

of Commons is now the ruling power in England, and as that House is expressly chosen to declare the will of the nation, it follows that the government of the realm is essentially democratic. In fact, so far as reflecting public opinion is concerned, no republic in the world is more democratic.

Custom, too, has decided that the sovereign must sanction any bill which Parliament approves and desires to make law;<sup>1</sup> so that, as a recent writer forcibly said, if the two Houses had agreed to send the late Queen her own death warrant, she would have been obliged to sign it, or abdicate.<sup>2</sup>

An English sovereign'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. He can exercise the right of vetoing a bill, and thus prevent a majority of Congress from enacting a law;<sup>3</sup> and he can remove the higher executive or cabinet officers at pleasure.

**631. Sketch of the Peerage.**—A change equally great has taken place with respect to the peers.<sup>4</sup> 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<sup>5</sup> with grants of immense estates, which were given on two conditions, one of military service at the call of the sovereign (§ 200), the other their

<sup>1</sup> Queen Anne was the last sovereign who vetoed a bill. That was the Scotch Military Bill in 1707. During the period of nearly two hundred years which has followed no English sovereign has ventured to repeat the experiment.

<sup>2</sup> See Bagehot, *The English Constitution*.

<sup>3</sup> Congress may, however, pass a law over the President's veto, providing they can get a two-thirds vote in its favor.

<sup>4</sup> Peers (from the Latin *pares*, equals); the word first occurs in an act of Parliament, 1321,—“*Pares et proceres regni Angliæ spirituales et temporales*.”

<sup>5</sup> The names of the great barons have been preserved in Domesday Book (see § 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.



attendance at the royal council (§ 200), 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,"<sup>1</sup>

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

In later reigns the king summoned other influential men to attend Parliament. To distinguish them from the original barons by land-tenure, they were called "barons by writ" (§ 315). Subsequently it became customary for the sovereign to create barons by letters patent, as is the method at present (§ 315).

The original baronage continued predominant until the Wars of the Roses (§ 368) 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."<sup>2</sup> With the coming in of the Tudors a new nobility was created (§ 404). Even this has become in great measure extinct. Perhaps not more than a fourth of those who now sit in the House of Lords 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 has during his life any civil or legal rights or privileges above that of the poorest and obscurest peasant in Great Britain.<sup>3</sup> They are simply commoners.

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, *Rob Roy's Grave*.

<sup>2</sup> Beaconsfield's *Coningsby*.

<sup>3</sup> 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*.

But by courtesy the eldest son of any of the three highest ranks of the nobility (§ 315, note) receives a part of his father's title. At his death he enters into possession of his estate<sup>1</sup> 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 of a duke or marquis have the courtesy title of "Lord" prefixed to their Christian names, but they inherit neither political power nor landed property. They generally obtain offices in the civil service, or positions in the army or the Church.

The whole number of peers is about six hundred.<sup>2</sup> 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 which probably falls short of 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. Just as any boy in America feels himself a possible senator or president, so any one born or naturalized in England may, like Pitt, Disraeli, Churchill, Nelson, Wellesley, Brougham, Tennyson, Macaulay, or the American Lord Lyndhurst,<sup>3</sup> 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, extremely 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 naturally fight against every tendency to give the people a larger measure of power. They opposed the Habeas

<sup>1</sup> 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. Badeau's *English Aristocracy*.

<sup>2</sup> The full assembly of the House of Lords would consist of five hundred and sixty-two temporal peers and twenty-six spiritual peers (archbishops and bishops).

<sup>3</sup> J. S. Copley (Lord Lyndhurst), son of the famous artist, born in Boston, 1772.



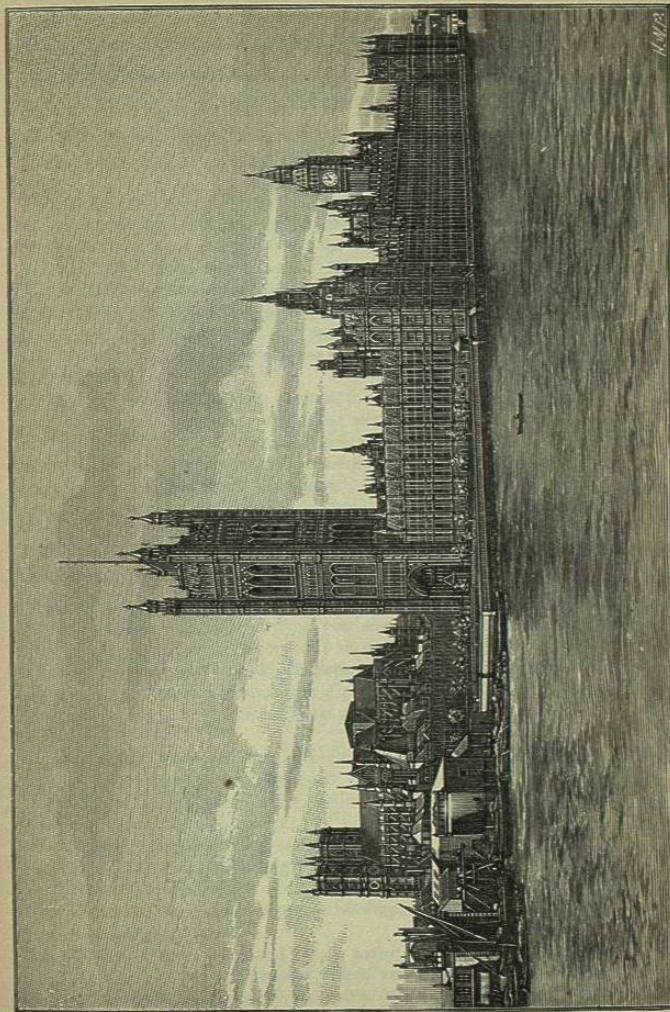
Corpus Act under Charles II, the Great Reform Bill of 1832, the Education Bill of 1834, the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, the admission of the Jews to Parliament in 1858, and reluctantly consented to the later extensions of the elective franchise.

But, on the other hand, it was their influence which compelled John to sign Magna Carta in 1215; it was one of their number — Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester — who called the House of Commons into being in 1265; 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 despotic self-will of James II. Again, it was Disraeli, the leader of the Tory or Conservative party, who carried the Reform Bill of 1867, by which suffrage was largely extended.

It is the fashion with impatient radicals to style the Lords "titled obstructionists," privileged to block the way to all improvements; but as a matter of fact they have often done the country good service by checking hurried and ill-considered legislation. There are indications that the time may not be 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 the late 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 (consisting of some six hundred and seventy members), 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



THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, WITH WESTMINSTER ABBEY (from the Thames)



measures, has passed from the Lords to the direct representatives of the people.<sup>1</sup>

**632. The Queen's Marriage (1840).** — In her twenty-first year, Queen Victoria married her cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg Gotha, a duchy of Central Germany.<sup>2</sup> The Prince was about her own age, of fine personal appearance, and had just graduated from one of the German universities. He was particularly

<sup>1</sup> 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 legislation which the people demand. 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 only one bill 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): "Le roi (or la reine) le veult" (The King or the Queen so wills it); when, in the past, the royal assent was refused, the denial was expressed thus: "Le roi (or la reine) s'avisera" (The King or the Queen will consider it). This form was used for the last time in 1707, when Queen Anne refused to sign a military bill. Since then no English sovereign has vetoed a parliamentary bill.

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.

<sup>2</sup> **Income of the Sovereign 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 late Queen's income was £385,000 (\$1,863,400, calling the pound \$4.84). The royal family received 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.



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 (1839).**—The preceding year Sir Rowland Hill introduced a uniform system of cheap postage. The rate had been as high as a shilling for a single letter.<sup>1</sup> Such a charge was practically prohibitive, and, as a rule, no one wrote in those days if he could possibly avoid it. Sir Rowland reduced it to a penny (paid by stamp) to any part of the United Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Since then the Government has taken over all the telegraph lines, and cheap telegrams and the transportation of parcels by mail (a kind of government express known as parcels-post) have followed. They are all improvements of immense practical benefit.

634. **Rise of the Chartists (1838-1848).**—The feeling attending the passage of the Reform Bill of 1832 (§ 625) had passed away; but now a popular agitation began which produced even greater excitement. Although the act of 1832 had equalized parliamentary representation and had enlarged the elective franchise to a very considerable degree, yet the great body of workingmen were still shut out from the right to vote. A radical party called the "Chartists" 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

<sup>1</sup> An illustration of the effects of such high charges for postage is related by Coleridge. He says that he met a poor woman at Keswick just as she was returning a letter from her son to the postman, saying she could not afford to pay for it. Coleridge gave the postman the shilling, and the woman then told the poet that the letter was really nothing more than a blank sheet which her son had agreed to send her every three months to let her know he was well; as she always declined to take this dummy letter, it of course cost her nothing. See G. B. Hill's *Life of Sir Rowland Hill*, I, 239, note.

<sup>2</sup> The London papers made no end of fun of the first envelopes and the first postage-stamps (1840). See the facsimile of the ridiculous "Mulready Envelope" in Hill's *Life*, I, 393.

parliamentary candidates.<sup>1</sup> 6. The division of the whole country into equal electoral districts.

The Chartists held public meetings, organized clubs, and published newspapers to disseminate their principles, but for many years made very little visible progress. The French revolution which dethroned King Louis Philippe (1848) imparted fresh impetus to the Chartist movement. The leader of that movement was Feargus O'Connor. He formed the plan of sending a monster petition to Parliament, containing, it was claimed, nearly five million signatures, praying for the passage of the People's Charter.

A procession of a million or more of signers was to 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, two hundred and fifty thousand 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 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 (1848) on Kennington Common in London, they numbered less than thirty thousand, and the procession of a million which was to march across Westminster Bridge dwindled to half a dozen. When the huge petition was unrolled it was found to contain only about a third of the boasted number of names. Further examination showed that many of the signatures were spurious, having been put down in jest, or copied from gravestones

<sup>1</sup> 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 £300 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.



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 bravado of the leaders of the movement could wholly destroy. The reforms asked for were needed. Since then the steady, quiet influence of reason and of time has compelled Parliament to grant the greater part of them.<sup>1</sup>

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 twentieth century has far advanced it seems safe to say that every man in England will have a voice in the elections.

**635. The Corn Laws (1841).** — At the accession of the Queen protective duties or taxes existed in Great Britain on all imported breadstuffs and on many manufactured articles. When Sir Robert Peel became Prime Minister (1841) he 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 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 League<sup>2</sup> to obtain the repeal of the grain duties.

At the same time, Ebenezer Elliott, the "Corn-Law Rhymer,"

<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Erskine May, in his *Constitutional History of England*, says: "Not a measure has been forced upon Parliament which the calm judgment of a later time has not since approved; not an agitation has failed which posterity has not condemned."

<sup>2</sup> Corn is the name given in England to wheat or other grain used for food. Indian corn, called maize, is seldom eaten.

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 (1845-1846); Repeal of the Corn Laws, 1846-1849; Free Trade.** — At last the Irish famine opened the Prime Minister's eyes (§ 635). 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.<sup>1</sup>

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 £10,000,000 to relieve the distress.<sup>2</sup> Subscriptions were also taken up in London and the chief towns, by which large sums were obtained, and America contributed shiploads of provisions and a good deal of money; but the misery was so great that even these measures failed to accomplish what was hoped. When the famine was over, it was found that Ireland had lost about two million (or one-fourth) of her population.<sup>3</sup> This was the combined effect of starvation, of the various diseases that followed in its path, and of emigration.<sup>4</sup>

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 repealed, with the exception of a trifling duty, which was finally removed in 1869.

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. A few years later (1849) the old Navigation Laws (§ 511) were totally repealed. This completed the English free-trade measures. But, by a singular contrast, while nearly all goods and products now enter England free, yet Australia, Canada, and nearly every other colony continue to impose duties on imports from the mother-country.

<sup>1</sup> O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement* (The Famine).

<sup>2</sup> Molesworth's *History of England* from 1830.

<sup>3</sup> The actual number of deaths from starvation, or fever caused by insufficient food, was estimated at from two hundred thousand to three hundred thousand. See *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Ireland."

<sup>4</sup> McCarthy, *History of Our Own Times*, Vol. I.

637. **The World's Fair (1851); Repeal of the Window and the Newspaper Tax; the Atlantic Cable (1866).**—The great industrial exhibition known as the "World's Fair" was opened in Hyde Park, London (1851). The original plan of it was conceived by Prince Albert. 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 the countries of 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 (1851) the barbarous tax on light and air, known as the "Window Tax," was repealed and the House Tax substituted for it. 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 (1855) a stamp tax on newspapers, which had been devised in Queen Anne's time in the avowed hope of crushing them out, was repealed. The result was that henceforth the workingman, as he sat by his fireside, 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 (1858). It soon gave out, but was permanently relaid not long afterward (1866). 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 (1839); the War in the Crimea (1854); the Rebellion in India (1857).**—For nearly twenty years after



Victoria's accession no wars occurred in her reign worthy of mention, with the exception of that with China (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,<sup>1</sup> 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. 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. This action, with the later aggressions of other European powers, roused an intensely bitter feeling among large numbers of the Chinese. Their hatred of foreigners finally led to a desperate attempt (1900) to drive all Europeans and Americans, including missionaries, out of the country.

Next, Turkey declared war against Russia (1853). 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 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 (1856).

<sup>1</sup> 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.

The following year (1857) 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 (§ 603). 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 British Government to enforce the use of the new cartridge brought on a general mutiny among three hundred thousand Sepoys. 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 later the Queen received the title of "Empress of India" (1876).

**639. Death of Prince Albert; the American Civil War (1861).**—Not long after the Sepoy rebellion was quelled, Prince Albert (§ 632) died suddenly (1861). 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.

After his death the Queen held no court for many years, and so complete was her seclusion that Sir Charles Dilke, a radical member of Parliament, suggested (1868) that her majesty be invited to abdicate or choose a regent. The suggestion was indignantly rejected; but it revealed the feeling, which quite generally existed, that "the real Queen died with her husband," and that only her shadow remained.

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, and the nobility, with a few exceptions, sympathized with the efforts of the South to establish an independent Confederacy. Most of the distinguished political and social leaders, in Parliament and out, with nearly all the influential journals, were on the same side and were openly hostile to the Union.<sup>1</sup>

Late in the autumn (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 American ships, and taking men out of them. That was the cause of the War of 1812. Now,

<sup>1</sup> Lord John Russell (Foreign Secretary), Lord Brougham, Sir John Bowring, Carlyle, Ruskin, and 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, the Duke of Argyll, 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.

we cannot abandon our own principles; we shall have to give up these men, and apologize for what we have done."

The British Government made a formal demand that the commissioners should be given up. Through the influence of the Prince-Consort, and with the approval of the Queen, this demand was couched in most conciliatory language. Slidell and Mason were handed over to Great Britain, and an apology was made by Secretary Seward.

During the progress of the war a number of fast-sailing vessels were fitted out in England, and employed in running the blockade of the Southern ports, to supply 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 the Lairds, of Birkenhead, armed with British cannon, and manned chiefly by British sailors.

Charles Francis Adams, the American Minister at London, notified Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister, of her true character. But Palmerston permitted the *Alabama* to leave port (1862), satisfied with the pretext that she was going on a trial trip.<sup>1</sup> She set sail on her career of destruction, and soon drove nearly every American merchant-vessel from the seas. Two years later (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 (1872), 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 for settling by arbitration on equitable and amicable

<sup>1</sup> 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.



terms whatever questions might arise in future between the two nations.<sup>1</sup>

**640. Municipal Reform (1835); Woman Suffrage; the Jews; the Second and Third Reform Acts (1867, 1884); County and Parish Councils (1888, 1894).**—Excellent as was the Reform Bill of 1832 (§ 625), 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.

A law was passed (1835) giving tax-payers in cities (except London) control of municipal elections. By a subsequent amendment, the ballot in such cases was extended to women,<sup>2</sup> 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.

The Jews, as a class, were often wealthy and influential in London and some other cities. They were entitled to vote and hold municipal office, but they were debarred from Parliament by a law which required them to make oath "on the faith of a Christian." The law was now so modified (1858) that Baron Rothschild<sup>3</sup> took his seat among the legislators of the country. Finally the Oaths Act (1888) abolished all religious tests in Parliament.

In 1867 Mr. Disraeli (afterward Earl of Beaconsfield), the leader of the Tory or Conservative party, brought in a second Reform Bill (§ 625), which became a law. This provided what

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Woman suffrage in municipal elections 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. By act of 1894 women were made eligible to sit and vote in district and parish councils (or local government elections).

<sup>3</sup> Rothschild (Roschild, English pronunciation).

is called "household suffrage," or, in other words, gave the right to vote to all male householders in the English parliamentary boroughs (that is, towns having the right to elect one or more members to Parliament), who paid a tax for the support of the poor, and to all lodgers paying a rental of £10 yearly; it also increased the number of voters among small property-holders in counties.<sup>1</sup>

There still, however, remained a large class in the country districts for whom nothing had been done. The men who tilled the soil were wretchedly poor and deplorably 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. A third Reform Act (1884) gave all residents of counties throughout the United Kingdom the right to vote on the same conditions as the residents of towns.<sup>2</sup>

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" (1886) Joseph Arch, and several others, were returned as representatives of classes of the population who, up to that date, had no voice in the legislation of the country. The next step will probably bring universal "manhood suffrage." The County Council and Parish Council acts (1888, 1894) greatly extended the power of the people in all matters of local government, so that now every village in England controls its own affairs.

**641. Abolition of Compulsory Church Rates; Disestablishment of the Irish Episcopal Church (1869); the Education Acts.**—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

<sup>1</sup> See Summary of Constitutional History in the Appendix, page xxvi, § 31.

<sup>2</sup> See above reference.



persons, of whatever belief, to pay taxes for the maintenance of the church of the parish where they resided. Methodists, Baptists, and other Dissenters (§§ 548, 556) objected to this law as unjust, since in addition to the expense of supporting their own form of worship, they were obliged to contribute toward maintaining one with which they had no sympathy. So great had the opposition become to paying their "church rates," that there were over fifteen hundred parishes in England (1859) in which the authorities could not collect them. After much agitation Mr. Gladstone carried through a bill (1868) which abolished this mode of tax and made the payment of rates purely voluntary.<sup>1</sup>

A similar act of justice was soon after granted to Ireland (1869).<sup>2</sup> At the time of the union of the two countries in 1800 (§ 609), 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. Henceforth the English Protestant resident in that country could no longer claim the privilege of worshipping God at the expense of his Roman Catholic neighbor.

In 1870 Mr. Forster, a member of the Cabinet, succeeded in passing the Elementary Education Act. It established a system of common schools 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 (§ 417).

It was found, however, that more than half of the children of the country were not reached by these institutions, but were growing

<sup>1</sup> Church rates were levied on all occupiers of land or houses within the parish. The Church of England is now mainly supported by a tax on landowners, and by its endowments.

<sup>2</sup> The Disestablishment Bill was passed in 1869, and took effect in 1871.

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 instruction was made compulsory, and, later (1891), Parliament passed an act which practically made education, up to the age of fifteen, free to the poorest.

Meanwhile (1871) the universities and colleges, with most of the offices and professorships connected with them, were thrown open to all persons without regard to religious belief; whereas, formerly, no one could graduate from Oxford or Cambridge without subscribing to the doctrines of the Church of England.

**642. The First Irish Land Act (1870).**—The same year that the Government undertook to provide for the education of the masses (1870) (§ 641), Mr. Gladstone, then Prime Minister and head of the Liberal party (§ 626), brought in a bill for the relief of the Irish peasantry. Since the union (§ 609) much of the general policy of England toward Ireland had been described as "a quick alternation of kicks and kindness." Gladstone did not hesitate to say that he believed that the misery of the island sprang mainly from its misgovernment. He thought that the small farmer needed immediate help. The circumstances under which land was held in Ireland were peculiar. A very large part—in fact about all the best of that island—was owned by Englishmen whose ancestors obtained it through the wholesale confiscations of James I, Cromwell (§§ 475, 505), and later sovereigns, in punishment for rebellion.

Very few English landlords cared to reside in the country or to do anything for its improvement. Their overseers believed they did their whole duty when they forced the farm tenants to pay the largest amount of rent that could be wrung from them, and they had it in their power to dispossess a tenant of his land whenever they saw fit, without giving a reason for the act. If by his labor the tenant made the land more fertile, he reaped no profit from his industry, for the rent was at once increased, and swallowed up all that he raised. Such a system of extortion was destructive to the peasant farmer, and produced nothing for him but misery and discontent.



The new law endeavored to remedy these evils by providing, first, that if a landlord ejected a rent-paying tenant, he should pay him damages, and allow him a fair sum for whatever improvements he had made. Secondly, provision was made for a ready means of arbitration between landlord and tenant, and the tenant who failed to pay an exorbitant rate was not to be hastily or unjustly driven from the land. Finally, the tenant might borrow a certain sum from the Government for the purpose of purchasing the land in case the owner was willing to sell.

**643. Distress in Ireland; the Land League (1879).**—It was hoped by the friends of the measure that the new law would be productive of relief; but the potato crop again failed in Ireland (1876-1879), and the country seemed threatened with another great famine (§ 636). Thousands who could not get the means to pay even a moderate rent, much less the amounts demanded, were now forced to leave their cabins and seek shelter in the bogs, with the prospect of dying there of starvation.

This deplorable state of things led a number of influential Irishmen to form a Land League (1879). It had for its object the abolition of the landlord system, and the securing of such legislation as should eventually give the Irish peasantry possession of the soil they cultivated.

Later, the League came to have a membership of several hundred thousand persons, extending over the greater part of Ireland. Finding that it was difficult to get parliamentary help for their grievances, the League resolved to try a different kind of tactics. Accordingly they formed a compact not to work for, buy from, sell to, or have any intercourse with, landlords, or their agents, who extorted exorbitant rent, ejected tenants unable to pay, or took possession of land from which tenants had been unjustly driven. This process of social excommunication was first tried on an English agent, or overseer, named Boycott, and soon became famous under the name of "boycotting."

As the struggle went on, many of the suffering poor became desperate. Farm buildings belonging to landlords and their agents were burned, cattle horribly mutilated, and a number of

the agents shot. At the same time the cry rose of "No Rent, Death to the Landlords!" Hundreds of tenants now refused to pay for the places they held, and even attacked those who did.

Eventually the lawlessness of the country provoked the Government to take severe measures; it suppressed the Land League (1881), which was believed to be responsible for the refusal to pay rent, and for the accompanying outrages; but it could not extinguish the feeling which gave rise to that organization, and it soon burst forth more violently than ever.

**644. The Second Irish Land Act (1881); Fenian and Communist Outrages.**—Mr. Gladstone succeeded in carrying through a second Irish land law (1881) (§ 642), which it was hoped might be more effective in relieving the Irish peasants than the first had been. This measure was familiarly known as the "Three F's,"—Fair-rent, Fixity-of-tenure, and Free-sale. By the provisions of this act the tenant can appeal to a board of land commissioners appointed by the law to fix the rate of his rent in case the demands made by the landlord seem to him excessive.

Next, he can continue to hold his farm, provided he pays the rate determined on, for a period of fifteen years, during which time the rent cannot be raised nor the tenant evicted except for violation of agreement or persistent neglect or waste of the land; lastly, he may sell his tenancy when he sees fit to the highest bidder. This law was later amended and extended in the interest of the peasant farmer (1887).

The year following the passage of this second Land Act, Lord Frederick Cavendish, chief secretary of Ireland, and Mr. Burke, a prominent government official, were murdered in Phoenix Park, Dublin (1882). Later, members of various secret and communistic societies perpetrated dynamite outrages in London and other parts of England for the purpose of intimidating the Government. These dastardly plots for destruction and murder were denounced with horror by the leaders of the Irish National Party, who declared that "the cause of Ireland was not to be served by the knife of the assassin or the infernal machine."

Notwithstanding the vindictive feeling which these rash acts