

DONE BEING IN ITSELF VITALLY WRONG, as tending to lessen instead of to increase the employment of our masses, at home, at sea, and in the colonies—thus containing in it the seeds of revolution, both at home and in our foreign dependencies, whether done constitutionally or unconstitutionally.

* Mr Cobden, in the speech from which the above is taken, was doing no more than repeating what the newspaper organs of every other party in British politics had long ago admitted as to the obvious change in the constitution of Parliament about to be forced on us by the policy of 1846. The following are a few samples of these admissions by the newspapers:—"It is not at all improbable, that having endeavoured to evade the question of protection by discussions on this (the Extension of the Suffrage and Financial Reform) and similar subjects, the Ministers will attempt to shuffe out of their engagement to the Humo and Walmsey section; but considering the class who already exercise the suffrage, it may be doubted whether an extension of it would not be an improvement. The most ignorant and ill-disposed class of the community already have votes, and the intermixture of the poorer but far more intelligent artisan classes would be a benefit rather than an injury. The votes of the *Copplewey* would to a great degree be neutralized by the infusion of a really industrious and intelligent class. As we have seen, the Ministers are not wholly blind to this, though the *Copplewey* leaders themselves are. Whether the Whigs succeeded in disappointing their reform supporters, or whether the latter succeeded in binding the Ministers to the reform policy, the country is likely to be the gainer; for it is likely to get rid of each of the rivals, whatever the result of their Thoban struggle."—*From the London Standard of 29th January, 1850.*

"After a trial of seventeen years, it cannot be denied that with regard to any systematic legislation for the amelioration of the moral and material condition of the working classes, the Reform Act has failed to make good the professions which it held out, and by means of which chiefly it was carried. The objects which its authors then professed to desire have not been attained by the measure which they prescribed as sufficient to effect them."

Our complaint, therefore, against the Reform Act, is not with regard to the nature, but to the extent of the measure which it has produced. In 1832 the necessity was felt of effecting a change which should secure a greater attention to the interests of the middle and working classes. The change which was actually accomplished resembled the answer of Jove to the hero's petition—he granted half the prayer, the other half he scattered to the winds. Since 1832 we have had a systematic course of legislation, in which the wants and wishes of the middle class have been carefully attended to, and their interests habitually consulted. But have we seen signs of the same solicitude with respect to the necessities and interests—certainly not less pressing nor less important—of the working classes? We do not, indeed, for an instant suppose that there can be any antagonism or contrariety between the interests of the employer and those of the employed; no error could be more fatal, no doctrine more mischievous. We are most anxious to assert that the gain of the former is ultimately, though indirectly, the gain of the latter. But while we admit the concurrence of their interests, we deny that they are at all points co-extensive.

* * * This is our charge against the reformed House of Commons, that it has dealt effectually with no question where the interests of the middle class ceased to be co-extensive with those of the working class. The long and anxious discussions, the thorough and effective legislation, on all commercial questions, contrasted with the indifference to educational and sanitary measures, and with the miserably insufficient provision for these objects—completely establish our position. The predominant influence in the legislature had no direct interest in these questions, and they consequently went to the wall."—*From the Peel Organ, the Morning Chronicle, of 6th September, 1849.*

"Hence we can say to the gentlemen of the Reform League, your project fills us with no terror on account of what we may lose. We are not inclined to receive a new constitution at your hands: but as for the existing system of representation, it came from the Birmingham mint—A Lambton was its principal inventor. NO CONSERVATIVE ASSISTED AT ITS FABRICATION; NOR WILL ANY CONSERVATIVE MOURN WILKINSON AS BASE METEAL, IF SHALL BE CAST AWAY. * * * We end as we began, by recommending these matters to the consideration of the Conservatives. There is nothing in the existing system for which they are bound to fight. And any change in which justice and common-sense are not thrown quite out of view, must be a change for the better. So saying, however, we give no accord or approval to the Drury Lane proceedings. We doubt the honesty of the promoters of that movement. We fear that their ultimate object is to get the government of the country, by fair means or by foul, into their own hands. But this conviction makes us only the more anxious that a great question, such as that of the representation, should not be left entirely in their possession."—*Morning Herald, August 18, 1849.*

"By the Reform Bill two-thirds of the seats in the House of Commons were given to the boroughs, and two-thirds of the voters in the boroughs, in the new constituency, were shopkeepers or those in their interest. Thus a decisive majority in the House which, from having command of the public purse,

practically became possessed of supreme power, was vested in those who made their living by buying and selling—with whom cheap prices (and low wages as a necessary consequence) was all in all. The producing classes were virtually, and to all practical purposes, cast out of the scale. The landed interest on all questions vital to its welfare, would evidently soon be in a minority."—*From Blackwood's Magazine for July, 1849.*

"In regarding Peel's monetary school, or the Horse of Commons as at present constituted, we fully sympathize with Cromwell when he told the Parliament to make room for better men. The original policy and present effort of Peel's class is to bribe the money market, by giving money a monopoly of the property and labour markets. PETERBURY seems altogether incapable of seeing that in all countries the goodness or popularity of a government is just in the proportion that it sides with the labour, as opposed to the money, power."—*From the Glasgow Examiner of 4th Nov., 1848.*

"Before, however, the gigantic speculations upon human labour, in which the manufacturers here and elsewhere fondly indulge, can be carried out to completion, something yet remains to be consulted—that is, the will of the labouring classes. There is a mind whose secret workings and deep communings with itself the world does not seem to heed; there is a voice whose fearful accents in all their strength and power the world has not yet heard—the mind and the voice of the working population throughout Christendom, burdened beyond the power of further endurance, and asking in every hand, where the region of righteous resistance begins? If governments take not good heed, this mind and voice will one day give utterance to the sense of wrong unjustly inflicted in forms and ways that will shake from their foundations all the existing institutions of the earth. The doctrine that the only true capital is labour, however specious and unsound in its application, is gaining fast hold of the mind of the masses. The claim of the workman to eat the fruits of the earth—to partake of the gifts of God—to be warm and to be clothed—to be fed when he is hungry, and to be sheltered from the storm, in fair return for the toil of his arm and the sweat of his brow, is daily making itself heard in accents that cannot be mistaken. A communism of interests—of indignation at the infliction of past wrongs—of determination to resist fresh oppressions, is binding the labouring classes of all lands into one powerful fraternity. TO MEET THIS GROWING CONFESSION OF THE FACT IS BY FAR THE MOST DIFFICULT TASK OF THE STATESMAN IN THE PRESENT DAY; FOR IT IS BY FAR THE MOST FEARFUL AND DANGEROUS ELEMENT WITH WHICH HE HAS YET TO DEAL."—*The Church of England Quarterly Review of April, 1846.*

† English Churchmen no doubt thought that by joining Peel in 1840 they would make themselves appear popular, and thus prevent the Church being the subject of the next sweeping reform. In this course, however, they displayed the same want of philosophy as the liberalizing Pope did at Rome; for even if protection to native industry did truly mean monopoly (a thing we deny), it were still a much less sectional monopoly than we have before us in their overgrown Church Establishment, which, therefore, on their own anti-monopoly principle, is a public nuisance and must immediately be done away.

† With reference to my proposition, as above, that the Lords should not only owe their power over the legislation of the country to their having been born nobles, but also to their election by a particular constituency, I may explain that my object is most conservative. I think this is the only way to save the aristocratic element for our social system. I see that at present anything wrong or unpopular which the Lords do tells against their order; whereas, by my plan, it would only tell against the individual of the majority in the House of Lords, who would probably be left at home at the next election, peers more suited to the spirit of the age being selected; while a bond would be formed, by the measure I propose, between our highest and lowest class, which would not only become apparent in their mutual respect, but in this union, furnishing the best and only check we can have against the foreign or foreign trade interest in this country, which has had the industry to interfere so barefacedly in British politics. If the foreign agents or merchants were to attempt to interfere in American politics, as the German Jews and other foreigners (or men with entirely foreign interests) did at the time of the Anti-Corn-Law League in Manchester, the domestic of America would be sure to turn and feather them; but it appears to me that, in the constitution of British society, we may yet be able to find a milder remedy against the interference in our politics of men who have no patriotism, or, at least, the allegiance of whose interests is not to Britain.

§ Besides the evidence on page 9, of the political economists knowing that democratic legislation would be protective legislation, we have plenty of evidence that the original economists in France were also well aware of this.

"The foregoing observations on the general aim of the *Economical System*, refer solely (as must appear evident to those who have perused them with attention) to the doctrines it contains on the article of *Political Economy*. The *THEORY OF GOVERNMENT* which it inculcates is of the most dangerous tendency; RECOMMENDING, IN STRONG AND UNQUALIFIED