

SPRIT OF THE ENGLISH JOURNALS.

That his Majesty entertains a strong objection to the creation of such a number of new Peers as would be necessary to neutralize the majority on the Reform Bill we have reason to believe; and we also believe that there exists, or has existed until very recently, a difference of opinion in the Cabinet upon the same important question. It is not unlikely that those matters may be denied in certain quarters, but we shall make no account of any denial which is not supported by better authority than mere assertion. In the mean time the statement as to the objection on the mind of his Majesty receives something like confirmation, from an announcement made with an air of authority in the Courier of last evening. That Journal, after stating that the prorogation of Parliament is to take place on Saturday, if possible, but certainly not later than Thursday, goes on to say, "Upon the re-assembly of Parliament the course will probably be to bring forward the Reform Bill, slightly modified, but by no means changed in principle, or in any of its important clauses. It is presumed, we imagine, and with good reason, that the Peers will not after the decision of the wishes of the King and his people, again reject the Bill, or, if they should reject it, that it will be by so small a majority as will enable the King, without inconvenience, to create new Peers." This announcement which is no doubt a feeling put forth, not by official authority but at official suggestion, to ascertain how the public would tolerate the idea of a modified Bill of Reform is entitled to an observation or two—but first, let us say a few words as to the creation of new Peers—Being sincerely attached to a Constitutional Monarchy, as the form of Government best adapted to the growth, development, and duration of rational liberty, and the protection and diffusion of all the social blessings that depend upon it, we wish to see every part of which it is composed preserved in its integrity. It is therefore that we advocate an efficient but not an intemperate Reform. But while we believe that the integrity of the House of Commons has been broken in upon by the Members of the House of Lords usurping the nomination of Members to seats in the Lower House, and while we endeavour, by such means as the case supplies, to have the pure representation of the Commons restored, we by no means desire to see the House of Lords degraded in its composition, or prostrated in its spirit at the feet of the Minister of the Crown. Deeply do we regret that the House of Lords should, with regard to the Reform Bill, have so decidedly opposed, not the Ministers of the Crown, but the earnest wishes and authentic will of the nation, expressed and recorded in the petitions which crowded the tables of both Houses, praying for nothing more than that the representative theory of the Constitution might be realised in practice. But it is not a sound principle to act upon, either in morals or politics, that a permanent evil should be committed to secure the acquiescence of a present good. Statesmen, as well as moralists, should look not merely to the immediate result, but to the probable consequences of actions, or their conduct would be always in error. It appears a good thing to pass the reform Bill by any means short of violence; but it is right to bear in mind that if it be effected by the creation of 50 or 60 new Peers—nearly 30 having been created by the present Ministry already—the dignity of the Peerage will not only be lowered, and the independence of the House of Lords destroyed, but a most dangerous precedent will have been thereby established, of which a corrupt and ambitious Minister may hereafter take ample advantage in promotion of the worst designs; for an abuse of the prerogative in a good cause to-day may be pleaded to-morrow in defence of proceedings of a totally opposite tendency. The prerogative of the Crown in creating Peers is only properly exercised when it is limited to the supplying the vacancies produced by time, and to the raising persons whose public merits and eminent services entitle them to that honor. We know that this prerogative has been sometimes used before for political purposes, though never to the extent which some contend for now. It was thought a great abuse in the reign of Queen Ann, when, to give Ministers a majority twelve new Peers were created at once. With such contempt were the twelve treated, that, on the day of their taking their seats in the Upper House, on the question of adjournment being put, the Earl of Wharton asked them, "Whether they voted by their foreman?" King William III. degraded the Peerage, by raising eight Earls to Dukedoms, and creating eighteen Earls, three Viscounts, and nine Barons. But what is this to what is now proposed? Besides, the Peers created for the occasion are generally the mere tools of every administration, who never vote against the Minister, unless when the Minister happens to act with the people. Witness Mr. Pitt's Peers in the present instance, whose names are to be found in the ranks of the majority against the Reform Bill, although most of them perhaps, never voted against the Crown before. Among them is the name of Lord Carrington, the enobled banker and professed Whig; but it was better, in his opinion, that the rights and liberties of the people should be sacrificed than the rotten borough of Wendover should be extinguished. In the celebrated case of Ashby and White the House of Lords made a noble and successful stand in defence of the popular liberties, against the despotic usurpation attempted by the House of Commons. There have been other occa-

sions, too, where they have been on the side of freedom when the Commons arrogated an authority subversive to the rights of their own constituents; but they were not occasional Peers who acted so. We would, therefore, rather see the House of Lords abolished at once, than so degraded as to reflect but the servile image of the will of the Minister of the Crown. Now, as to the announcement which the Courier puts forth as a feeling, we ask—are the people prepared for a modified Bill of Reform—that is, let it be disguised as it may, a changed, an altered Bill—a something that is not the "whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." We should like at all events to know what the intended modifications are, and then we could say whether they infringe upon the principle or not. As to ourselves, we have never joined in the cry from the beginning for "the whole Bill;" on the contrary, we have pointed out several defects which we should be glad to see removed. In the mean time, what need of mystery, if the thing be honest? It is easy to govern the people of England by reason—not by deception.—Morning Herald.

The cause of Reform can now only be injured by an abuse of that strength, which, directed by reason, must be sure to make it triumphant. This is not a time when the popular feeling requires to be excited by the stimulating furor of the Press. The danger is least the excitement already abroad may break over the moulds which protect the Constitution, and become a furious torrent in which the vessel of Reform shall be wrecked, instead of flowing on in its legitimate channel, with that full but calm tide which would bear it securely and majestically to the haven of its proper destination. We have already told the people that "the emissaries of the Anti-Reformers are abroad instigating to acts of a dangerous and unlawful nature with the hope of crushing Reform itself." We have told this to the people whose cause we have supported with such force of reason and arguments as we could command, when some Journals, that are now administering the intoxicating draughts of that cup of madness which already "kindles in its circulation," were equally zealous in supporting and applauding every act and sentiment of the determined enemies of all Reform. That the emissaries of the Anti-Reformers are abroad is sufficiently evidenced by the anonymous placards which have been fixed up in various quarters, with the obvious intention of breaking down the legitimate force of a reasoning people on this question, by substituting for that constitutional power the lawless and destructive fury of a mob. The busy, dark, and malignant contrivers of disorder and violence, no doubt, calculate upon the mind of the Sovereign himself being alienated from Reform, by that cause being mixed up and confounded with disgraceful riots and rebellious outrage. They also calculate upon the military being called out to massacre the deluded people. They would like to see the scenes of Newtownbarry and Merthyr Tydvil—scenes of disgusting military execution—renewed even in this metropolis. That they may be disappointed is the wish of every good citizen, but in order to disappoint them it is necessary to put the people on their guard against their machinations. There is another class of persons endeavouring to get up disorder in London—those desperate characters that abound in every great and luxurious city, who expect that their predatory "patriotism" will be enriched with a rich harvest of spoil, amid scenes of tumult and commotion. But, indeed, the mere reading of the seditious placards by crowds of simple people, who, in looking after their political rights, sometimes forget that others are looking after their pockets, afford to gentry of this sort no small opportunity to pursue with success their honest avocation. As a specimen of the public indication of the sentiments of the people of England, a Morning Paper publishes a placard which had been posted up at Canterbury, and which after a hypocritical expression of respect for the King, and calling upon the people to hold meetings to declare their loyalty, goes on to say, "At these meetings to express your opinion more decidedly on the politics of this momentous crisis, you can resolve to pay no more taxes, in the event of an Anti-Reforming Ministry being appointed. You can resolve, in consideration of the part taken by the Bishops and the Clergy against the people, that you will pay no more tithes. And remember, fellow citizens, that a public meeting in other times—and that meeting was the English House of Commons—resolved that 'The House of Lords was a nuisance.' How far your opinion coincides in this respect remains to be seen." The inditer of this placard is not quite so willing to get into a "scrape" himself as to bring others into it—for he modestly conceals his name, and plays his heroic part under the signature, as well as under the mask of "a Reformer." It is easy to determine what sort of a Reformer he is, while he speaks of loyalty to the King, instigates the people to follow the example of the democratic assembly that, voted the House of Lords a nuisance—and that also, be it remembered, brought the King to the block. Are we not, therefore, justified in saying that the "emissaries of the Anti-Reformers are abroad?" Let the people recollect the Special Commissions, and the military executions that have taken place, even under our Whig Government. But if they should forget those things, and listen to violent and treacherous advisers, we shall be guiltless of the afflicting consequences.—Morning Herald.

In consequence of the part which they took on the Reform Bill, the Bishops have

been marked out as objects of peculiar hostility. The propriety of their sitting at all as lords of Parliament has been drawn into question, and the political contentions of the Senate are asserted to be incompatible with the pious duties and spiritual functions of the prelates of the Church. Some Journals broadly hint at the necessity of measures of retaliation not only against the bishops, but against the temporalities of the church of which they are the guardians. Now as to the vote which the bishops gave against the reform bill, we have no right to say that it was not a conscientious one. Indeed when a bishop votes against the Crown we are always disposed to believe that he sacrifices his habits, his inclinations, and even his taste, to his conscience. King and Church are not more closely associated by prescriptive maxim than by the general conduct of the Bench of Bishops in the house of lords. When the Monarchy was abolished in England Episcopacy went down along with it; when the Monarchy was restored Episcopacy was re-established. Burke says that "religion should raise her mitred head in palaces;" but it is another question whether she should exhibit her lawn sleeves in Parliament. We maintain that this question is not likely, in stormy times like the present, to be temperately or impartially discussed. As to the effect which the votes of the bishops produced on the fate of the reform bill, let us see what it was. Twenty-one bishops voted against the bill, and the bill was lost by a majority of forty-one. Suppose then all those Prelates had followed the example of the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London and abstained from voting, the loss of the bill could not have been prevented, for it would still have been thrown out by a majority of twenty. If, indeed, the twenty-one Prelates had voted for the bill instead of voting against it, the bill would have been carried by a majority of one. But this could not have removed the objection of those who maintained the position that Bishops should not interfere in political questions. Whether they voted for the popular side or against it would be equally a violation of the spiritual non-intervention principle which the objectors to a Political Prelacy have laid down. If we are to have a Reform in the Church, it cannot be a judicious and temperate Reform unless it be one considered and adopted on its own merits, and without any reference to the votes of the Bishops on the Reform Bill, or on any other question. If the Church wants Reform—and we are of opinion that, to a certain extent, it does—it would be the inversion of all sound reasoning to say that because the guardians of the Church voted for the Reform Bill (supposing they had done so,) it would be right that the Church itself should go unreformed; or, in other words, because the guardians of the Church acknowledged that the best way to renovate the State was to remove its abuses, therefore the best acknowledgment that could be made to them would be to allow the abuses of the Church to be perpetual.—Though we have said that the abstract question as to the propriety of the Prelates of the Established Church having seats in the House of Lords is not a question for times of excitement, yet we have no hesitation in saying that our Bishops, in their places in Parliament, have, somehow or other, almost invariably resisted all improvement. We do not forget the heroic conduct of the "seven Bishops" in blowing the trumpet of the glorious Revolution, and we venerate their memories for the stand which they made against a tyrant, when their own rights, and privileges had been arbitrarily assailed; yet, when the restoration of the rights and privileges of their fellow subjects is the question which the Government supports, we find the great body of the Bishops, for the first time in living memory, arrayed in opposition to the King and his Ministers. But on other occasions, when harsh and cruel laws were to be passed against the people—when an unconstitutional stretch of power was to be sanctioned by the Legislature—when the passing of the "Six Acts"—the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act—the enactment of new capital Statutes, inflicting death under circumstances for which Christians ought to blush—the passing of a Spring-gun Bill to legalize a system of cowardly assassination, more dangerous to the innocent than the guilty—when these and other matters equally opposed to sound and humane legislation were the work cut out by the Ministers for Parliament, we have always found the Bishops on the side of power. In short, the Minister of the day has generally calculated on their votes with great certainty, but never with a more justified confidence than when the corrupt or arbitrary acts of the Government were to be absolved from all responsibility, or the errors of the law, or the "venerable abuses of the State, were to be protected against the reforming hand of salutary innovation. During the successive years that Sir Samuel Romilly nobly struggled to purify our criminal code from inhumanity and barbarism, by judicious and enlightened ameliorations, the Prelates of our Church—the teachers of a religion of mercy, were among the most steady opponents to any and every alteration of our sanguinary code. This circumstance Sir S. Romilly himself adverted to with deep regret in his place in the House of Commons in the year 1813, when he said "I saw without any astonishment that the punishment of death for privately stealing to the amount of five shillings had been sanctioned by the support of five Prelates, because, upon a former occasion, I recollect that the punishment of death for this offence was approved and supported by seven of the Bench of Bishops, amongst whom, if I mistake not, there was an

Archbishop." What Bishops voted on the other side? Alas! the records of merciful and enlightened legislation bear no traces of their names! Far be it from us to ascribe those things to any corruption or venality of the Bench itself; we would rather believe that cloistered habits, a narrow experience of life, an advancement to high rank and power, oftener the result of a subservient cultivation of patronage than of independent thinking and laborious merit, have, in a great measure, disqualified them for those duties of political life which require comprehensive views, moral integrity, and that civil wisdom which knows how to distinguish between pernicious change and wholesome innovation. We speak of the body of Bishops, knowing that there are, and have been, individuals among them, at all times, of the purest integrity, the most amiable feelings, and the greatest mental endowments. We have said that the Church wants Reform to a certain extent; and we think so chiefly because the wealth of the Church is great, while that wealth is most unequally distributed. Many of the Dignitaries of the Church are far too highly paid, while the working Clergy are, in general, without adequate remuneration. These and other defects must be reformed; but Reform in the Church should be conducted, not as a measure of retaliation but as a duty of morality and justice.—Morning Herald.

The Government have yielded so far to the well-intentioned recommendation of Mr. Sadler, as to allow the introduction of a Bill for the providing of small patches of land for cultivation by the peasantry. Whether the accomplishment of this object, undoubtedly desirable in itself, is capable of being effected by an Act of the Legislature, is at least extremely doubtful; and so Lord Althorp thought; but at the same time the subject is one which is so important, that every inquiry into it is likely to be productive of public advantage.

Many large land owners have of late been so forcibly impressed with the conviction that the possession of land is the best security for the good conduct and character of the peasantry, as to have appropriated land to their use with great liberality, and the Bishop of Bath and Wells, the Duke of Buckingham, and others, have acted, in this respect, with a highly commendable public spirit. The more such examples are followed the better for the landed interest; but there will be many difficulties in establishing a system of compulsory allotment, which are not met with by individuals who pursue the plan of allotment on their own account.

The truth is that the degradation of the British peasantry has been brought about by a complication of causes which cannot be well understood, without a thorough examination of our social condition for the last fifty years. The change that has taken place in the agricultural population is within the personal remark of any intelligent observer of sixty years of age.—They have lost their independence and well being, and with them, unfortunately, in a great degree, their honesty and sense of order. They have become almost serfs or adstricti glebe, dependent solely upon the wages of their labour, which have dwindled to so low a rate as to be scarcely sufficient to keep body and soul together. The supply of labour so greatly exceeds the demand, that labourers and paupers are almost synonymous, and having nothing to fall back upon—not a rood of ground that is his own, either for subsistence, or solace,—the working man feels that he has no stake in the country, and no interest in the preservation of the existing order of things, which, so far as he is concerned, he finds to be the worst that possibly can be. To this point, from causes too numerous to recapitulate, the agricultural labourer has been reduced, and his situation is unfortunately aggravated by the want of conciliation—the absence of sympathy, which too many of the higher orders have manifested towards him. So far as money goes, the British gentry are both charitable and liberal, but there is wanting some bond of union between rich and poor, some identification of their views and interest, without which there cannot be true amity between them. There is now that broad line of demarcation between rich and poor, which is the sure mark of an unsound and unhealthy state of society. There is a feeling of bitterness entertained by the poor against the gentry, as a class, which augurs very ill for the permanent domestic peace of the country. Those who mix the most with the lower orders, will know the best how far our assertion is true, but we have a deep conviction that the evil is already far greater than superficial observers are apt to suppose. The first French Revolution was preceded by the prevalence of a servile war, and of a spirit of destruction, which led the peasantry to the commission of outrages of a character precisely similar to those which occurred here during the last winter. This spirit was acutely remarked by Arthur Young, who in speaking of the frequent burnings of the chateaux, explains very clearly their true origin. The French peasantry found themselves in a situation in which they had more to gain than to lose, by the destruction of property, and they acted accordingly. There is too much reason to fear that the peasantry of England are now under the influence of similar motives, and, if so, there can be no hope of peace and order, until those motives can be replaced by others of a better tendency.

In France at the present day, every man is proprietor of land to a greater or less extent. Agricultural labours, domestic servants, and in short all the lower our classes, possess some little property of their own which, though seldom sufficient for their maintenance, gives them a stake in the hedge, and makes them feel that they are ci-

tizens and not slaves. But this advantage arises out of the law of equal partition, and against which so much has been said and written, without the slightest effect upon national prejudice either in one country or the other. To advocate a law of equal distribution for Great Britain would be generally regarded here as a wild delusion, although it is evident that it would be the most powerful means of giving the peasantry the interest in the soil of which the present law tends to deprive them. An alteration in the Law of Inheritance can only be looked for, under present circumstances, by visionaries; but in the meantime it must be confessed that the system of accumulation and perpetuation of land in the hands of a few great proprietors offers an almost insuperable difficulty in the way of remedying the evils of the condition of the agricultural labourers. The peasantry are now mere machines for performing work, and the question out to be how to remove them into the station of men—how to change them from degrading Helots into useful and independent citizens. It is to be feared the task is too arduous to afford any prospect of speedy accomplishment, even with the aid of Mr. Sadler, who appears benevolently disposed towards the lower orders, but does not possess adequate knowledge or capacity to be the instrument of materially improving their condition, which requires a concurrence of remedies as it has been brought about by a concurrence of causes. Of this we are sure, that the mind of no anti-reformer can be adapted to a task for which a perfect freedom from prejudice and from attachment to existing abuses is a condition of the very first necessity.—Sun.

The peaceable conduct of the people, notwithstanding the studied efforts made to betray them into violence, is only what we should have expected from their habitual good sense, good feeling and reflection. Indeed those purists and demagogues who were most vehement in their threats of revolution made it appear, upon their own showing, that revolution was impossible. They stated that the whole people were of the one way of thinking; and that, supported as they were by the King and the existing Administration, they were only prevented from having that Parliamentary Reform which they desired by a few Noblemen. How, then could there be a revolution. The word revolution, in its political sense, means a change of dynasty, or of the whole subsisting frame of Government, effected by force. But here the King and the people—the Executive Government and the popular force—went together. There was therefore, no possibility of revolution, because there was nothing to revolutionize. But though the people have been orderly and peaceable, there have been some instances of rabble violence. The outrages at Derby and at Nottingham, and the personal attacks in London upon some of the Noble opponents of the reform Bill, have not been the work of the people. They are the worst enemies of Reform who indulge in such excess—for they disgrace a just and rational cause by the most wanton and criminal, and tyrannical application of brute force. Such disturbers of the peace must either be the dupes of treacherous instigators, who hope Reform will be impeded by outrage, or ruffians of desperate habits, who care nothing about the political question, but think the crisis favourable for the more congenial operation of pillage and devastation. The breaking open the goal and letting out the criminals, and breaking indiscriminately the windows of the respectable inhabitants, whether Reformers or Anti-Reformers, prove what a mere rabble it was that commended the disturbances at Derby, which the military have quenched in blood. The burning of Nottingham Castle, too, was a brutal and barbarous act, only worthy of the followers of a Tyler or a Cade. Reform has nothing in common with incendiaries and men of blood. It repudiates them and their acts. Its great object is improvement—their destruction. We regret to see any portion of the London Press tending itself at this moment to the instigation of the worst passions of the rabble, by publications denouncing the Members of the majority in the House of Lords as objects of popular vengeance. We do not suppose the papers that publish those things have any intention of personal violence; but such is their natural, if not inevitable tendency. Even the book of peace—the book of religion, has been ransacked for the purpose of profanely applying passages in the sacred writings to purpose of malignant mischief. In an Evening Paper of last evening appeared the common version of the 59th Psalm, applied to Lord Mansfield, and other Anti-Reform Lords. One verse, we need hardly tell our readers, runs as follows:—

The righteous shall rejoice to see
Their crimes a rich vengeance meet,
And Saints in persecutor's blood
Shall dip their harmless feet.
Is it right or decorous in a respectable paper to profane even a bad translation as any part of the inspired writings by such an application? Can fanatical violence serve any just cause; or does Reform stand in need of the practical zeal and pious works of political St. Bartholomew?—Morning Herald.

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