority, he held that it needed the warrant of an infallible Church to be

accepted, and that any argument against the Church applied equally to the Bible.

Pusey, who afterwards gave his name to the Movement, was not drawn into it until some time after the publication of the Tracts had begun. His views had indeed been at first more liberal than Keble's or Newman's. He knew German, had travelled in Germany, and resented Rose's onslaught on the German theologians, some of whom were his friends. A pamphlet of his, written in their defence, seemed even to indicate some serious reservations about the extent to which Biblical infallibility should be accepted as of faith. But the remonstrances of his High Church friends soon put an end to such doubts, and henceforth Pusey gave his unfaltering support to the literal accuracy of every statement in the Old Testament, no less than to the dogma of a never-ending hell, as integral elements of Christianity. As for Keble, he held that most of the men who felt difficulties about Scriptural inspiration were too wicked to be reasoned with.

Among Newman's younger followers the most conspicuous were Hurrell Froude and W. G. Ward. Froude was a Romanticist, who hated the Reformation, and felt more enthusiasm for the mediæval than for the primitive Church. He urged Newman further along the reactionary path, but died before the alternative between insular and Roman Catholicism could be fairly presented to his choice. Ward, before he came under Newman's influence, had been a Broad Churchman of the Arnoldian school. As a keen dialectician, he convinced himself that Arnold's principles logically led to complete unbelief. It was easier to prove that Tractarianism,

when pressed to its legitimate consequences, involved complete submission to Rome ; and Ward lost no opportunity of reasoning the matter out with Newman.

The Reformation had begun as a revolt against priestly authority, and had ended, in Calvinism, with the reduction to a minimum of the sacramental and ritualistic systems by which that authority is chiefly maintained. The Tractarian reassertion of sacerdotalism naturally led to a reversal of the process, to a resumption of the practices and beliefs which Protestant England had condemned as unscriptural and superstitious. Such a proceeding was not indefensible. It so happened that the formularies of the Anglican Church had been carefully constructed so as to conciliate that considerable body of Catholics, amounting probably to a majority of the whole population, who had separated from the See of Rome solely because on no other terms could the national independence of England be preserved. Nor was this all. In clearing away alleged mediæval corruptions the English Church Reformers had not trusted to their unaided private judgment. They had appealed to primitive doctrine and practice as evinced by the Fathers and the first great Councils. Their interpretation was not infallible ; it was open to correction or completion from the researches of later scholars. By a skilful use of such methods Newman concluded that an Anglican clergyman might, consistently with his ordination vows, hold something very like the whole cycle of Roman doctrine as formulated before the Council of Trent. His contention provoked a general outcry, which

brought the Tracts to an end ; and the charge of dishonesty was freely flung at him and his party. It came with an ill grace from Low Churchmen who on some points were departing not less widely from the plain sense of the formularies in the direction of Calvinism than their opponents were departing from it in the direction of Rome.

After long hesitation, Newman and Ward extricated themselves from this disagreeable position by submitting to the Church which the patristic researches of the one and the peremptory dialectic of the other had convinced them was the sole refuge from that utter unbelief to which unaided human reason is condemned.

So ended the Tractarian Movement. Oxford resumed her interrupted studies, and the current of free criticism so dreaded by Newman returned in greater force than ever. The Tracts had failed to effect the original purpose of their chief author ; they had not persuaded the English clergy as a body to claim a position of commanding authority on disputed questions of belief ; nor in a Church constituted like theirs was the claim possible, for no such authority can exist without a supreme head to issue and enforce its decrees. Besides, the Bishops showed no inclination to assume new responsibilities, nor would the majority of the clergy have accepted their guidance had it been offered. Many individual curates were not slow to plume themselves on their restored dignity as successors of the Apostles, though in their hearts they felt much prouder of being classed as English gentlemen ; and celibacy was the very last feature of Romanism they were disposed to imitate. Such

as they were, this disorganised band of Puseyites, as they now began to be called, after their sole remaining Oxford leader, found themselves far outnumbered by the Evangelicals, to whom Apostolical succession was at best but an antiquarian curiosity, while the doctrines and practices associated with it by the new High Churchmen were objects of fanatical hatred and terror. Intellectually, after Newman's secession, the lights of the party could not compare with such divines as Milman, Whately, Hare, Thirlwall, and Maurice, soon to be reinforced by Arthur Stanley, Charles Kingsley, Robertson of Brighton, and Benjamin Jowett. Some of these were more than suspected of doctrinal heresy; none were sacerdotalists; all cherished the connection between the Church of England and the new Liberal State.

The Movement had begun as a protest against the ecclesiastical policy of the reforming Whigs. Three years afterwards fresh and more direct provocation was given by Lord Melbourne's appointment of Dr. Hampden to be Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. Hampden had been Bampton Lecturer in 1832, and had chosen the scholastic theology for his subject. The course he delivered was one long attack on the mediæval dogmatism that his dreaming contemporaries proposed to make the supreme law of belief. They now accused him of heretical views about the Trinity. His real offence probably consisted in throwing some doubt on the penal interpretation of the Atonement. Anyhow, a strong official protest against the appointment was got up, signed, it is said, by some who had not read the incriminated

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lectures. Melbourne persisted in forcing his professor on the reluctant university authorities, who used their power to make Hampden's position as disagreeable as they could. Eleven years later Lord John Russell raised a fresh outcry by promoting him to the See of Hereford, carrying the appointment through against the protest of half the Episcopal Bench. Arnold, whose orthodoxy seemed more doubtful still, would probably have been made a Bishop if he had lived.

The logical course would have been for the High Churchmen to sever their connection with the State altogether. In Scotland this was the actual outcome of a somewhat similar movement. There the Evangelical revival took the form of a revolution in Church government. As religious zeal increased among the people, it was claimed that the congregations should be allowed, if they chose, to exercise a veto on the choice of their ministers. This was found to be inconsistent with the law as it stood, and every attempt to alter the law broke down. Finally, under the lead of the most distinguished living Scotch Churchman, the celebrated Dr. Chalmers, 474 ministers seceded from the Establishment, and set up a Free Church, supported by voluntary contributions.

But, although the Movement failed to accomplish the objects of those who first began it, their efforts were by no means thrown away. By provoking religious controversy they greatly raised the religious temperature of the upper and middle classes, thus contributing to that state of opinion which enabled the Lords to reject the Appropriation Clause and eventually drove the Whigs out of

office. And not only did the Church of England profit, like every other religious body, by this reinforcement of religious zeal, but it profited in a more special way by the reforming activity of the detested Liberal Government. During his brief tenure of office between Melbourne's first and second Administrations, Peel issued a Commission to ascertain what was the amount of the Church's revenues, and how they were distributed among her ministers. Its report brought to light the existence of scandalous abuses. Speaking broadly, the richest preferments fell to those who did the least work, or, in numerous instances, to those who did no work at all, while the hardest workers were the most miserably paid. Nearly half the beneficed clergy were non-resident, with the result that Dissenting chapels had nearly doubled in twenty-four years.¹ On the basis of this information Russell carried a series of measures putting an end to the most crying abuses, and establishing a less unequal proportion between the services rendered and the emoluments received.

Such legislation, excellent as it was, effectually blocked what would perhaps have been the more salutary course, recommended by the philosophical Radicals, of applying the surplus revenues of the Church to national education. Above all, by making the Church more popular it increased the power of the clergy to resist any comprehensive system of State education, which from the nature of things must have been unsectarian, like Lancaster's, or secular, like Bentham's.

¹ Walpole, *History of England*, vol. v., pp. 259-60.

Before clerical resistance to popular education could be even partially overruled, a new current of opinion operating against theological prejudice of every kind had to come into play. Two distinct forces, represented, however imperfectly, in Paine's *Age of Reason*, combined to swell its volume. There was the direct attack of rationalistic criticism on theological beliefs; and there was the indirect effect wrought by science in substituting the view of nature as an orderly, uninterrupted sequence of events, without any known beginning or end, for the supernaturalist view of the same events as emanating from a personal will, and subject at any moment to its interference for purposes best known to the guardians of accredited religious tradition, and occasionally disclosed by men and women believed to be in the confidence of that overruling will.

Many hold that democracy counts as a third force co-operating with criticism and science. But this seems to be a mistake, resting on incomplete historical studies or on accidental political experiences. A democracy where the people remain in ignorance is from the nature of the case rather favourable to the more simple and primitive beliefs of mankind, or, more generally, to whatever offers the greatest felicity at the cost of the smallest intellectual effort. Popular feeling may easily be excited against costly ecclesiastical establishments; but so also may the cupidity of a despot or an oligarchy; and, when pious benefactions have been given up to public plunder, the zeal that originated them returns, in default of diffused enlightenment, with equal facility under every form of government, and becomes the basis of fresh accumulations.

The rising influence of the people as such in English politics long remained associated with an increase of general bigotry; and it seems more than doubtful whether in the aristocratically organised Scottish society of the eighteenth century a sustentation fund of a million and a quarter could have been raised for the Free Church.

In fact, the transfer of power to a more extended section of the community registered by the Reform Act seems at first to have rather discouraged rationalistic criticism, and given a theological twist to scientific ideas. Thirlwall took orders two years after publishing his translation of Schleiermacher, nor did he make any other contribution to liberal theology. As tutor at Trinity College, Cambridge, he advocated the admission of Dissenters to the University, condemning also the collegiate lectures on divinity and compulsory attendance at chapel—pronouncements which led to the forfeiture of his academical position. After the outcry against his *History of the Jews*, Milman kept silence for ten years. In 1840, when the reaction seemed to be abating, he published a far bolder work, the *History of Christianity*, studiously minimising the miraculous element in the New Testament, and maximising the points of contact between the new revelation and the religious developments reached on various lines of unassisted heathen speculation. This time Milman's enemies were discreet enough not to advertise his heresies by such extreme vituperation as before; but their dangerous character was quietly pointed out, and the circulation of the book seems to have been effectually blocked. A little before its publication Charles Hennell, a

highly intelligent Unitarian layman, had handled the same subjects with much less learning, but with much greater freedom, in *An Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity*, giving, indeed, no satisfactory solution of the problem, but impugning the miraculous narratives of the Gospel with such effect as to convince George Eliot, then a girl of eighteen, that the Evangelical view of religion she had adopted was not true.

The wide popularisation of physical science in England dates from 1831, the year when the British Association was founded. Several among its prominent teachers—Chalmers, Sedgwick, Buckland, and Whewell, for example—were clergymen; and Faraday, the greatest of them all, sometimes conducted the religious services of the little sect to which he belonged.

Apart from the gratification of their own devotional feelings there were ample pecuniary rewards for those who, in the poetical language of Tom Moore, made "Science the torch-bearer to Religion." A pious peer, Lord Bridgewater, bequeathed £8,000 to subsidise Natural Theology; and his executors fulfilled his intentions by dividing the money among eight men of science, four of them clerics, each of whom was paid to produce a treatise bringing evidence from his own particular study to prove the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator. One of these treatises, written by the Rev. Professor Buckland, an Oxford geologist, had an enormous circulation, and earned for its lucky author a handsome sum in addition to the Bridgewater fee of a thousand pounds. This was

in 1836. The author had made his reputation thirteen years before by a book called *Reliquiæ Diluvianæ, or Observations on the Organic Remains Attesting the Action of a Universal Deluge*. Such an event, had it occurred, would have proved more for the power than for the wisdom or goodness of its author; but, whatever might be its bearings on natural religion, the *Reliquiæ* was warmly welcomed as a support to revealed religion, whose authenticity seemed at that time to be closely bound up with the historical truth of a book where a universal deluge is recorded as having actually taken place not many thousand years ago. Buckland subsequently abandoned what he had once defended, and was bitterly assailed by his fellow-clergymen in consequence.¹

However its relations with Scripture might ultimately be adjusted, geology was supposed to bring incontrovertible proof of the popular religious philosophy by its then accepted doctrine of Catastrophes. Cuvier, the great French palæontologist, taught that Noah's Flood came last in a series of great cataclysms, by which the living population of the globe was periodically cleared off, to be subsequently replaced by a new organic creation. Now, unless the earth were credited with a power of spontaneously generating plants and animals on the largest scale—and that such a power ever did or could exist seemed contrary to all experience—no alternative remained but to admit that God himself intervened on each occasion to fill up the void.

At a time, however, when this argument was being most confidently hawked about, the

¹ White, *Warfare of Science and Theology*, vol. i., p. 232.

hypothesis on which it rested had already received a mortal blow from the greatest living authority on the life-history of the earth. In 1830 Charles Lyell published his famous *Principles of Geology*. That work is one long argument going to prove that the known facts can be explained without the intervention of any such catastrophes as Cuvier demanded. The natural forces now in operation are enough to account for every past change in the climatic conditions and in the distribution of land and water on the earth's surface ever since it became capable of supporting life. There are no abrupt transitions from one geological period to another. All is orderly sequence, and at the same time all is perpetual change. Lyell still admitted that every new species represented a separate act of creation; but his uniformitarian theory made possible the subsequent theory by which the successive appearance of organisms adapted to altered environments has been interpreted as due to the unaided operation of natural causes.

Lyell privately described his theory as striking at the Mosaic cosmogony, but he avoided any public expression of hostility to the prejudices of the age. It is, however, reported on his own testimony, given long afterwards, that this reserve did not save him from social ostracism for having contributed, however indirectly, "to discredit the Pentateuchal accounts of the Creation and the Deluge" (Huxley). It is, at any rate, certain that ladies were excluded from his professional lectures at King's College, London, probably because his subject involved some adverse reference to the Mosaic cosmology. Mrs. Somerville was preached against

in York Cathedral, presumably for the same offence.

So much of the national energy spent itself on politics, religion, and science during the Reform era that less remained available for imaginative literature and history. Brief lyrics, brilliant review articles, and novels of episodic rather than concentrated interest were most in request among readers with little leisure, and most readily supplied by writers on whose time there were many other demands. *Pelham*, the novel that made Bulwer Lytton's reputation (1828), is a series of almost disconnected studies in life and literature, not a romance. Tennyson's earlier poems show vivid inspiration and careful workmanship, but no sustained constructive effort. In prose this was a great age of essayists, made illustrious by the names of Macaulay, Carlyle, De Quincey, J. S. Mill, and John Wilson. Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34) is not really a book, but a collection of unsystematic thoughts and disconnected images. The *French Revolution* (1837), indeed, is a great work of art, unequalled by anything that his contemporaries were then doing, or by anything that he himself did afterwards, for splendour, power, and unity; but it is an exception that proves the rule, being, in fact, a political pamphlet of the transcendent kind, the expression of a radicalism that would substitute, not individual liberty, but better and stronger government, for the rotten institutions of the past. The Lectures on *Hero-Worship* (1841) are generally supposed to represent Carlyle's leaning to autocracy as the only legitimate form of government. But, whatever their intention may have been, such is

not the moral they convey. With few exceptions the heroes are religious reformers, poets, men of letters, not men of action, exercising authority, not by force, but by persuasion. The two representative soldiers really serve as a warning against autocracy, for Cromwell totally fails to carry out his ideals in the absence of popular support; while Napoleon, possessing all that Cromwell wanted, has his head turned by uncontrolled dominion, deserts the democratic cause, and perishes by fighting against the laws of justice. Another marked trait of the Lectures is their silent, but probably not unconscious, hostility to the dreams of such enthusiasts for the mediæval Church as Hurrell Froude. Most of the heroes belong to Protestantism; the one mediæval Catholic, Dante, is only made interesting on the human and personal side, his theory of the world being dismissed as obsolete.

Carlyle's own religion at this time was a vague deism inherited from the previous century, combined with a particular hostility to the Tractarians for their attempt to rehabilitate superstition under forms more objectionable than any others to a Scotchman. Another Scotchman, George Combe, taught deism in a more undisguised form to a more popular audience in association with the alleged discoveries of phrenology. His idea of basing education and social reform on cranioscopy was a chimera; but he did good service by pointing to a healthy constitution of brain and body as the necessary condition of mental and moral improvement.

It is to be noticed how Scotchmen stood to the front in every scheme for benefiting the people by cultivating their intelligence. Besides his efforts

on behalf of State-aided education, Lord Brougham was the soul of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. The valuable publications of the Chambers brothers obtained a wide circulation in England as well as in Scotland ; and George Birkbeck, the founder of Mechanics' Institutes, himself a Yorkshireman, owed his enthusiasm for popular education to a prolonged residence in Scotland.

Such enterprises as Brougham's and Birkbeck's, beneficial as they were to the middle classes, left the mass of the labouring population untouched. For them the question was not how to live well, but how to live at all. Brougham had, rather pedantically, hoped the time might come when every cottager would read Bacon. Cobbett observed, with pertinent wit, that he had much rather see every cottager eat bacon. But the one wish seemed nearly as Utopian as the other. A cottager supporting himself, a wife, and five children on from seven to ten shillings a week had much difficulty in providing bare bread, with corn ranging from fifty to seventy shillings a quarter. Factory hands were better paid, and altogether the condition of the people had improved since the Regency ; but their poverty was pitiable, and distress continued to be much aggravated from time to time by a bad harvest or a commercial crisis. The Reform Act had put an end to some great evils ; but others remained unabated, and the decline of political excitement left public opinion more free to occupy itself with these. We shall see in the next chapter what ideas, more or less practical, more or less permanent, responded to the social demands of the age.

CHAPTER VIII.

IDEALS AND REALITIES

OF all schemes for the regeneration of mankind put forward during the Reform era, the most ambitious and far-reaching originated with Robert Owen (1770-1858). This man had raised himself by genius and conduct from the position of a petty trader to be the head of a great manufactory, and had relinquished that position in order to carry on a world-wide propaganda for his favourite ideas. He may be described as the father of modern Socialism. But his proposals for collective ownership differed widely from the State socialism of more recent times. For their realisation he looked not to government intervention, but to experiments in voluntary co-operation, aided to any extent at first starting by private or public munificence, in the confidence that, once started, they would prove self-supporting, and by successful competition would gradually free industry from the control of individualistic capital. As the foundation of the new social order he devised, and for several years actually put into practice among his own work-people at New Lanark, a peculiar system of education and discipline which replaced the study of words by the study of things, and the use of rewards and punishments by the use of moral suasion. Believing character to be the creature of circumstance, he held that to inflict pain on people

for what they could not help doing was unjust; but, as his methods proved perfectly successful at New Lanark, they might have been defended on grounds of simple expediency, without the intervention of metaphysical abstractions. In fact, Owen's personal magnetism, falling in with the grateful enthusiasm of the Scottish character, exhibited a happy coincidence not to be reckoned on by ordinary educators and rulers, nor even by such experts as Dr. Arnold of Rugby, who, we are told, did not govern by love, but by fear.

Owen ultimately gave up his position at New Lanark for the office of a public agitator, which he was much less fitted to fill. Believing in no existing religion and adhering to no recognised political party, his faith in Co-operation was such that, like some more recent reformers, he dreamed of combining all schools in the support of his educational and communistic schemes. As a natural consequence, the rest of his active life was spent in spinning ropes of sand. Men of the most discordant views—Archbishops and atheists, Radicals and reactionists—were induced to promise their support; but it never went beyond promises. Some important movements—Secularism, industrial co-operation, profit-sharing—may be traced back to his initiative; but these lie off the central line of English evolution as it was being unrolled when Peel came into power.

Chartism was of far more immediate practical importance than anything Owen ever said or did. It may be described as the resumption in a more systematic way of the agitation for Parliamentary

Reform begun under the Regency and temporarily arrested by the Whig measure of 1831-32. A document called the People's Charter, drawn up in 1838, put the extreme democratic claims into shape. Taken in the order of their importance, its articles were: Manhood suffrage, equal electoral districts, vote by ballot, annual Parliaments, abolition of the property qualification at that time required for members of the House of Commons, and instead thereof payment of them for their services. The leaders of the movement are deservedly forgotten, nor need their names be recorded here. The Chartists were as much inferior to Chartism as Owen was superior to the Owenites. They were, in truth, quack doctors drawing attention to a dangerous disease, and so winning a sort of confused sympathy from literary people, not always much more practical than themselves — Wordsworth, Carlyle, Harriet Martineau, and Benjamin Disraeli. Carlyle took hold of the agitation as a good stick to beat Benthamism with. But his own proposals for remedial legislation did not go beyond education and emigration. The one was advocated by every Benthamite, the other by J. S. Mill, the young chief of the school, from whom he had probably picked it up in conversation. Carlyle also gave a gruff approval to the new Poor Law, which the Chartists hated. Wordsworth, in whom the old revolutionary passion had never died out, preferred them to the Whigs, against whom Disraeli also hoped for their aid.

Macaulay put the Whig case against Chartism — which, in this instance, was the case of all sensible people — in one short speech with crushing

effect. According to him, the only demand of supreme importance was manhood suffrage. To grant that would be to place all the property of the kingdom at the mercy of men who proclaimed their intention of confiscating it if they gained the control of Parliament. He pointed out that, among the grievances which those who petitioned for the passing of the People's Charter expected to be redressed, payment of interest on the National Debt was expressly mentioned; and that the monopolies of machinery, of land, and of the means of travelling and transit were also quoted as injustices to be removed. Whence he concluded that to pass the Charter would bring irretrievable ruin on the country.¹

As against the petitioners this reasoning was conclusive. But our experience of universal suffrage elsewhere has not gone to confirm Macaulay's gloomy anticipations of its probable effect if introduced into England. Where the voters are educated they have too much honesty and good sense to ask for the confiscation of private property. Where they are ignorant they go to the poll in disciplined masses at the bidding of party managers whose desire is rather to secure lucrative offices for themselves than to propose a general scramble for the instruments of production in which they might probably be crushed to death. If by a miracle the Chartist agitation had succeeded, the result might well have been a more complete victory for the reactionists than was won in 1841.

¹ Macaulay, *Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches*, vol. iii., p. 186.

Among the literary sympathisers with Chartism the name of Disraeli has been mentioned. Sympathy, as attributed to him, must not be understood in an emotional sense, for his attitude in reference to the Turkish atrocities forty years later proves that human suffering on a large scale left him absolutely callous. But he saw that, as opinion then set, to expatiate on the wrongs of the labouring poor was a convenient method for acquiring notoriety and power. For the rest, both then and afterwards he failed conspicuously, for one so clever, in forecasting the general trend of progressive ideas. A sort of dandified romanticism playing at the resuscitation of mediæval institutions in Church and State had been the fashion in his youth; and now in the late thirties, when it was waning before the light of science, Disraeli took it up in the spirit of a secondhand broker as a means for the reconstitution of the Tory party. A people maddened with hunger were invited to seek deliverance by rallying round the old aristocracy, the throne, and the altar. Owing to the exigencies of sentimental fiction, Scott and Bulwer Lytton had chosen very young men for their heroes; and Scott's youths, at least, were habitually associated with great affairs of State. Therefore, according to Disraeli, the country and its institutions were, in some mysterious way, to be now saved by its youth. Hence the party formed on his principles became known by the name, or nickname, of Young England. Whether the juniors were to be chiefly employed in the education of their elders, or in what is now called slumming among the cottagers on their fathers' estates, did

not seem clear. On no important political question could the Young Englanders be got to act together, not even on the maintenance of the Corn Laws, which Disraeli himself considered essential to the predominance of the landed interest, and therefore to the salvation of England. To stake the cause of the aristocracy on an odious food-tax showed a singular want of political sagacity in one who was negotiating an alliance between the nobles and the people.

A still greater blunder, if possible, was Disraeli's proposal, borrowed from Bolingbroke, to revive the power of the Crown. This, as Canning and Peel had foretold, proved incompatible with the authority exercised by a truly representative House of Commons; and neither the last independent political act of William IV. in sending for Sir Robert Peel, nor the first political act of the young Queen in refusing to accept Peel's terms, had tended to make royal interference more popular than before.

Disraeli and his young friends seem to have agreed in thinking that they could win over public opinion to recognise the Church of England as a body invested with theocratic powers. No idea could well have been more chimerical. It ran counter to all the traditions of English statesmanship. And the failure of the Tractarian Movement showed it to be particularly ill-timed at that moment. By making national education impossible the Church as a corporation proved herself the people's worst enemy; and the new science was rapidly paralysing her hold on the educated intelligence of the country.

It is remarkable how closely Disraeli, himself a Jew, agreed with Keble in resting the Church's theocratic pretensions on the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures; how they both dreaded Biblical criticism; and how the apostle of Young England gibes at the doctrine of evolution in *Tancred*, his religious romance of 1847, no less scornfully than in his address to the Church Congress of 1865.

Finally, after all these dissolving dreams, we come to the only movement of the late thirties that was practical, progressive, successful, and permanent. This was the agitation for the free importation of corn, conducted by the Anti-Corn-Law League, and associated for ever in the memory of Englishmen with the name of Richard Cobden.

The part played by Cobden and the League in their campaign against the Corn Laws has somewhat interfered with a right apprehension of the history of Free Trade in England. Cobden, of course, condemned all commercial restrictions on principle and as a matter of policy for his own country and for the whole world. But he was not the first by a good many to preach that principle in its entirety, or to make it the keynote of a successful policy. Plato, who created political economy, also held that imports should be untaxed; the French physiocrats, Adam Smith, and Ricardo placed his *aperçus* on a scientific basis, after whom came statesmen like Shelburne, Pitt, Canning, and Huskisson to carry them into practice. It happened that the new policy of more or less

withdrawing artificial protection from native industry was applied in the first instance to manufactures, because England, as a great corn-growing country, did not need to import foreign grain. Agriculture did, indeed, receive what was called protection; but this took the form of giving bounties on the exportation of corn. It was hoped that the bounties, by creating an artificial dearth, would raise prices at home; but as they stimulated production the actual effect was that prices fell. The importation of foreign corn had indeed been prohibited since the time of Charles II.; but, as plenty generally prevailed, the prohibition was not felt as a grievance.

With the industrial revolution and the rapid growth of population a change set in. Prices rose with the new demand for food; and a series of laws passed in the interest of the landowners pushed up the limit on the sliding scale of scarcity until foreign wheat was practically refused admission so long as English wheat stood at less than eighty shillings a quarter. To admit it even then hardly relieved the distress; for in the uncertainty of finding a market the foreign grain-merchants did not care to lay in stores which England might or might not be pleased to buy.

It was thought that a real representation of the people would put an end to such exactions; and the distress during the early years of peace produced, for the first time, a widespread demand for Parliamentary Reform. Liberty, in Shelley's phrase, meant—

Clothes and fire and food
For the trampled multitude

—a reason the more why it should be refused by the men in power. In other directions, however, concessions were made to the industrial interest even by an unreformed Parliament. Taxes on the raw material of manufactures were partially repealed, and reciprocity was substituted for the restrictions formerly placed on foreign shipping, while the duties on imported manufactures were vastly reduced. This was done by a nominally Tory Ministry. The Whigs of 1830 were Free Traders in theory; but they had neither leisure nor ability to do anything beyond reducing the paper duties. A series of good harvests postponed the Corn Law question for some years longer.

So matters remained until the terrible distress of 1837, continued and aggravated through the next five years, made the condition of the people the one all-absorbing interest of politics and literature. Owenites, Chartists, Young Englanders, agitators for the repeal of the new Poor Law, agreed in assuming that there was wealth enough in the country to afford a comfortable subsistence all round if only it were better distributed, by private or public charity, or by voluntary or compulsory Socialism. The scientific economists alone showed how the national wealth could be both increased and better distributed by granting complete Free Trade. According to them, the Corn Laws did mischief in more than one way, directly by raising the price of bread, indirectly by checking our foreign trade and diverting capital from investments where it could be turned to the best account to investments where it was turned to the least account. At home capital was diverted from the

manufacturing industries in which we excelled all other nations to agriculture, where, by the law of diminishing returns, not only was there less profit to begin with, but that profit was always growing less and less for equal amounts of capital expended on the soil. Abroad the reverse process obtained. The nations which would gladly have grown more corn wherewith to buy our cloths and calicoes, finding that we refused it, built factories of their own and set up prohibitory tariffs to guard their new industries against our cheaper goods. It was contended that the repeal of the Corn Laws would enlarge the field of employment for English labour and capital by giving a new stimulus both to the import and to the export trade.

The Protectionists did not deny all this, but they argued that to make England dependent on foreign countries for her food-supplies would be most hazardous ; that to draw the peasantry away from the country to the towns would injure the national physique ; that to lower the price of corn would be to lower rents, which was an act of confiscation—at the expense, too, of the class to whom England owed all her greatness.

To keep the people in a chronic state of want and misery seemed a rather costly insurance against the risk of future famine in the highly improbable contingency of our being at war with all the corn-producing countries of the world at the same time ; and the middle classes, whom Reform had made sovereign, believed that they, rather than the noble lords who called robbery property, were the brain and backbone of England. Their wealth and energy had, in fact, brought us safely out of the

wars undertaken and misconducted by the ruling territorial aristocracy. And the literary leader of Young England, the political bravo of the high Tory party—Disraeli—himself admitted that the condition of the agricultural poor was even worse than that of the factory operatives.

So stood the balance of argument. In Parliament, and probably in the country, the balance of opinion stood heavily against Free Trade. But the progress of Liberalism had removed the restrictions by which reason used to be prevented from turning itself into public opinion, and had created a machinery by which the opinion of the people could turn itself more rapidly into the opinion of Parliament. In 1836 an Anti-Corn Law Association was founded in London by some Benthamites, and another of the same name two years later at Manchester, which in 1839 became the Anti-Corn Law League. This body carried on an agitation of unexampled magnitude all over the country, collecting enormous sums of money, assembling crowded meetings to hear addresses in favour of Free Trade, disseminating Free Trade pamphlets and leaflets by tens of thousands, prompting the acquisition of electoral qualifications by Free Traders, contesting Protectionist votes on the register, fighting Protectionist candidates at by-elections, making Free Trade motions in Parliament, appealing, and at last not in vain, to the all-powerful Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, to repeat what he had done for Catholic Emancipation, sacrificing the interests of his party to the interests of his country, which this time were the interests of all mankind.

At what precise date Peel's conversion to complete Free Trade took place is uncertain, and of no interest to anyone but his biographers. His adherence to Protection had long been avowedly a matter more of expediency than of principle. His first Budget embodied a rather complicated arrangement, which had the effect of lowering the corn duties to one half of what they had previously been; and this was accompanied by a large remission of protective duties on manufactured articles. Three years later, by a comprehensive scheme of Tariff Reform in the true sense, 430 articles were relieved of import duties, and all duties on British exports were repealed.

Disraeli at first applauded Peel for taking up what he then chose to describe as the genuine Tory policy—the policy of Pitt. When the Conservative Administration of 1841 was being formed he had applied for office, and had been refused. Perhaps he still hoped to conciliate the Prime Minister by this unexpected support. If so, he was mistaken. Then he turned to the extreme Tories, who were becoming mutinous at the growing liberality of their middle-class chief. They had another grievance besides the reformed tariff. In 1845 Peel proposed and carried an augmentation of the grant to Maynooth, a training college for Irish Roman Catholic priests. Judged by the ideas of that age, it was a statesmanlike measure, and it received the support of Cobden and Macaulay. But to subsidise the priests agreed better with Whig than with Tory traditions; nor could such a grant have been carried against the No Popery wing of the Conservative party without the aid

of Liberal votes. Then the unscrupulous and desperate adventurer saw and seized his chance. In a series of speeches unrivalled for picturesque sarcasm, Disraeli taunted Peel with having stolen the Whigs' clothes while they were bathing, with treating the landed interest like a cast-off mistress, with turning Conservatism into an organised hypocrisy. The Prime Minister's mind was one vast Appropriation Clause; he resembled the Turkish Admiral who steered his fleet right into the enemy's port. After the most virulent of these attacks Peel asked why, then, had the honourable gentleman wished to serve under one of whom, by his own account, his opinion had always been so bad. Disraeli replied that he had never made any such request. Sir Robert quietly repeated his assertion, but refrained even in that emergency from producing the written evidence of his treacherous assailant's falsehood; and the damning letter remained unpublished until nearly half a century after his death.

Stuart absolutism received its mortal blow from the Irish insurrection of 1641. Irish agitation broke up the reactionary Toryism of Peel's youth. Irish famine was now to ruin the Protectionist Conservatism of his triumphant prime. Our unequalled aristocratic government, which made the Irish bigoted Romanists in the seventeenth century, and destroyed Irish manufactures in the eighteenth century, had in the nineteenth century completed its fatal work by the utter degradation of Irish agriculture. For want of any other outlet the whole industry of the country was thrown on the

land ; and the landlords, in order to multiply the electors who voted at their dictation, had subdivided the land among the greatest possible number of tenant-farmers holding their little plots at a rack-rent. These men had no capital and no motive to improve the land, as their improvements, if any, were liable to confiscation under the form of an increased rent. Many landlords lived away from their estates, delegating their authority to merciless agents, or letting them out in large farms on leases to middlemen who sublet them to a swarm of tenants-at-will, living themselves like gentlemen on what they could extract from these miserable serfs. As a means of subsistence the peasants were given a small piece of land, on which they raised a scanty crop. Potatoes were the food that could be grown in the greatest abundance with the smallest amount of labour. Potatoes accordingly became the staple food of the people. The system resulted in a rapid growth of population, thus increasing the competition for land and placing the poor more and more at the mercy of the rich. Those who could not pay their rent were turned out on the highways to starve. Until 1838 there was no Poor Law for Ireland ; the system then introduced did not sanction the distribution of outdoor relief, and the workhouses had not sufficient accommodation for the mass of pauperism thrown on them in times of distress.

A Commission appointed by Peel "to investigate the conditions on which Irish land was held" reported in favour of compensating evicted tenants for improvements made by them with the permission of authorities appointed for the purpose ; and a

measure giving partial effect to its recommendations was laid before the House of Lords in 1845, but excited so much opposition on the ground of invading the rights of property that it had to be withdrawn almost without discussion.¹ Apparently the Young Englanders had not educated their fathers up to the point of enabling them to see on which side, in this instance, as in the instance of the Corn Laws, the rights of property were to be found.

A people so circumstanced and thrown for subsistence on a single esculent are exposed to famine whenever, as frequently happens with the potato, their staple food is ruined by bad weather or by disease. The autumn of 1845 was rainy, and a new form of blight destroyed the potato crop. Free importation of corn became a necessity. Lord John Russell, who had hitherto advocated a fixed eight-shilling duty on foreign corn, now, by a public declaration, committed the Whig party to Free Trade. Peel had already been converted by Cobden's exposure of the miseries that Protection entailed on the English agricultural population. He proposed the immediate suspension of the Corn Laws, to be followed by their gradual abolition. At his first Cabinet Council all but three members dissented; at the second, held in December, all but two agreed. What made the services of those two indispensable does not appear; but anyhow Peel resigned. The Queen sent for Russell, who accepted, but failed to form an Administration, for the very odd reason that Lord Grey, the Reform

¹ Spencer Walpole's *History of England*, vol. v., p. 127.

Minister's son, had to be included, and that he would not sit in the same Cabinet with Lord Palmerston, who could not be left out. Peel returned to office, having in the meantime converted one of his late recalcitrant colleagues. The other, Lord Stanley, remaining obstinate, was replaced by W. E. Gladstone. At that time the future Liberal leader sat for a nomination borough in the gift of the Duke of Newcastle. The Duke now handed it over to a Tory, at the same time ousting his own son, Lord Lincoln, Peel's Irish Secretary, from the representation of South Notts. Lincoln remained out of Parliament for three months, and Gladstone for eighteen months. This was the same Duke that justified his eviction of tenants who voted against his candidates by asking had he not a right to do as he liked with his own. The Dukes of Richmond and Buckingham pursued a similarly obstructive policy in preventing Free Trade Ministers from retaining their seats. So much for the claim to altruism put forward on behalf of the landowning oligarchy by its modern apologists.

Peel did not introduce immediate or complete Free Trade. He proposed to retain for the next three years a duty on foreign corn varying inversely as the home price from ten to four shillings per quarter, after which it was to remain fixed at a shilling per quarter. Duties on manufactured goods were reduced from twenty to ten per cent., and on half-manufactured goods to five per cent., while the duty on raw material was entirely abolished. Abolished also was the duty on live stock and dead meat; the duties on butter, cheese,

and hops were lowered fifty per cent. ; the differential duty against slave-grown sugar still continued, but in a diminished amount, as likewise did the duties on timber and tallow.

In the speech that introduced these great changes Peel touched on the question of reciprocity, or what is now called Fair Trade. He explained that his own policy had been adopted in complete independence of what foreign countries were doing or would do. He admitted that since our departure from Protection their tariffs, instead of being lowered, had in some instances been raised against English goods. But he parried this consideration by the fact that during the same period our export trade had increased. And he used the one fact to explain the other. The Protectionist countries were injuring themselves by their system of exclusion, and therefore their manufacturers could not resist the competition of our less fettered industry.¹ That our example would eventually tell on their governments he did indeed believe, but without staking his credit on the fulfilment of that prediction. And had a vision of the world's industrial history for the next sixty years unfolded itself before his gaze, we have no reason to think that the great Minister would have gone back on his adhesion to the principles of the Anti-Corn Law League. Precisely the same remark applies to Cobden. He anticipated a coming era of universal Free Trade. But he never argued for the abolition of the corn tax on the ground that it would be followed by a world-wide economic revolution, or

¹ Sir Robert Peel, *Speeches*, vol. iv., p. 601.

hinted at an admission that England would be worse off than before if other countries refused to follow in her footsteps.

It has been asked why Free Trade did not immediately lower the price of corn. The fact is so; but we must remember that the harvests for some years previously had been exceptionally good, and that the cheapness thus introduced was at least maintained; that a quite appreciable duty continued to be levied until 1849; and that foreign corn-growers needed some time to make arrangements for supplying the English market. When sufficient time had elapsed for the new demand to operate the price fell to an unprecedented extent.

Peel's Budget was carried by a coalition of Conservative Free Traders and Liberals, the House of Lords not daring to resist. But that victory was his Trafalgar. On the night when the Corn Bill passed the Lords his Ministry fell before a factious combination of Liberals and Protectionists in the Commons. English misgovernment had led to famine in Ireland, famine to outrage, and outrage to a new Coercion Bill, one article of which rendered any person found out of doors at night in a proclaimed district liable to transportation. At this time the Conservative party had split into two. Less than a third followed Peel; the others, who still clung to Protection, placed themselves under the leadership of Lord George Bentinck, an ignorant racing man with a head for figures, who allowed himself to be made the tool of Disraeli's ambition, while at the same time he gratified a relentless thirst for vengeance on one whom he believed to have been the cause of his

kinsman Canning's death. Bentinck and his followers had voted for the first reading of the Coercion Bill; they opposed the second reading on a frivolous pretext, and by combining with those who had resisted it from the beginning placed the Government in a minority of seventy-three. Peel resigned, and was succeeded by Lord John Russell at the head of a purely Whig Administration, including Grey and Palmerston, who by this time had contrived to make up the difference that had been found insuperable only six months before.

The Free Trade question introduced new lines of party cleavage on the Liberal as well as on the Conservative side. Some Whigs—Lord Melbourne among the number—believed in Protection. Some of the ablest Tories—Gladstone for one—followed Peel when he forsook it. The Benthamites, who had been the first Free Traders, were more or less Freethinkers, and so as a rule were the Foxite Whigs. The League habitually appealed to Christian charity against the policy of commercial restrictions, and its three greatest orators were men of deep religious conviction, combined, it is true, with very liberal religious opinions—Cobden, the most persuasive, as a Churchman; John Bright, the most powerful, as a Quaker; W. J. Fox, the most brilliant, as a Unitarian minister. The Anglican clergy were Protectionists almost to a man; Thomas Spencer, Herbert Spencer's uncle, being one of the very few exceptions. This seems to have been due to their connection with the landlord class. The Wesleyan ministers, from whatever reason, held the same opinions. But a great

conference of Nonconformist ministers assembled at Manchester in 1841 passed resolutions condemnatory of the tax on corn, as did also similar conferences at Edinburgh and Carnarvon.¹ This association of Nonconformity with Liberal politics has probably contributed to its subsequent development on lines of increased dogmatic liberality.

Another consequence of the Free Trade movement was the growing identification of Radicalism with a policy of peace, non-intervention, and disarmament. There had been a connection of the same sort before, but it was rather accidental than essential. The wars with America and with the French Republic had been or had looked like wars against popular government; and the war with Napoleon, although fought partly in self-defence and partly on behalf of European liberty, had contributed to the aggrandisement of the plutocracy in England. A great change took place with the revolutionary movement of 1820, as a consequence of which England under Canning definitely took sides with the cause of free nationalities in Europe and America. This made Liberal opinion more favourable to armed intervention in the affairs of other countries, while absolutist Tories, with Wellington at their head, advocated a policy of neutrality and strict respect for treaty rights.

Among the Canningites who coalesced with Lord Grey in 1830 the ablest and most vigorous was Lord Palmerston, who held the post of Foreign Secretary with a break of only a few months down

¹ Molesworth, *History of England*, vol. ii., p. 216; Morley, *Life of Cobden*, vol. i., p. 232.

to the Whig defeat of 1841. He steadily carried on the tradition of his old chief, extending the power and prestige of England by the support he gave to constitutional government in Belgium and Southern Europe, by his resistance to French and Russian ambition in the Near East, and, more questionably, by his aggressive action in the Far East. His greatest successes were won by diplomatic pressure, with the help of very little fighting. But his Turkish policy, brilliant as it was, had been carried out at the risk of war with France and with the certainty of prolonging for an indefinite period the blighting tyranny of the Sultan over some of the fairest regions on the globe. Its immediate success proved highly prejudicial to our own interests in Asia. For, as a counter-move to Palmerston's opposition on the Bosphorus, Russia raised up enemies against us in Afghanistan; and, finally, the blundering of the Indian Government brought on a war with that country signalised by the most frightful disaster that has ever befallen a British army, the annihilation of Elphinstone's force in the Khyber Pass.

While these deplorable events were happening on the north-west frontier of India we were carrying on a still more disgraceful war with China. When the Charter of the East India Company expired, in 1833, the Chinese trade was thrown open to all British merchants, and many of them used the opportunity thus offered to introduce large quantities of opium into China, although its importation was forbidden by the Chinese Government. As might have been expected, collisions of a more and more violent character occurred between the

officials on both sides; and, although Lord Palmerston gave orders that the Emperor's prohibition of the traffic in a pernicious drug should be respected, they were not obeyed. Finally, the Chinese Commissioner in Canton insisted on the surrender and destruction of all the British opium in China, valued at some millions sterling. Unfortunately, a part of the Indian revenue, too large to be spared, depended on the opium monopoly, and the value of this again depended on keeping the Chinese market open. Our people treated the destruction of the smuggled opium-chests as an outrage to be avenged by war, and war accordingly ensued. After some years of fighting, chequered by the usual disasters, it ended with the submission of our helpless opponents. China had to pay compensation for the opium destroyed and a heavy indemnity besides. Certain ports were opened to British trade, and, although the importation of opium was not yet legalised, no very energetic resistance to it could be expected from the Chinese authorities after such bitter experience of what came from meddling with its freedom.

At the conclusion of peace Lord Ashley, whose acquaintance we have already made as a defender of the defenceless, wrote in his private journal: "It may be unpatriotic, it may be un-British, I cannot rejoice in our successes; we have triumphed in one of the most lawless, unnecessary, and unfair struggles in the records of history." Next year he moved a resolution in the House of Commons condemnatory of the trade in opium as, among other evils, "destructive of all relations of amity between England and China," but withdrew his

motion at the entreaty of Sir Robert Peel, who "indulged in a deprecatory argument of which the gist seemed to be that, as we could not put down gin at home, we need not concern ourselves about introducing 20,000 chests of opium into China every year."¹

In 1836 Cobden had published a pamphlet criticising Palmerston's policy of supporting Turkey against Russia, and generally advocating the principle of non-intervention. We do not hear that he or Bright took any part in opposing the Afghan and Chinese wars, or that they supported Lord Ashley in his attack on the opium trade, probably because all their energies were then absorbed in the Free Trade struggle. When Free Trade triumphed those energies became available for a wider policy, and the late chiefs of the League proved, by their opposition to the Russian war and the second Chinese war, that the principles of international justice and peace had become an integral part of their creed. They valued trade, but not the extension of trade by violence and chicane.

It was not only in the Levant, in the Far East, or in Ireland, that the interests of justice and mercy collided with the interests of national vainglory or plutocratic greed. I have already touched on the history of factory legislation, and in that connection I have shown with how little truth an exclusive claim has been set up on behalf of Toryism for the merit of intervening to protect the helpless sufferers

¹ Hodder, *Life of Lord Shaftesbury*, vol. i., p. 475.

against their taskmasters. Lord Ashley complained with reason of the extent to which the Whig Government of 1833 had limited his scheme for the prohibition of child-labour in factories, and again in 1836 of the imperfect way in which the law actually passed was allowed to work. But Peel had not been long in power before the great philanthropist discovered that less was to be hoped for from him and from his colleagues than from their predecessors. "This Government," he writes in his private diary, "is ten times more hostile to my views than the last, and they carry it (*sic*) out in a manner far more severe and embarrassing."¹

In August, 1840, Ashley obtained a Commission to inquire into the employment of children in mines and collieries. Its first report appeared in May, 1842, unveiling a mass of misery and depravity that left the evils of factory labour far behind, and approached the horrors of the African slave-trade. The Home Office tried, but failed, first to keep back the report, and then to prevent its sale. This time public opinion was fairly roused, and Ashley's Bill to forbid the labour of women and children in coal-pits passed both Houses in the same Session, unsupported by the Government, received with coldness by the Lords, and nearly wrecked by their amendments, one of the worst being due to the Marquess of Londonderry, a high Tory peer.

By an Act passed in 1844 children were forbidden to work in factories under the age of nine, and to work for more than six hours and a-half a day under thirteen. Ashley proposed a ten-hour day

¹ *Life*, vol. i., p. 409.

for young persons from thirteen to twenty-one, but failed to carry his amendment. His supporters were mostly Conservatives, whom we may not uncharitably conjecture to have been in some degree animated by hatred of the manufacturers; but he also carried with him such representative Whigs as Russell, Palmerston, and Macaulay. By his own account, his "strength lay at first among the Radicals, the Irishmen, and a few sincere Whigs and Conservatives."¹ Members of the League suspected the sincerity of a philanthropist who voted for taxing the people's bread, and who showed no interest in the woes of the labourers on his father's Dorsetshire estate. Lord Ashley set himself right with the Free Traders by accepting total repeal, but lost his seat in consequence, and remained out of Parliament for years. During his absence the conduct of the Ten Hours Bill was entrusted to John Fielden, a cotton manufacturer, a Radical, and a Unitarian. After one more defeat it passed both Houses by large majorities in 1847, many Conservatives, according to Ashley, taking this opportunity of revenging themselves on Peel and the League.² Further legislation in 1850 and 1853, carried by Liberal Ministers, gave fresh protection to women and children against overwork. The same principle has since been more widely extended and safeguarded with the co-operation of both parties, and individual statesmen who were once opposed to it have admitted that they were mistaken. That the Tories should claim this as a triumph for themselves is even more

¹ *Life*, vol. ii., p. 209.

² *Life*, vol. ii., p. 202.

absurd than their now abandoned claim to the championship of Free Trade. Both are particular applications of Bentham's supreme principle—the greatest happiness of the greatest number—which no single rule either of interference or of non-interference can exhaust.

Lord Ashley complains that at first only a single minister of religion supported him, and even to the last very few.¹ He is distressed and puzzled "to find support from infidels or non-professors; opposition or coldness from religionists or declaimers." He points out that in the war with Scinde (1842) all the bad faith was on the side of the Christian conquerors, the vain appeals to justice on the side of the Mohammedan Ameers,² as previously, after the Opium War, that "Christians had shed more heathen blood in two years than heathens had shed of Christian blood in two centuries";³ hears also with disgust that "many persons of *piety* defend and practise slavery" in America.⁴ Yet, according to him, the salvation of the English poor depended on their being given a religious education, and a dogmatic one at that. Sir James Graham's abortive Factory Bill of 1843 contained provisions, more or less compulsory, for the education of the half-time children, the schools to be mainly under clerical control. Dissenters and Roman Catholics not unreasonably objected to a scheme for practically handing over the factory children to the tuition of the Church of England. Graham sought to con-

¹ *Life*, vol. ii., p. 202.

³ *Ibid*, vol. i., pp. 440-41.

² *Ibid*, vol. ii., p. 11.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 448.

ciliate them—vainly, as the event proved—by directing that Bible teaching should be limited to reading the text, without note or comment. For the sake of peace, Ashley accepted this arrangement, but described it as “leaving a Socinian in Socinian ignorance, and a Socialist in Socialist impurities,” and spoke of himself as feeling “a nausea almost to faintness” at having to gulp it down.¹

Lord Ashley was, for an Evangelical, exceptionally statesmanlike and tolerant. But, besides objecting to simple Bible teaching, he passionately opposed Peel's increased grant to Maynooth College, and in this he not only represented the opinion of Peel's own party, but the prevailing opinion of Great Britain. For having supported the grant, Macaulay, otherwise a most popular candidate, lost his seat at Edinburgh in the general election of 1847. Up to 1847 English Roman Catholic schools were refused a share in the education grant. In that year the injustice was removed, not without violent opposition from Lord Ashley and the Wesleyans, at the motion of Sir William Molesworth,² a Benthamite, who probably had no religious belief—a suspicion also attaching to Macaulay.

Thus once more, as in the previous decade, we find theological prejudices opposing a barrier to educational progress which the most disinterested benevolence could not overcome, which had to be met by a radical change in the intellectual con-

¹ *Life*, vol. i., p. 461.

² Mrs. Fawcett, *Life of Sir W. Molesworth*, p. 262.

victions of the people. After studying the English political and social revolution, we must now return to trace the course of that scientific, philosophical, and critical movement whose still unexhausted impulses are continuing to bear us forward towards new horizons at the present day.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MASTER-BUILDERS

DURING the earlier part of the nineteenth century a strong interest in Bacon's philosophy may be observed among the young Liberals of the period. It led them to conceive the discoveries and inventions of their own age as part of a general movement in which political reform represented no more than a single line of advance. But it soon appeared that the great Chancellor's work had all to be done over again. Sir John Herschel's *Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy*, published in 1830, showed, by its analysis of the experimental methods, what Bacon, not being himself an expert, could not know—that is, how scientific discoveries are actually made. It was followed, in 1837, by Whewell's *History of the Inductive Sciences*, a work which, although imperfect and in some parts retrograde, had the merit of suggesting still more forcibly the idea of science as one vast and connected body of doctrine. J. S. Mill acknowledges that, without the facts brought together by Whewell, his own *Logic* would not have been written.

Besides these products of native thought, a potent foreign influence, acting in the same direction, suddenly came into play. The earlier volumes of Auguste Comte's *Philosophie Positive* were appearing in Paris at this time, and speedily attracted the notice of some influential British

thinkers. Comte taught that the earliest social institutions were founded on theological conceptions of nature, on the belief that all phenomena are the product of personal volitions. Personal government and militarism go together with such views. Next comes a metaphysical or transitional period, in which abstract entities take the place of gods or of God as the explanation of whatever happens to us or about us. Finally, with the discovery that phenomena result from the invariable properties of matter acting by fixed laws of co-existence and succession, begins the positive or scientific stage of human progress, the maturity and perfection of society. Theologies, monarchies, and militarism, already undermined by metaphysical criticism, are destined to disappear in that ultimate stage, being replaced by a systematic intelligence of the world, founded on observation and reasoning, enabling us to foresee and provide for the future, and accompanied by a peaceful re-organisation of society on an industrial basis. The object of Comte's Positive Philosophy is to replace the dogmatic summaries of mediæval Catholicism and the abstract metaphysical systems of a later day by a conspectus of the fundamental sciences arranged in their logical order, with a general account of their methods, principles, and laws. At the summit of the series is placed the new science of sociology, which Comte claims as his own special creation. In a masterly survey of universal history he traces the development of society through the growth and decline of theology and war up to the dawn of an age when science and industry shall reign supreme.

Mill had been prepared to accept Comte's philosophy in so far as it agreed with what was permanent in eighteenth-century rationalism and what was progressive in nineteenth-century historical romanticism, by a study of the great Scottish thinkers, and by a similar though less complete training in modern science. He had long been preparing a systematic work on logic; it was completed almost simultaneously with the appearance of Comte's last volume, and incorporated some of the Frenchman's views, with qualifications rendering them less offensive to English prejudices. Mill accepts the law of the Three Stages, but tries to show that the belief in a fixed order of nature is quite compatible with the belief in a personal Creator, although in private he made no secret of not sharing that belief himself. In another way, however, Mill's *System of Logic* is more hostile to theology even than Comte's Positivism. Comte is so occupied with laws that he seems to overlook their true relation to causes. How phenomena are produced, he tells us, is beyond the power of man to know. All we know or need know is the order of their appearance. But no dogmatic pronouncements of the kind can prevent people from speculating on the subject; and the most effectual way to satisfy their curiosity is to show, as Mill shows, by an analysis of the idea itself, that causation means no more than unconditional antecedence. If something happens, something else will happen, and so on for ever. In order that something may happen, something else must have happened immediately before it, and so back for ever. What we say of any one event