

THE MINISTRY AS FORMED BY LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The great Irish Famine.—The Potato-Rot of 1845 and 1846.—Modes of relief adopted by the Government.—Mr. O'Connell's call upon England for help.—His death.—Munificent Subscriptions.—Irish Landlords and Cottier Tenants.—Navigation Laws suspended.—Ten Hours' Factory Bill.—Abundant Harvest in England.—Monetary Pressure and Panic.—Excitement on the subject of National Defences.—The Duke of Wellington's Letter.—Proposed increase of the Income Tax.—The House of Commons on the night of the 24th of February.—News of the Abdication of Louis Philippe.—Real causes of the overthrow of the French Monarchy.—The Revolution of 1848.—Provisional Government appointed.—Chartism in England revived by the Socialist Revolution.—The tenth of April.—Preparations of the Government.—Physical-force Chartism at an end.—The attempt at Insurrection in Ireland.—The French Republic established in bloodshed.—Paris in a State of Siege.—Prince Louis Napoleon, President.—Convulsions of the Continent.—Progress of Improvement in England.—The Public Health Bill.—The impulse to social amelioration given by Prince Albert.—Free-Trade Banquet at Manchester to celebrate the final extinction of the Corn-Laws.—Meeting of Parliament the next day.—Tranquillity and Loyalty of England contrasted in the Royal Speech with the condition of the Continental Kingdoms.

Postscript.

Tables.—Sovereigns.—Populations.—Occupation of the People.—Census of Education.—Census of Religious Worship.—Revenue and Expenditure.—Commerce.

ONE of the most intelligent and experienced of the official men attached to the Whig Government thus wrote in the beginning of 1848: "The time has not yet arrived at which any man can with confidence say that he fully appreciates the nature and the bearings of that great event which will long be inseparably associated with the year just departed." That event was "the great Irish Famine." This thoughtful writer adds, "Unless we are much deceived, posterity will trace up to that famine the commencement of a salutary revolution in the habits of a nation long singularly unfortunate, and will acknowledge that on this, as on many other occasions, Supreme Wisdom has educed permanent good out of transient evil."*

We have seen how the first appearances of the Potato-Rot, which was to deprive the population of Ireland of their too-exclusive article of subsistence, induced that alarm in 1845 which was the turning-point in the memorable change of the policy of sir Robert Peel as to the supply of food for the population of all this kingdom. The disease in the crop of 1845 was not so universal as

* "Edinburgh Review," vol. lxxvii, p. 229. Article "On the Irish Crisis," by Sir Charles Trevelyan.

to prevent a considerable portion being saved; but the quantity that was found unfit for food when the store-pits were opened in 1846, fully testified to the wisdom of the step which sir Robert Peel took upon his own responsibility before he quitted office, of giving a commission to a great mercantile house to purchase a hundred thousand pounds' worth of Indian corn in the American markets. That supply was intrusted to Irish commissariat officers in the spring of 1846, to sell from various depôts at a moderate price, wherever the ordinary supplies of food were found to be deficient. The necessity for something more effectual than even such a timely but partial supply was soon apparent. In 1846 the fatal potato blight took place earlier, and was much more destructive, than in 1845. Father Mathew, the great temperance apostle of Ireland, has described how, on the 27th of July, he saw in a journey from Cork to Dublin the doomed plant blooming in all the luxuriance of an abundant harvest; but how, on his return on the 3rd of August, he beheld one wide waste of putrefying vegetation: "In many places the wretched people were seated on the fences of their decaying gardens, wringing their hands, and wailing bitterly the destruction that had left them foodless." The experience of the partial failure of 1845 had not taught the people that it was dangerous to depend upon one species of food alone. The great proportion of the early culture of 1846 was that of potatoes. Towards the end of July the potatoes began to show symptoms of the disease of the previous year. There was first a little brown spot on the leaf; the spots gradually increased in number and size, until the foliage withered, and the stem became brittle. Then, although the stalks remained green, the leaves suddenly blackened; the growth of the root was arrested; the staple food of a nation had perished. No potatoes were that year pitted. Those that were of any value when dug up were immediately sold or consumed, in the natural apprehension that they would rot. The autumn came, and it was now found that the potato crop had, with very few local exceptions, universally and entirely failed.

Before the distress in Ireland had reached its height—before the word "Famine" was the only term which could express the real state of human beings who would die for want of food if help were not bestowed upon them—the government of lord John Russell had devised various modes for the relief of sufferings and privations which were, even in their early stage, far more extensive than those which had been caused by the failure of the potato crop in various years during the previous quarter of a century.

On the 28th of August, 1846, the royal assent was given to

three Acts especially directed to meet the inevitable failure of the great Irish esculent. They were Acts for the employment of the poor in the distressed districts for a limited period; for providing additional funds for provisional loans and grants for public works; and for authorizing a further issue of money in aid of public works. The application of these measures was a tentative process. The Labour Rate Act at the beginning of September was directed to be applied to twenty-four districts, proclaimed to be in a state of distress. At the beginning of October this measure was found ineffectual, and the Lord-Lieutenant issued a circular authorizing the undertaking of works of permanent utility. In the House of Commons, on the 20th of January, 1847, lord John Russell described how the Labour Rate Act and other acts of the last session had worked. An immense staff of servants, upwards of eleven thousand, had been employed to furnish labour to half a million of adults, representing two millions of souls, at an expense estimated for January of 800,000*l.* It was difficult to find trustworthy servants, and to prevent the improper employment upon the works of persons by no means destitute. It was desirable for the government to adopt new measures; to form Relief Committees empowered to receive subscriptions and levy rates, and to be intrusted with donations from the State. Out of the sums thus raised they were to purchase food, and deliver rations to the famishing inhabitants. The system of affording relief through public works had utterly broken down; the payment of money was evidently liable to gross abuse; and undrest food, such as meal, might be exchanged for less needful articles by the improvident. Rations of cooked food offered the most effectual mode of relieving the helpless and prostrate people. Then began that beneficial system which was limited by the Act to the 1st of October, and which reached its highest point in July, 1847, when upwards of three millions of persons received separate rations. The Famine was stayed. The harvest was approaching in which the staple food was not affected by the disease. Impressively it has been said by sir Charles Trevelyan—"This enterprise was in truth the grandest attempt ever made to grapple with famine over a whole country. Organized armies, amounting altogether to some hundreds of thousands, had been rationed before; but neither ancient nor modern history can furnish a parallel to the fact, that upwards of three millions of persons were fed every day in the neighbourhood of their own homes, by administrative arrangements emanating from and controlled by one central office."*

* *Edinburgh Review*, vol. lxxxii. p. 269

The last time that the voice of Daniel O'Connell was heard in Parliament was on the 8th of February, 1847. He called upon the House of Commons to do something speedy and efficacious—some great act of national generosity, calculated upon a broad and liberal scale. "Ireland is in your hands—in your power. If you do not save her, she cannot save herself." The great demagogue was dying. The wretched parodists of his system of agitation, which was powerful for good as for evil—the ranting and swaggering young Irelanders, who, as Charles Lamb said of the early dramatists, used blood as they would "the paint of the property-man in the theatre"—had separated from him when he declared against the employment of physical force to obtain the Repeal of the Union. In the famine he perhaps clearly saw how social evils had been neglected for the advocacy of purely political objects very uncertain in their possible benefits for the future, and deeply injurious in their present tendency to put aside all real improvement. He died at Genoa on the 15th of May. Had he lived he would have seen and acknowledged how England had answered, not merely his call upon her generosity, but had yielded at once and wholly to the cry that had gone up to Heaven from the afflicted land, and had stretched forth her hand to succour and to save. Distressing as it must be, even at this distance of time, to look back upon the amount of human misery produced by this national calamity, there were circumstances connected with its relief that we can regard with pride and admiration. The noble exertions of public officers and private individuals, the unstinting employment of the pecuniary resources of the government, the munificence of the subscriptions sent to Ireland from the sister kingdom, the tender sympathy with the sufferers of every true English heart—these might be considered by a captious few as the mere payment of a debt from the happier island; but if so the payment was large and liberal, and such as could scarcely have been anticipated, even by those who best understood the English character. Captain Mann, an officer of the Coast Guard, who had seen the whole course of this great affliction, and who, when the worst was over, said, "I frequently look back upon it as a fearful and horrid dream," was of opinion that "such sufferings, and such help, cannot be easily forgotten." The Government in 1846 and 1847 advanced more than seven millions of money. The British Association for the Relief of the Distress in Ireland and Scotland applied to Ireland half a million sterling of the subscriptions raised. The Society of Friends collected in addition 168,000*l.*; and many persons in England contributed largely, independently

of any association. Sir Robert Peel, in his Cabinet Memorandum of November 1, 1845, thought there would be no hope of contributions here for Irish relief. He apprehended that the charitable would have Monster meetings and Repeal rent too present to their minds to make any great exertions.* All such feelings quickly passed away. England did her duty. "In the hour of her utmost need, Ireland became sensible of an union of feeling and interest with the rest of the empire, which would have moved hearts less susceptible of every generous and grateful emotion than those of her sons and daughters." † It was during the eventful years from 1846 to 1850 that the vast amount of Emigration took place which has been called the Irish Exodus. Before the gold discoveries in Australia, the emigrants from England and Scotland were comparatively few. "It is to Ireland that we must chiefly ascribe the departure during those five years, of a million and a quarter of emigrants from the ports of the United Kingdom, three-fourths of whom went to the United States." ‡

Sir James Graham wrote to Sir Robert Peel at the commencement of the alarm with respect to the potato crop, "A great national risk is always incurred when a population so dense as that of Ireland subsists on the potato; for it is the cheapest and the lowest food, and if it fail no substitute can be found for starving multitudes." § Why was the population of Ireland driven to subsist on the cheapest and the lowest food? Why was the agriculture of the South and West in a neglected state, little wheat being grown, with oats inferior for milling purposes, and green crops almost unknown? Why was the sole foundation for a sufficiency of food the renting of a bit of land on which a family could be located in a miserable cabin; the population rapidly increasing, inasmuch as land used for raising potatoes will support three times the number as the same land laid down to corn will support? These small tenures paid the landlord a higher rent than could have been obtained by letting to cultivators on a large scale. The rent of the cottier tenantry was always forthcoming, either in money or in kind. This certain payment, however delayed, was the absolute condition of their precarious existence upon the cheapest and lowest food. Too often, even in the best times, they were standing on the margin of absolute want, especially when they were waiting for the ingathering of their crop. It was as

* Memoirs by Sir Robert Peel," p. 143.

† Sir Charles Trevelyan—"Edinburgh Review," vol. lxxxvii. p. 316.

‡ See the Twenty-second Report of the Emigration Commissioners, 1862. Table, p. 69.

§ "Memoirs by Sir Robert Peel," p. 114.

truly as boldly said, by a great political economist, soon after the Irish crisis—"With individual exceptions (some of them very honourable ones), the owners of Irish estates do nothing for the land but drain it of its produce." He had previously said—"In no sound theory of private property was it ever contemplated that the proprietor of land should be merely a sinecurist quartered on it."* Mr. O'Connell, in the speech we have quoted, replied to some such inference:—"It is asserted that the Irish landlords do not do their duty. Several of them have done their duty; others have not. . . . But recollect how incumbered is the property of Ireland, how many of her estates are in Chancery, how many in the hands of trustees." The legislature did recollect this; and in 1849 passed the Act by which a Commission for the sale of Incumbered Estates was established. From the beneficial operations of this Commission, and through a better spirit infused into the proprietors of unincumbered estates, much of the land has come into the hands of skilful cultivators; and that race of cottier tenantry, of whose family one or more of its members was supported by beggary, has in great part vanished. Religiously and wisely did the Society of Friends in Ireland regard the mysterious dispensation with which their country had been visited in the blight of the potato, "as a means permitted by an All-wise Providence to exhibit more strikingly the unsound state of its social condition."

The question of the probable scarcity of food, not only in Ireland and in the Highlands and Isles of Scotland but in the kingdom generally, was very early in the session brought before parliament; upon a proposal of the government for the total suspension of all import duties upon corn, and of the Navigation Laws through which importation was restricted. There was very little opposition to this measure. The Protectionists were paralyzed by the fearful presence of the Irish famine, which forbade the consideration of class interests whilst three millions of people were crying out for food. Sir Robert Peel has justly said, that if subsequent events could fairly be taken into account, the various measures taken by parliament to mitigate the sufferings of 1846 and 1847, and "the hurried suspension of the Navigation Laws and of the remaining duties on articles of subsistence, would exercise no unfavourable influence on the opinion which might be formed on the precautionary measures of 1846." Unanimously as these measures were passed, as an absolute and uncontrollable necessity, there was scarcely a debate during the session in which

* John Stuart Mill—"Principles of Political Economy," book ii. chap. ii. sect. 6.

the Repeal of the Corn-Laws, and the abolition or reduction of Protective Duties, were not denounced as causes of present injury and of future mischief. When the Budget was brought forward, lord George Bentinck denied that free-trade had caused any increased consumption, as affirmed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, except in slave-grown sugar and in foreign silks; and he read an address from the Spitalfields weavers to himself, which thus concluded:—"We entertain the idea that had your lordship possessed the reins of government, the people of Ireland would not have perished to the extent they have, because we conceive that your lordship would not have regarded the fashionable principles of political economy, whereby the people might have been saved." His lordship with great complacency affirmed that he agreed with them.

It was during this session that the Ten Hours' Factory Bill was carried upon the motion of Mr. Fielden; the members of the government being divided in opinion, not only upon the general question of this interference with labour, but as to the probable benefit, or rather injury, of limiting factory labour to ten hours or to eleven hours. Sir Robert Peel was strongly opposed to restrictions of labour which might lessen the power of the operatives to command the material necessities and comforts of life. It had been said that a diminution of the hours of labour would tend to the moral and intellectual improvement of the great labouring class. "I firmly believe," said Sir Robert Peel, "that the source of the future peace, happiness, and prosperity of this country, lies in the improvement, religious as well as moral, of the different classes of society; but it is thus in advocating the elevation of the people that I oppose these restrictions. I do not deny the advantage of leisure; but of this I am perfectly convinced, that the real way to improve the condition of the labourer, and to elevate the character of the working classes of this country, is to give them a command over the necessities of life." When the Bill went to the House of Lords, lord Brougham laughed at the idea of passing the Bill for the sake of mental improvement. After ten hours' work a man was too tired for the task of self-cultivation. He had been trying to educate the peasantry for these twenty-five years, and his constant competitor and antagonist, by which he had always been defeated, was—Sleep.

On the 23rd of July Parliament was prorogued by the Queen. Her Majesty, after announcing her intention immediately to dissolve the present parliament, said—"I rely with confidence on the loyalty to the throne, and attachment to the free institutions of this country, which animate the great body of my people. I join

with them in supplications to Almighty God that the dearth by which we have been afflicted may, by Divine blessing, be converted into cheapness and plenty."

The prayer was heard. On the 17th of October thanksgivings were offered up in all the churches of England for the abundant harvest. But in a country of such large and complicated relations as Great Britain, the transition from dearth to plenty cannot produce that universal gladness which is felt in simpler communities, when the garners are newly filled, and the privations of the summer and the dread of the winter are removed in a bounteous autumn. In September and October there had been such a pressure upon the merchants and traders as had not been experienced since the great panic of 1825. Mercantile houses in London of the highest eminence suspended their payments. Corresponding disasters occurred at Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow. All the usual accommodation in the Money Market was at an end. In October the alarm swelled into a general panic; the crash of eminent houses went on in London; in the country, not only mercantile firms but banks were failing; the funds fell rapidly; exchequer bills were at a high rate of discount. On the 19th of October a deputation from the bankers, merchants and shipowners of Liverpool addressed the First Lord of the Treasury on the necessity for some remedial measures. On the 23rd a deputation of London Bankers urged upon the government to grant relief by a suspension of the Bank Charter Act of 1844. On the 25th of October a letter was addressed, signed by lord John Russell and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to the Governor and Deputy-Governor of the Bank of England, in which it was announced that "her Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that a time has arrived when they ought to attempt, by some extraordinary and temporary measure, to restore confidence to the mercantile and manufacturing community." They recommended, therefore, the Directors of the Bank of England to enlarge the amount of their discounts and advances upon approved security, charging a high rate of interest. The letter added, "if this course should lead to any infringement of the existing law, her Majesty's Government will be prepared to propose to Parliament on its meeting a Bill of Indemnity." The recommendation was immediately acceded to by the Bank of England. There was a partial restoration of confidence; but the ruin had been too widely spread not to make its effects long felt by the mercantile and manufacturing classes, and thus, by abridging the capital engaged in the employment of labour, extending the suffering to the class least able to endure it.

The New Parliament was opened on the 18th of November. Mr. Charles Shaw Lefevre was re-elected Speaker. On the 23rd the royal speech was delivered by Commission. It announced that although the course recommended by Ministers to the Bank of England might have led to an infringement of the law, the law had not been infringed. It went on to say that the alarm had subsided; that the pressure on the banking and commercial interests had been mitigated; and that the abundant harvest with which the country had been blessed had alleviated the evils which always accompany a want of employment in the manufacturing districts. On the 30th of November, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a speech in which he defended the government interference with the Bank Act of 1844, ascribed the recent pressure to the continued drain of available capital for the purchase of foreign corn and for the construction of railways. He moved the appointment of a Select Committee "to inquire into the causes of the recent commercial distress, and how far it has been affected by the laws for regulating the issue of Bank-notes payable on demand." After three nights of debate the motion was agreed to. It is unnecessary to follow the course of that debate. A law was passed for the Prevention of Crime and Outrage in Ireland; and a Bill to remove the Civil Disabilities of the Jews was read a first time, the second reading being deferred till the 7th of February. The measure proposed by lord John Russell was occasioned by the return at the general election of the baron Rothschild as one of the members for the City of London. It was first presented in the shape of a Resolution, affirming the eligibility of Jews to all functions and offices to which Roman Catholics were admissible by law. The Prime Minister, who was the colleague of baron Rothschild vindicated his measure in a speech of great eloquence and historical research. He was opposed by sir Robert Inglis and lord Ashley; he was supported by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli.

On the 20th of December it was moved and carried in both Houses that Parliament should be adjourned to the 3rd of February.

When Parliament met after the Recess, there was existing in the country an unusual excitement on the subject of our national defences. Many may remember how the great domestic festival of Christmas was somewhat marred that season by a letter of the earl of Ellesmere which appeared in the "Times" of the 25th of December, 1847. From the 10th of October, 1846, when the King of the French and M. Guizot, his minister, by a stroke of policy intended to circumvent the supposed designs of the British govern-

ment, secretly prepared and hastily accomplished the double marriage of the Queen of Spain with the Infante of Spain, the duke of Cadiz, and of the Infanta with the duke de Montpensier, the son of Louis Philippe, it was evident that between the two Courts of France and England there would no longer be friendship. There had been too much bad faith on the part of the King to permit the old relations to continue, which had existed during the days of the *entente cordiale* at Windsor Castle and at the Chateau d'Eu. M. Guizot exaggerated the importance to France of the Spanish alliance. He has said, that he had openly laid down the principle that the throne of Spain should not pass from the House of Bourbon, and that he secured its triumph when it was on the point of defeat.* The British Government perhaps took an equally exaggerated view of a new Family Compact, in being, as M. Guizot infers, more influenced by memory and imagination than enlightened by observation; the Past casting its mighty shadows over their minds, and leading them to waste their strength in the pursuit or avoidance of phantoms.† Whether the apprehension of the mischief that was especially provided against by the Allied Powers in 1814 was well-founded or unreasonable, the correspondence between the two governments became altered in its character; and the English people, with a natural hatred of trickery, and with peculiar feelings of disgust at some circumstances connected with the marriage of Queen Isabella to the Infante, from that time forth ceased to regard Louis Philippe with the sentiments of respect and confidence which once prevailed. When lord John Russell, therefore, in making his financial statement for the year exhibited a probable excess of expenditure beyond revenue, occasioned by the Irish famine and by the commercial panic, he said it was obvious that the deficiency must be met by taxation, or by great reductions in the army and navy. He adverted to a Letter of the duke of Wellington, on our National Defences, which had been described by a foreign writer, ‡ animated by the most friendly feelings toward England, as a pamphleteering reply to the Prince de Joinville. Nothing, he continued, could be more foreign to the intentions of the duke of Wellington, or could have given him greater pain, than the publication of sentiments which he had confidentially expressed to a brother officer. The duke had communicated to the government what he considered to be a deficiency in our defences; but it was far from his wish to make any public appeal, or to exasperate relations between England and other

* Guizot, "Memoirs of Sir R. Peel," p. 336.

‡ M. Chevallier.

† *Ibid.*, p. 330.

countries. It was clear from the statements of lord John Russell that France was the country from which danger was apprehended. "Under a king," he said, "who was a sincere lover of peace, since 1833 the active preparations and increase of the naval force of France had been very extensive." The proposition of the government was to increase the Military, Naval and Ordnance estimates by 358,000*l.*; to lay the foundation of a Militia by a grant of 150,000*l.*; and to meet the probable deficiency of revenue by increasing the Income Tax to 5 per cent. The proposed armament was moderate, compared with the public alarm on the subject of invasion; but it was evident that a reduction of expenditure would be strenuously demanded by the union of two very opposite parties—the Free-traders and the country gentlemen. The House of Commons was debating these subjects, when the question whether we could look to the professed friendship of Louis Philippe as our security for peace, or prepare for a rupture arising out of his bitter remembrance of our dissatisfaction with his schemes for the aggrandizement of his house, suddenly received a solution most unexpected—pregnant with far higher consequences than the success or the failure of an obsolete policy, totally out of character with the altered condition of society in which a king could no longer say—"I am the State."

Mr. Cobden, in his "Historical Episode,"—which, however decided may be the bias of his opinions, exhibits many of the qualifications of the historian,—has preserved the recollection of a scene of singular interest. "On the evening of the 24th of February, 1848, whilst the House of Commons was in session, a murmur of conversation suddenly arose at the door, and spread throughout the House, when was witnessed—what never occurred before or since, in the writer's experience—a suspension for a few minutes of all attention to the business of the House, whilst every member was engaged in close and earnest conversation with his neighbour. The intelligence had arrived of the abdication and flight of Louis Philippe, and of the proclamation of the Republic." Mr. Cobden relates a curious anecdote of the impression which this startling intelligence produced upon sir Robert Peel. Mr. Cobden and Mr. Hume were sitting together when the news reached their bench. Mr. Hume stepped across the floor to tell it to the ex-minister; and on returning to his place, repeated the following remarkable words as sir Robert's commentary: "This comes of trying to carry on a government by means of a mere majority of a Chamber, without regard to the opinion out of doors."*

* "The Three Panics," p. 12.

Before we proceed to relate, with necessary brevity, the portentous event which shook Europe to its centre, "with fear of change perplexing monarchs," we feel it due to M. Guizot, who has been accused of precipitating the fall of his sovereign by his conduct in the Spanish marriages, to exhibit his opinion upon this debateable matter: "It has sometimes been said that the Spanish marriages, and the ill-humour which the English government had felt on their account, were not without their influence in this catastrophe. This is a frivolous mistake with regard to its nature and causes; they were altogether internal. It was a social and moral crisis—an earthquake, French at first, and afterwards European, but with which the external relations of States and their Governments had nothing to do."*

The real causes of the "social and moral crisis," by which the government of France was overthrown, were too deeply imbedded in the feelings and opinions of that large portion of the French people who were shut out from an active participation in public affairs, to be at first seen and understood by political observers in England. The proximate causes were on the surface. A very short time sufficed to reveal, what might have been conjectured from the tendency of much of the current literature of the time, that the employers of labour and the receivers of wages had no bond of union or sympathy; were suspicious of each other; were regarding each other as natural enemies,—the one accustomed to view their almost exclusive possession of political power as their exclusive and inalienable right; the other, debarred from civil privileges, hating the government much, but hating the middle class more, upon whose affections the government was founded. The Opposition in the Chambers were ready to excite this uneasiness in the masses. They wielded the double weapons of the Tribune and the Press; dangerous as orators they were more dangerous as journalists. Seeking for the attainment of power whilst they strove to accomplish an electoral reform, they did not hesitate to ally themselves with men of more extreme opinions, whose democratic principles were directed rather towards the maintenance of the doctrine of "Equality" under a new form, than to the assertion of "Liberty," as understood by the founders of the Revolution which had overthrown the ancient monarchy; which was the cry of the indignant citizens who destroyed the monarchy of the Restoration, to place upon the throne one who was proud to call himself a Citizen King. The constitutional opposers of the government of Louis Philippe in 1848 were ready enough to propitiate the assert-

* Guizot, "Memoirs of Sir R. Peel," p. 337.

ors of Equality, without perceiving that it had taken a practical shape in which was involved the modification or destruction of all the conditions of society which rested on the basis of individual property exchanging Capital for Labour, and which, carrying out the principle of Competition, regarded the Consumer more than the Producer. A profound thinker has said, "the passion for Equality has never ceased to occupy that deep-seated place in the hearts of the French people which it was the first to seize: it clings to the feelings they cherish most fondly."* In 1848 the principle of Co-operation was regarded by the workmen of France less as a means of benefitting their condition, than as placing all men upon a level. Vain attempt to war against Nature, who, in making men unequal in bodily and mental vigour, has decreed that the most skilful, the wisest, and the strongest shall be foremost in the race.

It is not compatible with the limits of our work to enter into any minute detail of the Revolution of February. The legislative session had opened on the 28th of December, 1847. The king's Speech contained an allusion to the agitation for "electoral and parliamentary reform,"—which words had become a toast at several provincial banquets. Petitions for reform had been presented to the Chamber of Deputies. On the opening of the session there had been discussions in the Chamber on the legality of peaceful and unarmed political meetings. On the 22nd of February there was to have been a reform banquet in the twelfth *arrondissement* of Paris—a quarter where the materials for disorder were abundant. The Minister of the Interior forbade the meeting, as the committee for the banquet had proposed a procession of National Guards in uniform, and of students. The uniform of the National Guards had almost disappeared from public view. They were no longer favoured and flattered by the government. The principal leaders of the parliamentary Opposition now announced that the banquet was adjourned, in consequence of the declaration of the Minister of the Interior. The postponement was loudly murmured at by the democratic journalists. On the morning of the 22nd the streets were crowded at an early hour. About noon a crowd surrounded the Chamber of Deputies; and a cry was raised of "Down with Guizot;" but in the evening the city was quiet. Not so during the night. The government was collecting troops, and the people were raising barricades. The *rappel* was again heard calling out the National Guard at seven in the morning of the 23rd. Some firing soon took place between the populace and the Municipal

* De Tocqueville, "France before the Revolution of 1789," Mr. Reeve's translation, p. 313.

Guards. But the National Guards had come to an agreement amongst themselves to act the part of conciliators rather than that of the opposers of the people; and their presence in consequence prevented any attempt of the regular troops to disperse the multitudes assembled in various quarters. Soon the cry of *Vive la Réforme* was heard amongst groups of the citizen soldiers. The royal occupants of the Tuileries began to be seriously alarmed. A council was hastily summoned, when M. Guizot, finding that the Cabinet could not rely upon the firmness of the king, expressed his determination to retire. He himself announced his resignation to the Chamber of Deputies. There was joy that night in Paris, for it was thought that the cause of Reform had gained a victory. Houses were illuminated as if the crisis were passed. But a band of republicans bearing a red flag had come forth, and gathering together before the Hotel of Foreign Affairs occupied by M. Guizot, where a battalion of infantry was stationed, a shot fired from the mob was answered by a volley from the soldiery, and fifty fell, killed or wounded. A procession was immediately formed. The bodies of the dead were carried by torchlight through the streets, amidst the frantic cries of excited crowds demanding vengeance. The opportunity of restoring tranquillity by the exercise of force had passed away. During the night the king had reluctantly decided for concession. He had sent for M. Thiers and offered him the formation of a ministry. As the condition of his acceptance M. Thiers stipulated that M. Odillon Barrot should be a member of the Cabinet. This was entirely to yield upon the question of Reform, and wholly to change the policy of the government. But there was no alternative for the perplexed king. The change of administration was announced by placards in the morning. The command of the troops had been given to Marshal Bugeaud during the night; and it is probable that he would have adopted no half measures to support the Crown. His command was superseded by the new ministers, who judged that the danger of insurrection was passed. They were deceived. About noon the populace attacked the Palais Royal, and sacked the apartments. The Tuileries was next to be assailed. The king left the palace with his queen. The mob broke in. The throne was carried along the Boulevards, and was burnt at the foot of the column of July.

The Chamber of Deputies met at half-past twelve, when M. Dupin announced the abdication of Louis Philippe. M. Dupin also announced that the king had abdicated in favour of his grandson, the comte de Paris, appointing the duchess of Orleans regent.