

Imperial Parliament.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

JUNE 27.

POLICE SPIES.

Mr. COBBETT said he had a petition to present which, if it contained the truth, must convince the House and the people of the country that they might now say with the Psalmist, "In the midst of life we are in death." The petition alleged that the police were employed systematically as spies, and he (Mr. Cobbett) would declare that he was in a condition to prove it. It was from the undersigned members of the Political Union of Camberwell and Walworth, and stated that William Popay had been a member for many months of their Political Union, and that at their meetings he had frequently urged them to use stronger language, and on many occasions had altered with his own pen the resolutions proposed at the meetings, so as to make them more violent. On these occasions he railed against the Government, and used such expressions as "Damn the Ministry." He proposed to some of the petitioners to open a shooting gallery, and to teach the use of the broadsword, of which he boasted to have a perfect knowledge.—He was always the first to promote anything that tended to military display, and subscribed to purchase a flag, and to pay for a band to attend a meeting of the people on Kennington Common, to which meeting he walked in procession, arm-in-arm with one of the petitioners. In the month of August last, he formed one of a party to make an excursion to visit a class of the Political Union at Richmond, when he paid all the expenses incurred by the party who accompanied him, by whom he was re-paid at the conclusion of the day.

At this moment an Hon. Member moved that the House be counted, and strangers were ordered to withdraw. On our return we found

Mr. COBBETT again on his legs, going on with the reading of the petition. At the funeral of Jeremy Bentham, Popay was seen taking notes. On all occasions this man had represented himself to be in very poor circumstances, originating from an act of oppression towards him, and the petitioners in consequence had frequently relieved Popay's wife and children. Popay generally carried a bag or portfolio, and represented himself as dealing in light articles of stationery and fancy goods. He did not enrol himself at the Union by his own name, but in fictitious names, the last of which was Pearce; and he stated his reason to be that he was afraid of offending some gentlemen who were his friends, among whom he mentioned Mr. Alderman Wilson. All this time it was quite unknown to the petitioners that Popay belonged to the police; but he was stationed at Brixton, and after these proceedings with the Political Unions of Camberwell and Walworth, which he carried on in plain clothes, he was promoted to the situation of clerk of the police, and subsequently to that of deputy inspector, and is now stationed at Park-place, Walworth. In February last he was charged, in the presence of some of the petitioners, with being a policeman in disguise, which he most solemnly denied. It was George Furse who first preferred the charge against him of belonging to the police; the very George Furse who was now imprisoned in Newgate on a charge of having wounded the policeman at the Calthorpe-street meeting. It was thus, then, said the Hon. Member, that spies were sent about among the people, under the pretence of their being employed as police for the preservation of the peace. It was thus that spies were sent out to entrap the thoughtless, and to plunge families into misery. The petitioners said that they had frequently seen other policemen at different places, and particularly at public meetings, sometimes dressed as gentlemen, at other times as artisans, or in sailors' jackets or farmers' frocks; so that the petitioners might be truly said to be living among spies and betrayers. The petitioners respectfully prayed that the hon. House would cause an immediate inquiry to be made in the matter, and enable them to give evidence of the truth of their statements, which they were fully prepared to do; so that themselves and their families might be protected from such wrongs and perils for the future.—(Hear, hear.) If, said the hon. Member, the people of this country were to be compelled to live among spies and traitors, the sooner they were all out of the world the better. He was convinced, from the most undoubted evidence, that it was impossible for any man to go into a coffee-house, or an eating-house, or for the more humble classes of society to go even into a beer-shop, without taking his chance of having every action watched by a villainous spy. There they were to be met with in all sorts of dresses, to suit their iniquitous purposes.—According to the rule that had been very recently laid down, when another hon. Member was presenting a petition, he (Mr. Cobbett) could not be called upon to prove all the allegations of any petition he presented, or indeed to be answerable at all for the facts. But, in presenting this petition, he would boldly say that he would prove

that all the facts therein stated were true.—He would pledge himself to their truth in the same way as any attorney or advocate in a cause could be expected to pledge himself, for he had taken some pains in the matter, he had seen and examined the witnesses himself, and all the allegations in the petition were true. Since the petition had been put into his hands, two persons had waited upon him with written proofs—not oral, but written, proofs—that this William Popay had subscribed towards the establishing of a depot of arms. He had put his name down to the list, and he had induced that unfortunate man, Furse, who was now in Newgate, to put down his name, but Furse, as soon as he discovered that this man was a spy, struck his own name out of the list. He (Mr. Cobbett) had always charged the Government with getting up the police for these purposes: they were a spy police, and he had always called them so. Now Government might, or might not, know all about the transactions which the petition narrated, but whether Ministers knew anything about them or not, somebody under the Government knew all about it; for the man was employed by the police; he had his situation to keep; he must have received his pay regularly, and yet he was walking about in plain clothes, denying he was a policeman. Somebody must have known that he was a spy.—The petitioners offered to give proof that Popay was at the Calthorpe-street meeting, dressed in private clothes; and who could say how many other policemen were there in the same state, and how much they had contributed to getting up the meeting? He would say that it was a second Cato-street plot, see how much it agreed with the proceedings on that occasion.—(Hear, hear.)—After the meeting in Calthorpe-street, the Jury was called to say how the man Cully had met with his death, and during the inquest the Jury had quite enough to do to combat with the Coroner, and after all their trouble, and they had brought in their verdict, which they had signed, the Coroner got them to sign also a blank inquisition, which he filled up with an inquest that was entirely inconsistent with the verdict. Instead of doing his duty, which was to make the inquest comport with the verdict, the Solicitor-General, and the hon. Member for Kidderminster, according to what they had said in that House, were not aware of the practice of signing blank inquisitions. What occurred after the verdict? Why, the Government immediately offered a reward for the apprehension of the murderer. Then came the concluding link, in the shape of a paragraph, in a Government paper, for so he must take that paper to be—it was the *Morning Chronicle*. The paragraph stated in substance that a few days before, Furse had been clearly identified by a disinterested witness as the murderer of Cully. Now he asked the House to put these facts together, and remember that Furse was the man who detected the spy policeman, at Walworth—(Cries of "Hear, hear")—and poor Furse was the man whose blood was to be spilt to expiate the crime of detecting a Government spy—for detecting a man who, although he was going about in private clothes, had been twice promoted. Who could say then that we did not live under an abominable spy system? He had said, on a previous occasion, that the police were as bad as the mouchards or *gens d'armes* of France; but a Member of the Government had told him they were not like either, but he would say that they were now proved to be like both.—In what did they not resemble them—how were spies treated in the time of war? Why, they were not even asked what they were looking after.—(Hear, hear.) No matter what their motives were, they were found as spies, and when caught, there was nothing to do but to hang them. But this, the House should remember, was among enemies; but what should they do with those who were spies among friends, with those who went about in civil society endeavouring to bring innocent men to an ignominious end? What could they think of the man who did this among those who had assisted to support himself, his wife, and his family? Could anything be more ignominious? The very people they were seeking to betray were those whose goods were sometimes sold to contribute towards their maintenance. When was there a country in such a state of degradation as this?—(Hear, hear, hear.) Never. It would be some consolation to them to hear that there ever had. There were other circumstances attending the police—these men were in the habit of receiving presents, suspicious presents, under some want of excuse, such as looking after property, but they were obliged to render an account of these suspicious presents to their superiors, with whom they had to divide the spoil; and what would be the consequence by and by?—(Hear, hear.) Why this custom would become a demand, and then woe be to the man who should refuse to make a present to the policemen. He was the more determined in his opposition to this Government plan of villainous police, because the Government wanted to extend its ignominious application into every little town and village in the country.

As he had been told by a Worthy Alderman that there was at the present moment a

committee sitting on police affairs, he would not apply for the appointment of any committee, but move that the petition should be referred to the sitting committee upon the subject.

After some conversation, Mr. Cobbett said he should, when His Majesty's Ministers were present, again bring the matter before the House.

The petition was then ordered to lie on the table.

PROGRESS OF LIBERAL OPINIONS IN BOTH HEMISPHERES.

From the Crisis, edit. by R. Owen.

We have now before us publications affording a remarkable evidence of the growth of the public mind in America and India, two countries, which in manners, customs, religion, and politics are as far removed from each other as they are in geographical situation. Who would appear to differ so widely in condition as the free-born republican and the subjugated Hindoo? and yet in both do we find the same spirit of inquiry and indomitable resolution to maintain the cause of TRUTH.

This fact calls up a train of ideas which is terminated alone by the cheering prospect of an emancipated world and one universal family. In the East as well as the West, it is true, we hear of struggles and persecution; but these, we are persuaded, will finally contribute to the tranquillity of the whole. To this conclusion we are chiefly led by the analogy which exists, though not in name, yet in the character of the disputes between the respective parties in both countries. Well may we, in more civilized Europe, inquire whether our discussions are more reasonable or justifiable than the scruples of the Americans to forsake Methodism, or those of the Hindoos to abjure idolatry.—A hundred years hence and our children will regard our senseless disputations with the same feelings as we now look upon a people contending for the worship of images of wood and stone. This reflection ought, at least, to render us less tenacious of old opinions, and more open to conviction as to the truth of those which are newly advanced, than most of us are disposed to be—for improvement and perfection are ever before us. We must never look back for them.

In Europe, America, and India, we find two parties, calling themselves the Orthodox and the Liberal, and in each country the term means something different. The Orthodox Hindoo stands up for polytheism and an abstinence from meals; and resists all innovation upon these long established customs of his nation, as subversive of religion and propriety. The Orthodox American is in many instances a stickler for revivals and camp meetings, prophesying the ruin of the nation unless these stately continue.—The Orthodox European stops short before this point of enthusiasm, but tenaciously asserts that unless the doctrines of Christianity are fully maintained, the world itself will be turned upside down. Now, who is to decide between these infallible guides to truth and happiness? We answer, Time: and Time has proved to us that India groans under a weight of mental and moral evil entailed by Hindooism; that the progress of civilization in America is retarded by fanaticism; and that Europe lies under a complication of difficulties resulting from party and sectarian feeling.

The Liberals in each country are the pioneers to clear the path of future progress.—We see that the great laws of the universe require a continual mutation and improvement in society—and why should any be opposed to this most desirable end? It is the interest of all that such should take place.—Let no one look upon society as a corrupt mass, without tracing the visible marks of regeneration which its bears upon its features. To imagine that they do not exist, is to believe a theory in contradiction to what we see around us in the visible world.

Here, in England, in the nineteenth century, we have a prominent sign of the progress of society. Hitherto all changes and improvements have been carried on at the point of the sword; but now we cast away this weapon from us for ever, perceiving, through our additional experience, that reasoning and persuasion, by expositions, theoretical and practical, are the only legitimate forces to be opposed to error.—Discovering the root of the evils against which we are contending to be the divisions existing among mankind, we wish to sink every obstacle that may rise up in the way of union. Whatever proves a bar to this desirable end, whether it may have been hitherto regarded as of a sacred or profane character, we are satisfied is wrong,—is, in fact, immoral in its tendency, and ought to be removed. Who can differ with us in opinion on this point? Who can say, whatever creed he may profess, that union is not the ultimatum of the desires of society, and the foundation upon which not only its happiness, but its very existence rests? For this reason we would go forth, and with the touchstone of truth, viz. consistency—try all things, whether opinions or institutions, by this test; judging thence of their tendency permanently to unite or divide mankind, and would reject

or retain them accordingly. Does any one refuse this mode of decision? he is no true Christian; for peace and good will are the essence of his religion.

We have been led to these remarks by the perusal of two papers, the one published periodically in New-York, the other in Calcutta. By a singular coincidence they are both denominated "the Enquirer," a name particularly denoting the temper of the times.—We wish that there were Enquirers all over the world, and we should soon have believers in what we conceive to be truth, that truth leading to universal union.

We shall begin with extracts from the Calcutta paper, which is edited by a native named Baboo Krishna Mohana Banerjea, who thus declares himself:—

"We have perceived Hindooism is folly, and we speak against it. If we be not convinced of the truth of Christianity, we cannot possibly do it any mischief for we are only clearing the obstacles that lie in the way of its propagation, and preparing the mind to receive it if true.

"A reverend gentleman of the Presbyterian sect, has undertaken this task of unfolding to us the nature of this set of doctrines. We attend him every Tuesday evening, and avail ourselves of his benevolent services with feelings of thankfulness. Whether we shall be convinced of all that he says or not, it is impossible for us to predict at present. We have entered into the inquiry with a sincere love of truth; and this is all we could do. Conviction depends not on the will; one cannot at his own pleasure feel a certain truth, although he may pretend to do so.—Before we are settled respecting it, we will not be so short-sighted as to be hostile to it."

Again, referring to the Hindoo religion, he says:—

"Then let the fanatic and the bigot bewail in silence the fate of their religion. The liberal, although now persecuted by brutal tyranny will soon have occasion to seal his triumph in the overthrow of ignorance. Proud shall we be of such a day; and all the pains, all the troubles we are at present undergoing, will be lost in the high satisfaction we shall feel at the triumph of knowledge over ignorance; of civilization over barbarism; and of truth over falsehood."

Such language as this makes us yearn for the day when the cause of truth shall be so advanced in England, as to permit its advocates to become missionaries in every part of the world. This noble-minded Hindoo and his party have thrown off the trammels of one superstition; but it appears highly doubtful whether their limited knowledge will enable them to cast aside all "mystery and mixture of error," and seize upon such principles alone as will lead to universal union. The tenor of their words seems to import, that they have not as yet perceived the true basis upon which society must be built, and therefore, we dread that the tragic scenes, enacted in Europe during the last 1800 years, may be repeated in the eastern continent.

Friends of peace and union in England! redouble your exertions at home, that ye may have the greater chance of averting this dire calamity from millions of your fellow-creatures in distant regions.

IMPORTANT TO SHIPOWNERS, &c.—Extract of a letter from John Wilks, Esq., M. P., to Mr. Noble, of Boston:—

House of Commons, June 17.

"My dear Sir,—I do not know whether the shipowners and mariners of Boston are apprised that the Treasury has at length issued an order that tea for ship's stores may now be shipped in such quantities as are required, according to the duration of the voyage and the number of men. At Hull this order is hailed as a great concession, and a considerable relief to the maritime populace of this town. At Boston, therefore, I presume it may also be a benefit, and I shall be obliged if you will give it publicity to the parties affected, if it should as yet be unknown.—Yours, very truly,

JOHN WILKS."

—Lincolnshire Chronicle.

At the meeting of West India proprietors, held on Saturday week, we are informed that resolutions were passed expressive of the determination of the parties to use their utmost endeavours to prevail on the colonial assemblies to adopt as speedily as possible, the ministerial plans for the emancipation of the negroes; but they are desirous that, while the broader features of the measure are drawn by act of Parliament, it may be left to the local legislatures to fill up the details in the manner best suited to their respective habits and circumstances; and it is believed, from the tone of Mr. Stanley's late speech, that this will be to some extent acceded to.—Globe.

COLONIZATION.—The sixteenth annual report of the American Colonization Society occupies a pamphlet of forty pages, and abounds with the evidences of the success and prosperity of the colony of Liberia.—New-York Paper.

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