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Art. I.

ARISTOCRACY.

THE advocates of aristocracy—who are numerous, not without abilities, and of whom there will be good supply for some time to come—labour strenuously to confound inequalities of fortune with aristocratical privileges. And no wonder they do; for all the plausibility of their sophisms is derived from this expedient. Were they obliged to speak of aristocratical privilege, truly, as it is—power held by a certain narrow class to do with the rest of the community what they please—they would be treated with the scorn, which a pretension so impudent and hostile deserves. While allowed, however, to practise with the forked tongue, and talk of inequality of fortune and aristocratical privileges as the same, they can hold up the advantages accruing from inequality of fortune, and by a juggle of language make them pass for advantages of aristocracy.

This is the course which must always be pursued when a bad thing is to be vindicated. The praises of some other thing, which is good, are cunningly transferred to the thing which is bad. When the object is to defend a useless and most expensive ecclesiastical establishment, take notice that the praises of religion are transferred to it. The two ideas—that of religion in all its excellence, and that of an ecclesiastical establishment, however bad—are blended together by artful language, and so closely associated, that ordinary minds find it difficult to disjoin them. When this association of ideas is pretty generally formed, the ecclesiastical sophists proceed at their ease. Their business is only to declaim and abuse:—'Base men! would you destroy religion?' Or, if in Ireland, 'Base men! would you destroy Protestantism?' When all the while there is no question about either religion or Protestantism, but only about an ecclesiastical establishment which is inimical to both.

Take another example, in the abuses of government. They who desire to maintain in existence the causes of evil strive to confound them with the causes of good; and by taking them

in the lump, apply to the causes of evil the praise which belongs to the causes of good. We are told of the advantages of the constitution: that is, in their sophistical language, the benefits of government in the aggregate. Well, we are as sensible of the benefits of government as they are; but we will not allow them to transfer the credit of those benefits to things which are not the causes of them, but the reverse—causes of evil, not of benefit. They may compliment causes of evil with the name of part of the constitution, as long as they please; we shall not be inclined to suffer them any more on that account. Those parts of the constitution which we hold sacred are the causes of good. By casting off the things which are the causes of evil, we think we are doing service to the constitution, in the only sense in which it deserves a particle of our respect.

Reformers are far from thinking evil of inequalities of fortune: on the contrary, they esteem them a necessary consequence of things which are so good, that society itself, and all the happiness of human beings, depend upon them: a consequence of those laws whence the generation and augmentation of property proceeds. That the prosperity of nations may advance, there must exist motives to accumulate. But these motives will operate on some men more, on some less, on some not at all. There will be different degrees, therefore, of accumulation:—and this is the origin of all inequality of property. Nor can the tendency to it be checked, were it desirable to do so, without checking accumulation, and all the advantages which are to be derived from it.

But, abstracting from the consideration that we cannot have other things which are good for us in the highest degree, without having inequalities of fortune along with them, we consider inequalities of fortune as themselves good—the cause of most admirable effects. To have men of high intellectual attainments, we must have men who have their time at their command: not under the necessity of spending it wholly, or in greater part, in providing the means of subsistence:—in other words, we must have men of independent incomes. And that we may have this happy effect, in the desirable degree, we must have them not few in number; we must have them a more than inconsiderable proportion of the population. Where the only men who are in circumstances to devote themselves to intellectual pursuits are few in number, there is not sufficient stimulus. There must be a public capable of appreciating such attainments, sufficiently numerous to give a weight to their esteem, before a motive can be generated sufficiently strong to induce any considerable number of men to take the

trouble, long and laborious, of making themselves knowing and wise.

Besides this first and all-important effect, a class of men possessing leisure is absolutely necessary for cultivating the elegancies of life. This cannot be expected from men absorbed in the labours and cares of earning a subsistence. A society composed of such men would be necessarily coarse, and would have a tendency to grow more and more so: a taste even for cleanliness and neatness would be apt to be lost among them. But the laborious classes are prone to the imitation of those who are in circumstances above them; and when they see elegance, are fully capable of discerning its superiority to that which is coarse; they are refined by imitation; and it is of prodigious importance to have in each community a standard of behaviour to which they may look up; and even of household accommodation, which they may strive to imitate—if not in the costliness of the materials, at least in the style of the arrangement, and even the beauty of the forms.

Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

And even to be conversant with the refinements of life, the simple, unaffected, and true, is a kind of drawing into the path of virtue.

But while we thus value the advantages of inequality of fortune, we must say a word for the prevention of a common, but grievous mistake. They are the natural inequalities of fortune, not the unnatural, to which all these advantages are attached. By the natural inequalities of fortune, we mean those which are the result of the natural laws of accumulation; not those which are the result of unnatural restraint put upon the natural laws of distribution—that a man shall not leave his property to whom he will, or that it shall not go in equal portions to those whose proximity of relation to him is the same. The inequalities which are owed to this source are mischievous in every way—restraining the salutary effects which flow from inequalities of the natural kind, and operating otherwise as a disease in the body politic.

A few reflections will make this evident; and it is a truth which deserves our most profound attention.

The first effect of those artificially-made, unnatural inequalities, is to raise up a small number of enormous fortunes, which stand by themselves, and constitute a little class. We have only to think of the situation of the persons in whom those masses of property, which cannot be used for any useful pur-

pose, are vested; and the influences which thence act upon them, at every stage of their lives.

What motive have they to cultivate the intellectual virtues? or any other virtues? Their business is pleasure. Distinction is created for them, by the command which they have over the things which all men desire.

Not acquiring the intellectual virtues, it is their interest to profess contempt for them, and to the utmost of their power to prevent the esteem of them from rising in the community. They hate men of intellect, and drive them away. Observe the character of those whom, not distinguished by the same gifts of fortune with themselves, our English nobility raise, as they term it, to their familiarity. Have men of intellectual superiority been much found among them in any age? The men whom they delight to honour are rhymesters, story-makers, pretenders to literature but true parasites, singers, fiddlers, dancers, painters, joke-crackers, and buffoons.

The effect of this is very great in keeping down the value of intellectual acquirements in the nation—lessening the motive to the acquisition of them, and diminishing the number of those who reach them; for this class have the power of setting the fashion, and their example forms the general taste.

This is one deplorable effect of these artificially-created and unnatural inequalities of fortune;—that they keep down the standard of intellectual excellence in the nation; in which they are potently assisted by the clergy of a vicious establishment, to whom the prospect of growing intellect in the community is despair.

Nor is their influence less potent in preventing the general diffusion of a taste for the elegancies of life. The distinction of men overflowing to excess with wealth is not to have beautiful things, but costly. A passion for running after the costly things, in preference to the beautiful, is created and diffused; the universal emulation is to put forth the gaudy signs of being rich, to the ruin of many of those who enter into this barbaric competition. Cost and elegance becoming synonymous terms, the very thought of seeking for elegance—which in this sense they cannot afford—is extinguished in the breasts of those among whom it is of most importance that the taste of real elegance should be diffused: because from them it descends with greatest ease to the body of the population.

It would be very instructive to illustrate this observation in detail, and to show how the operation of large fortunes tends to the corruption of taste, in everything to which the word elegance is with propriety applied. But we must confine ourselves to a few instances.

To begin with architecture, which is one of the noblest of the fine arts, and of which the creations, when really tasteful, have the power of calling up such a train of interesting associations as constitute some of the highest of the pleasures of imagination. By the strength and durability of their materials, uniting one age with another—by the charms of proportion, and the superaddition of appropriate and harmonious beauties to the parts essential to the use for which the building is designed—in the ornaments of which, for every purpose of taste, the idea of fitness, or the useful, must always predominate—trains of the most agreeable ideas are incessantly renewed; and with this great advantage, that the creations of architecture are of necessity public; and the enjoyment of them, like the light of day, is as much the property of the poor as of the rich.

The unmanly and frivolous state of mind which characterizes a class overloaded with wealth has actually extinguished architecture among us as one of the fine arts. It has become a low trade of mimicry, or rather apery—misjudging, misapplying—forming incongruous monsters, revolting to good sense as well as to good taste. Who but people whose taste is gone would have thought of erecting, as ornamental, a triumphal arch, in an age, and a country, in which there are no triumphal processions, and in which the reality of that barbarous and inhuman exhibition would not be endured? A man of taste would as soon think of ornamenting his drawing-room with the thumb-screws and bootikins with which the hierarchical churchmen of Scotland tortured the Presbyterians, as to ornament his street with a triumphal arch!—not to mention the bright idea of setting it astride, not a public street, through which only would a triumphal procession pass, but a by-path, leading to a private dwelling.

We have also some beautiful specimens of the rich man's taste, in gates. A gate is an opening through the inclosure of an inclosed space. The gate of a walled city is an opening into the city through its wall;—a gate into a park or a field is an opening through the fence of the park or the field, into the field. But it is evident that there is no sense in a gate higher or more elaborate than the fence, of whatever sort it be, through which it affords admission. Take, then, as a specimen of congruity, proportion, or good sense, the extraordinary piece of stone and mortar at Hyde Park Corner, which lets people into a green field, through a paling four feet high;—and, as another specimen, the thing set before the palace at Buckingham Gate, standing totally detached from the building, like a pillar of

salt, and put there it should seem only (by the superiority of its material) to make the palace look dirty and mean.

But the thing which deserves most reprobation is the despicable mimicry, substituted for ornament, in the ordinary class of expensive buildings. Every idea of appropriate ornament seems to be abandoned, in order to stick about them the appurtenances of a Grecian temple. The men of Greece did what men of sense and taste will always do—they considered what were the substantial, indispensable parts of their buildings; to these they endeavoured to superadd such shapes, proportions, and decorations as harmonized with them. The essential parts of Grecian buildings, particularly temples, of which almost solely any specimens have remained for our inspection, were pillars, and the roof which they were placed to support. The chief thing which admitted of ornament here were the pillars. What grace and beauty the Grecian architects contrived to bestow upon them is known to all. The substantial, indispensable parts of buildings in our climate are solid walls, with holes cut in them for doors and windows. The study of our architects should, therefore, have been, the ornaments which could be applied to solid walls, windows, and doors—as well by variety and grace of form, as by other congruous decorations. But our architects, under guidance of the wealthy man's taste, have abandoned the very thought of this, and have dreamed of nothing but giving us the supports of a Grecian roof, where all roofs are otherwise supported: exhibiting mere affectation, and the utmost barrenness of invention. What an image is presented to a man of cultivated taste, when he sees that which is the appropriate support of the roof of an open building stuck into the heart of a solid wall, or standing a little space before it, with something laid on its top, to make a mock show that it has got something to do!

Music, fortunately, it has not been in the power of our rich man's taste to spoil. It is not of home growth. The man of wealth is obliged to take it as it is made for him, in places more favourable to the wholesome cultivation of it; and one of his affectations is to profess a delight in it, which is beyond both truth and reason. In this, too, his conduct is very unfavourable to the progress of taste. The profession of the intense in the enjoyment of the fine arts, tends to working for the intense in the productions of them; and then truth, and nature, and all that is of fine relish in them, goes. There is a peculiarity well worth remarking in our rich man's concern for music: he hates that the enjoyment should go down to his poorer neighbours. Yet it is obvious that this is a very desirable thing.

In the first place, it is an innocent pleasure; and in so far as it exercises agreeably the vacant time of the labouring man, it is a good *per se*, and moreover a diversion from the pursuit of pleasures which are otherwise than innocent. But there is another effect of still greater importance. Sweet music is in unison with all the sympathetic affections of the soul, and by drawing out trains of such emotions tends to make them habitual in the mind. A really wise and beneficent legislature would reckon it a great point to cultivate a taste for music among the common people, and to afford it to them of a good kind. The conduct of our legislature, under influence of the rich man's taste, and the churchman's hypocrisy, is altogether its own. There never was anything like it in the world. It treats the common people as unworthy to enjoy the pleasure of music. Latterly the taste in music had so much improved, that the strolling musicians, who practise in the streets, had become no bad performers; and very tolerable music might be heard in the streets. That was the moment for declaring war against it; and now it is all but prohibited: as it is, in those only other places, where it was in the power of the common people to enjoy it—the places of cheap resort. If there was danger, as no doubt there was, of improprieties in those places of unregulated resort, what was to be done? Why, to afford the same, or better amusement, in places properly regulated.

In painting and sculpture, the taste of the man of wealth is notorious and proverbial: it is pure selfishness. His money is all lavished on old pictures—the reverse of encouragement to the making of new—and on portraits. The old pictures he carries home, where he is proud of them as signs of his wealth, and shuts them up from public inspection, which is almost their only use. Portrait-painting, and portrait-sculpture, the very lowest branches of the art, are the branches which he really encourages: so that, in the higher departments, very few attempts are made; and the art in this country is stationary, or worse. We do not, however, regard this as much of a misfortune. To the body of the population, pictures and statues can never render very valuable service: they are but poor arts; and the pleasures they give are but little connected with any of those mental states which we are interested in cultivating. The exhibition of the human form in its ideal perfection is the best thing they do; and that is something. The perfection of the female form calls up ideas of love; and of the male form, ideas of dignity, or of force. But these are states of mind which nature provides for. In telling a story, to call out the affections, the brush and the chisel are very de-

fective: their resources are confined. Except by some hideous exhibition, as that of the Laocoontes, or Ugolino, the emotions raised are faint.

In respect of this art, there is in the behaviour of the men of wealth in this country to the rest of the community, something characteristic, and singularly worthy of attention. Under pretence of improving the taste of the people, they get the community, as often as possible, to buy certain articles, which serve exclusively for their own enjoyment; and while they are doing so, exclude the people, about whose taste they are so anxious, from the enjoyment of the beauties of nature—a source of the greatest improvement—by shutting up paths, which are the people's right, and from which they are excluded only by the right of the stronger, or, in plain English, robbery.

We are accustomed, no doubt, to acts of rapacity on a larger scale; but there never was in degree a more profligate instance of the abuse of public money than the purchase of two Correggios the other year, by money extracted from the pockets of an overburthened population. Why did not the men of wealth, if they wanted such things—nobody else did—purchase them with their own money? The pretence that the purchase was for the good of the people, even after all our experience of impudent pretences, was astounding. Our legislators gave 11,000*l.* for two Correggios, and had but 20,000*l.* to spare for the education of the people, and could not at all relieve them from the taxes on knowledge! Oh, brave!

We come now to an art, which is of greater importance, than all the rest taken together, the art of conversation.

When a society exists, well constituted for the pursuit of intellectual attainments and of the elegancies of life, a style of social intercourse is cultivated, which whets the understanding, and improves at once the morals and the taste. Men of independent, but few enormous incomes, sufficiently numerous to form a class and a public, are obliged to seek distinction among themselves by qualities which recommend them to the respect and affection of their fellows. These are, the high qualities of the intellect, the practice of virtue, the endearing affections, and elegance of deportment in life. In the social intercourse of persons so circumstanced, the principal ambition must be to make manifest the possession of such qualities. It needs but little stretch of imagination to see the consequences. Think what a society must be, in which all that is respectable in intellect and correct in conduct is the object of display: what effusions of knowledge,—what ingenuity of discussion,—what patience with the ignorant,—what gentleness in the contest of

differing opinions,—what tasteful disquisitions on the slighter ornaments of life, and what grace in the enjoyment and display of them! Social intercourse of this kind is a school of all that is grand and lovely in human nature. And where such is the style of that intercourse in the leading class—a class not separated from, but intimately mixed with, the rest of the community, the imitation of it is inevitable. The community becomes intellectual and refined. Please call to mind that this is the state of things, which a vapouring man, a needy dependent of the aristocracy, said was to tread down all that is ornamental in society "under the hoofs of a swinish multitude:" a formula which was greedily taken up by those who thought themselves made of a different clay from the "swinish multitude;" and actively made use of, till they found it would no longer do. The "swinish multitude" now know that they are a potent multitude; and they will no longer be trodden down under heels however high-born and genteel.

We have now to consider the style of social intercourse which is generated by the circumstances of a society composed of men of overgrown wealth. The distinction of these men arises from their wealth; and for the most part they seek no other distinction. This is a fruitful source of consequences. High mental qualifications, not being the cause of distinction to such men, are not possessed by them. They cannot take part in conversations where these are displayed. They therefore banish them from their society. It is voted ungenteel to be the introducer of a serious subject; and the frivolity of the conversation in the high circle is proverbial and notorious. Pope, who often hit off characteristic features with great felicity, gave a taste of aristocratic conversation, in speaking of the heads of the aristocratic circle, Kings:

> ——"Heard every lord declare
> His noble sense of op'ras and the fair."

The writers of books of entertainment, in verse or prose, and suited to the aristocratical taste, also men who can vent the cant of criticism, or who have got by heart and can spout flashy passages out of books, and come out occasionally with bits of knowledge or pretended knowledge, are admitted into this high society; but men of solid acquirements are not there; and the others are admitted on terms sufficiently humiliating. Mr. Moore, though one of the most favoured of the admissibles, complains that he was invited not as part of the company, but as one who could help to entertain the company. Observe also the distinctions they make; who they are whom they favour, and

who they are whom they neglect; they make this man a pensioner, the other man a baronet; and the only great poet we have had since Milton, they made a gauger.

So much for what is gained in intellect by the social intercourse of high people. Let us next see what is gained in morals and refinement. Their conversation has two tones, and two only; that of mockery, and that of vehement admiration. These are the tones naturally assumed by men who think themselves superior to all others, and that upon the worst of grounds. To talk of plain things in a plain way is below the dignity of such people; the herd of mankind do that: they never talk but to show what they think of themselves; that is, with contempt of all the rest of the world; and with strained admiration of their own set, and the things which distinguish it. How prodigious their admiration of pictures!—because pictures are a luxury confined to themselves; of expensive music, for the same reason; of fine houses, fine horses, and fine dogs. The intense in admiration is in itself bad; hostile in the highest degree to the progress of taste; and the infallible criterion of a feeble understanding. When it is exclusively bestowed on frivolous objects, it is hostile to every thing that is valuable in the human mind.

But if their admiring tone is thus injurious, their disdainful tone is infinitely more so. What is desirable above all things in society is a spirit of mutual benevolence; a kindly feeling towards one another pervading the whole community. To this the tone of scorn and mockery is in direct hostility. Sympathetic kindness does not inhabit the breast along with contempt. Scorn is the natural expression of the hostile mind, where other manifestations of it are not permitted; and the indulgence of scorn is the plentiful feeder of the hostile mind. The hostile mind, therefore, is proved; and that we do not feel the more cruel effects of it, is only because they in whom it exists dare not attempt them. How deeply we are indebted to our power of striking terror! If it were not for this, we should be in the condition of the most miserable of mankind. Do you ask any further proof than the nature of the case affords? Look at Ireland.

It is thus evident, that society derives no improvement from the style of conversation and social intercourse which take place in a class of men of overgrown wealth. It is, on the other hand, the main cause why the state of intellect, of morals, and of taste, is in this country at the low point at which, in each of these respects, it remains; nor will there be any change for the better, till the influence of that class ceases to be predominant.

We have as yet considered only the effects upon society produced by a class of men possessing large fortunes, secured by special laws against distribution, without political privileges. We are now going to consider what effects are produced by the addition of political privileges.

A privilege means, a beneficial something conferred upon an individual, or class of individuals; in which the rest of the community are not permitted to share. These privileges are always some one of three things—money, or dignity, or power. The privilege is the most perfect when it combines, as it commonly does, all the three. Let us see how they, severally and respectively, work.

By the money-privilege is not meant the enjoyment of a man's own property, whether large or small; for that belongs to every member of the community, one as much as another. It is money peculiarly allotted. The most remarkable case of this which has been actually exemplified, is that exemption from taxes which formerly was one of the privileges of the nobility in France. The sinecure places in England, once of great amount, reserved for distribution among the people of rank, is another instance of the same thing. It is not necessary to allude to more; and it is very evident what this benefit in the case of the few is composed of. It is composed of oppression to the many. There is so much taken from the many, that it may without reason be given to the few. This kind of privilege therefore is always wicked. And we must not permit the friends of this wickedness to confound it, which they like to do, with another thing which is not wicked,—the reward of important service. That is no privilege. What is so bestowed by the people is bestowed for their advantage, to secure them a supply of eminent services; and if such rewards are honestly conferred, any individual in the community, as much as another, may aspire to them.

The reflections which apply to factitious dignity are of kin to the above. We say *factitious* dignity, because it is that alone which has anything of privilege in it. Dignity, from its natural sources, from superior wisdom, superior beneficence, superior elegance, is open to the aspirations of all the community; even the dignity which springs from the associations we have with superior wealth, the effects of which are of a more mixed character, is not withheld from any member of the community who can manage to become rich. The dignity we mean is the dignity which is conferred by artificial distinctions; by titles, by precedencies, or any of the other contrivances, by which, apart from the natural causes of dignity, elevation is given to an individual or a class.

A reflection is called forth upon this subject, which is of the highest importance, and which has been far too long in attracting the notice which it ought; for, out of what is this dignity to the one, or to the few, created? The answer is indisputable: the degradation of the rest. A man is elevated above others, only by making others lower than him. But if I am made lower than another man without reason, that is an injury to me: it is injustice and oppression. If another man's pocket is filled out of mine, all the world acknowledges the oppression; but my dignity is dearer to me than my wealth. If then my dignity is lessened to augment the dignity of another man, I am injured in a more precious part.

The contrivance to degrade a community for the elevation of a few is not a happy contrivance: it is unrighteous in the purpose, and it is grievous in the effects. A degraded community is not an object of comfortable contemplation. It is a community, in which all the valuable qualities of human nature are in a lower state than they would be, if that fatal cause of depression did not exist.

When a man has attained to eminence by intellectual acquirements, by a course of beneficent conduct to his fellow-creatures, by presenting a model of what is amiable in his amusements and tastes, or, lastly, by the honourable accumulation of wealth, why should he be robbed of any portion of the dignity which those merits are calculated to confer? But this robbery he sustains, when a portion of dignity is taken from him, in order to make an addition to the dignity of somebody else: when an elevation to somebody else is created out of his degradation. The motives to the highest degree of well-doing in every line are then the most operative when this well-doing leads to the highest distinction. But the highest distinction is to be at the top. To whatever extent therefore the highest degree of well-doing is prohibited from reaching the top, to that degree the motive to it is taken away; and to that degree is the virtue of the community kept down. Then only will virtue be at the highest when the *præmia virtutis* are at the highest. But artificial ranks are a contrivance to prevent the *præmia virtutis* to be at the highest. To have a high rank, therefore, we must have a low virtue; that is part, and but a part, of the price we must pay for the article.

But of the kinds of privilege, that which consists in political powers is by far the most important. We do not mean to enter into a detailed exposition of its effects; but the particulars to which we shall advert will be allowed to deserve the most profound attention.

A privilege made of political power, must be made either of

judicial power, administrative power, or legislative power. In our own country we have specimens of all the ways. The highest of all our tribunals, the tribunal of last resort, is composed of hereditary judges. The whole of the administrative power in a mass, is placed in the hands of an individual by the right of descent; which individual has also a great share of judicial power, in the exclusive right of pardoning: and as the legislative power in this country, according to the received theory of the constitution, is divided into three parts, two of the three parts exist in the shape of privilege, and only one is free.

No one disputes, that there ought to be no political power which does not exist for the good of the community; and that if in any quarter there is a single particle of it, in any shape, which is not for the good of the community, it ought to be abolished. And why?—not merely because it is superfluous; but because it is noxious. Political power is the power of commanding; and that implies the obligation of obeying. But why should I be subjected to the degradation, and the hardship, which may be to any degree, of submitting to the commands of any one, when it is for no good? Above all, why should the millions composing the community be subjected to the degradation and oppression of obeying any one's commands, when it is for no good?

But the most weighty consideration of all yet remains to be stated. All political power which exists in the shape of privilege has a tendency to be mischievously used. This in fact is true of all political power; and therefore all wise men are for putting adequate checks upon it; that is, so ordering matters, that it shall be against the interest of those who hold it, not to make a good use of it. But all that portion of it which is allotted in the shape of privilege, is, to a certain degree, placed out of the reach of check. So far as it is so, it is most unwisely allotted. It is a power put into the hands of individuals, to be used for their own advantage, at the expense of the rest of the community.

But to set up a class or order of men, by giving them powers which they may use for their own advantage, at the expense of the rest of the community, is to set up a body of enemies to the rest of the community; for they will be sure to act like enemies; which is, to prosecute their own advantage to the utmost, regardless of the mischief they do to the rest of the community. Their constant endeavour will be, to give to their power the most extensive operation possible. It will be gilded with all sorts of false colours. Writers will be hired, some with money, some with smiles, to serve it with all the powers of sophistry.

The writers who expose it, will be pursued with calumny, if there be no more direct mode of persecuting and putting them down. If there be, they will be thrown into gaols, and robbed of their property, till their ruin is consummated.

Such men full well know, that in the attainment of good government their power of serving themselves at the expense of the community will be taken away. There is nothing, therefore, which they hate with so much intensity as any approach to good government, and the men who are working with any effect towards the attainment of it. If they could poison all such men with their looks, what a heartfelt joy it would be to them! In the meantime, they do what they can with their pestilential breath: they strive to poison their reputations. The man who appears as an advocate for good government they call a wretch, who wants to destroy government and substitute anarchy; the man who exposes the abominations of an unwholesome ecclesiastical establishment they call an Atheist, and would have us believe that he is as much detested by the Almighty as he is by them.

It is very unfortunate, when a state possesses within itself a body of enemies, such as this. However, in committing the folly of giving the powers which make men the enemies of their fellow-citizens, the greatest mischief is done by giving legislative powers. So long as the legislative power is well placed, there is a remedy. The command of the legislative power is the supreme command; and it can set bounds to the exercise of all subordinate powers, and keep it within the path of utility—at least, of harmlessness. But when the power of legislation is put in the hands of those who have an interest in using it for their own purposes, the descent to evil is prone and irresistible.

In making these reflections, no man can forbear turning his thoughts to the situation of England in respect to its legislature. Nearly one-half of the legislative power is placed in the hands of men who, by the tenure on which they hold it, are of necessity converted into a body of enemies, of the kind we have just described. The great object of their dread is, as we have seen, every approach to good government. Their earnest desire, of course, is to prevent it; and the fact is—a lamentable fact assuredly—that they have it completely in their power to do so.

The existence of this power is an evil, so great, that all other grievances in the state sink into nothing compared with it. That a clear-sighted and resolute people will not always endure it, is not to be feared; but how long it may contrive to carry on its

work, by fair words, and by little concessions, well-timed, it is not easy to foresee: especially so long as those who take the lead of the people in opposing them, afford them so much encouragement, by the faintness of their desire for the progress of good government, and the feebleness with which they urge even the reforms which they approve.

In the meantime, it behoves the people of this country deliberately to mature their thoughts, about the mode of meeting so great an evil, the removal of which is a matter of necessity.

In taking measures for removing evils in the machinery of government, it is good to accomplish the object (if accomplished it be, for half measures only indicate a weakness, which gives boldness to resistance, and adds to the difficulties of farther improvement)—with as little change as possible. We think that the power of the Lords to effect the incredible mischiefs, involved in their power of frustrating all schemes of improvement, might be taken away by a change very little perceptible. Let it be enacted, that if a bill, which has been passed by the House of Commons, and thrown out by the House of Lords, is renewed in the House of Commons in the next session of parliament, and passed, but again thrown out by the House of Lords, it shall, if passed a third time in the House of Commons, be law, without being sent again to the Lords.

What is put forward, as the great, and almost sole advantage of having two houses of legislation, is the security which it provides for mature deliberation; for it never can be thought by any man who has the blessing of reason, that there ought to be two authorities in a state, the one capable of barring whatever the other would do. This would be a scheme to arrest the powers of legislation, and set the whole vessel afloat without a carpenter and without a pilot. It is quite certain that if there be two authorities, one or other must have the means of prevailing in the long run. The only question then is, to which of our two houses of parliament that power should belong. And this, we believe, we may consider as a question decided. We do not suppose that the Duke of Wellington himself would pronounce for the House of Lords. Whether he would discern the consequences may be doubtful; but this he would certainly see, that it would not be submitted to. If anywhere there be two legislative assemblies—one under efficient obligations to legislate for the good of the community, the other under no obligations but to legislate for their own good—the power of prevailing in the long run, given to one or the other, involves the whole of the difference between good government and bad.

The powers of legislation exercised for the good of the people is good government; the powers of legislation exercised for the good of any set of men is bad government, and is naturally carried to excess; for the good of the set can only be pursued at the expense of the community. The set are, therefore, always in fear. Fear is essentially cruel. Every thing which looks like opposition is savagely punished; terror is the security in which they confide; and the reign of terror is theirs.

The expedient which we propose would be an effectual antidote to those evils, and would at the same time afford all the security against precipitate legislation which can be derived from a House of Lords. We are happy to see that Mr. Roebuck has taken up the idea of this expedient, and has given notice of a motion on the subject for next session of parliament. We think, however, that he has given too little time for consummating the operation. The evil will be alleged of postponing good measures; but on most of the measures on which immediate decision is of importance, there is not much likelihood of opposition between the two Houses; and on the great questions of constitutional improvement a little delay is not a great evil. Take, for example, the questions of the ballot, of shortening the duration of parliaments, of equalizing the constituencies—the interval which we propose between the first passing of a bill for any of these great objects in the House of Commons, and the time for its becoming law independently of the votes of the Lords, would not have many evil consequences; and the strong attention which would be kept fixed upon it in the meantime, would make it better understood, and more sure in its operation.

If we are told that this expedient of ours would no doubt be effectual to its end, if we could obtain it, but that to such a measure as this the Lords will never give their consent, we answer that, in a case of necessity, what cannot be obtained in one way must in another; and the probability is, that this being seen by the Lords, they will not hold out to the last. But if they do, the House of Commons have only to proceed a step farther, and declare that bills, as passed by them a certain number of times, and at certain intervals, are law. This resolution the people would hail with transport, and make the enactments laws by their obedience; and from that moment the House of Lords is blotted out. The thing would be done as quietly as passing a money bill. Collision! What could they do? They would draw the sword. So do a gang of as many smugglers on the coast; but this does not alarm the nation.

We shall be told, perhaps, that the judges would not recog-

nise such laws, and would refuse to enforce them. A good many of them would have an itching that way, we have no manner of doubt; but they are men who look which way the wind blows. When the nation, and the nation's representatives, in their determination to effect the removal of an intolerable evil, have not allowed the House of Lords to stand in the way, the judges will not be slow to infer that neither will they be allowed to stand in the way. It is easy to supply the place of judges who set themselves up against the legislature.

It has been hinted by Lord John Russell (for he is one of those who like to make themselves known by circumlocution, rather than by plain speaking, when their inclinations and those of the community are not quite in accord) that there is no occasion for any reform of the House of Peers; and in this he has been copied, which was a matter of course, by the Attorney-General. To be sure, their arguments are not calculated to make great impression. The Lords, they tell us, will grow wiser. We therefore have their word for this great event, on which so much of our happiness depends; and it much concerns us to consider the value of it. First of all, we must think who the men are, who call upon us for such a stretch of our confidence, upon a matter to us of infinite moment. What if they are mistaken in their word, thus pledged for the Lords? Will it not be a great satisfaction to us to find ourselves the victims of aristocratic misrule, because Lord John Russell and the Attorney-General told us not to expect it? Let us, therefore, deliberately ask ourselves, whether it is more likely that they are mistaken in this word of theirs, or the contrary? If we should suppose, with them, that the light which is shining upon the rest of the community, and which may be expected, as they justly say, to shine every year with greater and greater force, will not permit the Lords to remain in the same thick darkness in which they are as yet immersed, will their greater degree of intelligence render them less disposed to pursue their own interests? Is such a supposition as this agreeable to our experience of human nature? Will not the Lords like to have power, as well after the wisdom of their inferiors has forced itself in some degree among them, as before? And will they not like as well to make that power available to their own ends, at the expense of the community? It is not to the ignorance of the aristocracy that we owe all our evils, but to a much deeper rooted cause—the preference which every man has of himself to another. Do Lord John and the Attorney-General really advise us to submit to the miseries of aristocratic misrule, till the wisdom of the Lords gets the

better of this propensity? The shallowness of the view in which such a thought could originate is not the least remarkable thing in this emphatic advice. Lord John and his colleagues only expect this degree of wisdom to exist among the Lords, when it exists to such a degree in the community that they cannot remain devoid of it. This implies a state of things in which no man prefers himself to his neighbour—a state in which every man values his neighbour's good as much as his own; for assuredly Lord John and his colleagues will admit that the Lords are the very last portion of the community whom this angelical spirit will reach. But is it possible Lord John and his colleagues should not see, that when the human mind has reached this stage of perfection, every man governs himself accurately, according to the truest principles of well-doing; and all government by others becomes useless; government ceases to exist. It follows with the force of demonstration, that we may trust to the wisdom of the Lords for their assent to good government, then, when government altogether becomes unnecessary, and not one moment sooner.

There is only one other pretence we can think of, which can be held up in favour of Lord John's advice—that the Lords will grow wise enough to see the danger of resisting the will of the people.

To trust to this security is not in our opinion a wise scheme of governing; and to recommend it would assuredly be a great inconsistency in Lord John. Lord John is one of that class, or tribe, or sect, who dread the people. The impetus of the people is, according to them, one of the great evils in society, against which adequate securities can hardly ever be taken; and yet it is here proposed to make it an ever-acting power in the state. Where one power is employed for the counteraction of another, it must work whenever the other works. But the will of the Lords to benefit themselves at the expense of the rest of the community is in perpetual action;—so then must the impetus of the people, which restrains it. This, in the opinion of reformers, is not a desirable state of things, even if we were to admit the inadmissible supposition that it could exist permanently. It would imply a state of perpetual excitement; and what would add enormously even to that evil—a feeling of hostility between the higher and other classes in perpetual and vehement action. To be in this state is, as far as it goes, to be in a state of anarchy. The aim of all the arrangements of government, so far as they have not grown like trees, as Sir James Mackintosh would have them, but have been made under the guidance of reason, with a view to public

good, is to trust no important series of results to uncertain causes—to impulses, which may or may not have place.

Lord John, and they whose thoughts run in the same channel with his, talk to us loudly about institutions; hold a language about institutions, as if no body had a regard for them but themselves; taking care, a large proportion of them, to include all abuses under the name of institutions. Well, then, we desire them to remark, that we, whom they calumniate as the enemies of institutions, because we are the enemies of abuses, are for checking the Lords by an institution; just as we are for securing all the other points of good government by institutions, and not by the irregular impulses of the people. Our institution, too, is the simplest thing in the world. It is merely that the assent of the Lords to a law deemed necessary for the public good, by the nation's house of legislation, shall, after a period of refusal, be unnecessary. Is not this better than bringing down the people upon them on every occasion? Does not Lord John think enough, to perceive, that the people have only two modes of acting in such a way as to coerce a body of powerful men?—It is either by violence; or the prospect of violence, so near as to be terrifying; and this prospect of violence, so near as to be terrifying, is what Lord John proposes to make the habitual medicine of the state. Also we, the reformers, who wish to gain all our ends by institutions, that is, by established organs, adequate to the purpose, are the people to be distrusted for their want of regard to institutions. If, indeed, nothing is to be institution, in the language of our aristocratical revilers, but established organs for preserving aristocratical abuses, we are their enemies, and will assuredly persevere till we have destroyed them.

In taking away, however, from the Lords such power of legislation as we cannot secure from being used for bad purposes we would grant to them other powers, the mischievous use of which we should have the means of preventing. They should obtain both the right of voting for members of the house of representatives, and the right of being chosen members. We think that this would be attended with several good effects. It would hold out motives to all the young men of that class who had ambition for high place in the service of the state, to cultivate the qualifications which would give them pre-eminence in the field of free competition, and recommend them to the highest trusts. It would make a spontaneous change in the education of that class; they would seek to become, and therefore would become, intellectual men; and they would have adequate motives to cultivate the good opinion of the people,

by the practice of all the virtues which render men valuable and acceptable to one another. They would become men of worth, in the highest and most endearing sense of the word; and possessing the means of doing good to others in a higher degree than men of inferior wealth, they would be more looked up to, and their wishes would be more consulted. They would still, if they chose, be the foremost men in the state, and with a happiness of which at present they have no conception.

We shall speedily, no doubt, hear, from those who make loyalty a virtue, whether well or ill bestowed,—that is to say, from those with whom in affairs of state the good of the people passes for nothing, but whom at last the people have learned to know, and are prepared, when the season comes, to treat as they deserve,—a loud accusation.

We shall be told, that, by this reasoning of ours, we destroy the foundation of monarchy as well as of aristocracy.

But those men, who have the monarchy appetite, at least the cant of it, for their virtue, and care for no other, are very shallow politicians; they never see more of a thing than its outside. We tell them, that monarchy rests on grounds totally different from those of aristocracy; and they are the great enemies of monarchy, who try to confound the two.

There is a great deal of foundation for what was urged with so much earnestness by the French Economistes, and by the penetrating philosopher, Hobbes,—that the interest of the monarch, and the interest of the people, are not opposite, but identical.

Let us take the leading particulars, and look at them for a moment.

The GREATNESS of a King, to begin with that, is doubtless dependent upon, and measured by, the greatness of his people. What has made the King of England for centuries hold the high rank which he has done among the sovereigns of the earth? Not the numbers of his subjects. Not the riches of his soil. What then?—The riches, that is, the productive powers of his people; who were prompted to exert themselves, because they knew that what they produced, they should have liberty to enjoy. Queen Elizabeth appears to have had more than a glimpse of this truth. When told that she was reproached for being shabby, what did she reply?—"My riches," she said, "are in the pockets of my people, where they are much better placed than in mine; and therefore it is my resolution to take out of those pockets, not as much as possible, but as little."

Next, for his GLORY. Abstracting from the GREATNESS, the grounds of which we have explored in the preceding para-

graph, what can that consist in but the high qualities of his people—their copious possession of all that contributes to well-being—their fame for high intelligence, for their skill in all the arts which supply the conveniences or ornaments of life—their love of their country, which gives them happiness—their social and domestic virtues? To be at the head of such a people, is to be at the very summit of glory.

And what, after this, has a king to wish for? A people, who themselves abound in all the means both of comfortable and of elegant living, will consider it for their own decoration that their king shall be pre-eminent in this, as in other respects. A king indeed, placed in these elevating circumstances, will be far above entering into a competition with his subjects in the tasteless display of wealth, or thinking any part of his dignity to consist in being able to make more waste than any other man in his dominions. He has better means of distinction.

How is it then, it will be asked in contradiction to us, that our kings of England, for example, have always been so much misled? When have they considered their GREATNESS as identified with the freedom and happiness of their people? When have they considered it their GLORY to be at the head of a people eminent for their intellectual attainments and their moral worth? Experience, we shall be told, is against us.

The account of this matter is (for the fact is not to be disputed) that our kings have always linked themselves with the aristocracy, and have committed the grievous blunder of thinking the interests of the aristocracy the same with their own. They have degraded themselves by becoming the creatures of the aristocracy. They have no independent power, because they have separated themselves from the people. The aristocracy, after making them dependent upon themselves, have made a stalking-horse of them;—have talked in very lofty terms of their authority, and the obedience due to it, because they can employ it all for their own use, and with the vast advantage of having the king for a screen. The power of the sovereign has been converted into their power: no wonder they like it. But till that was brought about, how did they behave? Let history answer the question. They were the king's antagonists, and his oppressors; and it was only by the aid of the people that he was ever able to make head against them. What was the contest with the Stuarts, but a contest to determine whether the king was to be master, or the aristocracy? If the king could rule without a parliament, the king was to be the master; if he could not, the aristocracy was to be the master, because the aristocracy at that time made the parliament. In this contest the

aristocracy had the advantage, for the first time, of drawing the people to their side—gulled as they were by the name representative—as if a man, because he was called a representative, would take care of the people's interests, though put into parliament only to take care of the interests of the aristocracy, and turned out when he failed to do so.

This contest was decided against the king, for ever; he discovered that he could not rule but in subservience to parliament. And what, in consequence, has he done? He has put his neck into the collar of the aristocracy, and to this hour tugs like a pack-horse at their waggon. He might have done better for himself, and better for the state;—he might have joined with the people in rescuing parliament from the gripe of the aristocracy; and then he would have been really subservient to nothing but the public interest, which he would have felt to be his.

Ever since the expulsion of the Stuarts, what has been the situation of the King of England in the hands of the aristocracy—his master, as well as the people's? Read the authentic documents in Coxe's biographical works, from Marlborough to Pelham inclusive. What was the government of England during the reigns of William, of Anne, of George the First, and George the Second, but a disgusting struggle among the aristocracy who should have the power of plundering the people? without its being thought necessary by a man among them to make even the pretence that a regard for the public good entered among his motives. There is no where else to be found such a display of immorality—of the utter abandonment of principle—of hardened, unblushing rapacity, as characterized the aristocracy in those days. The business of a minister was, by his intrigues, by his personal or family interest, to get a majority of those marauders to support him in parliament. The man who had obtained this, the king was obliged to make minister; and George the Second, with great bitterness, told the Chancellor Hardwicke, that whoever was minister was king in this country—not the cypher who bore the name.

There is no doubt that when a king is afraid of his people, and believes that he is only safe by being able to crush them, he has cogent motives to govern ill, and that in every possible way: to hinder his people from knowing; to hinder them from speaking; to plunder them to the utmost, for the sake of gorging those whose profligate assistance he may require; and to subject them to the most atrocious revenge for any appearance of a disposition to dispute his will. But when a king

is satisfied that his throne is established on the rooted conviction in the minds of his people that it is good for them, he has no fear to provide against; no blackguards to hire, either to debase the understandings of the people, or to shed their blood. He has no higher ground of rejoicing than the blessings in which his people rejoice—plenty of the good things of life, with minds sufficiently cultivated to use them all to the best advantage.

And if it be true, that the interest of a king is not irreconcilable with the interests of his people, it is not yet proved that his office is an unnecessary one, or unattended with advantages which in no other way can be so perfectly attained.

A first magistrate is necessary; that is a fixed and undisputed point. The necessity of unity in matters of administration, the use of concentrated responsibility, and many other considerations, seem to place the balance of advantage on the side of the individuality of the first magistrate. He should be one, and not two, or more.

But if so, the only question which remains is,—whether he should be hereditary, or elective.

The chief advantage urged on the side of electiveness is the security for talent. With an hereditary first magistrate, the degree of talent is a matter of chance; with an elective, a high degree is tolerably certain.

If we allow this to be so, we have still the question to answer, whether the security for talent in the chief magistrate is a matter of much importance.

As it is very certain that he must govern in subservience to parliament; and as parliament will soon be chosen by the people, and responsible to the people, we should say that it is not in this country a matter of much importance.

It is clear to reason, and well proved by experience, that when the chief magistrate attempts to act as his own minister, he does no good, but evil; and if he chooses for his ministers, as in the above circumstances he must do, men agreeable to the parliament, he cannot go far wrong: they will always be, if not the very best men, among the best that are to be had.

In these circumstances, there are advantages of a very solid nature, on the side of the hereditary principle. The choice of the chief magistrate, if he is elective, must be given either to the parliament, or to the people. The evils are so obvious of giving the choice of the great administrative organ of government to the legislative organ, that we believe it has never been seriously contemplated. It would be the most effectual of all contrivances to fill that body with faction, to light up the evil

passions, and to engross the minds of members with any thing rather than the interests of the country, the care of which, even in minute detail, is their great and infinitely important duty. The choice by the people is perhaps less pregnant with evil. But the agitation which must be created by so important a choice as that of head of the state, even for a few years, pervading the whole mass of the population, and carrying with it all the solicitations, all the intrigues, all the misrepresentations, all the calumnies, and all the estrangements, which it creates, is very unfavourable to all that is good in the minds of the people; among whom quietness and harmony, when they know that the securities for good government are firmly placed in their hands, are most desirable for every kind of prosperity—their prosperity in wealth, their prosperity in intellect, their prosperity in morals, and in all the ornaments of life.

If ever the King of England becomes clear-sighted enough to see that he has been very ill-advised, in leaning upon a corrupt aristocracy, and a corrupt church, as the two crutches without which he could not stand; and that he may rest with assurance on the solid advantages to the people, inherent in his office: he will occupy a far more exalted station in the social union than he has hitherto done. He will feel that he reigns in the reason and understanding of his people; which is a more steady reliance, than that reigning in their hearts, which he has hitherto heard so much about, and to so little purpose.

P. Q.

Art. II.

Cours d'Histoire Moderne, par M. Guizot, Professeur d'Histoire à la Faculté des Lettres de Paris—(consisting of) *Histoire Générale de la Civilisation en Europe, depuis la Chute de l'Empire Romain jusqu'à la Revolution Française*, 1 vol. *Histoire de la Civilisation Française depuis la Chute de l'Empire Romain jusqu'en* 1789, only 5 vols. published.

IT is not many years since an English nobleman, who long performed his duties of hereditary legislator, under no apprehension of unfitness, on his part, or distrust of his abilities, on that of the public, declared to a brother Peer that he knew no more of the history of England than what he had learnt in Shakspeare. Since the period to which this fact belongs there has been a considerable improvement in the education of all classes. Yet if we could obtain equally unreserved confessions, it is probable that the increase of historical knowledge, in any valuable sense of the term, would be found still to be a rare