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LET ME GO.

BY WILLIAM BAXTER.

Let me go: my soul is weary
Of the chain which binds it here;
Let my spirit bend its pinion
To a brighter, holier sphere,
Earth, 'tis true, has friends to bless me
With their fond and faithful love;
But the hands of angels beckon
Me to brighter climes above.

Let me go: for earth has sorrow,
Sin, and pain, and bitter tears;
All its paths are dark and dreary—
All its hopes are fraught with fears:
Short-lived are its brightest flowers;
Soon its cherished joys decay;
Let me go; I fain would leave it
For the realms of cloudless day.

Let me go: my heart has tasted
Of my Saviour's wondrous grace;
Let me go where I shall ever
See and know his face to face:
Let me go; the trees of heaven
Rise before me, waving bright,
And the distant crystal waters
Flash upon my failing sight.

Let me go: for songs seraphic
Now seem calling from the sky;
'Tis the welcome of the angels
Which, e'en now, are hovering nigh;
Let me go; they wait to bear me
To the mansions of the blest,
Where the spirit, worn and weary,
Finds at last its long-sought rest.

Church Times.

THE BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS.

(From the London Correspondence of the N. Y. Courier and Enquirer.)

London, January 2, 1849.

The Lower House of Parliament consists of 658 members—500 English, 53 Scotch, and 105 Irish. The body, as its name implies, purports to be the representation of the "commonalty" of the realm, but yet the aristocratic element enters largely into its composition. It contains 39 eldest sons of Peers, who upon the death of their fathers will step into the Upper House, 170 brothers, younger sons, and immediate relatives of Peers, and 167 other members, who by birth or marriage are connected with the nobility. The superabundance of place-men in the representative branch, exists to a great extent in the British Commons. The body contains 63 government officials drawing large annual salaries, 56 Generals and Colonels, 84 military officers of lower grade, 8 lieutenants, 74 deputy and vice-lieutenants, 53 magistrates, and 108 patrons of church livings, who are all more or less connected with the government, and of course are all more or less interested in the preservation of present abuses.

It has long been the theory of the British Constitution that every citizen in the kingdom was present, either himself or by proxy, in the House of Commons, but the reconciliation of this theory with the actual system of representation is enough to baffle any ingenuity. The famous Reform Bill of 1832 abolished some rotten boroughs, and somewhat enlarged the area of representation, but yet the evils of the old electoral law were not removed, nor in fact materially ameliorated. The elective franchise still remains most unjustly limited. Only those who have a freehold, the annual value of which is forty shillings, and those who pay ten pounds house-rent annually, are privileged to vote; and in consequence not one million out of the twenty-eight millions of the United Kingdom, can exercise the dearest

right of freemen. In England only one out of seven male adults have the legal right to vote: in Scotland only one out of eleven, and in Ireland only one in seventeen.

But the present electoral law is not only very limited in its range: it is also extremely unequal in its application. It not only refuses votes, but it most unreasonably denies all equality of value to the votes it actually gives. A vote in one constituency may be worth twenty, thirty, and even fifty times as much as a vote in another. One-sixth of the whole number of electors, and less than one-fortieth of the adult male population, have the power of electing a majority of the House of Commons. The law in its apportionment of members pays little regard to the sum total of population, to the number of electors, to the amount of wealth, to extent of territory, to the degree of intelligence, or to any other standard whatever. The immensely wealthy city of Liverpool, with a population of 282,656, of whom 15,559 are electors, returns two members, just the same number as the miserable little borough of Harwich, with a population of 3,730, and with 233 electors.—Manchester, with a population of 240,000, and with 1,200,000 pounds rateable property, sends two members to Parliament; while Buckinghamshire, with a population of 17,000 and 760,000 pounds rateable property, sends 11. Kensington, a district containing 14 square miles, with a population of 110,000, and 18,345 qualified voters, has not been thought worthy of a single member; while the petty boroughs of Calne, Dartmouth, and Medhurst, with a voting population under 300, have one member each, and Thetford, which has not 200 voters, has two members. In fact, all the great towns and cities of the kingdom, the centres of wealth, enterprise and intelligence, are virtually disfranchised, their voice being completely swallowed up by a multitude of little boroughs which have comparatively no claims whatever upon the national consideration. There are no less than thirty-five electorates, which send one or two members each, although each has less than 500 voters. One half of the House are elected by towns, with less than 10,000 inhabitants.—Eight particular boroughs, with a united population of 32,516, have the same number of representatives as London with its population of a million and a half. The five cities, London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds, send in all twenty-four members, while a certain number of counties and boroughs, with the same population, send one hundred any forty-two. Thirty-one English boroughs, with a united constituency of 9,862, return to Parliament as many members as all Scotland; and seventy English boroughs, containing 26,443 electors, return as many as all Ireland. As gross an inequality exists among the different Scotch and Irish constituencies as among the English.

By the present system, the aristocracy have potentially a controlling voice in the composition of the Lower House. By virtue of that clause of the Reform Bill which denies the suffrage to tenants at will, the 249 county constituencies are subjected to the entire control of the landlords. The 69 members of those boroughs which are mere appendages of aristocratic houses, and the six University members, who are always appointed by the nobility, make up the number of "national representatives," dependent on the peerage, to 324, six less than the majority of the House. But this deficiency can be supplied twenty times over, if necessary, from among the 160 other seats which the landlords always successfully contest. The actual extent of aristocratic influence, in the so-called popular branch of the legislature, is not then a matter wonder.

A society has been recently formed at Birmingham, the special object of which is the curtailment of aristocratic power in the national representation. This association is called the Birmingham Freehold Land Society; it has about a thousand members, and its income is about five hundred pounds monthly. Its funds are expended in purchasing large tracts of land in the electoral districts, where there is a chance of success, and retailing them in forty shilling freeholds, (which, it has been found, can be done for £19,) to men of liberal principles, who do not now possess the property qualification. It is probable that by this means the liberal cause will obtain the complete control of many electorates, where it has never yet successfully waged a contest.

A favorite method with many to give security and independence to the electors, is to substitute the ballot for the present *viva voce* system of voting. This would strike an American republican, who has seen its operation in his own country, as a measure promising great benefit. But this mode of voting is foreign to British usages, and is not generally regarded with much favor. It is thought inconsistent with true frankness and manliness of character; and, moreover, it is represented that its effect would be to superinduce additional evil. It is said that bribery and intimidation would be employed as freely as now to procure promises to vote; and that withal, a facility for lying and fraud would be afforded which does not now exist.

Notwithstanding all the defects of the present electoral law and the corruptions of election contests, the House of Commons contains a large number of most capable and faithful public servants—men of the soundest intellect and the maturest experience. A really meritorious civilian is in fact much more sure of finding and of permanently retaining a seat in the National Legislature in England than in America, and simply because he is not dependent as among us upon the pleasure of a single constituency, but can appeal to as many different electorates as he pleases. The English people are seldom deprived for any great length of time of the services of an eminently valuable statesman.

Public opinion in Great Britain is strong and ever active; and it has a great number of ways of expressing and enforcing itself other than through parliamentary elections.—The British House of Commons, though not its own created, is its efficient agent, and never holds out long against its behests.—When public sentiment upon any subject of great national moment has fairly formed and clearly expressed itself, neither party discipline nor the predominance of any social caste in Parliament can long successfully resist it.—Thus the abolition of the Corn Laws, which dealt to the landed interests of the country so severe a blow, in spite of all the means and appliances which the aristocracy brought to bear against it, was carried by the irresistible force of the public will. If the Chartist petition, presented by Fergus O'Connor last spring, to the house, had really, as was affirmed, contained five millions of *bona fide* signatures, if it had been the "collected will" of a majority of the nation, and not the miserable humbug of a reckless faction, its speechless energy would have shaken the existing British Constitution to its very base. In supplying the *personnel* and in regulating the administrative details of government, the aristocratic influence in England is predominant; but in the settlement of those great questions which vitally concern a nation's weal and woe, the middle class is the ultimate controlling power in the country. Sooner or later it is sure to overmaster all opposing interests and influences.

PROTESTANTISM IN RUSSIA.

We find in the July number of the London Evangelical Magazine, the following correspondence from Russia. The facts in respect to Protestantism in that vast empire, which it communicates, are new, and will interest the reader:

On the banks of the Wolga, in the government circuit of Saratow, which lies between 40 and 45 degrees north latitude, there is a German colony; it was founded under the reign of Catherine II., in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Its population amounts to more than 150,000, distributed into 102 villages. These are situated principally upon the banks of the river. Few are more than 25 wersts from it, and nearly all are within 100 wersts of the provincial town, Saratow.

The houses are built chiefly of fir wood, and in regular order. They present an appearance of comfort, and consist generally of two, in some cases of three, four, or even five rooms. The roofs are often painted red, and the windows, which are pretty large, either red or green. The interior is, in most cases, neat and orderly.

On the right, or 'hill' side of the river, there are 46 villages, of which 33 are Protestant, and 13 Catholic; on the left, or 'meadow' side, 56; of which 40 are Protestant, and 16 Catholic. The proportion of population was, in 1836, as follows:

	Households.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Protestant,	9,073	41,898	40,436	82,334
Catholic,	3,070	13,568	13,023	26,591
	12,143	55,466	53,459	108,925*

A 'household' comprehends the inhabitants of a house in which usually two or more married couples and their children reside. The people are simple, cheerful, and virtuous. From the names of several of the villages—Shafhausen, Glarus, Basel, Zurich, Solothurn, Zug, Lucern, Unterwalden,—we presume that a part of the population emigrated originally from Switzerland. Each 'village' is under the care of a superintendent, aided by 'elders'; and an overseer is appointed for each 'district,' comprising several villages. The overseer stands in connection with the Imperial authorities at Saratow, where a 'Guardian Office for Foreign Immigrants' superintends the affairs of the entire colony, and was formerly under the 'Minister for the Interior,' (Home Secretary,) but now under the 'Minister of the Imperial Demesnes,' (Commissioner of Woods and Forests.)

The Protestant villages are distributed into 17 parishes, nine on the 'hill' and eight on the 'meadow' side. Two are Calvinistic and fifteen Lutheran; though in some of the latter there is a considerable proportion of Calvinists. There are two provosts, one for each side of the river, who are chosen from amongst the preachers, and whose appointment has to be confirmed by the governmental 'Consistory for the religious affairs of foreign confessions.' It is their province to inspect the schools and churches, and to preside at the annual synods of the preachers. They are subordinate to the Consistory at Moscow. From 1820 to 1833 there were a Superintendent and Consistory in the colony; but afterwards the former was abolished and the latter removed to Moscow.

The churches and school-houses are generally of fir wood, though lately some have been constructed of stone. Nearly all the old ones are too small for the present amount of population. The churches, moreover, are incapable of being heated. In winter, therefore, the service must be often held in the school-room, whose capacity is far too small to contain the

* The population returns in 1842 give 104,000 Protestants, 33,894 Catholics.