

character of the government, and was amply justified by its fruits, political, financial, and social. The classes then admitted to power were fully as fit for its exercise as those which had before enjoyed it. In the Reform Bill, brought forward some thirty years after by the Whigs, there was much more of the merely demagogic or party element, though ground for a wise extension of the suffrage was still presented by the existence of a numerous class of intelligent artisans whom it was most desirable to bring within the pale of the Constitution. The Tory Reform Bill of 1868, enfranchising the populace of the cities, while the agricultural labourers, a worthier class, were left unenfranchised, was an attempt of profligate strategists to ally ignorance and mob violence with aristocracy against the respectable and educated citizens of the middle class, who were the peculiar objects of its framer's insolent hatred. The manœuvre obtained a measure of transient success, but its price has still to be paid by the conspirators. The new electors of 1832, being already prepared for the exercise of political power, showed from the outset what their influence on government would be; but the masses of small householders and lodgers, to whom the Bill of 1868 gave votes, being for the most part devoid of political ideas, were at first blindly led by local clubs and by the beer-cup; they are just beginning to be conscious of the power placed in their hands, and to indicate the use which they are likely to make of it. Those who have studied the history of political progress will renounce, once for all, the hope of preserving social order for the future by means of the dead forms of the past; they will heartily embrace the elective principle as the only one on which in our day stable institutions can be built; they will see that the task before us is so to order the elective system as to give reason and public spirit the ascendancy over passion and self-interest; and they will recognise the utility as well as the justice of a broad basis, and of the participation of as many citizens as possible in the active work of political life. "That is the best form of government which doth most actuate and dispose all parts and members of a commonwealth to the common good." The new, in spite of all imperfections and perils, is the better and higher state. But wise and righteous