

holders of the right to vote, on the pretext that they would be influenced by either their landlord or their priest.¹

Under the new order of things, Daniel O'Connell, an Irish gentleman of an old and honorable family, and a man of distinguished ability, came forward as leader of the Catholics. After much difficulty he succeeded in taking his seat in the House of Commons, and henceforth devoted himself, though without avail, to the repeal of the act uniting Ireland with England, and to the restoration of an independent Irish Parliament.

619. The New Police. — Although London had now a population of a million and a half, it still had no effective police. The guardians of the peace at that date were infirm old men who spent their time dozing in sentry-boxes, and had neither the strength nor energy to be of service in any emergency. The young fellows of fashion considered these venerable constables as legitimate game, and often amused themselves by upsetting the sentry-boxes with their occupants, leaving the latter helpless in the street, kicking and struggling like turtles turned on their backs, and as powerless to get on their feet again. During the last year of the reign Sir Robert Peel got a bill passed which organized a new and thoroughly efficient police force, properly equipped and uniformed. Great was the outcry against this innovation, and the "men in blue" were hooted at, not only by London "roughs," but by respectable citizens, as "Bobbies" or "Peelers," in derisive allusion to their founder. But the "Bobbies," who do not carry even a visible club, were not to be jeered out of existence, and they have henceforth continued to do their duty in a way which long since gained for them the good will of all who care for the preservation of law and order.

620. Death of the King. — George IV. died in the summer of 1830. Of him it may well be said, though in a very different sense from that in which the expression was originally used, that

¹ The property qualification in Ireland was raised from £2 to £10.

"nothing in his life became him like the leaving it."¹ During his ten years' reign he had squandered enormous sums of money in gambling and dissipation, and had done his utmost to block the wheels of political progress. How far this son of an insane father was responsible, it may not be for us to judge. Walter Scott, who had a kind word for almost every one, and especially for any one of the Tory party, did not fail to say something in praise of the generous good nature of his friend George IV. The sad thing is that his voice is the only one. In a whole nation the rest are silent; or, if they speak, it is neither to commend nor to defend, but to condemn.

621. Summary. — The legislative reforms of George IV.'s reign are its chief features. The repeal of the Test and Corporation acts and Catholic emancipation were tardy measures of justice, for which neither the king nor his ministers deserve any credit, but which, none the less, accomplished great and permanent good.

WILLIAM IV. — 1830-1837.

622. Accession and Character of William IV. — As George IV. left no heir, his brother William, a man of sixty-five, now came to the throne. He had passed most of his life on ship-board, having been placed in the navy when a mere lad. He was somewhat rough in his manner, and cared nothing for the ceremony and etiquette that were so dear to both George III. and IV. His faults, however, were on the surface. He was frank, hearty, and a friend to the people, to whom he was familiarly known as "the Sailor King."

623. Need of Parliamentary Reform; Rotten Boroughs. — From the beginning of this reign it was evident that the great question which must come up for settlement was that of Parliamentary representation. Large numbers of the people of England had now no voice in the government. This unfortunate state of

¹ Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 4.

things was chiefly the result of the great changes which had taken place in the growth of the population of the midlands and the north. Since the introduction of steam the rapid increase of manufactures and commerce had built up many large towns in the iron, coal, pottery, and wool-raising districts, such as Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, which could not send a member to Parliament; while, on the other hand, many places in the South of England which did send, had long since ceased to be of any importance. Furthermore, the representation was of the most hap-hazard description. In one section no one could vote except substantial property-holders, in another, none but town officers, while in a third, every man who had a tenement big enough to boil a pot in, and hence called a "Potwalloper," possessed the right. To this singular state of things the nation had long been indifferent. During the Middle Ages the inhabitants often had no desire either to go to Parliament themselves or to send others. The expense of the journey was great, the compensation was small, and unless some important matter of special interest to the people was at stake, they preferred staying at home; so that it was often almost as difficult for the sheriff to get a distant county member up to the House of Commons in London as it would have been to carry him there a prisoner to be tried for his life. Now, however, everything was changed; the rise of political parties, the constant and heavy taxation, the jealousy of the increase of royal authority, the influence and honor of the position of a Parliamentary representative, all conspired to make men eager to obtain their full share in the management of the government. This new interest had begun as far back as the civil wars of the seventeenth century, and when Cromwell came to power he effected many much-needed reforms; but after the restoration of the Stuarts the Protector's wise measures were repealed or neglected, the old order, or rather disorder, again asserted itself, and in many cases matters were worse than ever. Thus, for instance, the borough or city of Old Sarum, in Wiltshire, which had once been an important place had, at an early

period, gradually declined through the growth of New Sarum, or Salisbury, near by. In the sixteenth century the parent city had so completely decayed that not a single habitation was left on the desolate hill-top where the castle and cathedral once stood. At the foot of the hill was an old tree. In 1830 the owner of that tree and of the field where it grew sent two members to Parliament — that action represented what had been regularly going on for something like three hundred years! In Bath, on the other hand, none of the citizens, out of a large population, might vote except the mayor, aldermen, and common council. These places now got the significant name of "rotten boroughs" from the fact that whether large or small there was no longer any sound political life existing in them.

624. The Reform Bill. — For fifty years after the coming in of the Georges the country had been ruled by a powerful Whig monopoly. Under George III. that monopoly was broken, and the Tories got possession of the government; but whichever party ruled, Parliament, owing to the "rotten borough" system, no longer represented the nation, but simply stood for the will of certain wealthy landholders and town corporations. A loud and determined demand was now made for reform. Among those who helped to urge forward the movement none was more active or influential among the common people than William Cobbett, a self-educated man, but a vigorous and fearless writer, who for years published a small newspaper called the *Political Register*, which was especially devoted to securing a just and uniform system of representation.

On the accession of William IV. the pressure for reform became so great that Parliament was forced to act. Lord Russell brought in a bill providing for the abolition of the "rotten boroughs" and for a fair system of elections. Those who owned or controlled these boroughs had no intention of giving them up. Their opponents, however, were equally determined, and they knew that they had the support of the nation. In a speech which the Rev.

Sydney Smith made at Taunton, he compared the futile resistance of the House of Lords to the proposed reform, to Mrs. Partington's attempt to drive back the rising tide of the Atlantic with her mop. The ocean rose, and Mrs. Partington, seizing her mop, rose against it; yet, notwithstanding the good lady's efforts, the Atlantic got the best of it; so the speaker prophesied that in this case the people, like the Atlantic, would in the end carry the day.¹

When the bill came up, the greater part of the lords and bishops, who, so far as they were concerned personally, had all the rights and privileges they wanted, voted against the reform. To them the proposed law seemed, perhaps with good reason, to threaten the stability of the government. The Duke of Wellington was particularly prominent among those who were hostile to it, and wrote: "I don't generally take a gloomy view of things, but I confess that, knowing all that I do, I cannot see what is to save the Church, or property, or colonies, or union with Ireland, or, eventually, monarchy, if the Reform Bill passes."²

The king dissolved Parliament; a new one was elected, but it was still more determined to carry the measure. Again the Upper House rejected it. Then a period of wild excitement ensued. The people in many of the towns collected in the public squares, tolled the church bells, built bonfires in which they burned in effigy the bishops, and other leading opponents of the bill, and cried out for the abolition of the House of Lords. In London the rabble smashed the windows of the Duke of Wellington. In Bristol and Derby terrible riots broke out, and at Nottingham the mob fired and destroyed the castle of the Duke of Newcastle, who was noted for his opposition to reform, while all over the country shouts were heard, "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill!"

625. Passage of the Bill (1832); Results. — In the spring of 1832 the battle began again with greater fierceness than ever.

¹ Sydney Smith's Essays and Speeches.

² Wellington's Despatches and Letters, Vol. II. 451.

Again the House of Commons voted the bill, and once again the Lords defeated it.

It was evident that matters could not go on in this manner much longer. The ministry, as a final measure, appealed to the king for help. If the Lords would not pass the bill, the sovereign had the power to create a sufficient number of new Whig lords who would. William now yielded to the pressure, and much against his will, gave the following document to his prime minister: "*The King grants permission to Earl Grey, and to his Chancellor, Lord Brougham, to create such a number of Peers as will be sufficient to insure the passing of the Reform Bill—first calling up peers' eldest sons.*"

WILLIAM R., Windsor, May 17, 1832."¹

But there was no occasion to make use of this permission. As soon as the peers found that the king had granted it, they yielded. Those who had opposed the bill now stayed away; the measure was carried, received the royal signature, and became law. Its passage brought about a beneficent change. (1) It abolished the "rotten boroughs." (2) It gave every householder who paid rent of fifty dollars in any town a vote, and largely extended the list of county votes as well. (3) It granted two representatives to Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, and nineteen other large towns, and one representative each to twenty-one other places, all of which had hitherto been unrepresented, besides granting fifteen additional members to the counties. (4) It added in all half a million of voters to the list, and it helped to purify the elections from the violence which had disgraced them. Before the passing of the Reform Bill and the legislation which supplemented it, the election of a member of Parliament was a kind of local reign of terror. The smaller towns were sometimes under the control of drunken ruffians for several weeks. During that time they paraded the streets in bands, assaulting voters of the opposite party with

¹ "First calling up peers' eldest sons": that is, in creating new lords, the eldest sons of peers were to have the preference. William R. (*Rex*, King): this is the customary royal signature.

clubs, kidnapping prominent men and confining them until after the election, and perpetrating other outrages which so frightened peaceable citizens that often they did not dare attempt to vote at all.

626. Abolition of Slavery; Factory Reform. — With the new Parliament that came into power the names of Liberal and Conservative began to supplant those of Whig and Tory. The House of Commons now reflected the will of the people better than ever before, and further reforms were accordingly carried.

In 1833 Buxton, Wilberforce, Brougham, and other philanthropists, against the strenuous opposition of the king, secured the passage through Parliament of a bill, for which they, with the younger Pitt, Clarkson, and Zachary Macaulay, had labored in vain for half a century, whereby all negro slaves in British colonies, who now numbered 800,000, were set free, and twenty millions of pounds sterling appropriated to compensate the owners. It was a grand deed grandly done, and could America have followed the noble example, she might thereby have saved a million of human lives and three thousand millions of dollars which were cast into the gulf of civil war, while the corrupting influence of five years of waste and discord would have been avoided.

But negro slaves were not the only slaves in those days. There were white slaves as well, — women and children born in England, but condemned by their necessities to work under ground in the coal mines, or exhaust their strength in the cotton mills.¹ They were driven by brutal masters who cared as little for the welfare of those under them as the overseer of a West India plantation did for his gangs of toilers in the rice swamps. Parliament at length turned its attention to these abuses, and greatly alleviated them by the passage of acts forbidding the employment of women and

¹ Children of six and seven years old were kept at work for twelve and thirteen hours continuously in the factories, and were often inhumanly treated. They were also employed in the coal mines at this tender age. All day long they sat in absolute darkness, opening and shutting doors for the passage of coal cars. If, overcome with fatigue, they fell asleep, they were cruelly beaten with a strap.

young children in the collieries and factories, while a later act put an end to the barbarous practice of forcing children to sweep chimneys. In an overcrowded country like England, the lot of the poor must continue to be exceptionally hard, but there is no longer the indifference toward it that once prevailed. Poverty there may still be looked upon as a crime, or something very like it; but it is regarded now as a crime which may possibly have some extenuating circumstances.

627. Inventions; the First Steam Railway; the Friction Match. — Ever since the application of steam to machinery, inventors had been discussing plans for placing the steam engine on wheels and using it as a propelling power in place of horses. Macadam, a Scotch surveyor, had constructed a number of very superior roads made of gravel and broken stone in the South of England, which soon made the name of macadamized turnpike celebrated. The question now was, Might not a still further advance be made by employing steam to draw cars on these roads, or better still, on iron rails? George Stephenson had long been experimenting in that direction, and at length certain capitalists whom he had converted to his views succeeded in getting an act of Parliament for constructing a railway between Liverpool and Manchester, a distance of about thirty miles. When the road was completed by Stephenson, he had great difficulty in getting permission to use an engine instead of horse power on it. Finally his new locomotive, "The Rocket," — which first introduced the tubular boiler, and employed the exhaust or escaping steam to increase the draught of the fire, — was tried with entire success. The road was formally opened in the autumn of 1830, and the Duke of Wellington, then prime minister, was one of the few passengers who ventured on the trial trip.¹ The growth of this new mode of transportation was so rapid that in five years from that

¹ "The Rocket," together with Watt's first steam pumping engine, are both preserved in the Patent Office Museum, South Kensington, London.

The tubular boiler is, as its name implies, a boiler traversed by a number of tubes communicating with the smoke-pipe; as the heat passes through these, steam

time London and the principal seaports were connected with the great manufacturing towns, while steam navigation had also nearly doubled its vessels and its tonnage. Ten years later still, the whole country became involved in a speculative craze for building railroads. Hundreds of millions of pounds were invested; for a time Hudson, the "Railway King," as he was called, ruled supreme, and members of Parliament did homage to the man whose schemes promised to cover the whole island with a network of iron roads, every one of which was expected to make its stockholders rich. Eventually these projects ended in a panic, second only to that of the South Sea Bubble, and thousands found that steam could destroy fortunes even faster than it made them.

Toward the close of William's reign, between the years 1829 and 1834, a humble invention was perfected of which little was said at the time, but which contributed in no small degree to the comfort and convenience of every one. Up to this date the two most important of all civilizing agents—fire and light—could only be produced with much difficulty and at considerable expense. Various devices had been contrived to obtain them, but the common method continued to be the primitive one of striking a bit of flint and steel sharply together until a falling spark ignited a piece of tinder or half-burnt rag, which, when it caught, had, with no little expense of breath, to be blown into a flame. The progress of chemistry suggested the use of phosphorus, and after years of experiments the friction match was invented by an English apothecary, who thus gave to the world what is now the commonest, and perhaps at the same time the most useful domestic article in existence.

628. Summary. — William IV.'s short reign of seven years is marked (1) by the great Reform Bill of 1832, which took Parlia-

is thereby generated much more rapidly than it could otherwise be. The steam after it has done its work in the cylinders escapes into the smoke-pipe with great force, and of course increases the draught. Without these two improvements of Stephenson's the locomotive would never have attained a greater speed than five or six miles an hour.

ment out of the hands of a moneyed clique and put it under the control of the people; (2) by the abolition of slavery in the British colonies, and factory reform; (3) by the introduction of the friction match, and by the building of the first successful line of railway.

VICTORIA 1837. —

629. The Queen's Descent; Stability of the Government. —

As William IV. left no child to inherit the crown, he was succeeded by his niece,¹ the Princess Victoria, daughter of his brother Edward, Duke of Kent. In her lineage the queen represents nearly the whole past sovereignty of the land over which she governs.² The blood of both Cerdic, the first Saxon king, and of William the Conqueror,³ flows in her veins,—a fact which strikingly illustrates the vitality of the hereditary and conservative principles in the history of the English crown.

We see the full force of this when we pause to survey the ground we have passed over. Since the coming of the English to Britain a succession of important changes has taken place.

In 1066 the Normans crossed the Channel, invaded the island, conquered its inhabitants, and seized the throne. Five centuries later the religion of Rome was supplanted by the Protestant faith of Luther.

A hundred years after that event, civil war burst forth, the king was deposed and beheaded, and a republic established. A few years subsequently the monarchy was restored, only to be followed by a revolution, which changed the order of succession, drove one line of sovereigns from the land, and called in another from Germany to take their place. Meanwhile new political parties rose to power, the Reform Bill passed, and Parliament came to represent more perfectly than ever the will of the whole people; yet after all these events, at the end of more than ten centuries from the date

¹ See table, Paragraph No. 581.

² The only exceptions are the Danish sovereigns and Harold II.

³ See Genealogical Table, page 402.

when Egbert first assumed the crown, we find England governed by a descendant of her earliest rulers!

630. A New Order of Things; the House of Commons now Supreme. — The new queen was but little over eighteen when called to the throne. At her accession a new order of things began. The Georges, with William IV., had insisted on dismissing their ministers, or chief political advisers, when they pleased, without condescending to give Parliament any reason for the change. That system, which may be considered as the last vestige of "personal government,"¹ that is, of the power of the crown to act without the advice of the nation, died with the late king.

With the coronation of Victoria the principle was established that henceforth the sovereign of the British Empire cannot remove the prime minister or his cabinet without the consent of the House of Commons elected by and directly representing the great body of the people; nor, on the other hand, would the sovereign now venture to retain a ministry which the Commons refused to support.²

Custom, too, has decided that the queen must give her sanction to any bill which Parliament approves and desires to make law;³ so that if the two Houses should agree to draw up and send her own death warrant to the queen, she would be obliged to sign it, or abdicate.⁴

¹ See McCarthy, History of Our Own Times.

² So carefully does the queen guard herself against any political influence adverse to that of the ministry (and hence of the majority of the House of Commons), that the Mistress of the Robes, or head of her majesty's household, now changes with the ministry, and it is furthermore understood that any ladies under her whose presence might be politically inconvenient to the premier shall retire "of their own accord." In other words, the in-coming ministry have the right to remodel the queen's household — or any other body of offices — in whatever degree they think requisite, and the late Prince Albert could not even appoint his own private secretary, but much to his chagrin had to accept one appointed for him by the prime minister. See May's Constitutional History of England, and Martin's Life of the Prince Consort, vol. 5.

³ Queen Anne was the last sovereign who vetoed a bill. That was in 1707. During the hundred and eighty years which have followed no English sovereign has ventured to repeat the experiment.

⁴ See Bagehot, The English Constitution.

Thus the queen's real position to-day is that of a person who has much indirect influence and but little direct power — far less in fact than that of the President of the United States, who can exercise the right of vetoing a bill, thus preventing a majority of Congress from enacting a law;¹ and may remove the lower class of office-holders at pleasure.

631. Sketch of the Peerage. — A change equally great has taken place with respect to the peers.² As that body has played a most important part in the government of England and still retains considerable influence, it may be well to consider their history and present condition. It will be remembered that the peerage originated with the Norman conquest. William rewarded the barons, or chief men, who fought under him at Hastings,³ with grants of immense estates, which were given on two conditions, one of military service at the call of the sovereign,⁴ the other their attendance at the royal council,⁵ an advisory and legislative body, which contained the germ of the present parliamentary system. It will thus be seen that the Conqueror made the possession of landed property directly dependent on the discharge of public duties. So that if on the one hand the conquest carried out the principle

"That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can,"⁶

on the other, it insisted on the higher principle that in return for such *taking* and *keeping* the victors should bind themselves by oath both to defend and to govern the state.

¹ Congress may, however, pass a law over the President's veto, providing they can get a two-thirds vote in its favor.

² Peers (from the Latin *pares*, equals). The word first occurs in an act of Parliament, 1322, — "Pares et proceres regni Angliæ spirituales et temporales."

³ The names of the great barons have been preserved in Domesday Book (see Paragraph No. 169), in the roll of Battle Abbey (though that was tampered with by the monks), and on the wall of the twelfth century church at Dives, Normandy, where the Conqueror built his ships.

⁴ See Paragraph No. 200.

⁵ See Paragraph No. 200.

⁶ Wordsworth, Rob Roy's Grave.

In later reigns the king summoned other influential men to attend Parliament, who, to distinguish them from the original barons by land-tenure, were called "barons by writ";¹ and subsequently it became customary for the sovereign to create barons by letters-patent, as is the method at present.²

The original baronage continued predominant until the Wars of the Roses³ so nearly destroyed the ancient nobility, that, as Lord Beaconsfield, says, "A Norman baron was almost as rare a being in England then as a wolf is now."⁴ With the coming in of the Tudors a new nobility was created.⁵ Even this has become in great measure extinct, and of those who now sit in the House of Lords perhaps not more than a fourth can trace their titles further back than the Georges, who created great numbers of peers in return for political services either rendered or expected.

Politically speaking, the nobility of England, unlike the old nobility of France, is as a rule strictly confined to the male head of the family. None of the children of the most powerful duke or lord have during his life any civil or legal rights or privileges above that of the poorest and obscurest peasant in Great Britain.⁶ They are simply commoners. But by courtesy, the eldest son of a nobleman usually receives a part of his father's title, and at his death he enters into possession of his estate⁷ and rank, and takes his seat in the House of Lords, having in many cases been a member of the House of Commons by election for a number of years before. The younger sons inherit neither hereditary title, political power, nor landed property, but quite generally obtain offices in the civil service, or positions in the army or the church.

¹ See Paragraph No. 315. ² See Paragraph No. 315. ³ See Paragraph No. 368.

⁴ Beaconsfield's *Coningsby*.

⁵ See Paragraph No. 404.

⁶ Even the younger children of the sovereign are no exception to this rule. The only one born with a title is the eldest, who is Duke of Cornwall by birth, and is created Prince of Wales. The others are simply commoners. See Freeman's *Growth of the English Constitution*.

⁷ So strictly is property entailed, that there are proprietors of large estates, who cannot so much as cut down a tree without permission of the heir. Badaeu's *English Aristocracy*.

The whole number of peers is, in round numbers, about five hundred.¹ They may be said to own most of the land of England. Their average incomes are estimated at £22,000 (\$110,000), or an aggregate of £11,000,000 (\$55,000,000), an amount certainly not greater, if indeed it equals, the combined incomes of half a dozen leading American capitalists.

One of the most remarkable things about the peerage in modern times is the fact that its ranks have been constantly recruited from the people; and just as any boy born in America feels himself a possible senator or president, so any Englishman who has commanding ability may, like Pitt, Disraeli, Churchill, Nelson, Wellesley, Brougham, Tennyson, or Macaulay, hope to win and wear a coronet; for brains and character go to the front in England just as surely as they do elsewhere.

In their legislative action the peers are, with very rare exceptions, ultra conservative. They have seldom granted their assent to any liberal measure except from pressure of the most unmistakable kind. It is for their interest to keep things as they are, and hence they fight against every tendency to give the people a larger measure of power. They opposed the Habeas Corpus Act under Charles II., the Great Reform Bill of 1832, the Education Bill of 1834, the admission of the Jews to Parliament, the repeal of the Corn Laws, and the later extensions of the franchise; but, on the other hand, it was their influence which compelled John to sign Magna Carta; it was one of their number—Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester—who called the House of Commons into being; and it was the lords as leaders who inaugurated the Revolution of 1688, and established constitutional sovereignty under William and Mary in the place of the arbitrary and despotic self-will of James II.

It is the fashion with impatient radicals to style the Lords "titled obstructionists," privileged to block the way to all improvements;

¹ About four hundred and seventy-five temporal peers and twenty-five spiritual peers (archbishops and bishops).