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HOUSE OF LORDS, Monday, July 27.

Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues Bill.

Lord Melbourne said the principle of this bill was involved in the question whether their lordships would consent to some reduction of the present cathedral establishments of the country, and to an application of the fund which would be raised by that reduction to the supplying a remedy to that state of unhappy destitution of spiritual instruction which prevailed throughout the country. The counsel for the bill had addressed their lordships as if their lordships had been called on to abolish these cathedrals; whereas all that their lordships were called on to do was, to make such reductions, and yet at the same time to leave them amply sufficient for all the purposes for which they were instituted, and to apply the funds to the desired improvement of the parochial system. The commission out of which this measure arose was proposed to Parliament by King William IV. in 1835 by the advice of that government of which Sir R. Peel was then the head. The commission was continued when the government was changed, and on the 10th March, 1836, reported. The suggestions of the commissioners had been carried out as concerned pluralities and sinecures and as concerned episcopal revenues, and it was now proposed to carry out their suggestions on the subject of cathedrals and chapters. The learned counsel said that they must prove some delinquency in those public bodies before they could properly interfere, as in the case of the Knights Templars. But the possessions of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem were seized because they refused to surrender, and because they adhered to the Roman Catholic religion. He did not think there was any sufficient ground for keeping up the chapters either for those purposes which they once fulfilled, or for any duties which they might be hereafter called on to undertake. (Cries of "Hear, Hear.") He was not for limiting the power of the bishop by any body which might fetter him when right and shield him when wrong; he was an advocate of the monarchical principle in the church as in the state. He did not accuse the churchmen of selfishness, but he did not think that the church alone and by herself was celebrated for her legislation. He had a high respect for the church of England, he agreed in the doctrines of that church; he meant her religious and not her political doctrines. (Laughter.) He did not agree with those divines who gave up the benefits of the Uniformity Act, or with those who refused the oath to King William and Mary, and continued nonjurors at the time the family of her Majesty ascended the throne. One great argument for the bill was, that the church was bound to provide for those who had the strongest claims upon her, and that it went to remove funds which were virtually lost and misapplied, when they could produce the greatest benefit and advantage.

The Bishop of Winchester paid all possible respect to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the commissioners, lay and clerical, but could not agree in their view of the bill and its effects. The universities, a majority of his episcopal brethren, and the great body of the clergy opposed it; twenty-two cathedrals opposed it, and besides it did not agree with the report in which it professed to be founded. The cathedral establishments were old and new. In the former the Prebendaries were resident or non-resident; in the latter resident only. They varied in number from twelve to four, and were in all 240 residents. The non-residents were 304, so that the bill affected 544 individuals. Their property was proper, as houses or land, or impropriate or parochial tithes, which had been exchanged for real property. This bill suppressed all non-residents, and reduced the residents to four in each cathedral, with a few exceptions. The corporations of minor canons might be suppressed. They asked for their own suppression. The estates of deans and chapters, and the funds of reductions and alienations were to be applied to the augmentation of old, or the establishment of new benefices.

Patronage was transferred from one to another body, and the statutes of the several bodies were to be altered. The Prebendaries would be reduced from 544 to 130, and to take away half the cathedral revenues. The bill impaired if it did not destroy the nurseries of sound theological knowledge and pure divinity—the nurseries of Hooker, Porteus, and the lights of literature. What right had the Legislature so to deal with property given for certain specific purposes—not by the state, but by individuals for ever. (Hear.) Mr. Burke had said, "it prescription be once taken away no species of property will be secure when it once becomes an object for indigent cupidity. I see that the confiscations begin with the bishops, deans, and chapters, but I do not see them end there." He concluded by moving that the bill be read a second time that day three months. (Hear.)

The Archbishop of Canterbury said, that all the skill and eloquence of the right reverend prelate, in attacking the principles and details of the bill, had not succeeded, in the slightest degree, in shaking the opinion which he (the Archbishop of Canterbury) entertained of its propriety and wisdom. It appeared that 235,000l. a-year was required to raise benefices of 500 to 2,000 persons to 200l. a-year, of 2,000 and upwards to 300l. and of 5,000 and upwards 400l.

In London there were four parishes with church-room for only one twentieth of the population, and twenty-one with church-room for one-eighth of the population. The resident canons were by this bill provided for amply, and the means of supporting the service of our magnificent cathedrals maintained. The non-residents were sinecures, and ought to be abolished. Were they to be preserved while the people were destitute of spiritual instruction? He could not balance the one against the other. As to the donors, let the time of their devising be remembered, and perhaps they would, if now alive, change their opinions. As to the power of the state, he thought it should be exercised on moral principle. As to precedent, he had not acted upon it. That which was inconsistent with justice would not be established by precedent. Suppose the 400 prebends, all eminent for piety and learning, and devoted to the church, yet their loss would be nothing in comparison with the continued destitution of millions. (Hear.) But were not the most eminent and learned theologians without canons? (Hear.) It had been said that it was the duty of the state to provide for the spiritual wants of the people. Granted; but the state had likewise a right to say to the church "Do something for yourselves towards remedying the evils of spiritual destitution." Such were the opinions of the Duke of Wellington, Earl Grey, and Sir R. Peel. When it was said that the precedent set by the measure would be ruinous, he would ask their lordships to look at the effect that would be produced by the rejection of the bill. (Hear.) The commissioners had sought to avert the danger, to remedy the evil, to supply the destitution, and, at the same time, to secure the church and those establishments which would undoubtedly fall with it. He would not be understood as undervaluing the petitions of the clergy, but every man's opinion was valuable in proportion as he was well acquainted with the state of the case, and he must say that the clergy had never seen the question put before them. He had been taunted with a breach of oath. He laid no stress on the circumstance that he took the oath, which was to this effect, by proxy:—You, Howley, swear that you will maintain the rights and liberties of this church, and observe the customs thereof, and as far as concerns your duty as Archbishop of Canterbury, that you will cause the regulations of the Chapter to be observed by others, so far as such customs are not repugnant to the laws, statutes, provisions, and ordinances of the realm, or to the prerogative of the crown." He must say that his oath did not, by its terms, bind him in the present case. See how the commissioners were circumstanced.—What could their motive be in sacrificing their labour and patronage in preparing this measure? Look at the amount of patronage, which it was always desirable for a government to have, that her Majesty's ministers had sacrificed in order to carry this measure of reform. Look at the sacrifices of the Archbishop of York, and of the Bishops of Lincoln and London, in surrendering their small prebends. Had they no friends to serve—no clergy to remunerate? He had two modifications to propose—first, to create honorary canons in the hands of the bishops as the reward of zeal, and piety, and learning among the clergy of their diocese; and, secondly, that a portion of the fund produced should go to Queen Anne's bounty and another portion be reserved for local wants.

Lord Lyttleton did not object to any measure for compelling contributions from every one of these dignitaries for the support of the necessities and calls of the church—he would even not dispute the right of Parliament to deal with the revenues of these bodies as it thought necessary, but he did deny its right to destroy the offices themselves.

The Earl of Harrowby said that after passing this bill and that of last year, there would still be twenty-six bishops at 4,000l. and 5,000l. a year; twenty-six deans, at a minimum of 1,000l. a year; 104 canons, at a minimum of 500l. a year; and 1,600 livings, on the other hand, exceeding 500l.; whilst there was a great and undue number of poorer livings, diminishing to 80l. and £70 a year. Let any one compare these endowments with any other liberal profession, and it would be found that the church did not at all suffer by the comparison. Taking the army, for instance, he found that amongst a hundred regiments, there was not distributed more than £200,000, to the officers. There had recently been 133 officers promoted by brevet at a cost of £47,000. And whilst considering these accounts, it should be borne in mind that these officers had paid £210,000, for their commissions. (Hear.)

The Earl of Devon said the effect of this bill would be to deter men from ever again appropriating any portion of their property to the purposes of promoting the interests and the religion of the established church. He admitted that the evil which this bill was intended to remedy existed; he admitted also that it became the church to make a sacrifice to meet that evil; but this bill would deny them the opportunity of doing so. It undertook to do the thing for them.

The Bishop of Gloucester and the Bishop of Lincoln supported, while the Bishop of Salisbury and the Bishop of Rochester opposed the bill, and the House divided. For the second reading, 99; against it, 48; majority, 51. The bill was then read a second time, and the House adjourned.

Thursday, July 30.

The Marquis of Londonderry asked when the payments to the men of the Spanish Legion would commence as promised by Sir De Lacy Evans, and being told that papers on the subject would be produced, he inquired if Government had heard of what was passing at Barcelona, and if the order of the Bath had indeed been conferred on Espartaco.—Lord Melbourne said nothing official had reached government from Barcelona, and the order of the Bath had been conferred on the Duke of Victory. . . . The Duke of Wellington moved for the production of a correspondence between himself, as warden of the Cinque Ports, and the Board of Trade. . . . Lord Melbourne, in reply to Lord Strangford, who said the public mind in France and England was much excited on the Question, allowed that negotiations for the pacification of the Levant had progressed very far between Great Britain Austria, Russia, and Prussia; of course nothing was settled until notified. To Lord Brougham he added—"It has certainly been always our wish to concur and agree with France upon this subject, but it is also certainly true that France has not been a party to this arrangement."—Lord Brougham—"Then all I have to say is, that I express, and feel that I cannot too strongly express, my deep regret upon this occasion."

Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues Bill.

The Bishop of Exeter, on the motion for going into Committee on this bill, addressed the House. He rebuked Lord Melbourne for having spoken slightly of Theology, and then said he could never consent that the cathedral institutions of the country should be overturned. It was said that, by the present bill, £130,000 a-year would be obtained for the purpose of relieving the spiritual destitution of the country. That sum would of course do much good, but there was no other way of obtaining it except the confiscation of the deans and chapters? It had been said that it would be useless in the government to apply to the House of Commons, that they would be told that the church must take the initiative and do something herself. That was his plan. The revenues of the bishops were now about £150,000 a-year, and those of the deans and chapters about £200,000. That did not sound a very large amount of property, but if it were well managed it would produce a million in addition. (Hear, hear.) Why then did they not look to a better management of the funds, rather than the confiscation, as a means of supplying the spiritual destitution which all acknowledge to exist?

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Duke of Wellington, and the Bishop of Exeter explained. The Duke had no recollection of what had passed between him and the right rev. prelates, but he had always considered the essential necessity which existed for additional means being adopted in this country for preaching the word of God to the people, and considering in what degree the church of this country was endowed, had always thought it expedient that the first step towards procuring the necessary funds for this purpose should be taken by the clergy themselves. (Hear, hear.) It had been his [the Duke of Wellington's] lot to have lived amongst many idolatrous nations, and people of all sorts of creed, but he never knew an instance of sufficient public means not being found to teach the religion of the country.

The Bishop of London complained that the clergy had shown impatience of the commission, and that parties who should have known better had joined in what he feared he must call willful misrepresentations of its objects. Daily, weekly, he had before his own eyes the evil effects of the spiritual destitution that prevailed amidst vast masses of the population amongst whom he lived. If he passed to the north-east of his diocese, he there saw the Cathedral of St. Paul—a noble structure consecrated to divine worship; with that cathedral were connected a dean and three residentiaries, enjoying ten or twelve thousand a-year. He saw too connected with it, twenty-six officers, sinecures; and there was an income of £12,000; he had then to go a mile or two farther, and he found himself in the midst of a population in the most wretched condition; they consisted of artisans, beggars, mechanics, thieves, and a variety of characters of the very lowest description—he found them there to the number, perhaps, of from 300,000 to 400,000. He found perhaps one clergyman to ten or twelve thousand people; and in one district he found but one church and one clergyman for 45,000 people; and then indeed he was to be told that he was not to touch St. Paul's. (Hear.) When he was enthroned at St. Paul's he had taken an oath to maintain the rights, liberties, privileges, and lawful customs thereof. What then was he bound to do by that oath?—He was as bishop bound to defend the rights and liberties of the cathedral from all unlawful aggression—but was that to prevent him from consenting to—nay, from originating any measure that he felt would be useful and good for the cathedral. Newport and Birmingham, and the calendars of the assizes were the fruits of the present system. He must complain that a right reverend prelate (the Bishop of Exeter) had not discussed this question with his usual candour; for that right reverend prelate had talked of their abolishing these institutions. They did no such thing. Some of them were not diminished—in two cases they were added to—in others they were not diminished. (Hear.) From all the information he had received, he believed that the number of canons left would be fully equal to the performance of divine service. In most of the cathedrals there was only one sermon preached on the Sabbath! He thought also that the patronage was badly entrusted to such a body as the chapter-houses, because their usual practice was to give the livings to members of their own body in rotation, without considering the fitness of the party. Now, properly speaking, the deans and prebendaries were not spiritual officers, although he admitted that they were ecclesiastical officers. If the bill failed it would not be from any want of consideration or caution on the part of those who had submitted their recommendations to their lordships. (Cheers.) The bill was then amended in committee, and ordered to be further considered on Monday.

Tea.—Our differences with China have rendered speculations in tea extensive; one house at Canton is said to have purchased 9,000,000 pounds.

Troops at Trincomalee.—By last accounts much mortality was prevailing among the troops at Trincomalee, and the 18th Royal Irish, it was said, had sustained considerable loss.

THE NEWGATE LITERATURE OF ENGLAND.

It will be in the recollection of our readers that a few years ago the *Quarterly Review*, in an article of considerable power, and no less bitterness, entered upon a very elaborate examination of the modern literature of France, for the purpose of holding up to the scorn of the good people of England its vicious and demoralizing character. The names of George Sand, Victor Hugo, and Alexander Dumas were covered with odium, and, if the reviewer was worthy of credit, they deserved nothing short of the universal execration of mankind.

Now, although we are not unprepared to defend those distinguished writers against all such rampant and corrupt critics, we do not propose to say one word on their behalf now, but merely to show with what an ill grace assaults of this description come from the English side of the channel. We lament, with no little humiliation, that our own literature is so tainted by the lowest vices as to put us fairly out of court; and we submit it to the good sense of the public whether we who in this nineteenth century, are literally living in glass-houses, should thus imprudently set the dangerous example of throwing stones at our neighbours.

It would be a manifest impertinence to ask those who are really acquainted with the writings of Madame Dudevant—(we select her because she is unquestionably the foremost genius of her age)—whether the imputed immorality of her works will bear one moment's comparison with the Newgate literature, that has for a considerable time past filled the heads and excited the passions of the bulk of the people of this country? Take the most questionable of all her novels—sift its principles—investigate its tendencies; and then turn to *Jack Sheppard*.—Need we say that the contrast is revolting, and that however our conventional morality may be shocked by the philosophy of that bruised spirit and mighty intellect, our common sentiments of humanity, our simplest affections, our sense of goodness and beauty, our ordinary sympathies and tastes, our manhood and our social feelings, throughout all the relations of life, are all outraged and violated by that most gross and pernicious story. We may dispute Madame Dudevant's positions—we may venture even to contend that her ethics are based upon a fallacious estimate of human nature—we may assert that she is often wrong, frequently sophistical, and sometimes transcendental; but whatever we may say or think of her principles, we recognize a noble mind in her works, we feel in every page the influence of a profound genius and a poetical imagination, and we are compelled to acknowledge, in despite of all prejudices, moral and religious, that the obvious direction of her labours is the disenfranchisement of man from the fetters of bigotry, and the assertion of human freedom. She is a lover and a vindicator of her species, however erroneous may be the means she employs. We gather ripe truths in her pages, even in the midst of sophistries and perversions; and she who pronounced that immortal sentence, that there is no justice without knowledge, must be admitted frankly on all sides to have wrought some useful effect upon the intelligence of her time. But is there in such productions as we have alluded to in our own country a single gleam of utility, of grace, of permanent beauty? Is there a solitary charm even of manner, to set off their offensive and repulsive vulgarity, or to mitigate the monstrous evils they are calculated to generate in society? Not one—they constitute an unrelieved mass of corruption, which can produce no other result than that of provoking the indignation of the educated, and debasing the ignorant into the commission of the most criminal excesses.—When the *Quarterly* next sets out upon a crusade in the service of virtue, it would be desirable to look at home first.

The rabid passion for the romantic literature of the Old Bailey, which we have witnessed at its height during the by-gone year, has been, perhaps, unparalleled in any other age or country. All the minor theatres, stringently prohibited from acting the higher forms of the drama, put *Jack Sheppard* into a red riding-coat, and night after night, captivated the imaginations of their motley audiences by the magnanimity, courage, and generosity of the burglarious hero. The horrible became so fashionable in the stews, that *Jack* was even hanged upon the stage amidst the tears of the sympathising spectators; and such was the frenzy of popularity that followed this gigantic show of mingled ribaldry and bombast, that one of our cleverest actresses did not hesitate to assume the character of the fascinating felon upon the stage, breaking goal with the most ineffable agility, and dashing two tipsy wives upon her delicate arms to the unspeakable delight of the congenial rabble! Did Victor Hugo, or Alexander Dumas, or any of the French melodramatists ever conceive such a disgraceful *mélange* as this?

Blueskin set the town on fire. "Nix my dolly" filled the police-offices for many weeks in succession with riff-raff roysterers—fortunate in their glorifications if they escaped the treadmill. But unfortunately the influence of this celebrated novel did not end with the inspirations of the gin-palace. A poor youth, emulating some fanciful image of despair that had got into his head, threw himself off the monument, and was found with a dirty *fasciculus* of *Jack Sheppard* in his pocket! The truth is, that books of this description exercise a most melancholy influence upon the minds of the lower orders, working them up to crime, and impressing them with deranged notions about the grandeur of robbery and murder. It is difficult to conceive an infatuation of this kind, but we have too many fatal proofs of the fact to question its existence for a moment. The last illustration is the most convincing and the most appalling of all. In one of his confessions, the wretched Courvoisier stated that the first idea of taking the life of his venerable master, was suggested to his mind by the perusal of the ignominious story of *Jack Sheppard*! Humanity shudders at such revelations.

That many such effects take place of which no proof can be traced—that infinite mischief, less apparent, but not less ruinous in its remote consequences, is thus produced—and that the seeds of depravity are thus sown in the hearts of the uneducated to an extent of which it is impossible to form any estimate—cannot be reasonably doubted. Works that are even less obviously depraved, and that profess to point the moral of crimes against society, frequently pervert the judgment of their readers by the very skill with which they delineate the vices they expose and denounce. The writings of Boz are rarely chargeable with any forbidden indulgence on the score of morals or taste, yet his *Oliver Twist* contains pictures of delinquency

which are not calculated to increase his reputation. With respect to one passage in that work—a passage of singular power, and crowded with agonizing, but faithful details—a very remarkable coincidence occurred in the case of a man, who shortly after the publication of that novel, was executed for a murder attended with some very remarkable circumstances. The case to which we refer was that of a young man who murdered a servant girl in the neighbourhood of Sloane-street. He had no sooner committed the deed, than he wandered away into the country, and after struggling in vain with the reproaches of his conscience, delivered himself up voluntarily to a police-constable. It was a curious feature in the story that he took the same route tracked by the miscreant *Sykes* in the novel of *Oliver Twist*, that the incidents which befel him were of a similar kind, and that the description of his remorse, of the mental images that haunted his fugitive steps, and of his wild fears whenever he came in sight of a human being, perfectly realized the appalling picture drawn by the novelist. It is just possible that this man had never read *Oliver Twist*; but it is much more likely that he was familiar with a book which was so extensively circulated, and had acquired such extraordinary popularity. Assuming the latter probability, there is but one inference to be drawn—namely, that he unconsciously, or by the force of his imagination, imitated an example that had made a deep impression upon his mind. The influence of imitation in such cases is often irresistible; but that consideration conducts us into another view of the subject, which we will resume at a future opportunity.

PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS.

EXPEDITION TO DAMASCUS.

Letter of the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Hirschel, to Sir Moses Montefiore, Knt. F. R. S. President of the London Committee of Deputies of the British Jews.

My most worthy Friend!—Before you proceed on your important and pious mission, I wish to address a few remarks to you, which the duties of my office dictate and existing circumstances render necessary.

As you well know, the Jews are perfectly innocent of the foul and murderous crime with which they are charged. You will readily stake your honour here and your salvation hereafter, on the truth of the declaration that no religious rite requiring human blood does or ever did exist among Israelites. But from what has been lately published I apprehend you will be told by our calumniators that such a rite may exist, and you not know it, because, as our accusers assert, "this mystery of blood is not known by all Jews, but only by the Rabbins;" that therefore your asseveration might be perfectly true as far as your own personal knowledge goes, and yet be false as to the crime of which our nation is accused.

To meet this objection I come forward. I am a Rabbi; Providence has permitted me to be the spiritual guide of the great Jewish communities of Britain for nearly forty years, previous to which time I filled a similar office in Germany. My honoured father (of blessed memory) for many years presided over the Jewish congregations in London, Berlin, and other towns of note in Europe, so did his father before him, and for more than ten generations my ancestors have with great renown held the highest clerical dignities amongst us. Their instructions have been transmitted from father to son, until it reached me, so that if any man, from the office he holds, the instruction he has received, and the ancestry from which he descends, ought to be thoroughly acquainted with all our laws, precepts, customs, rites, and observances, I may, without the slightest tincture of vanity, and in accordance with strict truth, declare I am that man.

Moreover, I am far advanced in life on this earth. I individually have nothing to hope for, but must expect it cannot be very long ere I shall appear before the Supreme Judge of the universe, the Holy One of Israel, who on Mount Sinai proclaimed, "Thou shalt not kill," and "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

With a full sense of my responsibility, I voluntarily come forward, and, without any equivocation or mental reservation whatsoever, join in the awful oath of expropriation, which, nearly 2000 years ago, in the name of the whole Jewish nation, and on the subject of this very accusation, was taken by the pious and learned Rabbi, Manasseh Ben Israel, to whose efforts the Jews owe their re-admission into Britain, and which oath he has recorded in his defence of the Jews, called *Vindicia Judaorum*. With him, and using his words, I say, "As this matter on our part is purely negative, and therefore cannot be cleared by the evidence of witnesses, I am constrained to use another kind of proof which the Lord blessed for ever has prescribed (Exodus xxii. v. 11.) and that is an oath.—Wherefore I swear, without any deceit or fraud, by the Most High God, the Creator of heaven and earth, who promulgated his law to the people of Israel on Mount Sinai, that I never yet to this day saw any such custom, as the use of human blood in any religious rite, among the people of Israel, and that they do not hold any such thing by divine precept of the law, or any ordinance or institution of their wise men, and that they never committed or sought to commit any such wickedness (that I know, or have credibly heard of, or have read in any Jewish author.) And if I lie in this matter, then let all the curses mentioned in Leviticus and Deuteronomy come upon me, let me never see the blessing and consolation of Zion, nor attain to the resurrection of the dead."

This, my solemn oath, which the virtuous and highly gifted Mendelssohn declares he is ready to repeat after Rabbi Manasseh Ben Israel with a clear conscience, I place in your hands, although the high authorities I have quoted require no support from my attestation, and I am convinced that in this enlightened country every such declaration is uncalled for and superfluous; but even where you are going this asseveration ought to satisfy the friends of truth, and that it will I firmly trust.

My best wishes attend you, my worthy friend. Go forth and prosper, and may a just and merciful God grant you that success which the justice of our cause deserves, that our innocence may be made manifest to all the nations of the earth.

Believe me yours ever faithfully,
SOLOMON HIRSCHEL,
Chief Rabbi.

No. 5, Bury-court, City,
29th Sivan (30th June,) 5600 A. M.