

but as a matter of fact they have often done the country good service by checking hurried and ill-considered legislation; and though the time may perhaps be not very far distant when a hereditary House of Lords will cease to exist, yet there will always be need in England, as in every other civilized country, of an upper legislative house, composed of men whose motto is to "make haste slowly."

Meanwhile, though England continues to lay strong emphasis on nobility of rank and blood, yet she is never forgetful of the honor due to nobility of character. Perhaps it is the consciousness of this fact which in recent times has led men like Mr. Gladstone to decline a title, content, as not a few of the descendants of the old Saxon families are, with the influence won by an unsullied name and a long and illustrious career. Eight hundred years ago the House of Lords was the only legislative and executive body in the country; now, nearly all the business is done in the House of Commons, and not a penny of money can be voted for any purpose whatever except the Commons first propose it. Thus taxation, the most important of all measures, has passed from the peers to the direct representatives of the people.¹

632. The Queen's Marriage. — In 1840 the queen, then in her twenty-first year, married her cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg

¹ Other measures may originate in either House, but practically nearly all begin with the Commons, though they require the assent of the Lords to become law. This, however, is now never refused for any great length of time in any important matter in which the people are interested.

The following points are also of interest:—

1. All laws relating to the rights of peers must originate in the House of Lords. Estate and naturalization laws also begin in the Lords.
2. A law directly affecting the House of Commons originates in that House.
3. There is one bill only which the crown has the right of initiating—an Act of General Pardon.

When a bill has passed both Houses, it receives the royal assent in the following words (a form which probably originated with the Norman kings): "La reigne le veult" ("The queen wills it so"); when, in the past, the royal assent was refused, the denial was expressed thus: "La reigne s'avisera" ("The queen will consider it").

The House of Lords is the Supreme Court of Appeal in the kingdom; and it is the tribunal by which persons impeached by the House of Commons are tried.

Gotha, a duchy of Central Germany.¹ The prince was about her own age, of fine personal appearance, and had just graduated from one of the German universities. He was particularly interested in art and education, and throughout his life used his influence to raise the standard of both.

633. Sir Rowland Hill's Postal Reforms. — The same year Sir Rowland Hill introduced a uniform system of cheap postage, by which rates were reduced to a penny for a single letter to any part of the United Kingdom.² Since then cheap telegrams and the transportation of parcels by mail (a kind of government express known as parcel-post) have followed, — all, improvements of immense practical benefit.

634. Rise of the Chartists. — The feeling attending the passage of the Reform Bill of 1832 had passed away; but now a

¹ **Income of the Queen and Royal Family.** — Up to the accession of George III. the royal income was derived from two sources: 1. Taxation; 2. The rents and profits of the crown lands. George III. surrendered his right to these lands in return for a fixed income granted by Parliament. Since then, every sovereign has done the same. The queen's income is £385,000 (\$1,863,400, calling the pound \$4.84). The royal family receive in addition, £156,000 (\$755,040), or a total of £541,000 (\$2,618,440).

The English sovereign has at present the following powers, all of which are *practically* vested in the ministry:—

1. The power of summoning, proroguing (suspending the action of), and dissolving Parliament at pleasure.
2. Of refusing assent to any bill (obsolete).
3. Of making peace, declaring war, and making treaties.
4. Of pardoning convicted offenders; of coining money.
5. Of creating peers, appointing archbishops and bishops, and in general granting all titles of rank and honor.
6. Of the supreme command of the army and navy. The appointment to all offices in the gift of the government, which was formerly in the hands of the sovereign, is now under the control of the prime minister, acting in connection with the civil-service and other commissions.

² The postage even within the limits of England proper had been as high as a shilling (twenty-five cents). A poor woman, who wished to hear regularly from her brother, but who could not afford to pay this sum, hit on an ingenious plan for doing so without expense to either side. Sir Rowland Hill happened to learn of it, and was so struck by the circumstance that he at once set to work to devise a reform which should make it possible for the poorest to send and receive letters. See McCarthy's Epoch of Reform, 1830-1850.

popular agitation began, which produced even greater excitement. Although the new law had equalized parliamentary representation and had enlarged the franchise to a very considerable degree, yet the great body of workingmen were still unable to vote. A radical party now arose, which undertook to secure further measures of reform. They embodied their measures in a document called the "People's Charter," which demanded, (1) Universal male suffrage; (2) That the voting at elections should be by ballot; (3) Annual Parliaments; (4) The payment of members of Parliament; (5) The abolition of the property qualification for parliamentary candidates;¹ (6) The division of the whole country into equal electoral districts. The Chartists, as the advocates of these measures called themselves, held public meetings, organized clubs, and published newspapers to disseminate their principles; but for many years little visible progress was made by them. In 1848 the French revolution which dethroned King Louis Philippe imparted fresh impetus to the Chartist movement. The leader of it was Feargus O'Connor. He now formed the plan of sending a monster petition to Parliament, containing, it was claimed, nearly five million signatures, praying for the passage of the charter. It was furthermore arranged that a procession of a million or more of signers should act as an escort to the document, which made a wagon-load in itself. The government became alarmed at the threatened demonstration, and forbade it, on the ground that it was an attempt to coerce legislation. In order that peace might be preserved in London, 250,000 special policemen were sworn in, among whom, it is said, was Louis Napoleon, then a refugee in England.

The Duke of Wellington took command of a large body of

¹ Property Qualification: In 1711 an act was passed requiring candidates for election to the House of Commons to have an income of not less than three hundred pounds derived from landed property. The object of this law was to secure members who would be comparatively free from the temptation of receiving bribes from the crown, and also to keep the landed proprietors in power to the exclusion of rich merchants. This law was repealed in 1858.

troops held in reserve to defend the city; and the Bank of England, the Houses of Parliament, the British Museum, and other public buildings were made ready to withstand a siege.

It was now the 'Chartists' turn to be frightened. When they assembled on Kennington Common they numbered less than 30,000; the procession of a million which was to march across Westminster bridge dwindled to half a dozen; and the huge petition when unrolled and examined was found to contain only about a third of the boasted number of names. Further examination caused still greater shrinkage, for it was discovered that many of the signatures were spurious, having been put down in jest, or copied from grave-stones and old London directories. With that discovery the whole movement collapsed, and the House of Commons rang with "inextinguishable laughter" over the national scare.

Still the demands of the Chartists had a solid foundation of good sense, which not even the blustering braggadocio of the leaders of the movement could wholly destroy. The reforms asked for were needed, and since then they have been in great part accomplished by the steady, quiet influence of reason and of time.

The printed or written ballot has been substituted for the old method of electing candidates by a show of hands or by shouting yes or no—a method by which it was easy to make blunders, and equally easy to commit frauds. The property qualification has been abolished, so that the poorest day-laborer may now run for Parliament. The right of "manhood suffrage" has been, as we shall see, greatly extended, and before the century closes, it is safe to say that every man in England will have a voice in the elections.

635. The Corn Laws.—At the accession of the queen protective duties or taxes existed in Great Britain on all imported breadstuffs and on many manufactured articles. Sir Robert Peel, who became prime minister in 1841, favored a reduction in the last class of duties, but believed it necessary to maintain the

former in order to keep up the price of grain and thus encourage the English farmers. The result of this mistaken policy was great distress among workingmen, who could not afford out of their miserable wages to pay high prices for bread. A number of philanthropists led by Richard Cobden and John Bright organized an Anti-Corn Law League¹ to obtain the repeal of the grain duties.

On the other hand, Ebenezer Elliott, the "Corn Law Rhymer," as he was popularly called, gave voice to the sufferings of the poor in rude but vigorous verse, which appealed to the excited feelings of thousands in such words as these : —

"England! what for mine and me,
What hath bread-tax done for thee?
* * * * *
Cursed thy harvests, cursed thy land,
Hunger-stung thy skill'd right hand."

When, however, session after session of Parliament passed and nothing was done for the relief of the perishing multitudes, many were in despair, and at meetings held to discuss measures, crowds joined in singing Elliott's new national anthem : —

"When wilt Thou save the people?
O God of mercy! when?
Not kings and lords, but nations!
Not thrones and crowns, but men!
Flowers of thy heart, O God, are they!
Let them not pass, like weeds, away!
Their heritage a sunless day!
God save the people!"

Still the government was not convinced; the corn laws were enforced, and the situation grew daily more desperate and more threatening.

636. The Irish Famine; Repeal of the Corn Laws; Free Trade. — At last the Irish famine opened the premier's eyes.

¹ Corn is the name given in England to wheat or other grain used for food. Indian corn, called maize, is seldom eaten.

When in Elizabeth's reign, Sir Walter Raleigh introduced the cheap but precarious potato into Ireland, his motive was one of pure good will. He could not foresee that it would in time become in that country an almost universal food, that through its very abundance the population would rapidly increase, and that then by the sudden failure of the crop terrible destitution would ensue. Such was the case in the summer of 1845. It is said by eye-witnesses that in a single night the entire potato crop was destroyed by blight, and that the healthy plants were transformed into a mass of putrefying vegetation. Thus at one fell stroke the food of nearly a whole nation was cut off.¹

In the years that followed, the famine became appalling. The starving peasants left their miserable huts and streamed into the towns for relief, only to die of hunger in the streets.

Parliament responded nobly to the piteous calls for help, and voted in all no less than \$50,000,000 to relieve the distress.² Subscriptions were also taken up in London and the chief towns by which large sums were obtained, and America contributed ship-loads of provisions and a good deal of money; but the misery was so great that even these measures failed to accomplish what was hoped, and when the famine was over, and its results came to be estimated, it was found that Ireland had lost about 2,000,000 (or one-fourth) of her population.³ This was the combined effect of starvation, of the various diseases that followed in its path, and of emigration.⁴ In the face of such appalling facts, and of the bad harvests and distress in England, the prime minister could hold out no longer, and by a gradual process, extending from 1846 to 1849, the obnoxious corn laws were gradually repealed with the exception of a trifling duty, which was finally removed in 1869.

¹ O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement* (The Famine).

² Molesworth's *History of England* from 1830, Vol. II.

³ The actual number of deaths from starvation, or fever caused by insufficient food, was estimated at from 200,000 to 300,000. See *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Ireland."

⁴ McCarthy, *History of Our Own Times*, vol. I.

The beginning once made, free trade in nearly everything, except wine, spirits, and tobacco, followed. They were, and still are, subject to a heavy duty, perhaps because the government believes, as Napoleon did, that the vices have broad backs and can comfortably carry the heaviest taxes. But, by a singular contrast, while nearly all goods and products now enter England free, yet Australia and several other colonies continue to impose duties on imports from the mother country.

637. The World's Fair; Repeal of the Window and the Newspaper Tax; the Atlantic Cable. — In 1851 the great industrial exhibition known as the "World's Fair" was opened in Hyde Park, London. The original plan of it was conceived by Prince Albert; and it proved to be not only a complete success in itself, but it led to many similar fairs on the part of different nations. For the first time in history, the products and inventions of all countries on the globe were brought together under one roof, in a gigantic structure of glass and iron called the "Crystal Palace," which is still in use for exhibition purposes at Sydenham, a suburb of London.

The same year, the barbarous tax on light and air, known as the "Window Tax," was repealed; and from that date the Englishman, whether in London or out, might enjoy his sunshine, — when he could get it, — without having to pay for every beam: a luxury, which only the rich could afford. A little later, a stamp tax on newspapers, which had been devised in Queen Anne's time in the avowed hope of crushing them out, was repealed; and the result was that henceforth the workingman, as he sat by his fire-side, could inform himself of what the world was doing and thinking, — two things of which he had before known almost nothing, and cared, perhaps, even less.

To get this news of the world's life more speedily, the first Atlantic cable, connecting England with America, was laid in 1858. Since then, a large part of the globe has been joined in like manner; and all the great cities of every civilized land are

practically one in their knowledge of events. So many improvements have also been made in the use of electricity, not only for the transmission of intelligence, but as an illuminator, and more recently still as a motive power, that it now seems probable that "the age of steam" is soon to be superseded by the higher "age of electricity."

638. The Opium War; the War in the Crimea; the Rebellion in India. — Up to 1854 no wars occurred in this reign worthy of mention, with the exception of that with China in 1839. At that time the Chinese emperor, either from a desire to put a stop to the consumption of opium in his dominions, or because he wished to encourage the home production of the drug,¹ prohibited its importation. As the English in India were largely engaged in the production of opium for the Chinese market, — the people of that country smoking it instead of tobacco, — the British government insisted that the emperor should not interfere with so lucrative a trade. War ensued. The Chinese, being unable to contend against English gunboats, were soon forced to withdraw their prohibition of the foreign opium traffic; and the English government, with the planters of India, reaped a golden reward of many millions for their deliberate violation of the rights of a heathen and half-civilized people. The war opened five important ports to British trade, and subsequent wars opened a number more on the rivers in the interior.

In 1853 Turkey declared war against Russia. The latter power had insisted on protecting all Christians in the Turkish dominions against the oppression of the sultan. England and France considered the czar's championship of the Christians as a mere pretext for occupying Turkish territory. To prevent this

¹ By far the greater part of the opium consumed in China is now raised, either with or without the full consent of the government, by the Chinese themselves. The probability is that before many years the home production will supply the entire demand, and thus exclude importations of the drug from India. It is estimated that about one hundred millions of the population of China are addicted to opium-smoking.

aggression they formed an alliance with the sultan, which resulted in the Russo-Turkish war, and ended by the taking of Sebastopol by the allied forces. Russia was obliged to retract her demands; and peace was declared in the spring of 1856.

The following year was memorable for the outbreak of the Sepoy rebellion in India. The real cause of the revolt was probably a long-smothered feeling of resentment on the part of the Sepoy, or native, troops against English rule,—a feeling that dates back to the extortion and misgovernment of Warren Hastings. The immediate cause of the uprising was the introduction of an improved rifle using a greased cartridge, which had to be bitten off before being rammed down. To the Hindoo the fat of cattle or swine is an abomination; and his religion forbids his tasting it. An attempt on the part of the government to enforce the use of the new cartridge brought on a general mutiny. During the revolt, the native troops perpetrated the most horrible atrocities on the English women and children who fell into their hands. When the insurrection was finally quelled under Havelock and Campbell, the English soldiers retaliated by binding numbers of prisoners to the mouths of cannon and blowing them to shreds. At the close of the rebellion, the government of India was wholly transferred to the crown; and in 1876 the queen received the title of Empress of India.

639. Death of Prince Albert; the American Civil War.—

Late in 1861 the prince consort died suddenly. In him the nation lost an earnest promoter of social, educational, and industrial reforms; and the United States, a true and judicious friend, who at a most critical period in the Civil War used his influence to maintain peace between the two countries.

Since his death the queen has held no court; and so complete has been her seclusion that in 1868 a radical member of Parliament moved that her majesty be invited to abdicate or choose a regent. The motion was indignantly rejected; but it revealed the feeling which quite generally exists, that “the real queen died with her husband, and that only her shadow remains.”

In the spring of the year (1861) in which Prince Albert died, civil war broke out between the Northern and Southern States of the American Union. A few weeks later, the queen issued a proclamation declaring her “determination to maintain a strict and impartial neutrality in the contest between the said contending parties.” The rights of belligerents—in other words, all the rights of war according to the law of nations—were granted to the South equally with the North; and her majesty’s subjects were warned against aiding either side in the conflict.

The progress of the war caused terrible distress in Lancashire, owing to the cutting-off of supplies of cotton for the mills through the blockade of the ports of the Confederate States. The starving weavers, however, gave their moral support to the North, and continued steadfast to the cause of the Union even in the sorest period of their suffering. The great majority of the manufacturers and business classes generally, the Liverpool merchants, the nobility, with a few exceptions, and most of the distinguished political and social leaders, in Parliament and out, with nearly all the influential journals, sympathized with the efforts of the South to establish an independent confederacy.¹ Late in the autumn of 1861 Captain Wilkes, of the United States Navy, boarded the British mail-steamer *Trent*, and seized Messrs. Mason and Slidell, Confederate commissioners, on their way to England. When intelligence of the act was conveyed to President Lincoln, he expressed his unqualified disapproval of it, saying: “This is the very thing the British captains used to do. They claimed the right of searching

¹ Lord John Russell (Foreign Secretary), Lord Brougham, Sir John Bowring, Carlyle, Ruskin, the *London Times* and *Punch*, espoused the cause of the South more or less openly; while others, like Mr. Gladstone, declared their full belief in the ultimate success of the Confederacy.

On the other hand, Prince Albert, John Bright, John Stuart Mill, Professor Newman, and the *London Daily News* defended the cause of the North.

After the death of President Lincoln, *Punch* manfully acknowledged (see issue of May 6, 1865), that it had been altogether wrong in its estimate of him and his measures; and Mr. Gladstone, in his “Kin beyond Sea” in “Gleanings of Past Years,” paid a noble tribute to the course pursued by America since the close of the war.

American ships, and carrying men out of them. That was the cause of the War of 1812. Now, we cannot abandon our own principles; we shall have to give up these men, and apologize for what we have done."

Accordingly, on a demand made by the British government,—a demand which, through the influence of the prince consort, and with the approval of the queen, was couched in most conciliatory language,—the commissioners were given up, and an apology made by Secretary Seward.

During the progress of the war, a number of fast-sailing vessels were fitted out in Great Britain, and employed in running the blockade of the Southern ports, for the purpose of supplying them with arms, ammunition, and manufactured goods of various kinds. Later, several gunboats were built in British shipyards by agents of the Confederate government, for the purpose of attacking the commerce of the United States. The most famous of these privateers was the *Alabama*, built expressly for the Confederate service by Laird, of Liverpool, armed with British cannon, and manned chiefly by British sailors. Though notified of her true character, Lord Palmerston, then prime minister, allowed her to leave port, satisfied with the pretext that she was going on a trial trip.¹ She set sail on her career of destruction, and soon drove nearly every American merchant vessel from the seas. In the summer of 1864 she was defeated and sunk by the United States gunboat *Kearsarge*. After the war the government of the United States demanded damages from Great Britain for losses caused by the *Alabama* and other English-built privateers. A treaty was agreed to by the two nations; and by its provisions an international court was held at Geneva, Switzerland, which awarded \$15,500,000 in gold as compensation to the United States, which was duly paid. The most important result of this treaty and tribunal was that they established a precedent

¹ The queen's advocate gave his opinion that the *Alabama* should be detained; but it reached the Foreign Secretary (Lord Russell) just after she had put to sea.

for settling by arbitration on equitable and amicable terms whatever questions might arise in future between the two nations.¹

640. The Second Reform Bill; Woman Suffrage; Admission of Jews to Parliament.—Excellent as was the Reform Bill of 1832,² many thoughtful men felt that it did not go far enough. There was also great need of municipal reform, since in many cities the tax-payers had no voice in the management of local affairs, and the city officers spent the income of large charitable funds in feasting and merry-making while the poor got little or nothing. In 1835 a law was passed giving tax-payers in such cities³ control of municipal elections. By a subsequent amendment, the ballot in such cases was extended to women,⁴ and for the first time perhaps in modern history woman suffrage was formally granted by supreme legislative act. A number of years later, the political restrictions imposed on the Jews were removed. Up to this time (1858) this class of citizens, though very wealthy and influential in London and some other cities, and although entitled to vote and hold municipal office, were yet debarred from Parliament by a law which required them to make oath "on the faith of a Christian." This law was now so modified that Baron Rothschild took his seat among the legislators of the country.⁵

In 1867 Mr. Disraeli (afterward Earl of Beaconsfield), the leader of the Tory, or Conservative, party, brought in a second Reform Bill, which became a law. This provided what is called "household suffrage," or, in other words, gave the right to vote to

¹ This treaty imposed duties on neutral governments of a far more stringent sort than Great Britain had hitherto been willing to concede. It resulted, furthermore, in the passage of an act of Parliament, punishing with severe penalties such illegal ship-building as that of the *Alabama*. See Sheldon Amos, *Fifty Years of the English Constitution*, 1830-1880.

² See Paragraph No. 625.

³ This municipal act did not include the city of London.

⁴ Woman suffrage was granted to single women and widows (householders) in 1869. In 1870 an act was passed enabling them to vote at school-board elections, and also to become members of such boards.

⁵ See Macaulay's Essays, "Civil Disabilities of the Jews."

every householder in all the towns of the kingdom who paid a tax for the support of the poor, and to all lodgers paying a rental of £10 (\$50) yearly; it also increased the number of voters among small property-holders in counties.

There still, however, remained a large class in the country districts for whom nothing had been done. The men who tilled the soil were miserably poor and miserably ignorant. Joseph Arch, a Warwickshire farm laborer, who had been educated by hunger and toil, succeeded in establishing a national union among men of his class, of which he became president, and eventually, mainly through his efforts, they secured the ballot. Since then, under the Liberal ministry of Mr. Gladstone, a third Reform Bill has been passed,¹ which went into operation in 1886, by which all residents of counties throughout the United Kingdom have the right to vote on the same condition as those of towns.

It is estimated that this law added about two and a half millions of voters, and that there is now one voter to every six persons of the total population, whereas, before the passing of the first Reform Bill (1832), there was not over one in fifty. In the first "People's Parliament," in 1886, Joseph Arch, and several others, were returned as representatives of classes of the population who, up to that date, had had no voice in the legislation of the country. One step more, and a short one, and Great Britain, like America, will have universal "manhood suffrage."

641. Abolition of Compulsory Church Rates; Disestablishment of the Irish Episcopal Church; the Education Act.—While these reforms were taking place with respect to elections, others of great importance were also being effected. Since its establishment the Church of England had compelled all persons, of whatever belief, to pay taxes for the maintenance of the church of the parish where they resided. Methodists, Baptists, and other Dissenters, objected to this law as unjust, since in addition to the expense of supporting their own form of worship, they were obliged to contribute

¹ The Representation Act.

toward maintaining one with which they had no sympathy. So great had the opposition become to paying their "church rates," that in 1859 there were over fifteen hundred parishes in England in which the authorities could not collect them. After much agitation a law was finally passed abolishing this mode of tax, and making the payment of rates purely voluntary.¹ A similar act of justice was soon after granted to Ireland.² At the time of the union of the two countries in 1800,³ the maintenance of the Protestant Episcopal Church continued to remain obligatory upon the Irish people, although only a very small part of them were of that faith. Mr. Gladstone's law disestablishing this branch of the national church left all religious denominations in Ireland to the voluntary support of those who belonged to them, so that henceforth the English resident in that country can no longer claim the privilege of worshipping God at the expense of his Roman Catholic neighbor.

In 1870 a system of common schools was established throughout the kingdom under the direction of a government board, and hence popularly known as "Board Schools." Up to this date most of the children of the poor had been educated in schools maintained by the Church of England, the various dissenting denominations, and by charitable associations, or such endowments as those of Edward VI.⁴ It was found, however, that more than half of the children of the country were not reached by these institutions, but were growing up in such a state of dense ignorance, that in the agricultural districts a large proportion could neither read nor write. By the "Board Schools" elementary unsectarian instruction is made compulsory, and though not wholly free, it is so nearly so that it is brought within the means of the poorest. A year later the universities and colleges, with most of the offices

¹ Church rates were levied on all occupiers of land or houses within the parish. They were abolished in 1868. The Church of England is now mainly supported by a tax on landowners, and by its endowments.

² The Disestablishment Bill was passed in 1869, and took effect in 1871.

³ See Paragraph No. 609.

⁴ See Paragraph No. 417.