

the public mind. We may, though, have quinquennial or triennial Parliaments ere long. As regards payment of members the debate in the House of Commons the other evening showed that this is not far off. Thus these six points of the Charter of 1835 have all become common-places, most of them have been already passed, and the remainder are in the way of being passed. Yet in 1835, when these points were first promulgated, and even later, long after the Chartist movement had collapsed, they were regarded as utterly revolutionary, and the men who advocated the Charter were imprisoned and even shot down by troops. History is now repeating itself. The reaction after the Reform Bill of 1884 has long been expended. The new electorate, startled out of its equanimity by being called upon to vote in a new way, or for the first time in 1885, had not recovered in 1886, when it sent the present Conservative Government into office. It has recovered now, and if there is any reliance to be placed in historical precedents, the next election will see the Conservative administration swept from office by an overwhelming Liberal majority at the polls.

There is at the moment a principle at stake, and it is this—Does the franchise mean anything or does it not? That principle is at stake in two directions. First, as regards Ireland; second, as regards labour. Almost since the ill-fated Union the Irish have been demanding emancipation from what they regarded as the alien rule of England. They have been demanding self-government. Mr. Joseph Cowen, who, besides being a great phrasemonger, has many of the qualities of a great man, has said in one of his series of epigrams delivered as speeches, that “the most erring form of self-government is better than the most benign