

# JOHN LORD

BEACON LIGHTS OF  
HISTORY, VOLUME 10:  
EUROPEAN LEADERS

**John Lord**  
**Beacon Lights of History,**  
**Volume 10: European Leaders**

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Beacon Lights of History, Volume 10: European Leaders:*

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# **John Lord**

## **Beacon Lights of History,**

### **Volume 10: European Leaders**

#### **WILLIAM IV**

**1765-1837**

#### **ENGLISH REFORMS**

On the death of George IV. in 1830, a new political era dawned on England. His brother, William IV., who succeeded him, was not his equal in natural ability, but was more respectable in his character and more liberal in his views. With William IV. began the undisputed ascendancy of the House of Commons in national affairs. Before his day, no prime minister could govern against the will of the sovereign. After George IV., as in France under Louis Philippe, "the king reigned, but did not govern." The chief of the ascendent political party was the real ruler.

When William IV. ascended the throne the Tories were

still in power, and were hostile to reform. But the agitations and discontents of the latter days of George IV. had made the ministry unpopular. Great political reformers had arisen, like Lords Grey, Althorp, and Russell, and great orators like Henry Brougham and Macaulay, who demanded a change in the national policy. The social evils which stared everybody in the face were a national disgrace; they made the boasted liberty of the English a mockery. There was an unparalleled distress among the laboring classes, especially in the mining and manufacturing districts. The price of labor had diminished, while the price of bread had increased. So wretched was the condition of the poor that there were constant riots and insurrections, especially in large towns. In war times unskilled laborers earned from twelve to fifteen shillings a week, and mechanics twenty-five shillings; but in the stagnation of business which followed peace, wages suffered a great reduction, and thousands could find no work at all. The disbanding of the immense armies that had been necessary to combat Napoleon threw out of employ perhaps half a million of men, who became vagabonds, beggars, and paupers. The agricultural classes did not suffer as much as operatives in mills, since they got a high price for their grain; but the more remunerative agriculture became to landlords, the more miserable were those laborers who paid all they could earn to save themselves from absolute starvation. No foreign grain could be imported until wheat had arisen to eighty shillings a "quarter,"

<sup>1</sup>--which unjust law tended to the enrichment of land-owners, and to a corresponding poverty among the laboring classes. In addition to the high price which the people paid for bread, they were taxed heavily upon everything imported, upon everything consumed, upon the necessities and conveniences of life as well as its luxuries,—on tea, on coffee, on sugar, on paper, on glass, on horses, on carriages, on medicines,—since money had to be raised to pay the interest on the national debt and to provide for the support of the government, including pensions, sinecures, and general extravagance.

In the poverty which enormous taxes and low wages together produced, there were not only degradation and squalid misery in England at this time, but violence and crime. And there was also great injustice in the laws which punished crime. There were two hundred and twenty-three offences punishable with death. If a starving peasant killed a hare, he was summarily hanged. Catholics were persecuted for their opinions; Jews were disqualified from holding office. Only men of comfortable means were allowed to vote. The universities were closed against Dissenters. No man stood any chance of political preferment unless he was rich or was allied with the aristocracy, who controlled the House of Commons. The nobles and squires not merely owned most of the landed property of the realm, but by their "rotten boroughs" could send whom they pleased to Parliament. In consequence the House of Commons did not

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<sup>1</sup> A quarter of a gross ton.

represent the nation, but only the privileged classes. It was as aristocratic as the House of Lords.

In the period of repose which succeeded the excitements of war the people began to see their own political insignificance, and to agitate for reforms. A few noble-minded and able statesmen of the more liberal party, if any political party could be called liberal, lifted up their voices in Parliament for a redress of scandalous evils; but the eloquence which distinguished them was a mere protest. They were in a hopeless minority; nothing could be done to remove or ameliorate public evils so long as the majority of the House of Commons were opposed to reform. It is obvious that the only thing the reformers could do, whether in or out of Parliament, was to agitate, to discuss, to hold public meetings, to write political tracts, to change public opinion, to bring such a pressure to bear on political aspirants as to insure an election of members to the House of Commons who were favorable to reform. For seven years this agitation had been going on during the later years of the reign of George IV. It was seen and felt by everybody that glaring public evils could not be removed until there should be a reform in Parliament itself,—which meant an extension of the electoral suffrage, by which more liberal and popular members might be elected.

On the accession of the new king, there was of course a new election of members to the House of Commons. In consequence of the agitations of reformers, public opinion had been changed, and a set of men were returned to Parliament pledged to reform.

The old Tory chieftains no longer controlled the House of Commons, but Whig leaders like Brougham, Macaulay, Althorp, and Lord John Russell,—men elected on the issue of reform, and identified with the agitations in its favor.

The old Tory ministers who had ruled the country for fifty years went out of office, and the Whigs came into power under the premiership of Lord Grey. Although he was pledged to parliamentary reform, his cabinet was composed entirely of noblemen, with only one exception. There was no greater aristocrat in all England than this leader of reform,—a cold, reticent, proud man. Lord Russell was also an aristocrat, being a brother of the Duke of Bedford; so was Althorp, the son and heir of Earl Spencer. The only man in the new cabinet of fearless liberality of views, the idol of the people, a man of real genius and power, was Brougham; but after he was made Lord Chancellor, the presiding officer of the Chamber of Peers, he could no longer be relied upon as the mouthpiece of the people, as he had been for years in the House of Commons. It would almost seem that the new ministry thought more and cared more for the dominion of the Whigs than they did for a redress of the evils under which the nation groaned. But the Whigs were pledged to parliamentary reform, and therefore were returned to Parliament. More at least was expected of them by the middle classes, who formed the electoral body, than of the Tories, who were hostile to all reforms,—men like Wellington and Eldon, both political bigots, great as were their talents and services. In



politics the Tories resembled the extreme Right in the French Chamber of Deputies,—the ultra-conservatives, who sustained the throne of Charles X. The Whigs bore more resemblance to the Centre of the Chamber of Deputies, led by such men as Guizot, Broglie, and Thiers, favorable to a constitutional monarchy, but by no means radicals and democrats like Louis Blanc, Ledru Rollin, and Lamartine. The Whigs, at the best, were as yet inclined only to such measures as would appease popular tumults, create an intelligent support to the throne, and favor *necessary* reform. It was, with them, a choice between revolution and a fairer representation of the nation in Parliament. It may be reasonably doubted whether there were a dozen men in the House of Commons that assembled at the beginning of the reign of William IV. who were democrats, or even men of popular sympathies. What the majority conceded was from fear, rather than from a sense of justice. The great Whig leaders of the reform movement probably did not fully foresee the logical consequences of the Reform Bill which was introduced, and the change which on its enactment would take place in the English Constitution.

Even as it was, the struggle was tremendous. It was an epoch in English history. The question absorbed all other interests and filled all men's minds. It was whether the House of Commons should represent the privileged and well-to-do middle classes or the nation,—at least a larger part of the nation; not the people generally, but those who ought to be represented,—those who paid

considerable taxes to support the government; large towns, as well as obscure hamlets owned by the aristocracy. The popular agitation was so violent that experienced statesmen feared a revolution which would endanger the throne itself. Hence Lord Grey and his associates determined to carry the Reform Bill at any cost, whatever might be the opposition, as the only thing to be done if the nation would escape the perils of revolution.

Lord John Russell was selected by the government to introduce the bill into the House of Commons. He was not regarded as the ablest of the Whig statesmen who had promised reform. His person was not commanding, and his voice was thin and feeble; but he was influential among the aristocracy as being a brother of the Duke of Bedford, head of a most illustrious house, and he had no enemies among the popular elements. Russell had not the eloquence and power and learning of Brougham; but he had great weight of character, tact, moderation, and parliamentary experience. The great hero of reform, Henry Brougham, was, as we have said, no longer in the House of Commons; but even had he been there he was too impetuous, uncertain, and eccentric to be trusted with the management of the bill. Knowing this, his party had elevated him to the woolsack. He would have preferred the office of the Master of the Rolls, a permanent judicial dignity, with a seat in the House of Commons; but to this the king would not consent. Indeed, it was the king himself who suggested the lord chancellorship for Brougham.

Lord Russell was, then, the most prominent advocate of the bill which marked the administration of Lord Grey. It was a great occasion, March 1, 1831, when he unfolded his plan of reform to a full and anxious assembly of aristocratic legislators. There was scarcely an unoccupied seat in the House. At six o'clock he arose, and in a low and humble manner invoked reason and justice in behalf of an enlarged representation. He proposed to give the right of franchise to all householders who paid £10 a year in rates, and who qualified to serve on juries. He also proposed to disfranchise the numerous "rotten boroughs" which were in the gift of noblemen and great landed proprietors,—boroughs which had an insignificant number of voters; by which measure one hundred and sixty-eight parliamentary vacancies would occur. These vacancies were to be partially filled by sending two members each from seven large towns, and one member each from twenty smaller towns which were not represented in Parliament. Lord Russell further proposed to send two members each from four districts of the metropolis, which had a large population, and two additional members each from twenty-six counties; these together would add ninety-four members from towns and counties which had a large population. To obviate the great expenses to which candidates were exposed in bringing voters to the polls (amounting to £150,000 in Yorkshire alone), the bill provided that the poll should be taken in different districts, and should be closed in two days in the towns, and in three days in the counties. The general result of the bill would

be to increase the number of electors five hundred thousand,—making nine hundred thousand in all. We see how far this was from universal suffrage, giving less than a million of voters in a population of twenty-five millions. Yet even so moderate and reasonable an enlargement of the franchise created astonishment, and was regarded by the opponents as subversive of the British Constitution; and not without reason, since it threw political power into the hands of the middle classes instead of into those of the aristocracy.

Lord Russell's motion was, of course, bitterly opposed by the Tories. The first man who arose to speak against it was Sir H. Inglis, member of the university of Oxford,—a fine classical scholar, an accomplished gentleman, and an honest man. He maintained that the proposed alteration in the representation of the country was nothing less than revolution. He eulogized the system of rotten boroughs, since it favored the return to Parliament of young men of great abilities, who without the patronage of nobles would fail in popular elections; and he cited the cases of Pitt, Fox, Burke, Canning, Perceval, and others who represented Appleby, Old Sarum, Wendover, and other places almost without inhabitants. Sir Charles Wetherell, Mr. Croker, and Sir Robert Peel, substantially took the same view; Lord Althorp, Mr. Hume, O'Connell, and others supported the government. Amid intense excitement, for everybody saw the momentous issues at stake, leave was at length granted to Lord John Russell to bring in his bill. No less than seventy-one persons

in the course of seven nights spoke for or against the measure. The Press, headed by the "Times," rendered great assistance to the reform cause, while public meetings were everywhere held and petitions sent to Parliament in favor of the measure. The voice of the nation spoke in earnest and decided tones.

On the 21st of March, 1831, Lord John Russell moved the second reading of the bill; but the majority for it was so small that ministers were compelled to make modifications. After a stormy debate there was a majority of seventy-eight against the government. The ministers, undaunted, at once induced the king to dissolve Parliament, and an appeal was made to the nation. A general election followed, which sent up an overwhelming majority of Liberal members, while many of the leading members of the last Parliament lost their places. On the 21st of June the new Parliament was opened by the king in person. He was received with the wildest enthusiasm by the populace, as he proceeded in state to the House of Lords in his gilded carriage, drawn by eight cream-colored horses. On the 24th of June Lord John Russell again introduced his bill, this time in a bold, manly, and decisive manner, in striking contrast with the almost suppliant tone which he assumed before. On the 4th of July the question of the second reading was brought forward. The discussion was carried on for three nights, and on division the great majority of one hundred and thirty-six was with the government. The only hope of the opposition was now in delay; and factious divisions were made on every point

possible as the bill went through the committee. The opposition was most vexatious. Praed made twenty-two speeches against the bill, Sugden eighteen, Pelham twenty-eight, Peel forty-eight, Croker fifty-seven, and Wetherell fifty-eight. Of course the greater part of these speeches were inexpressibly wearisome, and ministers were condemned to sit and listen to the stale arguments, which were all that the opposition could make. Never before in a legislative body was there such an amount of quibbling and higgling, and "speaking against time;" and it was not till September 19 that the third reading came on, the obstructions in committee having been so formidable and annoying. On the 22d of September the bill finally passed in the House of Commons by a majority of one hundred and six, after three months of stormy debate.

But the parliamentary battles were only partially fought; victory in the end was certain, but was not yet obtained. It was necessary that the bill should pass the House of Lords, where the opposition was overwhelming.

On the very evening of September 22 the bill was carried to the Lords, and Lords Althorp and Russell, with one hundred other members of the Commons, entered the Upper House with their message. The Lord Chancellor Brougham advanced to the bar with the usual formalities, and received the bill from the hands of Lord John Russell. He then resumed his seat on the woolsack, and communicated to the assembled peers the nature of the message. Earl Grey moved that the bill be read a first time,

and the time was agreed to. On the 3d of October the premier addressed the House in support of the bill,—a measure which he had taken up in his youth, not so much from sympathy with the people as from conviction of its imperative necessity. There was great majesty in the manner of the patrician minister as he addressed his peers; his eye sparkled with intelligence, and his noble brow betokened resolution and firmness, while his voice quivered with emotion. Less rhetorical than his great colleague the Lord Chancellor, his speech riveted attention. For forty-five years the aged peer had advocated parliamentary reform, and his voice had been heard in unison with that of Fox before the French Revolution had broken out. Lord Wharncliffe, one of the most moderate and candid of his opponents, followed. Lord Melbourne, courteous and inoffensive, supported the bill, because, as he said, he dreaded the consequences of a refusal of concession to the demands of the people, rather than because he loved reform, which he had previously opposed. The Duke of Wellington of course uttered his warning protest, and was listened to more from his fame as a warrior than from his merits as a speaker. Lord Brougham delivered one of the most masterly of his great efforts in favor of reform, and was answered by Lord Lyndhurst in a speech scarcely inferior in mental force. The latter maintained that if the bill became a law the Constitution would be swept away, and even a republic be established on its ruins. Lord Tenterden, another great lawyer, took the side of Lord Lyndhurst, followed in the same strain by Dr. Howley,

Archbishop of Canterbury. On a division, there was a majority of forty-one peers against the bill.

The news spread with rapidity to every corner of the land that the Lords had defeated the reform for which the nation clamored. Never in England was there greater excitement. The abolition of the House of Lords was everywhere discussed, and in many places angrily demanded. People could do nothing but talk about the bill, and politics threw all business into the shade. An imprudent speech from an influential popular leader might have precipitated the revolution which the anti-reformers so greatly dreaded. The disappointed people for the most part, however, restrained their wrath, and contented themselves with closing their shops and muffling their church bells. The bishops especially became objects of popular detestation. The Duke of Newcastle and the Marquis of Londonderry, being peculiarly obnoxious, were personally assailed by a mob of incensed agitators. The Duke of Cumberland, brother of the king, was dragged from his horse, while the mob demolished the windows of the palace which the nation had given to the Duke of Wellington. Throughout the country in all the large towns there were mobs and angry meetings and serious disturbances. At Birmingham a rude and indignant meeting of one hundred and fifty thousand people vented their wrath against those who opposed their enfranchisement. The most alarming of the riots took place in Bristol, of which Sir Charles Wetherell was the recorder, and he barely escaped being murdered by the mob, who



burned most of the principal public buildings. The example of Bristol was followed in other towns, and the whole country was in a state of alarm.

In the midst of these commotions Parliament was prorogued. But the passage of the bill became more than ever an obvious necessity in order to save the country from violence; and on December 12 Lord John Russell brought forward his third Reform Bill, which, substantially like the first, passed its second reading January 17, 1832, by the increased majority of one hundred and sixty-two. When considered in committee the old game of obstruction and procrastination was played by the opposition; but in spite of it, the bill finally passed the House on the 23d of March.

The question which everybody now asked was, What will the Lords do? It was certain that they would throw out the bill, as they did before, unless extraordinary measures were taken by the government. The creation of new peers, enough to carry the bill, was determined upon if necessary, although regretted by Lord Grey. To this radical measure there was great opposition on the part of the king, although he had thus far given the bill his support; but the reformers insisted upon it, if reform could not be accomplished in any other way. To use a vulgar expression, Lord Brougham fairly "bulldozed" his sovereign, and the king never forgave him. His assent was at last most reluctantly given; but the peers, dreading the great accession to their ranks of sixty or seventy Liberal noblemen, concluded to give way, led by the

Duke of Wellington, and the bill passed the House of Lords on the 4th of June.

The Reform Bill of 1832 was the protest of the middle classes against evils which had been endured for centuries,—a protest to which the aristocracy was compelled to listen. Amid terrible animosities and fearful agitations, reaching to the extremities of the kingdom, the bill was finally passed by the Liberal members, who set aside all other matters, and acted with great unanimity and resolution.

As noted above, during this exciting parliamentary contest the great figure of Henry Brougham had disappeared from the House of Commons; but more than any other man, he had prepared the way for those reforms which the nation had so clamorously demanded, and which in part they had now achieved. From 1820 to 1831 he had incessantly labored in the lower House, and but little was done without his aid. It would have been better for his fame had he remained a commoner. He was great not only as a parliamentary orator, but as a lawyer. His labors were prodigious. Altogether, at this period he was the most prominent man in England, the most popular among the friends of reform, and the most hated by his political enemies,—a fierce, overbearing man, with great talent for invective and sarcasm, eccentric, versatile, with varied rather than profound learning. When Lord Melbourne succeeded Lord Grey as premier, Brougham was left out of the cabinet, being found to be irascible, mischievous, and unpractical; he retired, an embittered man, to private life, but not

to idleness, He continued to write popular and scientific essays, articles for reviews, and biographical sketches, taking an interest in educational movements, and in all questions of the day. He was always a lion in society, and, next to Sir Walter Scott, was the object of greatest curiosity to American travellers. Although great as statesman, orator, lawyer, and judge, his posthumous influence is small compared with that which he wielded in his lifetime,—which, indeed, may be said of most statesmen, the most noted exception to the rule being Lord Bacon.

With Brougham in the upper House, Lord John Russell had become the most prominent man in the lower; but being comparatively a poor man, he was contented to be only paymaster of the forces,—the most lucrative office in the government. His successful conduct of the great Reform Bill gave him considerable prestige. In the second ministry of Lord Melbourne, 1834-1841, Lord Russell was at first colonial and afterward home secretary. Whatever the post he filled, he filled it with credit, and had the confidence of the country; for he was honest, liberal, and sensible. He was not, however, an orator, although he subsequently became a great debater. I have often heard him speak, both in and out of Parliament; but I was never much impressed, or even interested. He had that hesitating utterance so common with aristocratic speakers, both clerical and lay, and which I believe is often assumed. In short, he had no magnetism, without which no public speaker can interest an ordinary audience; but he had intelligence, understood the

temper of the House, and belonged to a great historical family, which gave him parliamentary influence. He represented the interests of the wealthy middle classes,—liberal as a nobleman, but without any striking sympathy with the people. After the passage of the Reform Bill, he was unwilling to go to any great lengths in further reforms, and therefore was unpopular with the radicals, although his spirit was progressive. It was his persistent advocacy of parliamentary reform which had made him prominent and famous, and it was his ability as a debater which kept him at the head of his party. Historians speak of him without enthusiasm, but with great respect. The notable orators of that day were O'Connell and Brougham. As a platform speaker, probably no one ever surpassed the Irish leader.

After the passage of the Reform Bill, the first thing of importance to which the reform Parliament turned its attention was the condition of Ireland. The crimes committed in that unfortunate country called loudly for coercive measures on the part of the government. The murders, the incendiary fires, the burglaries and felonious assaults, were unprecedented in number and atrocity. The laws which had been passed for the protection of life and property had become a dead letter in some of the most populous districts. Jurors were afraid to attend the assizes, and the nearest relatives of the victims dared not institute proceedings; even magistrates were deterred from doing their duty. In fact, crime went unpunished, and the country was rapidly sinking into semi-barbarism. In the single year of 1832 there

were two hundred and forty-two homicides, eleven hundred and seventy-nine robberies, four hundred and one burglaries, five hundred and sixty-eight house-burnings, one hundred and sixty-one serious assaults, two hundred and three riots, besides other crimes,—altogether to the number of over nine thousand. A bill was accordingly brought into the Upper House by Lord Grey to give to the lord-lieutenant power to substitute courts-martial for the ordinary courts of justice, to enter houses for the purpose of searching for arms, and to suspend the act of *habeas corpus* in certain districts. The bill passed the Lords without difficulty, but encountered severe opposition in the House of Commons from the radical members and from O'Connell and his followers. Nevertheless it passed, with some alterations, and was at once put in force in the county of Kilkenny, with satisfactory results. The diminution of crime was most marked; and as the excuse for disturbances arose chiefly from the compulsory tithes which the Catholic population were obliged to pay in support of the Protestant Church, the ministry wisely attempted to alleviate the grievance. It was doubtless a great injustice for Catholics to be compelled to support the Established Church of England; but the ministry were not prepared to go to the length which the radicals and the Irish members demanded,—the complete suppression of the tithe system; in other words, "the disestablishment of the Irish Church." They were willing to sacrifice a portion of the tithes, to reduce the number of bishops, and to apply some of the ecclesiastical property to secular purposes. But even this

concession called out a fierce outcry from the conservatives, in and out of Parliament. A most formidable opposition came from the House of Lords, headed by Lord Eldon; but the ministers were at last permitted to carry out their measure.

Nothing satisfactory, however, was accomplished in reference to the collection of tithes, in spite of the concession of the ministers. The old difficulty remained. Tithes could not be collected except at the point of the bayonet, which of course was followed by crimes and disturbances that government could not prevent. In 1833 the arrears of tithes amounted to over a million of pounds, and the Protestant clergy were seriously distressed. The cost of collecting tithes was enormous, from the large coercive force which the government was obliged to maintain. When the pay of soldiers and policemen is considered, it took £25,000 to collect £12,000. The collection of tithes became an impossibility without a war of extermination. Every expedient failed. Even the cabinet was divided on all the schemes proposed; for every member of it was determined to uphold the Established Church, in some form or other.

At last Mr. Ward, member for St. Albans, in 1834 brought forward in the Commons a measure which had both reason and justice to commend it. After showing that the collection of tithes was the real cause of Irish discontents, that only a fourteenth of the population of Ireland were in communion with the English Church, that nearly half of the clergy were non-residents, and that there was a glaring inequality in the

salaries of clergymen,—so that some rectors received from £500 to £1,000 in parishes where there were only ten or twelve Protestants, while some of the resident clergy did duty for less than £20 per annum,—he moved the following: "Resolved, that as the Protestant Episcopal Establishment of Ireland exceeds the spiritual wants of the Protestant population, it is the opinion of the House that the temporal possessions of the Church of Ireland ought to be reduced." The motion was seconded by Mr. Grote, the celebrated historian; but Lord Althorp rose and requested the House to adjourn, in consequence of circumstances he was not prepared to mention. All understood that there was trouble in the cabinet itself; and when the House reassembled, it was found that the Duke of Richmond, Earl Ripon, Lord Stanley (colonial secretary), and Sir James Graham, being opposed to the appropriation of the funds of the Irish Church to other than ecclesiastical purposes, had resigned. The king himself was strongly opposed to the motion, to say nothing of the peers; and the conservative part of the nation, from the long-inherited jealousy of the Catholic Church, stood upon the same ground.

While ministers were tinkering on the affairs of Ireland, without lofty purpose or sense of justice or enlightened reason even, the gigantic figure of O'Connell appeared in striking contrast with the statesmen who opposed him and tried in vain to intimidate him. The great agitator had made his power felt long before the stormy debates in favor of reform took place, which called out the energies of Brougham,—the only man in

England to be compared with O'Connell in genius, in eloquence, in intellect, and in wrath, but inferior to him in the power of moving the passions of an audience, yet again vastly superior to him in learning. While Brougham was thundering in the senate in behalf of reform,—the most influential and the most feared of all its members, without whose aid nothing could be done,—O'Connell was haranguing the whole Catholic population of Ireland in favor of a repeal of the Union, looking upon the evils which ground down his countrymen as beyond a remedy under the English government. He also made his voice ring with startling vehemence in the English Parliament, as soon as the Catholic Emancipation bill enabled him to enter it as the member from Clare, always advocating justice and humanity, whatever the subject under consideration might be. So long as O'Connell was "king of Ireland," as William IV declared him to be, nothing could be done by English ministers on Irish matters. His agitations were tremendous, and yet he kept within the laws. His mission was to point out evils rather than to remove them. No man living was capable of pointing out the remedy. On all Irish questions the wisdom and experience of English statesmen were in vain. Yet amid the storms which beat over the unhappy island, the voice of the great pilot was louder than the tempests, which he seems to control as if by magic. Mr. Gladstone, in one of his later contributions to literature, has done justice to the motives and the genius of a man whom he regards as the greatest that Ireland has ever produced, if Burke may be excepted, yet a man whom



he bitterly opposed in his parliamentary career. Faithful alike to the interests of his church and his country, O'Connell will ever be ranked among the most imposing names of history, although he failed in the cause to which he consecrated his talents, his fortune, his energies, and his fame. Long and illustrious is the list of reformers who have been unsuccessful; and Mr. O'Connell must be classed with these. Yet was he one who did not live in vain.

Incapable of effectively dealing with the problem, the government temporized and resolved to stave off the difficulty. A commission was appointed to visit every parish in Ireland and report the state of affairs to Parliament, when everybody already knew what this state was,—one of glaring inequality and injustice, exceedingly galling to the Catholic population. Nor was this the only Irish Church question that endangered the stability of the ministry. Tithe bill after tithe bill had been passed, and all alike had failed. Mr. Ward had argued for the entire abolition of the tithe system, from the expense and difficulty of collecting tithes, leaving the clergy to be supported by the crown. A new tithe bill was, however, introduced, by which the clergy should accept something short of what they were entitled to by law. Not only was the tithing system an apparently inextricable tangle, but there was trouble about the renewal of the Coercion Act. Lord Grey, wearied with political life, resigned the premiership, and Lord Melbourne succeeded him,—a statesman who cared next to nothing for reform; not an incapable man, but lazy, genial,

and easy, whose watchword was, "Can't you let it alone?" But he did not long retain office, the king being dissatisfied with his ministers; and Sir Robert Peel, being then at Rome, was sent for to head the new administration in July, 1834. It may be here remarked that Mr. Gladstone first took office under this government. Parliament, of course, was dissolved, and a new election took place. The Whigs lost thereby much of their power, but still were a majority in the House, and the new Tory government found that the Irish difficulties were a very hard nut to crack.

The new Parliament met Feb. 15, 1835; and as the new government came into power by defeating the Whigs on the subject of the Irish Church, it was bound to offer some remedy for the trouble which existed. Accordingly, Lord Morpeth, the eldest son of the Earl of Carlisle, and closely allied with the Duke of Sutherland and other great families,—agreeable, kindly, and winning in his manners, and of very respectable abilities,—on June 26 introduced his Tithe Bill, by which he proposed to convert the tithe itself into a rent-charge, reducing it to a lower amount than the late Whig government had done. His bill, however, came to nothing, since any appropriation clearly dealing with surplus revenues failed to satisfy the Lords.

Before anything could be done with Ireland, the Peel ministry was dissolved, and the Whigs returned to power, April 18, 1835, with Lord Melbourne again as prime minister. But the Irish difficulties remained the same, the conservatives refusing to

agree to any bill which dealt with any part of the revenues of the State church; and the question was not finally settled for Ireland till after it was settled in England.

Thus the reformed Parliament failed in its attempt to remove the difficulties which attended Irish legislation. It failed from the obstinacy of the conservatives, among Whigs as well as Tories, to render justice in the matter of rates and tithes,—the great cause of Irish discontent and violence at that time. It will be seen that new complications arose with every successive Parliament from that time to this, landlords finding it as difficult to collect their rents as the clergy did their tithes. And these difficulties appear to be as great to-day as they were fifty years ago. It still remains to be seen how Ireland can be satisfactorily governed by any English ministry likely to be formed. On that rock government after government, both liberal and conservative, has been wrecked, and probably will continue to be wrecked long after the present generation has passed away, until the English nation itself learns to take a larger view, and seeks justice rather than the conservation of vested interests.

But if the reformed Parliament failed to restore order in Ireland, and to render that justice which should have followed the liberal principles it invoked, yet in matters strictly English great progress was made in the removal of crying evils.

Among these was the abolition of slavery in the British West India Islands, which as early as 1833 occupied the attention of the House, even before the discussion on Irish affairs. The slave-

trade had been suppressed long before this, through the untiring labors and zeal of Wilberforce, Zachary Macaulay (father of the historian), and other philanthropists. But the evils of slavery still existed,—cruelty and oppression on the part of slave-owners, and hardships and suffering on the part of slaves. Half-caste women were bought and sold, and flogged and branded. As early as 1823 Fowell Buxton, then in Parliament, furnished with facts by Zachary Macaulay, who had been manager of a West India estate, brought in a motion for the abolition of slavery. Canning was then the leading member of the House of Commons; although he did not go so far as Buxton, still he did something to remedy the evils of the system, and was supported by Brougham, Mackintosh, and Lushington,—so that the flogging of women was abolished, and married slaves were not separated from their children. In 1830, Henry Brougham introduced a motion for the total abolition of slavery in the British colonies, and thrilled the House by his eloquence and passion; but his motion was defeated. When the new reform Parliament met in 1831, more pressing questions occupied its attention; but at length, in 1833, Buxton made a forcible appeal to ministers to sweep away the greatest scandal of the age. He was supported by Lord Stanley, then colonial secretary, who eloquently defended the cause of liberty and humanity; and he moved that effectual measures be at once taken to abolish slavery altogether, with some modifications. Thomas Babington Macaulay, who had entered Parliament in 1830, also brought all his eloquence to bear in behalf of the

cause; and the upshot of the discussion was that Parliament set free the slaves, and their masters received twenty millions of pounds as a compensation. Thus the long agitation of fifty years pertaining to negro emancipation in the British dominions was closed forever. The heart of England was profoundly moved by this act of blended justice, humanity, and generosity, which has been quoted with pride by every Englishman from that time to this. Possibly a similar national assumption of the vast expense of recompensing English owners of Irish lands may at some time relieve Ireland of alien landlordism and England of her greatest reproach.

The condition of Hindostan next received the attention of Parliament; and on the renewal of the charter of the East India Company, in 1833, its commercial monopoly was abolished, and trade with the East was thrown open to the merchants of all the world. The political jurisdiction of the Company was, however, retained.

The new Parliament then turned its attention to a reduction of taxes. The duty on tiles was repealed; also the two-shilling stamp duty on advertisements, together with the vexatious duty on soap. Dramatic copyrights also received protection, and an improvement in the judicial administration was effected. Sinecure offices were abolished in the Court of Chancery, and the laws of dower and inheritance were amended.

The members most active in these reforms were Lord Althorp, Daniel O'Connell, Joseph Hume, and William Cobbett.

Lord Althorp, afterward Earl Spencer, made not less than one thousand speeches, and O'Connell six hundred, in support of these reforms,—all tending to a decrease in taxation, made feasible by the great increase of wealth and the abolition of useless offices.

The Trade Unions (a combination of operatives to secure improvement in their condition) marked the year 1834, besides legislative enactments to reduce taxation. Before 1824 it was illegal for workmen to combine, even in the most peaceable manner, for the purpose of obtaining an increase of wages. This injustice was removed the following year, and strikes became numerous among the different working-classes, but were generally easily suppressed by the capitalists, who were becoming a great power with the return to national prosperity. For fifty years the vexed social problem of "strikes" has been discussed, but is not yet solved, giving intense solicitude to capitalists and corporations, and equal hope to operatives. The year 1834, then, showed the commencement of the great war between capital and labor which is so damaging to all business operations, and the ultimate issue of which cannot be predicted with certainty,—but which will probably lead to a great amelioration of the condition of the working-classes and the curtailment of the incomes of rich men, especially those engaged in trade and manufactures. There will always be, without doubt, disproportionate fortunes, and capitalists can combine as well as laborers; but if the strikes which are multiplying year by year in

all the countries of Europe and the United States should end in a great increase of wages, so as to make workmen comfortable (for they will never be contented), the movement will prove beneficent. Already far more has been accomplished for the relief of the poor by a combination of laborers against hard-hearted employers than by any legislative enactments; but when will the contest between capital and labor cease? Is it pessimism to say that it is likely to become more and more desperate?

The "Poor Law Amendment" was passed July, 1834, during the administration of Lord Melbourne,—Lord Grey having resigned, from the infirmities of age and the difficulties of carrying on the government. He had held office nearly four years, which exceeded the term of his predecessor the Duke of Wellington; and only four premiers have held office for a longer period since 1754. The Poor Law Amendment, supported by all political parties, was passed in view of the burdensome amount of poor rates and the superior condition of the pauper to that of many an independent laborer.

The ill management of the beer-houses led to another act in 1834, requiring a license to sell beer, which was granted only to persons who could produce a certificate of good character from six respectable inhabitants of a parish.

The session of Parliament in 1834 was further marked by a repeal of the house tax, by grants for building schoolhouses, by the abolition of sinecure offices in the House of Commons, and by giving new facilities for the circulation of foreign newspapers

through the mails. There was little or no opposition to reforms which did not interfere with landed interests and the affairs of Ireland. Even Sir Robert Peel, in his short administration, was not unfriendly to extending privileges to Dissenters, nor to judicial, municipal, and economical reform generally.

The most important of the measures brought forward by Whig ministers under Lord Melbourne was the reform of municipal corporations. For two hundred years the abuses connected with these corporations had been subjects of complaint, but could not easily be remedied, in consequence of the perversion of municipal institutions to political ends. The venal boroughs, which both Whig and Tory magnates controlled, were the chief seats of abuses and scandals. When these boroughs were disfranchised by the Reform Bill, a way was opened for the local government of a town by its permanent residents, instead of the appointment of magistrates by a board which perpetuated itself, and which was controlled by the owners of boroughs in the interests of the aristocracy. In consequence of the passing of the municipal reform act, through the powerful advocacy of Lord John Russell, the government of the town passed to its own citizens, and became more or less democratic, not materially differing from the government of cities in the United States. Under able popular leaders, the towns not only became a new political power in Parliament, but enjoyed the privilege of electing their own magistrates and regulating their domestic affairs,—such as the police, schools, the lighting of streets, and



public improvements generally.

Besides this important act, some other salutary measures for the general good were carried by parliamentary leaders,—such as enlarging the copyrights of authors, lecturers, and dramatists; abolishing imprisonment for debt for small sums; amending the highway and the marriage laws; enforcing uniformity in weights and measures, regulating prison discipline, and commuting death punishment for many crimes. These reforms, having but little reference to partisan politics, received the approbation of both Whigs and Tories. Most of the important bills which passed the Parliament from the accession of William IV., however, were directly or indirectly the result of the Reform Bill of 1832, which had enlarged the representation of the people.

William IV. died in January, 1837, after a short but prosperous reign of seven years, much lamented by the nation. He was a frank, patriotic, and unconventional king, who accepted the reforms which made his reign an epoch. At his death there were more distinguished men in all departments of politics, literature, science, and art in Great Britain than at any previous period, and the condition of the people was more ameliorated than had been known since the Reformation. A great series of reforms had been peaceably effected without revolution; the kingdom was unusually prosperous; so that Queen Victoria, William's niece, the daughter of his brother the Duke of Kent (whose previous death had made Victoria heir-apparent to the throne), entered upon her illustrious reign under hopeful

auspices, June 21, 1837. The reform spirit had passed through no reactions, and all measures which were beneficent in their tendency were favorably considered.

In 1837 Mr. Rowland Hill proposed the startling suggestion that all existing rates of postage should be abolished, and the penny postage substituted for all parts of the kingdom, irrespective of distance. This was not at first accepted by the government or post-office officials; but its desirableness was so apparent that Parliament yielded to the popular voice and it became a law, with increased gain ultimately to the national finances, to say nothing of its immense influence in increasing knowledge. The old postage law had proved oppressive to all classes except members of Parliament, who had the franking privilege, which the new law abolished. Under the old system, the average of letters mailed was annually only four to each person. In 1875 it was thirty-three, and the net revenue to the nation was nearly two million pounds sterling.

Another great reform was effected in the early part of the reign of Victoria,—that of the criminal code, effected chiefly through the persevering eloquence of Sir James Mackintosh; although Sir Samuel Romilly, an eminent and benevolent barrister, as early as 1808, had labored for the same end. But thirty years had made a great change of opinion in reference to the punishment of crime, which was cruelly severe. Capital offences numbered at the beginning of the century nearly two hundred and fifty, some of which were almost venial; but in 1837 only seven crimes were

punishable with death, and the accused were allowed benefit of counsel. Before this, the culprit could be condemned without a hearing,—a gross violation of justice, which did not exist even under the imperial despotism of the Caesars.

Such were the most important measures passed by the reformed Parliament during the ten years' administration of the Whigs, most of which were the logical results of the Reform Bill of 1832, which made the reign of William IV. the most memorable in the domestic history of England since the great Revolution which hurled the Stuarts from their throne. But the country was not satisfied with these beneficent reforms. A great agitation had already begun, under the leadership of Cobden and Bright, for a repeal of the Corn Laws. The half measures of the Liberal government displeased all parties, and the annual deficit had made it unpopular. After vainly struggling against the tide of discontent, the Melbourne ministry was compelled to resign, and in 1841 began the second ministry of Sir Robert Peel, which gave power to the Tories for five or six years. Lord Lyndhurst returned to his seat on the woolsack, Mr. Goulburn was appointed chancellor of the exchequer, Sir James Graham became home secretary, Lord Aberdeen took the foreign department, and Lord Stanley the colonial office. Into this cabinet Mr. Gladstone entered as president of the board of trade, on the retirement of Earl Ripon.

The Duke of Wellington also had a seat in the cabinet, but held no office, his age and infirmities preventing him from

active duties. He was "the grand old man" of his generation, and had received unparalleled honors, chiefly for his military services,—the greatest general whom England has produced, if we except Marlborough. Although his fame rests on his victories in a great national crisis, he was also an able statesman,—sensible, practical, patriotic; a man of prejudices, yet not without tact; of inflexible will, yet yielding to overpowering necessities, and accepting political defeat as he did the loss of a battle, gracefully and magnanimously. If he had not, however, been a popular idol for his military exploits, he would have been detested by the people; for no one in England was more aristocratic in his sympathies than he, no one was fonder of honors and fashionable distinctions, no one had a more genuine contempt for whatever was plebeian and democratic.

In coming lectures,—on Sir Robert Peel, Gladstone, etc.,—we shall find occasion to trace the course of Victoria's beneficent reign over Great Britain, beginning (as it did) after the abuses and distresses culminating under George IV. had been largely relieved during the memorable reform epoch under William IV.

# AUTHORITIES

Miss Martineau's History of England; Molesworth's History of England; Mackenzie's History of the Nineteenth Century, Alison's History of Europe; Annual Register; Lives of Lord Brougham, Wellington, Lord Melbourne, Lord John Russell, Lord Liverpool, and Sir Robert Peel. These are the most accessible authorities, but the list is very large.

# **SIR ROBERT PEEL**

**1788-1850**

## **POLITICAL ECONOMY**

Among the great prime ministers of England Sir Robert Peel is to be classed. He ranks with Pitt, Canning, and Gladstone for his intellectual force, his services, and his patriotism. He was to England what Guizot and Thiers were to France,—a pre-eminent statesman, identified with great movements, learned, eloquent, and wise. He was a man of unsullied character, commanding the respect and veneration of superior minds,—reserved and cold, perhaps; not a popular idol like Fox and O'Connell, but a leader of men.

There was no man in his cabinet more gifted or influential than he. Lord Liverpool, Lord Melbourne, and Lord Aberdeen were placed in their exalted posts, not for remarkable abilities, but by the force of circumstances, for the purpose of uniting greater men than they in a coalition in order to form a strong government. Thus, Canning really was the master spirit in the cabinet of Lord Liverpool, as Lord Palmerston was in that

of Lord Aberdeen. Peel, however, was himself the controlling intellect of the government of which he was the head, and was doubtless superior in attainments and political genius to Wellington, to Earl Grey, and Lord John Russell,—premiers like him, and prominent as statesmen. Lord Goderich, Lord Stanley, Lord Althorp, Sir James Graham, Mr. Goulburn, Lord Wharncliffe, Lord Howick, Earl Ripon, Mr. C. Wood, Mr. Macaulay, Mr. Croker, were all very able ministers, but not to be compared with Sir Robert Peel in shaping the destinies of the country. His administration was an epoch in English political history, to be long remembered as singularly successful and important.

Sir Robert Peel came from the people, although his father was a baronet and a very wealthy man, proud and aristocratic as he was rich. His riches were acquired by manufacturing cotton goods, like those of his father before him, whose business he inherited; but the great-grandfather of Sir Robert was a plain and unimportant cotton spinner in Lancashire, of no social rank whatever. No noble blood flowed in the veins of the great premier, nor was he ever ambitious of aristocratic distinction. He declined an earldom, though rich enough to maintain its rank. He accepted no higher social rank than what he inherited, and which came from successful business.

But Peel was educated with great care by an ambitious father. He was sent to Harrow and Christ Church, and was distinguished as a boy for his classical attainments, as was Canning before

him. At an early age he reached all the honors that Oxford could bestow; and when he was only twenty-one was brought into Parliament for the close borough of Cashel, in Ireland, in the gift of some noble lord. He entered the House of Commons in 1809, at the same time with Palmerston, and a few years earlier than Lord John Russell, during that memorable period when Napoleon was in the midst of his victories, and when a noble constellation of English statesmen combined their energies for the good of their country,—Wilberforce, Wyndham, Tierney, Perceval, Grattan, Castlereagh, Canning, Romilly, Brougham, Mackintosh, Huskisson, and others,—all trained in the school of Pitt, Fox, or Burke, who had passed away. Among these great men Peel made his way, not so much by force of original genius—blazing and kindling like the eloquence of Canning and Brougham—as by assiduity in business, untiring industry, and in speech lucidity of statement, close reasoning, and perfect mastery of his subject in all its details. He was pre-eminently a man of facts rather than theories. Like Canning and Gladstone, he was ultra-conservative in his early political life,—probably in a great measure from his father's example as well as from the force of his university surroundings,—and, of course, joined the Tory party, then all-powerful. So precocious were his attainments, and so promising was he from the force of his character, that at the age of twenty-four he was made, by Mr. Perceval, under-secretary for the Colonies; the year after (in 1812) he was promoted, by Lord Liverpool, to the more important post of



secretary for Ireland. In the latter post he had to combat Canning himself in the matter of Catholic emancipation, but did his best to promote secular education in that priest-ridden and unhappy country. For his High Church views and advocacy of Tory principles, which he had been taught at Oxford, he was a favorite with the university; and in 1817 he had the distinguished honor of representing it in Parliament. In 1819 he made his financial reputation by advocating a return to specie payments,—suspended in consequence of the Napoleonic wars. In 1820 he was married to a daughter of General Sir John Floyd, and his beautiful domestic life was enhanced by his love of art, of science, of agriculture, and the society of eminent men. In 1822 he entered Lord Liverpool's cabinet as home secretary; and when the ministry was broken up in 1827, he refused to serve in the new government under Canning, on account of the liberal views which the premier entertained in reference to Catholic emancipation.

The necessity of this just measure Sir Robert Peel was made to feel after Canning's death, during the administration of the Duke of Wellington. Conservative as he was, and opposed to all agitations for religious or political change even under the name of "reform," the fiery eloquence of O'Connell and the menacing power of the Catholic Association forced upon him the conviction of the necessity of Catholic emancipation, as the cold reasoning of Richard Cobden afterward turned him from a protectionist to a free-trader. He was essentially an honest

man, always open to reason and truth, learning wisdom from experience, and growing more liberal as he advanced in years. He brought the Duke of Wellington to his views in spite of that minister's inveterate prejudices, and the Catholics of Ireland were emancipated as an act of expediency and state necessity. Peel, although only home secretary under Wellington, was the prominent member of the administration, and was practically the leader of the House of Commons, in which character he himself introduced the bill for Catholic relief. This great service was, however, regarded by the ultra Tories as an act of apostasy, and Peel incurred so much reproach from his former friends that he resigned his seat as member for Oxford University, and accepted the constituency of Westbury. During this administration, too, Sir Robert, as home secretary, reorganized the police force of London (whence their popular nicknames of "Peelers" and "Bobbies"), and performed other important services.

In 1830 the Whigs came into power under Lord Grey, and for ten years, with the brief interval of his first administration, Sir Robert Peel was the most able leader of the opposition. In 1833 he accepted the parliamentary membership for Tamworth, which he retained to the end of his great career. He persistently opposed the Reform Bill in all its stages; but when it was finally passed, he accepted it as unmistakably the will of the nation, and even advocated many of the reforms which grew out of it. In 1841 he again became prime minister, in an alarming financial crisis; and it was his ability in extricating the nation from financial

difficulties that won for him general admiration.

Thus for thirty years he served in Parliament before he reached the summit of political ambition,—half of which period he was a member of the ministry, learning experience from successive administrations, and forging the weapons by which he controlled the conservative party, until his conversion to the doctrines of Cobden again exposed him to the bitter wrath of the protectionists; but not until he had triumphantly carried the repeal of the corn laws,—the most important and beneficent act of legislation since the passage of the Reform Bill itself.

It was this great public service on which the fame of Sir Robert Peel chiefly rests; but before we can present it according to its Historical importance, we must briefly glance at the financial measures by which he extricated his country from great embarrassments, and won public confidence and esteem. He did for England what Alexander Hamilton did for the United States in matters of finance, although as inferior to Hamilton in original genius as he was superior to him in general knowledge and purity of moral character. No one man can be everything, even if the object of unbounded admiration. To every great man a peculiar mission is given,—to one as lawgiver, to another as conqueror, to a third as teacher, to a fourth as organizer and administrator; and these missions, in their immense variety, constitute the life and soul of history. Sir Robert Peel's mission was that of a financier and political economist, which, next to that of warrior, brings the greatest influence and fame in a commercial and manufacturing

country like England. Not for lofty sentiments, such as Burke uttered on the eve of the French Revolution, are the highest rewards given in a material country like that of our ancestors, but for the skill a man shows in expounding the way in which a nation may become prosperous and rich. It was Sir Robert Peel's mission to make England commercially prosperous, even as it was that of Brougham and Russell to give it liberty and political privileges, that of Pitt and Castlereagh to save it from foreign conquest, and that of Wilberforce to rescue it from the disgrace and infamy of negro slavery.

Sir Robert Peel came into power in 1841, the Russell Whig ministry having failed to satisfy the country in regard to financial questions. There had been an annual deficit, and the distress of both the agricultural and manufacturing classes was alarming. The new premier proceeded with caution in the adoption of measures to relieve the burdens of the people and straighten out the finances, which were in great disorder. His first measure had reference to the corn laws, for the price of food in England was greater than in other European countries. He finally proposed to the assembled Parliament, in 1842, to make an essential alteration in the duties; and instead of a fixed duty he introduced a sliding scale, by which the duty on corn should be thirteen shillings a quarter<sup>2</sup> when the price was under sixty shillings, increasing the duty in proportion as the price should fall, and decreasing it as the price should rise,—so that when the price

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<sup>2</sup> "The fourth of a ton in weight, or eight bushels of grain."

of corn was under fifty shillings the duty should be fixed at twenty shillings, and when the price was above seventy-three the duty should be only a shilling a quarter. This plan, after animated discussion, was approved; for although protection still was continued, the tendency of the measure was towards free-trade, for which the reformers were clamoring. Notwithstanding this measure, which was triumphantly carried through both Houses, the prevailing distress continued, and the revenue was steadily diminishing. To provide revenue, Peel introduced an income tax of seven pence in the pound, to stand for three years; and to offset that again lowered the import duties on domestic animals, dairy products, other articles of food, and some drugs.

When Parliament assembled in 1843 the discussions centred on free-trade. Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Gladstone and Sir James Graham admitted the general soundness of the principles of free-trade, but felt that the time had not yet come for their adoption, fearing an increased distress among the agricultural population. At that time, and for a long period before, the interests of agriculture were regarded as paramount, and those of manufacturing secondary; but, as time passed, it was generally felt that reduced taxes on all the necessities of life were imperative. Fifty years earlier, England produced corn enough for all the wants of the country; but with a population increasing at the rate of two hundred thousand a year, it was obvious that the farmers could not supply the demand. In consequence of which, at then existing tariffs, bread became yearly still dearer, which

bore hard on the manufacturing operatives.

The year 1844 opened under happier auspices. The financial measures of the government had answered public expectations, and changed the growing deficiency into an increasing surplus. Improvements in machinery had increased the gains of the manufacturers; a war in India had been terminated successfully, and England was at peace with all the world. The only formidable troubles were in Ireland,—the standing difficulty with all administrations, Conservative or Liberal, and which no administration has ever been able to surmount. Sir Robert Peel had hoped that the Catholic Emancipation Act would lead to the tranquillity of Ireland. But that act did not content the Irish reformers. The fiercest agitation was conducted by O'Connell for the repeal of the Union itself and the restoration of the Irish parliament. At bottom, the demands of the great agitator were not unreasonable, since he demanded equal political privileges for both Ireland and England if the Union should continue,—that, in short, there should be one law for both countries. But since the ministry insisted on governing Ireland as a foreign and conquered country, denying equality of rights, the agitation grew to fearful proportions, chiefly in the shape of monster meetings. At last the government determined on the prosecution of O'Connell and some others for seditious conspiracy, and went so far as to strike off the name of every Catholic on the jury which was to try him. The trial lasted twenty-four days, and the prisoners were convicted. The hard and unjust sentence on

O'Connell himself was imprisoned for twelve months and a fine of two thousand pounds. Against this decision an appeal was made to the House of Lords, and the judgment of the court was reversed. But the old man had already been imprisoned several weeks; his condemnation and imprisonment had told on his rugged constitution. He was nearly seventy years of age, and was worn out by excitement and unparalleled labors; and although he tried to continue his patriotic work, he soon after sickened, and in 1847 died on his way to Rome in search of rest.

O'Connell's death did not end the agitations, which have continued from that time to this with more or less asperity, and probably will continue until justice shall be done to Ireland. It is plain that either Ireland should be left free to legislate for herself, which would virtually be the dismemberment of the empire; or should receive equal privileges with the English; or should be coerced with an iron hand, which would depopulate the country. It would seem that Ireland, if it is to form part of the empire,—not as a colony, but an integral part, like the different States of the American Union,—should be governed by the same laws that England has, and enjoy the same representation of its population. Probably there never will be order or tranquillity in the island until it shall receive that justice which the prejudices of the English will not permit them at present to grant,—so slow are all reforms which have to contend with bigotry, ignorance, and selfishness. The chain which binds nations and communities together must be a chain of love, without reference to differences

in color, religion, or race.

In the session of 1844 the factory question occupied a large share of public attention. Lord Ashley, whose philanthropic aims commanded great respect, contended for a limitation of the hours of labor. The ministry insisted upon twelve hours; but Lord Ashley carried his measure, with some amendments, the government being brought over to the side of humanity. The result was that the working-hours of children under thirteen was limited to six and a half hours, and the amount of fines imposed for a violation of the laws was lowered; while a provision was made for the instruction of children employed in the mills of three hours in summer, and two and a half in the winter.

The confidence in the government showed itself in the rise of public securities, so that it became practicable to reduce the interest on consols (the consolidated government debt) from three and a half to three percent, by which a saving accrued to the country of £1,250,000, indicating general prosperity. The income increased with the revival of trade and commerce, and the customs alone increased to nearly £2,500,000, chiefly from duties on tea and sugar, which increasing prosperity enabled the poorer classes to use more freely. The surplus of the revenue amounted to over £4,000,000 sterling, owing largely to the income tax, which now the ministers proposed to reduce. The charter of the Bank of England was renewed in a form which modified the whole banking system in England. The banking business of the Bank was placed on the same footing with other



institutions as to its power of issuing notes, which beyond a certain amount should depend on the amount of bullion in the Bank. Substantially, this was the same principle which Daniel Webster advocated in the United States Senate,—that all bank-notes should be redeemable in gold and silver; in other words, that a specie basis is the only sound principle, whether in banking operations or in government securities, for the amount of notes issued. This tended to great stability in the financial world, as the Bank of England, although a private joint-stock association, has from its foundation in 1694 been practically the fiscal agent of the government,—having the management of the public debt, paying dividends upon it, holding the government moneys, making advances when necessary, helping the collection of the public revenue, and being the central bank of the other banks.

In addition to the financial measures by which Sir Robert Peel increased the revenues of the country, and gave to it a greater degree of material prosperity than it had enjoyed during the century, he attempted to soothe the Catholics of Ireland by increasing the grant to the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth, in Ireland; indeed, he changed the annual grant to a permanent endowment, but only through a fierce opposition. He trebled the grant for national education, and exhibited increasing liberality of mind as he gained experience. But his great exploit was the repeal of the corn laws, in a Parliament where more than three quarters of the members represented agricultural districts, and were naturally on the side of a protection of their own

interests. In order to appreciate more clearly the magnitude of this movement, we must trace it from the beginning.

The centre of agitation for free-trade, especially in breadstuff's, was Manchester,—the second city of the kingdom for wealth, population, and influence, taking in the surrounding towns,—a very uninteresting place to the tourist and traveller; dingy, smoky, and rainy, without imposing architecture or beautiful streets; but a town of great intellectual activity in all matters pertaining to industrial enterprise and economical science,—the head centre of unpoetical materialism, where most of the well-to-do people dined at one o'clock.

As soon as this town was permitted to send members to Parliament it selected eminent free-traders,—Poulett Thomson and Mark Phillips,—who distinguished themselves for the fearlessness of their speeches on an unpopular subject. The agitation in Parliament had begun in 1836, at a period of great depression in all kinds of business and consequent suffering among the poor; but neither London nor the House of Commons was so favorable to the agitation of the principles of free-trade as Manchester was, and the subject began to be discussed throughout the country. An unknown man by the name of Poulton was the first to gain attention by his popular harangues; and he was soon followed by Richard Cobden,—a successful calico printer.

An Anti-Corn-Law Association was started by these pioneers, and £1,800 were raised by small subscriptions to enlighten the

people on the principles of free-trade, when protection was the settled policy of the government. The Association was soon after reinforced by John Bright, an exceedingly brilliant popular orator, who was rich enough to devote a large part of his time to the spread of his opinions. Between him and Cobden a friendship and cordial co-operation sprang up, which lasted to the death of the latter. They were convinced that the cause which they had so much at heart could be effectually advanced only by the widest dissemination of its principles by public meetings, by tracts and by lectures. It was their aim to change public opinion, for all efforts would be in vain unless the people—and especially their leaders—were enlightened on the principles they advocated. They had faith in the ultimate triumph of these principles because they believed them to be true. From simple faith in the power of truth they headed the most tremendous agitation known in England since the passage of the Reform Bill. It was their mission to show conclusively to all intelligent people that it was for the interest of the country to abolish the corn laws, and that the manufacturing classes would be the most signally benefited. To effect this purpose it was necessary to raise a large sum of money; and the friends and advocates of the movement most liberally subscribed to circulate the millions of tracts and newspapers which the Association scattered into every hamlet and private family in England, besides the members personally giving their time and effort in public speeches and lectures in all parts of the country. "It was felt that the battle of free-trade must be fought

first by the conversion of individuals, then at the hustings, and lastly in the House of Commons."

The principle of protecting the country against the importation of foreign breadstuffs was upheld as fostering the agricultural interests, as inciting the larger cultivation of poor lands, as providing against dangerous dependence on foreign countries, and as helping the large landowners and their tenants to patronize manufactures and trade; so that, although the high prices of breadstuffs were keeping vast numbers of people in misery and the country on the edge of revolution, the protectionist doctrine was believed in religiously by the laboring classes, the small shopkeepers, nearly all the educated classes, and a large majority of the members of Parliament.

To combat this unshaken traditional belief was a gigantic undertaking. It was the battle of reason and truth against prejudice and bigotry,—the battle of a new enlightenment of general interests against the selfishness of unenlightened classes. While Villiers and Thomson appealed to members in the House of Commons, Cobden and Bright with still greater eloquence directly addressed the people in the largest halls that could be found. In 1838 Cobden persuaded the Chamber of Commerce in Manchester to petition Parliament for a repeal of the duties on corn. In 1839, the agitation spreading, petitions went up from various parts of the country bearing two million signatures. The motion to repeal, however, was lost by a large majority in the Commons. Then began the organization of Free-Trade Leagues.

In 1841 a meeting in Manchester was held, at which were present seven hundred nonconformist ministers, so effectually had conversions been made among intelligent men. Nor did the accession of the conservative Sir Robert Peel to power discourage the agitators, for in the same year (1841) Cobden was sent to Parliament. Meetings were still more frequently held in all the towns of the kingdom, A bazaar held in favor of the cause in the Theatre Royal, Manchester, in 1842, produced a clear profit of £10,000. In 1843 the great Free-Trade Hall was opened in Manchester, built expressly for public meetings for the anti corn-law agitation, and the sum of £150,000 was raised by private subscription to disseminate knowledge. At last, recognizing with keen instinct the inevitable turn in public opinion, the "Times" came out with a leading article of great power, showing a change of views on the subject of protection. Great noblemen, one after another, joined the League, and the Marquis of Westminster contributed £500 to the cause.

The free-trade movement was now recognized as a great fact which it was folly to ignore. Encouraged by the constant accession to the ranks of reform, the leaders of the League turned their attention to the registration of voters, by which many spurious claims for seats were annulled, and new members of Parliament were chosen to advocate free-trade. At last, in 1846, Sir Robert Peel himself, after having been for nearly his whole career a protectionist, gave in his adhesion to the new principles. Cobden, among others, had convinced him that the

prosperity of the country depended on free-trade, and he nobly made his recantation, to the intense disgust of many of his former followers,—especially of Disraeli, who now appears in Parliament as a leader of the protectionists.

This brilliant man, who in 1837, at the age of thirty-two, took his seat in Parliament, had made no impression in that body for several years; but having learned from early failures his weak points, and by careful study of the successes of others trained himself to an effective style of parliamentary speech, he became, at the critical time of Peel's change of front, the representative of Shrewsbury, and gradually organized about himself the dissatisfaction and indignation of the landed proprietors with Sir Robert Peel's concessions to the free-trade movement. His strictures on Peel were severe, caustic, and bitter. "What," said this eloquent speaker, "shall we think of the eminent statesman, who, having served under four sovereigns, who, having been called to steer the ship on so many occasions and under such perilous circumstances, has only during the last three or four years found it necessary entirely to change his convictions on that most important topic, which must have presented itself for more than a quarter of a century to his consideration? I must, sir, say that such a minister may be conscientious, but he is unfortunate.... It is all very well for the right honorable gentleman to come forward and say, 'I am thinking of posterity; my aim is heroic; and, appealing to posterity, I care neither for your cheers nor for your taunts,' It is very well for the right honorable

gentleman to take this high-flying course, but I can but say that my conception of a great statesman is one who represents a great idea,—I do not care whether he is a manufacturer or a manufacturer's son. I care not what may be the position of a man who never originates an idea,—a watcher of the atmosphere,—a man who, as he says, 'takes his observations,' and when he finds the wind in a certain quarter trims his sails to suit it. Such a man may be a powerful minister, but he is no more a great statesman than a man who gets up behind a carriage is a great whip."

All this tirade was very unjust,—though it pleased the protectionists,—for Sir Robert Peel was great enough to listen to arguments and reason, and give up his old sentiments when he found them untenable, even if he broke up his party. His country was greater in his eyes than any party.

As prime minister, Peel then unfolded his plans. He announced his intention to abandon the sliding scale entirely, and gradually reduce the duty on corn and other articles of necessity so that at the end of three or four years the duty would be taken off altogether. This plan did not fully satisfy the League, who argued for immediate repeal. Indeed, there was a necessity. The poor harvests in England and the potato-rot in Ireland were producing the most fearful and painful results. A large part of the laboring population was starving. Never before had there been greater distress. On the 2d of March, 1846, the ministerial plan had to go through the ordeal of a free-trade attack. Mr. Villiers proposed an amendment that would result in the immediate and

total repeal of the corn laws. Nevertheless, the original bill passed the Commons by a majority of ninety-eight.

It was at once carried to the House of Lords, where it encountered, as was expected, the fiercest opposition, no less than fifty-three lords taking part in the discussion. The Duke of Wellington, seeing that the corn laws were doomed, and that further opposition would only aggravate the public distress, supported the bill, as did Lord Aberdeen and other strong conservatives, and it was finally carried by a majority of forty-seven.

Before the bill for the virtual repeal of the corn laws was passed by the House of Lords, the administration of Sir Robert Peel abruptly closed. An Irish coercion bill had been introduced by the government, not very wisely, even while the corn bill was under discussion by the Commons. The bill was of course opposed by the Irish followers of O'Connell, and by many of the Liberal party. The radical members, led by Cobden and Bright, were sure to oppose it. The protectionists, full of wrath, and seeing their opportunity to overthrow the government, joined the Liberals and the Irish members, and this coalition threw out the bill by a majority of seventy-three. The government of course resigned.

Nor was the premier loath to throw off his burdens amid calumny and reproach. He cheerfully retired to private life. He concluded the address on his resignation, after having paid a magnificent tribute to Cobden—by whose perseverance, energy,



honesty of conviction, and unadorned eloquence the great corn-law reform had been thus far advanced—in these words: "In quitting power, I shall leave a name severely blamed, I fear, by many men, who, without personal interest but only with a view of the public good, will bitterly deplore the rupture of party ties, from a belief that fidelity to party engagements and the maintenance of great parties are powerful and essential means of government. [I fear also] that I shall be blamed by others who, without personal interest, adhere to the principles of protection, which they regard as necessary to the prospects of the country; that I shall leave a name detested by all monopolists, who, from less honorable motives, claim a protection by which they largely profit. But I shall perhaps leave a name which will sometimes be pronounced by expressions of good-will by those whose lot in this world is to labor, who in the sweat of their brow eat their daily bread; and who may remember me when they renew their strength by food at once abundant and untaxed, and which will be the better relished because no longer embittered by any feeling of injustice." He then resumed his seat amidst the loudest applause from all sides of the House; and when he left Westminster Hall, leaning on the arm of Sir George Clark, a vast multitude filled the street, and with uncovered heads accompanied him in respectful silence to the door of his house.

Sir Robert Peel continued to attend the meetings of Parliament as an independent member, making no factious opposition, and giving his support to every measure he

approved,—more as a sage than a partisan, having in view mainly the good of the country whose government he no longer led.

It was soon after Peel's retirement from office that O'Connell, too, made his last speech in the House of Commons, not as formerly in trumpet tones, but with enfeebled voice. "I am afraid," said the fainting athlete, "that the House is not sufficiently aware of the extent of the misery in Ireland. I do not think that members understand the accumulated miseries under which the people are at present suffering. It has been estimated that five thousand adults and ten thousand children have already perished with famine, and that twenty-five per cent of the whole population will perish, unless the House will afford effective relief. I assure the House most solemnly that I am not exaggerating; I can establish all that I have said by many and painful proofs. And the necessary result must be typhus fever, which in fact has already broken out, and is desolating whole districts; it leaves alive only one in ten of those whom it attacks." This appeal doubtless had its effect in demonstrating the absolute need of a repeal of the corn laws. But it is as the "liberator" of the Roman Catholic population of Ireland in the great emancipation struggle,—triumphantly concluded as early as 1829,—and the incessant labors after that for the enlargement of Irish conditions, that O'Connell will be remembered. "Honor, glory, and eternal gratitude," exclaimed Lacordaire, "to the man who collected in his powerful hand the scattered elements of justice and deliverance, and who, pushing them to their logical

conclusions with a vigorous patience which thirty years could not exhaust, at last poured on his country the unhopd-for delight of liberty of conscience, and thus deserved not only the title of Liberator of his Country but the oecumenical title of Liberator of his Church."

O'Connell, Cobden, and Sir Robert Peel,—what great names in the history of England in the agitating period between the passage of the Reform Bill and that of the repeal of the corn laws! I could add other illustrious names,—especially those of Brougham and Lord John Russell; but the sun of glory around the name of the first was dimmed after his lord chancellorship, while that of the latter was yet to blaze more brightly when he assumed the premiership on the retirement of his great predecessor, with such able assistants as Lord Palmerston, Earl Grey, Macaulay, and others. These men, as Whigs, carried out more fully the liberal and economic measures which Sir Robert Peel had inaugurated amid a storm of wrath from his former supporters, reminding one of the fury and disappointment of the higher and wealthy classes when Mr. Gladstone—a still bolder reformer, although nursed and cradled in the tenets of monopolists—introduced his measures for the relief of Ireland.

During the administration of Sir Robert Peel there was another agitation which at one time threatened serious consequences, but as it came to nothing it has not the historical importance of the Anti-Corn-Law League. It was a fanatical uprising of the lower classes to obtain still greater political

privileges, led by extreme radicals, of whom Mr. Feargus O'Connor was the most prominent leader, and Mr. Henry Vincent was the most popular speaker. The centre of this movement was not Manchester, but Birmingham. The operatives of Manchester wanted cheaper bread; those of Birmingham wanted an extension of the franchise: and as Lord John Russell had opposed the re-opening of the reform question, the radicals were both disappointed and infuriated. The original leaders of parliamentary reform had no sympathy with such a rabble as now clamored for extended reform. They demanded universal suffrage, annual Parliaments, vote by ballot, abolition of property qualifications, payment of members of Parliament, and the division of the country into equal electoral districts. These were the six points of the people's charter,—not absurd to the eyes of Americans, but utterly out of the question in such an aristocratic country as England, and advocated only by the working-classes and their incendiary leaders. Discontent and misery were the chief causes of the movement, which was managed without ability. The agitation began in 1836 and continued to 1848. At first the government allowed it, so far as it was confined to meetings, speeches, and the circulation of tracts,—knowing full well that, as it made no appeal to the influential and intelligent classes, it would soon expend itself. I was lecturing at the time in Birmingham, and the movement excited contempt rather than alarm among the people I met. I heard Vincent two or three times in his chapel,—for I believe he was educated as a dissenting

minister of some sort,—but his eloquence made no impression upon me; it was clever and fluent enough, but shallow and frothy. At last he was foolishly arrested by the government, who had really nothing to fear from him, and imprisoned at Newport in Wales.

In England reforms have been effected only by appeals to reason and intelligence, and not by violence. Infuriated mobs, successful in France in overturning governments and thrones, have been easily repressed in England with comparatively little bloodshed; for power has ever been lodged in the hands of the upper and middle classes, intolerant of threatened violence. In England, since the time of Cromwell, revolutions have been bloodless; and reforms have been gradual,—to meet pressing necessities, or to remove glaring injustice and wrongs, never to introduce an impractical equality or to realize visionary theories. And they have ever been effected through Parliament. All popular agitations have failed unless they have appealed to reason and right.

Thus the People's Charter movement, beginning about 1838, was a signal failure, because from the practical side it involved no great principles of political economy, nothing that enriches a nation; and from the side of popular rights it was premature, crude, and represented no intelligent desire on the part of the people. It was a movement nursed in discontent, and carried on with bitterness and illegal violence. It was wild, visionary, and bitter from the start, and arose at a period when the

English people were in economic distress, and when all Europe was convulsed with insurrectionary uprisings, and revolutionary principles were mixed up with socialism and anarchy. The Chartist agitation continued with meetings and riots and national conventions until 1848, when the Revolution in France gave a great impulse to it.

At last some danger was apprehended from the monster meetings and inflammatory speeches of the Chartists, and government resolved to suppress the whole movement by the strong arm. The police force throughout the kingdom was strengthened, and one hundred and seventy thousand special constables were sworn in, while extensive military preparations were intrusted to the Duke of Wellington. The Chartists, overrating their strength, held a great meeting on Kensington Common, and sent a petition of more than five millions of names to the House of Commons; but instead of half a million who were expected to assemble on the Common with guns and pikes, only a few thousand dared to meet, and the petition itself was discovered to be forged, chiefly with fictitious names. It was a battle on the part of the agitators without ball cartridges, in which nothing was to be seen but smoke. Ridicule and contempt overwhelmed the leaders, and the movement collapsed.

Although the charter failed to become law, the enfranchisement of the people has been gradually enlarged by Parliament in true deliberate English fashion, as we shall see in future lectures. Perhaps the Chartist movement may have ripped

up the old sod and prepared the soil for the later peaceful growth; but in itself it accomplished nothing for which it was undertaken.

The repeal of the corn laws in 1846 was followed, as was the Reform Bill of 1832, by a series of other reforms of a similar kind,—all in the direction of free-trade, which from that time has continued to be the established principle of English legislation on all the great necessities of life. Scarcely had Lord John Russell in 1846 taken the helm of state, when the duties on sugar were abolished, no discrimination being shown between sugar raised in the British colony of Jamaica and that which was raised in Cuba and other parts of the world. The navigation laws, which prohibited the importation of goods except in British ships, or ships which belonged to the country where the goods were produced, were repealed or greatly modified. The whole colonial system was also revised, especially in Canada; and sanitary measures were taken to prevent disease in all the large towns of the country.

In the midst of these various reforms, which the government under Lord John Russell prosecuted with great zeal and ability, and by which a marked improvement took place in the condition of the people, Sir Robert Peel was thrown from his horse in London, June 29, 1850, and survived but a few days. His accidental death created universal lamentation, for everybody felt that a great national loss had occurred. In spite of the bitterness of the monopolists, disappointed in their gains, no death was ever more seriously and universally lamented in England. Other

statesmen blazed upon their contemporaries with more brilliant original genius than Peel, but no one ever had more force of character than he, or was more respected for his candor, truthfulness, and patriotism. If he had not the divination to originate, he showed transcendent ability in appropriating and making his own the worthy conceptions of others. He was among those few statesmen who are willing to renounce the dearest opinions of youth and the prejudices of manhood when convinced of their unsoundness.

Peel was a great administrator and a great debater. His character was austere, his temperament was cold, his manners were awkward and shy; he was chary in the bestowal of pensions and rewards; and by reason of his rather unsympathetic nature he never was a favorite with artists and literary men. It was his conviction that literary men were not sufficiently practical to be intrusted with political office. Hence he refused to make Monckton Milnes an under-secretary of state. When Gladstone published his book on Church and State, being then a young man, it is said that Peel threw it contemptuously on the floor, exclaiming, "What a pity it is that so able a man should injure his political prospects by writing such trash!" Nor was Peel sufficiently passionate to become a great orator like O'Connell or Mirabeau; and yet he was a great man, and the nation was ultimately grateful for the services he rendered to his country and to civilization. Had his useful and practical life been prolonged, he probably would again have taken the helm of state. He was



always equal to the occasion; but no occasion was sufficiently great to give him the *éclat* which Pitt enjoyed in the wars of Napoleon. Under the administration of Peel the country was at peace, and no such internal dangers threatened it as those which marked the passage of the Reform Bill.

Sir Robert Peel was one of the most successful ministers that England ever had. Certainly no minister was ever more venerated than he; and even the Duke of Wellington did nothing without his advice and co-operation. In fact, he led the ministry of the duke as Canning did that of the Earl of Liverpool; and had he been less shy and reserved, he would not have passed as so proud a man, and would have been more popular. There is no trait of character in a great man less understood than what we call pride, which often is not pride at all, but excessive shyness and reserve, based on sensitiveness and caution rather than self-exaggeration and egotism.

Few statesmen have done more than Peel to advance the material interests of the people; yet he never was a popular idol, and his history fails to kindle the enthusiasm with which we study the political career of Pitt or Canning or Disraeli or Gladstone. He was regarded as a great potentate rather than as a great genius; and he loved to make his power felt irrespective of praise or censure from literary men, to whom he was civil enough, but whose society he did not court. Politics were the element in which he lived, and politicians were his chief associates outside the family circle, which he adorned. And yet when distinguished

merit in the Church or in the field of literature was brought to his notice, he was ready to reward it.

As a proof of the growing fame of Sir Robert Peel, no less than three biographies of him have lately been issued from the Press. Such, after a lapse of forty years, indicates the lasting reputation he has won as a statesman; but as a statesman only. He filled no other sphere. He was not a lawyer like Brougham; not a novelist like Beaconsfield; not a historian like Macaulay; not an essayist and reviewer like Gladstone. He was contented to be a great parliamentary leader alone.

# AUTHORITIES

Molesworth's History of England; Miss Martineau's History of England; Justin McCarthy's Life of Sir Robert Peel; Alison's History of Europe,—all of which should be read in connection with the Lives of contemporary statesmen, especially of Cobden, Bright, and Lord John Russell. The Lives of foreign statesmen shed but little light, since the public acts of Sir Robert Peel were chiefly confined to the domestic history of England.

# CAVOUR

1810-1861

## UNITED ITALY

The most interesting and perhaps important event in the history of Europe in the interval between the fall of Napoleon I. and that of Napoleon III., a period of fifty-six years,—from 1815 to 1871,—was that which united the Italians under the government of Victor Emmanuel as a constitutional monarchy, free of all interference by foreign Powers.

The freedom and unity of Italy are to be considered, however, only from a political point of view. The spiritual power still remains in the hands of the Pope, who reigns as an ecclesiastical monarch over not only Italy but all Roman Catholic countries, as the popes have reigned for a thousand years. That venerable and august despotism was not assailed, or even modified, in the separation of the temporal from the spiritual powers. It was rather, probably, increased in influence. At no time since the Reformation has the spiritual authority of the Roman Pontiff been greater than it is at the present day. Nor can any one,

however gifted and wise, foretell when that authority will be diminished. "The Holy Father" still reigns and is likely long to reign as the viceroy of the Almighty in all matters of church government in Catholic countries, and as the recognized interpreter of their religious faith. So long as people remain Roman Catholics, they must remain in allegiance to the head of their church. They may cease to be Catholics, and no temporal harm will happen to them; but the awful power remains over those who continue to abide within the pale of the Church. Of his spiritual subjects the Pope exacts, as he has exacted for centuries, absolute and unconditional obedience through his ministers,—one great hierarchy of priests; the most complete and powerful mechanism our world has seen for good or evil, built up on the experience of ten centuries, and generally directed by consummate sagacity and inflexibility of purpose.

I have nothing here to say against this majestic sovereignty, which is an institution rather than a religion. Most of the purely religious dogmas which it defends and enforces are equally the dogmas of a majority of the Protestant churches, founded on the teachings of Christ and his apostles. The doctrines of Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, the great authorities of the Catholic Church, were substantially embraced by Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, and the Westminster divines. The Protestants rebelled mainly against the usurpations and corruptions of the Catholic Church as an institution, not against the creed of the Fathers and schoolmen and theological doctors in all Catholic countries.

The Nicene and Apostles' creeds bind together all orthodox Christians, whether of the Roman or Greek or Protestant churches.

Thus, in speaking of the liberation and unity of Italy as effected by an illustrious band of patriots, aided by friendly powers and fortunate circumstances, I mean freedom in a political sense. The papal yoke, so far as it was a yoke, was broken only in a temporal point of view. The Pope lost only his dominions as a temporal sovereign,—nothing of his dignity as an ecclesiastical monarch; and we are to consider his opposition to Victor Emmanuel and other liberators chiefly as that of a temporal prince, like Ferdinand of Naples. The great Italian revolution which established the sovereignty of the King of Sardinia over the whole peninsula was purely a political movement. Religious ideas had little or nothing to do with it. Communists and infidels may have fought under the standards of Mazzini and Garibaldi, but only to gain political privileges and rights. Italy remained after the revolution, as before, a Catholic country.

In considering this revolution, which destroyed the power of petty tyrants and the authority of foreign despots, which gave a free constitution and national unity to the whole country,—the rule of one man by the will of the people, and the checks which a freely elected legislature imposes,—it will be my aim to present chiefly the labors and sacrifices of a very remarkable band of patriots, working in different ways and channels for the common

good, and assisted in their work by the aid of friendly States and potentates. But underneath and apart from the matchless patriotism and ability of a few great men like D'Azeglio, Mazzini, Garibaldi, Manin, Cavour, and, not least, the King of Sardinia himself,—who reigned at Turin as a constitutional monarch before the revolution,—should be mentioned the almost universal passion of the Italian people to throw off the yokes which oppressed them, whether imposed by the King of Naples, or by the Pope as a temporal prince, or by Austria, or by the various princes who had divided between them the territories of the peninsula,—diverse, yet banded together to establish their respective tyrannies, and to suppress liberal ideas of government and all reforms whatsoever. All who could read and write, and even many who could not, except those who were dependent on the government or hopelessly wedded to the ideas and institutions of the Middle Ages,—that conservative class to be found in every country, who cling to the past and dread the future,—had caught the contagion spread by the apostles of liberty in France, in Spain, in Greece, in England. The professors and students in the universities, professional men, and the well-to-do of the middle classes were foremost in their discontent and in their zeal for reform. They did not agree in their theories of government, nor did they unite on any definite plan for relief. Many were utterly impractical and visionary; some were at war with any settled government, and hated all wholesome restraints,—communists and infidels, who would destroy, without substituting anything

better instead; some were in favor of a pure democracy, and others of representative governments; some wanted a republic, and others a constitutional monarchy: but all wanted a change.

There was one cry, one watchword common to all,—*Personal liberty!*—freedom to act and speak without the fear of inquisitions, spies, informers, prisons, and exile. In Naples, in Rome, in Bologna, in Venice, in Florence, in Milan, in Turin, there was this universal desire for personal liberty, and the resolution to get it at any cost. It was the soul of Italy going out in sympathy with all liberators and patriots throughout the world, intensified by the utterances of poets and martyrs, and kept burning by all the traditions of the past,—by the glories of classic Rome; and by the aspirations of the *renaissance*, when art, literature, and commerce revived. The common people united with their intellectual leaders in seeking something which would break their chains. They alike responded to the cries of patriotism, in some form or other. "Emancipate us from our tyrants, and we will follow you wherever you choose to lead," was the feeling of all classes. "We don't care who rules us, or what form government may take, provided we are personally free."

In addition to this passion for personal liberty was also the desire for a united Italy,—a patriotic sentiment confined however to men of great intelligence, who scarcely expected such a boon, so great were the difficulties and obstacles which stared them in the face. It was impossible for the liberators of Italy to have effected so marvellous a movement if the material on which they



worked had not been so impulsive and inflammable.

It required an uncommon degree of patriotic ardor on the part of the mass of the people to follow leaders like Garibaldi and Mazzini,—one of whom was rash to audacity, and the other visionary; and neither of whom had the confidence of the government at Turin, which, however, was not disposed to throw cold water on their enterprises or seriously to interfere with them. One thing is clear,—that had not the Italians, on the whole, been ripe for revolution it could not have succeeded; as in France the *coup d'état* of 1851, which enabled Louis Napoleon to mount the throne, could not have succeeded twenty years earlier when he made his rash attempt at Strasburg. All successful revolutions require the ready assent—nay, even the enthusiasm—of the people. The Italian revolution was based on popular discontent in all parts of the country where the people were oppressed, and on their enthusiastic aspirations for a change of rulers. What could any man of genius, however great his abilities, have done without this support of the people? What could the leaders of the American Revolution have done unless the thirteen colonies had rallied around them? Certainly no liberated people ever supported their leaders with greater enthusiasm and more self-sacrifices than the Italians. Had they been as degraded as has sometimes been represented, they would not have fought so bravely.

The Italian revolution in its origin dates back as early as 1820, when the secret societies were formed—especially that of the

Carbonari—with a view to shake the existing despotisms. The Carbonari ("charcoal burners"), as they called themselves, were organized first at Naples. This uprising (at first successful) in Naples and Piedmont was put down by Austrian bayonets, and the old order of things was restored. A constitutional government had been promised to various Italian States by the first Napoleon in 1796. when he invited the Italians to rally to his standard and overthrow the Bourbon and Austrian despotisms; but his promises had not been kept. "Never," said that great liar to Prince Metternich, "will I give the Italians a liberal system: I have granted to them only the semblance of it." Equally false were the promises made by Austrian generals in 1813, when the Italians were urged to join in the dethronement of the great conqueror who had drafted them into his armies without compensation.

Though Italian liberty was suppressed by the strong arm of despotism, its spirit was kept alive by the secret societies, among whom were enrolled men of all classes; but these societies had no definite ends to accomplish. Among them were men of every shade of political belief. In general, they aimed at the overthrow of existing governments rather than at any plan as to what would take their place. When, through their cabals, they had dethroned Ferdinand I. at Naples, he too, like Napoleon, promised a constitution, and swore to observe it; but he also broke both his promises and oaths, and when reinstated by irresistible forces, he reigned more tyrannically than before.

When the revolution in the Sardinian province of Piedmont

was suppressed (1821), King Victor Emmanuel I. refused to grant further liberty to his subjects, or to make promises which he could not fulfil. In this state of mind the honest old king abdicated in favor of his brother Charles Felix, who ruled despotically as Austria dictated, but did not belong to that class of despicable monarchs who promise everything and grant nothing.

In 1831, on the death of Charles Felix, the throne of Piedmont—or, rather, Sardinia, as it was called when in 1720 the large island of that name was combined with the principality of Piedmont and other territories to form a kingdom—was ascended by Charles Albert, of the younger branch of the House of Savoy. Charles Albert was an honest sovereign, but perpetually vacillating between the liberal and clerical parties. He hated Austria, but was averse to revolutionary measures. He ruled wisely, however, effecting many useful reforms, and adding to the prosperity of the country, which was the best governed of all the Italian States. It was to him that Mazzini appealed to put himself at the head of the national movement for liberty.

Joseph Mazzini, one of the earliest of the prominent men who aided in the deliverance of Italy, was a native of Genoa, belonging to a good but not illustrious family. He was a boy of twelve years of age when the revolution of 1821 broke out in Piedmont, which was so summarily crushed by Austria. At that early age he had indefinite ideas, but thought that Italians should boldly struggle for the liberty of their country. In 1826, while a student at the university, he published an article on Dante, whose

lofty sentiments and independent spirit made a deep impression on his soul. His love for his native land became like a "fire in his bones;" it was a passion which nothing could repress. He was an enthusiast of immense physical and moral courage, pure-minded, lofty in his aspirations, imbued with the spirit of sacrifice. As his mind developed, he became an intense republican. He had no faith in monarchies, even if liberal. Heart and soul he devoted himself to the spread of republican ideas. He early joined the Carbonari, who numbered nearly a million in Italy, and edited a literary paper in Genoa, in which he dared to rebuke the historian Botta for his aristocratic tendencies. He became so bold in the advocacy of extreme liberal opinions that his journal was suppressed by government. When the French insurrection broke out in 1830, he and other young men betook themselves to the casting of bullets. He was arrested, and confined in the fortress of Savona, on the western Riviera. It was while in prison that he conceived the plan of establishing a society, which he called "Young Italy," for the propagation of republican ideas. When liberated he proceeded to Geneva, where he made the acquaintance of Sismondi, the Swiss historian, who treated him with great kindness and urbanity, and introduced him to Pellegrino Rossi, the exiled publicist, at that time professor of law at Geneva. From Geneva Mazzini went to Lyons, and there collected a band of Italian exiles, mostly military men, who contemplated the invasion of Savoy. Hunted as a refugee, he secretly escaped to Marseilles, and thence to Corsica, where

the Carbonari had great influence. Returning to Marseilles, he resumed his design of founding the Association of Young Italy, and became acquainted with the best of the exiles who had flocked to that city. It was then he wrote to Charles Albert, who had lately ascended the Sardinian throne, inviting him to place himself at the head of the liberal movement; but the king at once gave orders to arrest the visionary enthusiast if found in his dominions.

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