

instead of being any where 'plenty as blackberries,' is every where rare as black swans. It will thrive in time, now that we have something like a soil for it; but the production will be slow. Meanwhile, a few operatives in the House of Commons would do that for their own class which is already done for other classes; they would give expression to its peculiar views, feelings, and interests, real or supposed. Their sturdy straightforwardness would be a check on the conventionalities and hypocrisies of 'honourable gentlemen.' They would mingle usefully with the other warring elements of the chaos out of which it is to be hoped that order will eventually arise. They would contribute towards the preparatory training through which we have to pass to arrive at the clear comprehension of representative government, and the right working of its pre-eminent facilities for securing and advancing the well-being of the community.

W. J. F.

ART. X.

THE BALLOT.—A DIALOGUE.

*Speakers:—a Farmer—a Schoolmaster—a Squire.**

FARMER.—You two are of opposite opinions, upon a subject in which I am interested. I wish to be in the right in my opinion; and you would do me the greatest favour if you would, each of you, state the reasons upon which his persuasion is grounded. When I have considered them together, I may, perhaps, discern which are the strongest.

SQUIRE.—Let us know the subject about which you are perplexed.

FAR.—The subject I mean is the ballot. You know I have recently had the power of voting for a member of parliament conferred upon me. But, as the tenant of another man, I am to such a degree dependent, that I must vote as he desires me.

Sq.—Why so? Why not maintain the spirit of an Englishman, and vote as your conscience directs you?

FAR.—It is easy, as I have often seen, for all of us to make light of another man's burdens. But, Sir, it is no small difference to such a man as me, whether he has the good, or the ill will of his landlord. In fact, the happiness or misery of his life may depend upon it. He may be forced from a spot on which he has planted himself, and from which he cannot be

* It will be perceived that this conversation took place shortly after the appearance, in the *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1833, of an article (ascribed to a distinguished member of the Whig party) containing a systematic attack upon the ballot; and was noted down by the schoolmaster at the time.

torn, without loss of property, and painful feelings, to any degree. Even if he is secured against removal, the state of a farmer, assured of all sorts of good offices from his landlord, and those about him, is very different from that of one assured of all sorts of ill offices from them.

Sq.—But a high-minded man will vindicate his liberty for all that.

SCHOOLMASTER.—You say right, Sir; and it is very desirable that there should be as many high-minded men as possible. That, however, is not the only question; and wise legislation takes care to embrace all the questions involved in the consideration of its measures. True, it is desirable that there should be high-minded men; but is it not desirable that your institutions should not be such as to punish men for their high-mindedness? Are such institutions calculated to encourage the growth of this desirable thing?

Sq.—But I desire to know how you make it out that our institutions punish high-mindedness.

SCH.—I think you will allow that the amount of evil just described to us by our friend the farmer, is no trifle.

Sq.—Certainly not; and I deplore it as much as you do.

SCH.—But a lot of evil attached to the doing of an act, is punishment for that act, is it not?

Sq.—No doubt.

SCH.—A lot of evil attached to the act of voting in a certain way is, therefore, punishment for that act?

Sq.—It is.

SCH.—The man who acts—that is, votes, in this particular way—in obedience, I mean, to his conscience, but disobedience to his landlord, performs the high-minded act you applaud?

Sq.—He does.

SCH.—And, when the lot of evil follows, he is punished for it?

Sq.—Yes.

SCH.—A line of acting, established by law, in a concern of the public, and for a public end, is an institution—is it not?

Sq.—It is.

SCH.—Here then is an institution which punishes the farmer, and the very large class of men placed in corresponding circumstances, for a high-minded act.

Sq.—I cannot deny that it is so.

SCH.—And you do not, I am sure, maintain that it is right?

Sq.—Far from it; but still it may be the least of two evils; and submission to it on that account may still be a duty.

SCH.—Is not this a supposition which may easily be made?

And does it deserve any regard, till that greater evil is pointed out, and its consequence, upon the removal of the less evil, proved to be inevitable?

Sq.—Certainly not.

Sch.—It is required of you, therefore, if you would entitle your position to any regard, to do both things—to show us the consequent evil, and to show that the consequence is certain.

Sq.—I do not think it will be difficult to comply with your conditions. In the first place, I think it can be shown that your plan for rescuing the high-minded voter from the punishment attached to his vote will be unavailing. I also think, if it were rendered availing, that the consequences of the remedy would be worse than the disease.

Far.—Ay, now you are coming to that which I am impatient to hear—whether I can be delivered from my thralldom? And if not, why?

Sch.—Yes; you and I now wait for the reasons of the Squire; and, first, he has promised to inform us, why the ballot cannot afford you protection.

Sq.—You will acknowledge that the efficacy of the ballot depends upon the secrecy.

Sch.—True; because we consider the ballot a short name for secret voting.

Sq.—But the ballot will be ineffectual for secrecy; because the same power which would compel the man, voting openly, to vote against his inclination, will compel him to tell how he has voted.

Sch.—Oh, no; it may compel him to *say* how he has voted, not to tell. That is a very different thing; and whether he says, or tells, his compeller can never know.

Sq.—Cannot he make him, in the very act of voting, show how he votes?

Sch.—No; there is an effectual mode of preventing that.

Sq.—How?

Sch.—The voter may vote in a place where there are no witnesses, and in a way in which it can be known to no creature but himself how he has voted.

Sq.—I do not understand your plan. Explain it more particularly.

Sch.—May not the voter be admitted into a room, where he can be seen by nobody?

Sq.—Certainly he may.

Sch.—In that room there may be receptacles for the voting-balls or tickets intended for each of the candidates. Into

which of these receptacles the voter has put his balls or tickets is utterly unknown, except to himself.

Sq.—That, it appears, I must admit; but the compulsion to tell how he has voted may still be exercised.

Sch.—What you mean is, that the man who has power over him may ask him how he has voted, and will punish him if he do not say that he has voted as he bid him.

Sq.—Yes, that is what I mean.

Sch.—Let us suppose that he does so; and what then? The voter either tells him the truth, or he does not. What is he benefited? He knows no more how the man has voted, in consequence of what he has told him, than what the emperor of China dreamt last night.

Sq.—But still he knows, if the man has not voted as he bid him, the man has lied.

Sch.—And pray, Sir, who is the cause of that lie? to whom of course the criminality of it ought to be imputed. But this part of the question—the collateral effects of the ballot—we had better, I think, consider afterwards, when we have first determined whether it will, or will not, afford a remedy for the evil against which we desire to provide it: in short, whether it will protect the voter from that process we have just described, of compelling a voter to vote dishonestly.

Sq.—True, Sir, if it is not a remedy which will answer its end, it is needless to discuss its other properties, since it will not be desired.

Sch.—You have admitted, I think, that the act of voting may be rendered perfectly secret; and also that, though the voter may say he has voted as his master has ordered, his master is not, by that circumstance, one jot the nearer a knowledge of how he has voted. His vote is still a secret to his master—and so, unless there are other circumstances to reveal it, must it ever remain.

Sq.—I find myself constrained to allow that.

Sch.—And so will all fair controvertists. The question, then, is, are there other circumstances to reveal it?

Sq.—Yes; there is an article just published in the 'Edinburgh Review,' and said to come from a high quarter, which affirms that there are undoubted means of discovery.

Sch.—Well, Sir, what are they?

Sq.—The Reviewer says, that the voter's general opinions are always known, from which his mode of voting will be inferred.

Sch.—That is one circumstance: is there any other?

Sq.—Let me think. It did appear to me, when I read the

article, that there was a list of them; but I confess I cannot recollect another.

SCH.—There is no other; though, as you say, the language used in the article implies that the assertion is well supported.

Sq.—Do you mean to say, then, that I have been deceived by language either wholly or partially begging the question?

SCH.—You compel me to smile. Do you not know that this is the master-piece of the rhetorical art? This circumstance, however,—this something, which is, by its sole operation, to discover the vote of the dependent, must be examined; that we may, of our own knowledge, not from the assertion of the reviewer, judge what it can, and what it cannot, make known.

Sq.—That I join with you in desiring.

SCH.—Let us suppose the case of our friend, the Farmer here, and his landlord. The Farmer is a known reformer. His landlord is an enemy of reform. Let the candidates be two—one a reformer, another an enemy of all reform. How does the landlord proceed? He denounces vengeance against those of his tenants who do not vote for his friend; and he will, says the ‘Edinburgh Review,’ go upon the rule, that all his tenants who are reformers will vote against him.

FAR.—But pray, gentlemen, consider a little in what condition I am to be placed by the operation of such a rule.

SCH.—What is it you apprehend?

FAR.—The consequence will be the same to me, whether I vote with my landlord, or against him: in either case he will conclude that I have voted against him. But if I shall be concluded to have voted agreeably to my own sentiments, whether I have done so or not, what you have justly called the punishment of my vote will fall upon me, do what I will. Of course I shall, in these circumstances, give the vote which pleases myself, and my landlord makes my opposition to him sure. I am punished, but my landlord is disappointed.

Sq.—That consequence is very clear; and the writer in the ‘Edinburgh Review’ has anticipated the objection. He says, that such of their tenants as have sentiments they consider opposed to the vote they desire, the landlord will keep from voting at all.

SCH.—I see that the writer in the ‘Edinburgh Review’ lays great stress upon the exercise of this forbidding power possessed by the landlords. It is necessary, therefore, to consider carefully both what it implies, and what it can accomplish. One thing which it implies deserves to be accurately noted: it is no less than the important point, which not a few have had the boldness to deny, that for the purpose of secrecy the ballot is perfectly

efficient. It is only because the landlord cannot know how his tenant will vote, that he deprives himself of his vote, of course fearing that it will be given against him; for if he had the means of knowing the vote, the same force which enables him to keep his tenant from voting, would enable him to make him vote as he pleased.

Sq.—I do not see how that can be disputed. There would be no motive for making a voter stay away, if you knew and could command his vote if he went.

Sch.—We are then to consider this as a conceded and established point, that the motive to keep dependents from voting arises entirely from the perfect secrecy of the vote.

Another thing which this argument implies is, an assurance that the power which great men possess to prevent the exercise of free voting will be generally used. This only deserves remark, as an instance of the inconsistencies in which the gentlemen of counsel against the ballot are involved. When the purpose is, to deny that there is any occasion for the ballot, it is commonly assumed, that gentlemen will not use their powers of coercion, but generously indulge their dependents in voting as they please; and we are called upon somewhat imperiously to wait, before calling for the ballot, till we see what their behaviour is. When the occasion, however, comes to maintain the inefficacy of the ballot, let the need for it be what it may, we are then told, with the loudest voice, that every man who has the power will exert it, even to the utmost: no mention now of the propriety of waiting, to see whether men grasping at political power will avail themselves of all their advantages for attaining it. Can the men who thus profess contradictory opinions upon the same subject—one opinion to-day, another to-morrow, as it suits their purposes—call upon us for belief in their sincerity?

Sq.—I object to this inference; and I think that candour should have restrained you from expressing it. I allow the contradiction; but I can declare that till now I was not aware of it; and held both opinions in sincerity—both that it was doubtful whether the conduct of men of local influence would be such as to call for the ballot, and certain that they would exert themselves to defeat the ballot.

Sch.—I am grateful for your rebuke, and feel its justice. I ought to have made more allowance for the oversights into which we are all apt to be led by the heat of controversy. You will, however, allow that those people who refute themselves—that is, who hold two opinions, the one of which destroys the other—are either somewhat careless in scanning their opinions, or not very capable of that most important intellectual process.

Sq.—You now charge the deficiency to the proper account—to the intellectual, not to the moral part of the offender; but I think that you are still guilty of an overcharge; it being, in my opinion, not very difficult for a man even of good intellect to overlook a contradiction or two in a number of allegations upon a complicated subject.

SCH.—You will allow, however, that to make this apology available, the party must not persevere in his self-contradiction. If he does, it not merely argues, it proves, a sad deficiency in him somewhere. But this is leading us from the question. We have to inquire what the power of a great man, or combination of great men, in forbidding their dependents to vote, can do for them? If it should appear that it must be altogether inefficient for the attainment of their ends, do you think that it will then be a good argument against the ballot?

Sq.—Certainly not; but I go upon the supposition that it will be efficient; and then I think it a good argument.

SCH.—First of all, does it not deserve some consideration, what appearance it will have to the public, and what conclusions it will suggest, if it shall be demonstrated, by notorious facts, that a great proportion of the Englishmen to whom the law gives the right of voting are debarred from the exercise of that right, because they hold such and such opinions? Is that a state of things which could continue to exist?

Sq.—I do not think that it could.

SCH.—Is it not, therefore, either puerile or unfair to produce, as an objection to the ballot, a state of things which cannot exist?

Sq.—I see that the argument would be of very little avail, if you can show how the evil is to be remedied.

SCH.—You have allowed that it is a state of things, the permanence of which is not to be supposed—that it would certainly be put an end to.

Sq.—I think it would.

SCH.—Whether it be put an end to by what you would call a remedy, or a disease, does not affect the argument. A state of things which cannot exist cannot be urged as an objection to the ballot.

Sq.—Yes, if getting rid of it would only introduce a greater evil.

SCH.—That greater evil, then, would be the real objection, and should alone be urged. What is this evil?

Sq.—That is what we have now, I think, to inquire. For my part, I do not see my way out of the difficulty. The ‘*Edinburgh Review*’ seems to think that no enactment of the legislature will

be sufficient to deprive great landlords of the power of preventing their tenants and tradesmen from voting.

SCH.—You are willing, then, to go with me into a close inspection of the subject?

Sq.—Most willing.

SCH.—There is one mode of delivery from the irrational and unseemly spectacle of a power conferred by the will of the community, through its supreme organ, on a portion of the community, and that power taken away, that is, the law broken and frustrated, by the will of certain individuals: namely, by repealing the law, taking away that power, which the will of individuals, too powerful for the law, renders nominal.

Sq.—Do you mean, that all that description of voters whom the landlords would withhold from voting should be deprived of their votes?

SCH.—Yes.

Sq.—And have you considered that this would be to select out of the most numerous class of voters—namely, the poorest class—all those who hold sentiments favourable to reform—that is, the far greater proportion—and to deprive them of the power of voting, on the sole ground of their holding reform sentiments? Why, that would be to make a fundamental law of the state, for the express purpose of preventing reform for ever after.

SCH.—It would be so.

Sq.—And do you think that such a proposition would ever be listened to?

SCH.—I do not; and therefore I think we may leave that proposition, as one sure not to be acted upon. But then, if we are to have these men with their votes, what are we to do for them? We see what the difficulty with them arises from: the source of it is, the power which certain men have over them. We must, then, work upon that power. Is there no means by which this power can be prevented from operating to the defeat of a fundamental end and purpose of the state?

Sq.—The 'Edinburgh Review' seems to think not. Are you of a different opinion?

SCH.—I am of opinion that the writer in the 'Edinburgh Review' did not very deliberately weigh the consequence of his opinion; which is only this, that the existence of large properties must be destroyed, and prohibited for ever.

Sq.—How say you? That, a consequence of the reviewer's opinion?

SCH.—You cannot doubt it. The votes of these men are, by the supposition, necessary to good government. Such is the opinion of the legislature, and of the community, who gave

them their votes. The power of the landlords destroys this essential condition of good government. Good government and the power of the landlords cannot exist together, if the opinion of the reviewer is true. What the community have then to determine is, which is best for them, that they should have good government without great landlords, or bad government with them.

Sq.—That is not a question which we can suppose they will be long in determining. But what would you do in that case?

SCH.—The proper course is easy to be seen. As their power arises from the greatness of their properties, all great properties must be broken down into small ones; distributed, if you will, to the next of kin of the original owners.

Sq.—I am staggered with this objection, and astonished that the writer in the 'Edinburgh Review' did not see what his doctrine would lead to. It is no light matter to hold up, from such a quarter, a representation, from which it may be legitimately inferred, that the existence of large properties in a certain number of hands is utterly incompatible with the existence of good government. Let us, however, see whether he has not a defence. We remember that he is arguing against the ballot; and may he not say, that though you prove such and such consequences will flow from your endeavours to protect the ballot, such consequences cannot be pleaded against him because he wishes not to have the ballot?

SCH.—It is only necessary to call to recollection the course of the preceding argument, to see how untenable is that plea.

Sq.—Let us observe.

SCH.—From the very proper terms in which the reviewer spoke, in the early part of the review, of the success with which the votes of individuals had been interfered with, both by reward and intimidation—both by money in hand and loss in prospect, it is clearly his opinion, that such interference (I mean to any considerable extent) is incompatible with good government. The same, undoubtedly, is the sole basis on which, in reason, the late reform can be defended; the object of which was by Lord Grey declared, in a pointed and admirably-chosen expression, to be representation—not nomination: meaning, by nomination, command of votes, either by bribery or intimidation. This, to be sure, is a ground which an opponent of the reform bill may reject; but it can never be renounced by any of its supporters, least of all by the 'Edinburgh Review.' The next point of admission on the part of the reviewer is, that the great proprietors have the power, and will have the will, to exercise both bribery and intimidation: so far, we agree with

him. He says, it is not in the power of legislation to prevent them. By way of parenthesis, we should then ask him, what was the use of last year's reform? But to pass that, we meet him here, and we say that the ballot would prevent them. This he denies, and skilfully states a train of reasons, such as they are, to show us we are deluded. Now, then, let us observe the upshot of our opposite reasonings. About the cause of the evil we are both agreed: it is the power—that is, the great properties—of the landlords. We say that the ballot will prevent the noxious exercise of this power; the reviewer denies that it will. But an efficient barrier against the introduction of good government must be removed. What follows I need not desire you to say. The question clearly is—ballot, or the destruction of large properties. If the ballot is sufficient to protect voting, as I believe it is, leave property to its natural course of accumulation or dispersion; if the ballot is not sufficient, the power of commanding votes must be taken away. For it is useless to mince the matter: good government we will not consent to be without. If the opposers of the ballot prove to us that with the existence of large estates we cannot have good government—in other words, pure representation—why then large estates must be abolished; the alternative is clear.

Sq.—The impression made upon me by your reasoning is complex, and somewhat difficult to describe. I cannot easily reconcile myself to your conclusion; and yet if it were proved to the community that they cannot have the benefit of genuine representation, that is, cannot have good government, while the property of the country is placed in great masses in particular hands, nobody can overlook the consequence. The community will assuredly come to the resolution of breaking up these masses, and making all properties small. Nor can anybody deny that they will have reason for such a proceeding. But still are you not alarmed at the idea of such a state of things?

Sch.—I know not what great evils I should apprehend from it. The moment of any considerable change is always ticklish. But I do not see why a community, in which there are a great many small properties, and none very large, should not be a very happy community. Many things might be said in praise of such a state of society, if it were now the object to recommend it. At present, however, I have no such design, because I think the ballot an antidote against the noxious exercise of the power of the rich; and if so, I desire not to meddle with their property. When it ceases to be hurtful, it ceases to be obnoxious to me.

Sq.—But how are you to get over the objection, that voters may be forbidden to vote?

SCH.—That must be examined. The objection is given in broad, general terms, which afford no distinct ideas, and only leave behind them an impression that there is something of importance under them. Impressions of this sort are always a legitimate object of distrust, till the causes of them are minutely examined. Let us put before ourselves the circumstances, the combination of which, we are told, will defeat the ballot.

FAR.—That part of the inquiry comes home to me. I am eager to learn what protection can be afforded to the men of my class.

SCH.—I wish to simplify the state of the question as much as possible. I shall suppose, therefore, that the distinction is solely that of reformer, and no reformer: the landlords forbidding the reformers to vote, and compelling the anti-reformers to do so. If they can do this, anti-reform candidates will alone be chosen.

We must bear in mind that the objection we are endeavouring to obviate supposes, that the majority of the farmers composing this or that constituency are reformers. If the majority were anti-reformers, the anti-reforming candidate would be chosen without the intimidation process of the landlords.

Now then, let us observe the natural working of this state of things. The landlords, says the objection, order the majority of their tenants to abstain from voting.

First of all, how are they to select their men? How do they know who are the reformers, who the anti-reformers? The answer must be, by their talk. The men who are known to hold anti-reform talk will be sent; those who hold the language of reformers will be kept away.

Talk then is the criterion; but talk is fallacious. The men who are the least likely to hold themselves bound by any promise to a landlord which they can break with impunity are precisely the men who are most likely to deceive him by holding language which he may hear of, though it be not the language of their thoughts. He may, upon this evidence, be sending men to the poll, the majority of whom will vote against him. That this is a probable result, is proved by this fact, that when there is a majority of farmers warm in a particular opinion, it is always a very large majority; as a body they think according to one another; those among them who stand by themselves in an opinion are always a small number.

So much for the success of the anti-reform expedient with those who are sent to the poll. In the meantime, what are the thoughts of those who are forbidden to poll? They know by being forbidden that they are marked men in the minds of their landlords. They are also men who have little regarded this

circumstance, since it has not hindered them from speaking their minds. Are they not men, therefore, who may go a step further, and ask themselves what other danger they are to undergo, if they disobey their landlord and vote in spite of his prohibition? Remember that they are the majority. There is no danger that the landlords will turn off the majority of their tenants. A general resolution, then, among the reforming tenants, to disregard the interdiction, would leave the landlords without a resource. The landlords are now in a situation in which the loss of a single tenant is no trifle; that of a great number a calamity. The landlords have already proceeded so far in misconduct to their tenants, that they have deterred the resort of capital to their land. Can they forbear to see how much it is their interest to encourage, to induce, men of property, and men of intellect, to become their tenants? But can they hope to have such men for tenants, if they are not to be as independent and free, in their thoughts, words, and actions, as their landlords themselves? To have a servile, mean-spirited tenantry, they must have a starving, poverty-stricken tenantry, and not half a rent. Nothing is more obviously the interest of the owners of the land, than to have an opulent tenantry. But a tenantry, independent in their circumstances, will also be independent in mind, and hold in scorn a landlord who should presume to interfere with their votes.

FAR.—You have delighted me by this last exposition. I see that we have not much to fear from the expedient of the landlords forbidding us to vote.

SQ.—I do think that this objection is answered. Not only is the state of things which it implies so revolting, that no man can suppose it would be tolerated; but if it were tolerated, we thus see that the landlords would be the sufferers. Still it appears to me that the question is not decided; the remaining arguments of the reviewer render the utility of the ballot more than doubtful.

SCH.—You remember that we are still considering the ballot with regard to one part of its effects, its efficacy, or inefficacy, to protect the voter from punishment for an honest vote. If it produces ill effects of any other sort to counterbalance this effect, this is to be another inquiry. Therefore, we had better not as yet use the word utility in the discussion, as it may lead our thoughts to the result of both inquiries, when we ought to be thinking only of one.

SQ.—Agreed. The next of the reviewer's objections to the efficacy of the ballot, is, if I remember, drawn from the hourly returns made under the present system of polling. The men

who vote within a certain hour, are so many. Their names are all known, and not so many as not to afford good ground of conjecturing who has voted one way and who another.

SCH.—This is one of the modes, in which, according to the reviewer, the ballot will be defeated; and it is surprising that he should have committed so great an oversight. The hourly returns are an incident of open voting, and would be thoroughly excluded from secret voting. The balloting boxes would remain securely locked till the end of the poll, and the final return, that is the only one, would tell nothing but the numbers.

So.—The reviewer, however, urges, and I think with reason, that the man of power would possess effectual means of intimidation, even if secrecy were fully secured by the ballot.

FAR.—Indeed! how does he make that appear?

So.—He says, that he would select certain victims, inflicting a blow on one farmer which would strike terror into all the rest.

SCH.—Let us take the facts as he would have us understand them. Let us suppose the anti-reforming landlords defeated; and that each of them has made his number of victims; that they have struck all the terror they can, and that a new election arrives. In what manner will each voter reason with himself? If the election goes against my landlord, says the man, some one in ten or twenty of us will be turned out. That to me would be a great calamity. How am I to conduct myself? Go, and vote for my landlord? That will not save me; because he may still suppose that I have voted against him. Shall I make great displays of zeal for his cause? He may still suppose that these are only a colour to disguise my opposition. I have no better chance if I vote for him than against him; then why should I not vote as I please? And after all, it is ten to one, or twenty to one, if any harm comes to me.—Is not this a very natural course of reasoning? And does not the reviewer, in his zeal to make out a case, invert a known law of human nature?

So.—To what law do you allude?

SCH.—That by which we over-rate the chances of good fortune; under-rate those of evil. Instead of seeing that every man, under the operation of this law, would believe, to a degree far beyond the actual probabilities of the case, that he would not be the victim, but escape safe, he would have us believe the contrary, that every man would look upon himself as the victim: as if it were the fact that every soldier, on going into a battle, believed that he was one of the men to fall: as if the direct contrary were not perfectly ascertained; and that the bravery of the mass of all armies depends upon that common illusion. Trust me, Sir, the selection of victims would not answer the

intimidator's purpose ; and, accordingly, the reviewer, as if he saw that it would not, concludes, at last, that it would only operate with the voter as a motive to abstain from voting. But I am not much afraid of those who abstain from voting. The man who has courage to disregard the bidding of his landlord, will not be long without the courage to disregard his forbidding.

Sq.—You dispose, Sir, of the objections of the reviewer, so easily, that I cannot but think there is more in them than your mode of showing them up permits to appear ; though I do not find myself prepared to say what it is.

Sch.—I perfectly understand the state of your mind. You are under the influence of habit, which all at once is never overcome. Your habit has been to suppose that there was something strong in those objections, without seeking to know distinctly what it was : and when it comes unexpectedly to be shown to you, that there is nothing strong in them, you cannot resist the reasoning, but the habit remains, and still produces a hankering to believe, what yet you have seen ought not to be believed,

Sq.—This certainly does look like a description of what I feel.

Sch.—In considering the effects which would be produced by any device of the great proprietors to reap the benefits of intimidation under the ballot, one of them is never to be forgotten : the situation in which it would place the intimidators among their fellow-countrymen. Suppose the owners of large properties to be guilty of some signal act of oppression (it must be severe to produce its effect) upon a proportion, say a tenth, or even a twentieth of their tenants, selected by caprice, and without evidence even of the honourable act of which they are condemned ; would not the indignation of the community be excited ? Would not such men be regarded as the sworn enemies of their fellow-citizens ? Could men the object of such feelings, in such a country as this, be long suffered to hold the power of which they make so offensive a use ?

Sq.—I think, indeed, it is a state of things which would not last. But there is still an allegation more of the reviewer, to show that intimidation would exist in spite of the ballot. He says, that the ballot could only be effectual in a country where all the people were for it. If not, the people who despise secrecy would make an ostentatious parade of their mode of voting, and would thus reveal the secret of those who wish their votes to be concealed.

Sch.—I think that this is the same objection, only in a new shape, which we have had before, and have disposed of. We be-

gan with supposing that there would be people who would declare beforehand their resolution of voting in a particular way; and would say afterwards that they had so voted. But we showed how these declarations of theirs could be rendered void, incapable absolutely of giving information, and of no more effect than so many inarticulate sounds. The reviewer supposes that these declarations would be accompanied with gaudy shews; with ribbons, and colours, and marrow-bones and cleavers. But what is all this to the purpose? Is it anything but profession still? and a noisy, or glaring profession, is just as likely to be false as a quieter one.

I think we have now gone through the reviewer's budget of devices, by which the man of large property will, he thinks, in spite of the ballot, command votes by intimidation: and I think we have ascertained that they are impotent every one; that the ballot may be looked to, not only as a great security, but as a security to this purpose wanting little of perfection. The reviewer, however thinks, that not only great men, but little men, may intimidate; and it is fit we should consider what we have to apprehend from that source likewise.

Sq.—I remember what you allude to. He says, that in towns (he confines the operation of this infirmity of the ballot to towns) combinations of the people, as by political unions, may be able to operate irresistibly on the fears of electors.

Sch.—How can that be if the voting is secret? Combinations only threaten evil to those who vote against them; but when voting is secret, they do not know who votes for, or who votes against them.

Sq.—The reviewer supposes that they will judge by the result.

Sch.—Be it so. But what does the result teach them? Only that such a number voted on the one side, such a number on the other.

Sq.—But what if they are exasperated with the result, and desire to take vengeance?

Sch.—Vague anticipations of evil from a source which offers specific good, never weigh much with any reasonable men. Let us inquire what this decree of vengeance is to do. It is not to be supposed that the combinations in question act like madmen, and run a-muck at electors indiscriminately. Their vengeance will point only at those who have opposed them. But who has opposed them? That is buried in impenetrable darkness. Next it is to be supposed that these combiners are under the coercion of the law; and that even the individuals at whom their vengeance is pointed are safe from all violence: the combiners will

only divert their custom from them. But why withdraw custom from one man more than another, when you cannot know that any man rather than another has voted contrary to your wish?

Sq.—It appears then to be your opinion that the ballot would be a security against intimidation?

Sch.—If you have nothing further to advance against that conclusion. For I think we have sufficiently shown, that the causes which, according to you and the writer in the ‘*Edinburgh Review*,’ would obstruct the salutary operation of the ballot, are all of them inefficient; in fact, powerless to that mischievous end. Secrecy of voting, in the first place, which you said was not to be effected, has appeared to be the easiest thing in the world; secrecy so perfect, that not any declaration of the voter himself can by possibility disclose it. Next, the knowledge of an elector’s general opinions, we have seen, affords no effective means to the landlord. His order to stay away will assuredly be disregarded, because he has no means of punishing the breach of it; and if his vengeance after defeat strikes at a few victims, the intimidation is inadequate, and the disrepute extreme; the loss of political consequence greater than the increase of it which he aims at, and aims in vain. As for the approximation to a knowledge of the votes by the hourly returns, we take away the hourly returns; and the vengeance of clubs and combinations of the most numerous class of the people, is clearly and most indisputably precluded by the secrecy. I think, therefore, we may affirm with assurance, that the power of intimidation is taken away by the ballot, and that the independence of voters would be secured by it.

Sq.—I am obliged to confess that the resources of the intimidator, under the operation of the ballot, appear, from what you have said, to be very weak in comparison with what I have been accustomed to suppose, and with what they are given out to be by the writer in the ‘*Edinburgh Review*,’ who, I suppose, has written under that same hankering, which you ascribed to me, a hankering to believe—as he has been in the habit of believing—that the means of eluding the ballot are strong.

Sch.—I have no doubt of it. But then he is a man who has the tutelary habit in such perfection, if the same who is commonly alluded to, I mean the habit of obeying the stronger evidence when it is found to bear even upon a fostered opinion, that he will soon get the better of the hankering.

Sq.—The good effects of the ballot, that is, honest voting, may be nullified by two means, either by intimidation, or bribery: the latter we have not yet considered. But I see the writer in the ‘*Edinburgh Review*’ lays great stress upon it in

proof of his first position, that the ballot is an institution feeble, or rather impotent, to the production of good.

SCH.—He does lay stress upon it, but in the way of rhetoric rather than argument. What he says is in truth an argument, not against the ballot, but against small constituencies, which his argument proves ought not to exist. In that conclusion I agree with him; if an imperfection of this kind is found in the constituency created by the Reform Bill, it must be, and that speedily, amended. There is no doubt that you may have a constituency so small as to destroy the influence of the ballot; but it is obvious, on the slightest reflection, that all the means alleged by the reviewer of gaining anything by bribery under the ballot, confine themselves to small constituencies, and can have no operation in large ones.

First, bribing voters to stay away, is only resorted to at the end of a hard contest, when it is known that a few votes more or less will decide the question; and when it is worth a man's while to bribe highly. But take the state of things which ought to be made to exist,—a large constituency, and, from the beginning to the end, absolute ignorance of the state of the poll; who, in that case, can tell whether bribing one hundred or two hundred will be of any use? And who will throw away his money for such uncertainty? The absurdity of the supposition is enough.

The next allegation is, that the bribe may depend upon success. A sum of money may be promised to the electors if such a man is returned.

It is almost too obvious to need being remarked, that this expedient would be successful only with a small constituency. A candidate may be supposed to offer a sum which would be an object to each of two hundred or three hundred men, 10*l.* a man, perhaps; but who could offer what would be efficient among five thousand? Why 2*l.* per man would be 10,000*l.* And then, which is a sufficient answer to this allegation, how would an act of such publicity lie concealed, and go unpunished?

But, if it thus appears, as to me it does incontrovertibly, that there is nothing in the allegations which are brought to controvert the efficacy of the ballot in securing freedom of voting, we may consider the first question as decided, and may affirm that the ballot is calculated to produce all the good effects which its advocates expect from it.

Sq.—Be it so, at least for the present; for I am not prepared to dispute your conclusions. But another inquiry remains,—namely, what are the ill effects which it produces?

SCH.—True; and the writer in the ‘*Edinburgh Review*’ has very justly observed, that the ultimate decision for or against the ballot, as an institution, must turn upon the balance of its good and evil effects. The ballot implies a power on the part of the voter to protect himself by saying one thing and doing another, and the use of this power as often as necessary. In this, as far as I can perceive, is included the whole of the evil which the writer in the ‘*Edinburgh Review*’ ascribes to the ballot; for he expressly rejects the arguments which have been vented by the petty advocates, telling us that speaking out is a good thing, not speaking out is a bad thing; that speaking out is English, not speaking out is un-English; and other childishness of the like sort.

Sq.—It would have been unworthy of the writer not to see that such allegations prove nothing, that speaking out, and not speaking out, are good or evil, as the case may be. But the deterioration of the moral character produced by a habit of lying, is an evil of such magnitude, that I cannot easily form the idea of any consequent good which would be an equivalent for it.

SCH.—The balance, as you and I have already agreed, should be accurately struck. But for this purpose is it not true, that the items on both sides of the account should be accurately examined?

Sq.—To that there is no man but must assent.

SCH.—What I complain of in the mode of proceeding of those who range themselves as enemies of the ballot is, that they have always evaded this examination. And this has struck me as a proof either of their rashness in taking upon them to settle an account which they have not examined; or the poverty of thought which they brought to the decision, if they were not aware that the examination was necessary.

Sq.—But what do you mean by saying that they have evaded the examination? Does not the article in the ‘*Edinburgh Review*’ before us, present an appalling catalogue of the consequences of the mendacity produced by the ballot?

SCH.—It does; but does an appalling catalogue come up to your idea of an examined catalogue? And if it does, what do you say to the other side of the account? The balance is ascertained by comparison of the two. It is very true that the writer in the ‘*Edinburgh Review*’ began by an endeavour to show that the ballot would leave the voter as much liable as before to vote under compulsion. Had his argument to that effect been conclusive, the controversy was at an end. If the ballot could do no good, the smallest portion of evil on the other side would

turn the balance against it. But we have seen that to this end his argument totally failed. At least, though I am not perfectly sure that you rely on the new conviction which you found you could not resist, you could find nothing in reason with which to oppose it.

Sq.—That I must confess.

SCH.—It is, therefore, incumbent upon you to take into account all the good which may appear to be the consequence of voting free from compulsion.

Sq.—Suppose we do so; will not your complaint against the opposers of the ballot then be limited to this omission?

SCH.—If it were, it would still be a very heavy complaint. What sort of judges can they be deemed who leave entirely out of their consideration the evidence on one side of the case?

Sq.—When viewed in that light it does seem a serious charge.

SCH.—And this is by no means the whole of the charge which I bring against them. They behave as ill with regard to their own as their adversaries' side of the account.

Sq.—How do you mean?

SCH.—They give us rhetoric instead of computation.

Sq.—You must speak plainer.

SCH.—Observe what they do, and then say if it is not so.

Sq.—I am attentive.

SCH.—To form a just estimate of the immorality really belonging to the protective lie of the ballot, it is necessary to submit the act to a minute examination; to ascertain its properties with exactness, and determine what consequences these properties imply. Have the lie-abhorrrers done this? Instead of it, they have given us a flashy picture, every feature distorted, nothing seen distinctly, and all covered over with a thick varnish of glaring colours. The object has been, not to do any thing for the understanding, but to make up a phantom hideous enough for the imagination. This might be all very well for a debating club, for a contest of rhetoricians, a game at oratory, or for a set of partisans who want not to enlighten but mislead. Legislators whose object is truth and the public good should proceed in a different manner.

Sq.—Your complaint is too much in generals; I wish you to present the particulars of it.

SCH.—I confess it is very inconsistent in me, complaining of others for their generals, to keep to them improperly myself. But I wished, not to be tedious; and therefore that my exposition should not be more minute than the necessity of the case seemed to require. Perhaps this further development will satisfy you.

Sq.—I am desirous to hear it.

SCH.—I have already said enough, or nearly so, to determine what a man imbued truly with the spirit of legislation would do. He would examine deliberately that case of mendacity the possibility of which the ballot supposes, and he would fix its proper place in the scale of demerit; that done, he would consider and ascertain what are the ill consequences inseparable from such an act, and would fix their respective places in the same scale; the only mode of proceeding by which an accurate statement of the amount of actual evil could be given.

Sq.—I now understand more distinctly the operations you would have performed.

SCH.—Instead of this, what have our objectors done? Their business has been to select the most hideous images connected with mendacity in its worst forms, to put as many of them as possible into a great aggregate, presenting no distinct ideas to the understanding, but a horrible image to the imagination, the more horrible because obscure; like Milton's devil, which shape had none, distinguishable in member, joint, or limb; and could be called neither substance nor shadow, for each seemed either.

Sq.—I willingly allow that this is not a mode of proceeding by which legislators should lay the foundation of great measures. Whether you are right in laying the charge so heavily upon the opponents of the ballot in the legislature, I have not the particulars of their conduct so fully in my recollection as to be able to say. But that is a question the determination of which does not press. The point of importance is to ascertain, by strict investigation, what the evil accruing from this source really amounts to. This, I fear, that my friends of the no-ballot cry have left undone. But that only renders me so much the more impatient to have this great service to the cause of truth and good government rendered by you.

SCH.—Do not say rendered by me; for how can you expect from me what those great men have left in despair?—I say despair, because I cannot find any other apology so honourable to them. However, if you consent to join with me in the inquiry, we can enter upon it, and may at any rate proceed so far—possibly far enough to find the means of a certain degree of satisfaction to ourselves.

Sq.—Agreed.

SCH.—I presume we may go upon the assumption that there are lies—if, to please the men of the no-ballot cry, we must call every expression which corresponds not with the matter of fact by that opprobrious name—of all degrees of criminality, from

the very highest to the lowest; some of no criminality at all; some absolutely meritorious.

Sq.—I doubt whether I can go along with you to the full extent of this proposition. I see very well that there are degrees of criminality in lies; that a lie, for example, by a witness in a court of justice, intended to take away the reputation, life, or fortune of an innocent man, is a much more atrocious crime than to make your servant exclude your visitor by a lie at your door. But I am not willing to allow that there are any innocent lies; for I do not call any thing a lie which is not meant to deceive. And whatever is done by a lie had better surely be done without it.

Sch.—If it can. But what if it cannot? Will you venture to say that there is nothing—there can be nothing—which had better be obtained than not, if it cannot be obtained unless a lie be told for it?

Sq.—I cannot say that; because a number of cases immediately occur to me in which the attaining of certain ends by lying is accounted perfectly laudable; the stratagems of war, for example; the deceptions often usefully employed by medical men; those practised, when necessary, towards madmen; or even those by which violators of the laws are obstructed in the pursuit of their wicked designs.

Sch.—You need not limit yourself to those instances. You can produce many more. Is it not reckoned perfectly honourable in a lawyer to do everything he can for his client; to use very gross acts of deception, not only by perverting facts, by making those appear to be no facts which really are, if by false glosses, and confusing the witnesses, it is in his power to do so, but making use, without scruple, of evidence which he himself knows to be false, making out, as proved, matters of fact, which never, he knows, had existence. Observe what the law itself and the judges do. The very instruments which they proceed upon and demand as the foundation of their acts, writs, bills, pleadings, are all full of notorious and ridiculous lies. They go further than that. They make no scruple to extort lies, aggravated by the violation of an oath. Though it is perfectly certain that twelve men cannot always agree upon a particular point, they compel every jury to declare, upon oath, that they have agreed. Though the value of a property stolen may be well known to be many pounds, they direct jurymen to declare, upon their oaths, that it is of another and far inferior value. And that without any blame imputed to either party.

Sq.—That is so; but it is necessary to inquire into the meaning of all this. It is all done for the attainment of an important end.

SCH.—It professes to be so ; and it is under the belief that it is so, that it passes without condemnation. But here we come to the difficulty which you said arrested your progress. Why is any thing we do done with a lie ?

Sq.—I see to what my own admissions have drawn me. I am no longer at liberty to say that a lie should not be told for the attainment of good.

SCH.—Provided it cannot be attained without the lie ; and provided it is a good which deserves to be purchased at such a price ; for it is never to be forgotten that the rule of sincerity is of so much importance in human life, that a violation of it is always an undesirable means. And the levity with which it is set aside in modern manners is no slight imputation on the morality of our times. To such a degree is the observation of truth held unnecessary, that a great part of the business of ordinary life is performed by the violation of it, not as a necessary, but a convenient, means. There cannot be a more striking example than the established expedient for declining to admit a visitor, by telling a lie at the door. How much of what is called good manners is grounded upon simulation, both by words and deportment indicating matters of fact which have no existence ? The very terms of salutation and valediction, in particular the epistolary, are commonly gross violations of the truth. The common apology is, that they injure nobody ; and on that ground it will readily be admitted that they deserve no very severe condemnation. Yet if they do no good, they are an evil, though small, still uncompensated.

Sq.—But this doctrine of yours leads to a conclusion which I shudder to think of,—that truth, in itself, is not more estimable than falsehood, that each is valuable in proportion to the end it effects.

SCH.—Do not say *my* doctrine ; for I have done nothing more than lay before you the common practice and common sentiments of the world. I object to the terms of your conclusion, because they are equivocal.

Sq.—How equivocal ?

SCH.—I think I can satisfy you by a few words. What is it that makes truth valuable to us ?

Sq.—The good it is the cause of.

SCH.—What is it that procures approbation of certain deviations from it ?

Sq.—The good they are the cause of.

SCH.—It is thus admitted by you that, in themselves, and without regard to their effects, speaking truly and falsely are equally matters of indifference. In this sense, therefore, the conclusion you draw from the received morality is true ; but

there is another sense in which it is very far from being true. Take speaking truly and speaking falsely in conjunction with their effects, and the difference is unspeakable. The good effects of speaking truly are constant and universal; the good effects of false speaking are occasional only, and, in comparative amount, a trifle. The general rule, therefore, is, that truth is to be observed. But for the very reason for which it is to be observed,—namely, the good which it produces, it is to be abstained from when it would produce not good, but evil. Depend upon it, Sir, whenever you find a man affecting a zeal for truth beyond this mark, it is not morality which is the spring within him.

Sq.—The moral grounds which you have laid down do, indeed, seem to be incontrovertible.

Sch.—And it was of importance to lay them correctly, because all the plausibility bestowed upon the ‘no-mendacity’ part of the argument against the ballot is derived from keeping the true moral grounds of the question out of view; and in place thereof, thrusting a quantity of false morality in our faces. The question appears to me to be now brought within a very narrow compass. We have only to inquire whether the good to be obtained by the deviation from the line of truth which the ballot may occasion, can be obtained by any other means; and whether the good is so small that the deviation is too great a price to pay for it. Is this inquiry worth entering upon, or is it not?

Sq.—What is worth entering upon, if this be not? I do entreat you to proceed. I never was more deeply interested in anything.

Far.—I am so deeply interested, that my tongue has been tied. I have not had a faculty but attention alive. It is of infinite importance to men in such circumstances as mine, to feel that, in protecting themselves against their oppressor, they do nothing of which they need to be ashamed. This will keep the pride of virtue alive in their breasts.

Sch.—The first inquiry, then, we have to undertake is, whether the end to be obtained by the lie of the ballot, can be obtained without it.

Sq.—Can it, or can it not?

Sch.—There is one very obvious way—namely, that the possessors of the compulsory power should cease asking promises before, or confessions after, the vote. If they could be either prevailed upon, or compelled to abstain from this exercise of their power, the object would be gained, free voting would take place, and not a lie would be told.

Sq.—That is clear.

SCH.—It is also clear, that if they act the other way, they, and they only, are the cause of all the lying which takes place. The guilt of it, therefore, belongs to them.

Sq.—The great guilt undoubtedly belongs to them. Whether there is not a separate guilt of him who allows the lie to be extorted from him, we have yet to see. But this abstinence of the landlords, which would save the lying, is it a thing to be expected of them, or not?

SCH.—The writer in the 'Edinburgh Review' goes openly and stoutly on the ground, that they can neither be counselled nor compelled; that they have objects of their own to gain by exerting the power which their fortunes give them; that they are men governed by selfish and ungenerous purposes; and that all the blessings of good government opened to the hopes of their countrymen have no charm for their eyes, nor anything but the profits of misrule, which, by defeating the ballot, they hope still to secure. The author in the 'Edinburgh Review' is not sparing in his condemnation of this conduct. But he affirms it will take place.

Sq.—Is he, or is he not, right in that opinion?

SCH.—First, as to persuasion, I must confess I see no equivalent which can be held out to them for the profits of misrule, which they might secure by defeating the ballot; and such an equivalent, I am afraid, is the only medium of persuasion, from which any great effect could be expected.

FAR.—You must allow me to come out with an observation here, though it is hardly in point to this part of your inquiry. But I have been wondering within myself, since you began to speak of the certainty with which the no-ballot men conclude that the landlords would exert their power to secure to themselves nomination if the ballot were obtained, what they could possibly mean by calling upon us to believe that these very men would not think of securing to themselves nomination, if voting were open; as if the same thing which would be to them an object of uncontrollable desire, if voting were secret, would be to them no object of desire at all, if voting were open; and, there-upon, exhorting, or rather commanding us, not to desire the ballot till we should see whether the conduct of the landlords would render it necessary or not. They could not foresee what the landlords would do with their power when they had not the ballot to obstruct them. They foresee perfectly what they will do with it, if the ballot stands in their way. This is a mystery in their conduct, which I wish you would explain.

SCH.—It is not necessary to conclude them altogether dis-

honest in the maintenance of these contradictions; nor altogether foolish. Self-interest is a great confuser of ideas, especially in the minds of those whose habits of thinking have been formed under all the perverting influences which arise from the possession of power. Evidence is no evidence with such men, when it goes against their desires. No proposition is fit for proof, but that which they wish to be true. But though I have no equivalent for those who might hope still to secure nomination by extorting promises from persons voting secretly, I may conclude thus far with certainty—that they will not continue to extort promises, after experience has proved to them that it is of no use. Now, if the vote can be rendered perfectly secret, as I think I have proved that it can—and if, as I think I have also proved, the means either of intimidation or bribery, with the ballot, and a constituency sufficiently large, are too insignificant to be of any avail, it is not doubtful that the promises exacted by landlords will be utterly useless; that asking them will, therefore, be soon relinquished, and become utterly discreditable. The evil of lying, therefore, will be short-lived; the benefits of free voting will have no end.

Sq.—If I do not misrecollect, the writer in the ‘*Edinburgh Review*’ has anticipated this remark of yours, and refuted it.

Sch.—I thank you for reminding me of that passage in the article. We should have it before us.

Sq.—I can turn to it immediately.

Sch.—Do so, and read it.

Sq.—It is this:—

‘If the ballot had been coeval with our elective system, the case, we readily admit, would have been different. Our feelings and our habits would have been fitted to it, and have grown up in harmony with it—always supposing that it had continued to be a really secret method of voting. To ask a vote, still more to ask a question as to how a vote had been given, would no more have entered into any man’s mind, than it now does to overlook a person when he is writing, or to open letters directed to another. But we are considering what protection the ballot, now first introduced, will give to men whose habits are already formed, and cannot be changed—at least during the few years that they would bear such an experiment to be tried.’—*Edin. Rev.* No. CXII. p. 555.

Sch.—I claim this as an affirmation of my opinion. It says that, after a time, secrecy would extinguish the very thought of asking a promise or confession.

Sq.—The Reviewer only says, that if the ballot had been coeval with our elective system, it would had these effects.

Sch.—Surely you do not suspect the Reviewer of putting forth so untenable a proposition as this—that the effect of

secrecy, as part of the elective system, would be good, if it began with the system, but bad if it begin at any other time. What is there in the commencement of an elective system, which should give an effect to secrecy different from the effect it would have at any other point of its duration? No sooner is the proposition distinctly announced, than its futurity is seen. The motive to influence votes are of the same kind at the beginning as at any subsequent point of an elective system. If a man has an object to gain by forcing a vote, will he be less disposed to serve himself at the commencement, than during the currency of a voting system?

Sq.—That would certainly be too much to expect; but is there not weight in what the Reviewer says about the habits we have now acquired, and should have to overcome?

Sch.—Let us not talk of those habits vaguely and obscurely. What are the habits we have now, and should not have at the commencement of an elective system? I know but of one—that of commanding the open voter to vote as we please. As to the demanding a promise from the secret voter, that can be no habit when secret voting begins. What is the habit here which is to be overcome? The habit of commanding open votes is gone, when open voting has ceased.

Sq.—Let us not keep to a construction of the mere words of the Reviewer; let us make a liberal interpretation of his sense. I think he must be understood to mean that the habit of commanding open votes would be followed by a propensity to command secret ones.

Sch.—If we do, I think his argument will not be a strong one. Pray, how did the habit of commanding open votes begin?

Sq.—You mean me to say, I suppose—and, in truth, I see not what else I can say—that it began, because he who had the power to command, had also the will.

Sch.—That is to say, he obeyed the dictates of his interest. But why look out for any new habit, to account for a man's obeying those dictates? Is not that the master-habit? But what if voting had been secret from the beginning? Would not the same interest which made men seek a command over open voting, make them seek it also over secret?

Sq.—Undoubtedly it would.

Sch.—And is there anything in the mere point of commencement that should make the feeling of interest less cogent than afterwards?

Sq.—I do not see that there is.

Sch.—Then the desire of the man, who had the same interest

to serve, in commanding secret votes, would not be less strong to command them at the commencement of a voting system, than at any subsequent stage of it.

Sq.—I know not why it should be so.

Sch.—But, at the commencement, the Reviewer says, that desire would have died away; and, again, he says it would not die away at the subsequent stage. But why would it have died away at the first stage? Solely because ineffectual. It will be equally ineffectual at the subsequent stage. Will not the same effect proceed from the same cause? No, says the Reviewer. Why? Because men have acquired the habit of commanding open votes. What reasoning! Because men have continued to do a thing by which they promoted their interests, they will be sure to go on doing another thing, by which they do not promote their interests.

Sq.—I do not, indeed, see how the one of these propositions follows from the other.

Sch.—And if it does not, we are at liberty to conclude, that the landlords of the present day, when they find promises of no use to them, will cease exacting them as well now, as they would a thousand years ago.

Sq.—I think it is vain to contend against that conclusion.

Sch.—The last sentence of the paragraph you have read is, to me, somewhat obscure. The writer desires us to observe, that he is ‘considering what protection the ballot, now first introduced, will give to men whose habits are already formed, and cannot be changed—at least during the few years that they would bear such an experiment to be tried.’ What is it that you understand by these words?

Sq.—I understand what I think is the obvious meaning of them; that the habits men now have, are adverse to the efficacy of secret voting, and would make them abolish the practice sooner than change their habits.

Sch.—Your comment is not much clearer than your text. We must look at the words a little more closely. The men whose habits the Reviewer here speaks of are evidently the voters—the men needing protection against the vote-compellers. But it is altogether out of my power to conceive what habit they can have adverse to the efficacy of secret voting. What we desire is, that they may vote as they please. Is the Reviewer so ill read in human nature, as to imagine there can be a habit, which men cannot get over, of acting contrary to their will? Men may act contrary to what they desire, under a dread of evil. But will the Reviewer tell us that the landlords

of the present day have more power over the occupants of their land, than the landlords 'coeval with our elective system?'

Sq.—What, then, is it you conclude?

Sch.—That the Reviewer, by these words, has not strengthened his argument. He here supposes a habit adverse to the efficiency of secret voting, in the voters, when there is no such habit; and he allows that the secret voters, if voting had always been secret, would have defeated their masters at the beginning, but would be defeated by them now; that is, when their dependence upon their masters is incomparably less, and their intelligence much greater.

Sq.—The words, when thus examined, do appear to have been inconsiderately spoken.

Sch.—We may as well, since we are upon this passage, not omit the concluding clause of it—where the writer intimates that the voters would not tolerate secret voting more than a few years. What motive should the voters have to seek the abolition of secret voting?

Sq.—He doubtless alludes to the oppression which he had above supposed the voters would be liable to, under the suspicion of having voted contrary to orders.

Sch.—Which oppression we have already shown to be impracticable, and not an object of dread. These reasons are wholly without force; and, therefore, leave the conclusion clear and unembarrassed—that the ballot will accomplish its object, and enable the voter, however dependent in his circumstances, to vote as he pleases, without any terror of consequences.

Sq.—I am not able to oppose these conclusions, and must consider them with such care as will either enable me to refute them, or show me the necessity of assenting to them. But I seem to have lost the thread of our discourse, and must endeavour to resume it. We had remarked that the Reviewer made two assertions—one, that the landlords could not be persuaded; another, that they could not be prohibited, from endeavouring to command secret votes. You had allowed that they could not be persuaded; but proceeded to show that the endeavour would be ineffectual; and that, being without a motive, it would, therefore, cease: and you have shown, with, at least, much appearance of reason, that the arguments of the Reviewer against that conclusion, are without force. It remains, however, for you to show, that it is not impossible to prohibit the selfish endeavours of the landlord.

Sch.—If I have established the conclusions at which we have now arrived, I think the argument is at an end. Where would

be the utility of prohibiting men from a practice, which you know they will not use? And what better security against a practice, than the knowledge, that nobody will have any motive to it? Upon these grounds the utility of the ballot is already demonstrated. However, I think it best to go through all the pleas, and shall, therefore, invite you to suppose that the arguments we have just produced, to show that the compeller of votes will be frustrated, and that he will not long endeavour, when he finds he must always endeavour in vain, are yet unknown to us; that he has, in short, a power of evil, which, not being able to persuade him to relinquish, we desire to take from him. The question is, have we the means? The Reviewer says not. It is our business to inquire. Is not that your meaning?

Sq.—It is.

SCH.—When a man, or set of men, have a power which they make a bad use of, there are two modes of dealing with them—either to restrain them from the bad use, or to take away the power. The Reviewer has considered only the first mode of remedy, and has passed over the last, as if it did not exist. This is a great error in reasoning. What he has endeavoured is, to prove that no penalties, which could be applied by the legislature to the use made of their power by the owners of large estates in coercing secret voters by punishing those whom they might suspect of voting contrary to their wishes, would be effectual.

If this were true, it would only be an argument for the abolition of large estates. The greatest enemy in the land to the existence of large estates is this Reviewer. There is a power in the hands of those landlords which is used to evil purposes. This use must be prevented. It cannot be prevented, says the Reviewer, by restraining the power; but it can, we say, by taking away the power; and this, if the Reviewer is right, is the only remedy. *Quod erat demonstrandum*. A formula which in this place, I think, we may apply without a joke. Do you concur with me?

Sq.—Your conclusions come upon me so rapidly, that, though I have seen no flaw in the reasoning, I fear to admit them. If the Reviewer is right in affirming, that the owners of large estates can by no means be hindered from making a bad use of their power, I cannot refuse your conclusion, that it is an argument against the existence of large estates; but I recoil from the idea of a law to break up large estates.

SCH.—Not surely, if good government is placed on the one side, and large estates on the other. You do not, I imagine,

prefer for your country large estates to good government. Society was not made for large estates, but for the community. If large estates can be reconciled with the good of the community, leave them to themselves; if they cannot, the consequence is inevitable: they ought to be abolished; nor is there any use in lamenting the catastrophe, which will assuredly come, whether we like it or not. This is the ultimate and sure remedy, if there is no other to be found.

Sq.—You think the ballot will prevent the bad exercise of the power of large estates, and therefore you have no hostility to them; but as I wish every hypothesis to be sifted, let us wave for a moment your argument on this subject, and suppose that the ballot will need aid against the machinations of the landlords, do you think that the Reviewer, when he says that the evil use of the power cannot be prevented, is right?

Sch.—I think he is far from right; I think that many expedients might be employed, without going the length of dividing large estates, which would reduce the mischievous exercise of the power they confer within very narrow limits.

The expedient of direct penalty—the only one which seems to have been in the contemplation of the Reviewer—would, perhaps, be feeble, as he says, from the difficulty of bringing evidence; but, nevertheless, a penalty, and a very heavy one, ought to be applied, which might be paid, in whole or in part, for his evidence, to the voter whose promise or confession had been demanded; and by which compensation might be made to those who suffer injury by an honest vote. It is not an argument against such a law, that there would be difficulties in the execution of it. The main thing wanting would be appropriate tribunals; and their only difficulty would be in determining the value of the evidence received. Suppose a man swears that his landlord had endeavoured to suborn his vote, it would often be difficult to determine whether the landlord should be fined upon such evidence. If a man, however, so swears, and can show by probable circumstances that he has suffered injury from his landlord through suspicion of his vote, there would be no difficulty at all; and in this way the penalty would operate strongly as a safeguard to the voter.

It might be rendered open to any candidate to call upon any landlord to make oath that he had neither intimidated nor bribed. I think that public feeling would operate strongly in sanction of the purity of such an oath. It would not be a custom-house oath, or a clergyman's oath; about which the public are indifferent. An oath on this subject, known to be foul, would leave a stain behind it. Even a penalty, therefore,

would not be so useless as the Reviewer endeavours to prove ; and he entirely overlooks the more efficient checks.

Sq.—I am impatient to hear what would be more efficient checks.

SCH.—The means of coercion which a landlord possesses may be mostly summed up, I think, under three heads :—1. The power of dispossessing ; 2. The power of pressing for arrears of rent ; 3. The power of withholding indulgences. In regard to the first two, I think you will not deny that the power of oppression in the hands of the landlord may be reduced.

Sq.—Perhaps not, when you have shown how it is to be done ; at present I do not see.

SCH.—To begin with the power of dispossessing, that is limited by every lease. Why not make leases adequate to the protection of the voter ?

Sq.—I see that a lease is protection against dispossession during its currency ; but what happens when it expires ?

SCH.—Would pure voting, and all the blessings of good government consequent upon it, be in your opinion too dearly purchased, if there were no other means, by declaring all leases perpetual ?

Sq.—Certainly not ; but it would be a great infringement of property.

SCH.—It is not even liable to that objection ; it would be a measure in strict conformity with the principle on which all property rests : that no man shall use that which he calls his own in a way to injure other people. If leases cannot be subject to renewal without such injury, leases must be made perpetual.

Sq.—I know not how to combat your conclusions ; but they do not please me.

SCH.—I shall please you better, perhaps, by saying that I do not think perpetuity of leases necessary to prevent the injury which might be made to attend the renewal of them ; though I should approve the perpetuity, if I thought the injury could not otherwise be prevented.

Sq.—How then is the injury to be prevented, if the leases are to be renewed ?

SCH.—If the terms of the renewal are left to the landlord, the injury will take place. The terms, therefore, must not be left to the landlord, but committed, along with the entire question of renewal, to an appropriate tribunal, by which an equitable arrangement could easily be made.

Sq.—I think, indeed, this might be done, without any great infringement of the principle of property ; because an equitable tribunal would weigh the landlord's reasonable objection to any

man as a tenant, and would estimate correctly the rent which he ought to receive.

SCH.—I think, then, we are agreed, that this part of the landlord's power to do mischief might easily be taken away. We may, therefore, proceed to the next.

Sq.—That, I remember, is the pressing for arrears.

SCH.—It is well known that landlords have provided for themselves a power over this class of debtors such as is granted to creditors of no other class : I mean, dstraint—a power which stands on no ground of reason, and ought to be abolished. This would greatly lessen their power over a tenant suspected for his political opinions, as they could only enforce a debt through the operation of law. But still the power would be too great, and must be further abridged. The same tribunal which determines whether a lease shall be renewed, and on what terms, should have the power of determining what time a tenant in arrear should have for making payment.

Sq.—These are great restrictions on the power of using a man's property.

SCH.—That is not the question ; but whether they are greater than is necessary to prevent him from using that property in a manner injurious to others ? for that is the law under which all property is held. Besides, I do not give these as the best expedients : they are such as have suggested themselves to me at the moment ; others, which are preferable, are perhaps to be found.

Sq.—You have then shown how two of the landlord's modes of coercing a tenant may be taken away. How do you dispose of the third—that of withholding indulgences ?

SCH.—Farther than by the restrictions we have already considered, on the renewal of leases, and raising of rents, and pressing for payment of arrears, I do not see that it would be necessary to interfere. If besides secure possession, at a reasonable rent, with moderation in pressing for arrears, a landlord is beneficent in other respects to his tenants, his conduct will have its effect upon their minds—will naturally incline them to oblige him. This, however, is not coercion ; this is an influence which I have no wish to diminish.

Sq.—There is, however, one contingency still which would afford coercive power : I mean the occasional necessity for remissions of rent.

SCH.—These necessities, I think, arise from bad laws ; and I have not mentioned them, because, when the corn-laws are abolished, those fluctuations of price, which the necessities in question arise from, will be prevented. When they do exist,

the question of remission is obviously a question for the tribunals we have been speaking of; and thus, you see, that, even waving, as you wished, the conclusion we had come to, that the landlords would not persevere in asking promises or misusing their power over those tenants whose votes they suspected, the means of taking away the power of abuse are not difficult; and that, according to either supposition, the objections to the ballot are overthrown.

FAR.—You have now determined so many points, in a way, I must say, very pleasing to me, that my poor head is a little bewildered. I want to have them all at once before me, that I may survey them together, and see to what they amount.

SQ.—I will endeavour to perform this service, both for you and for myself; feeling not less than you the necessity of combining the propositions we have established, and comparing them with the questions which the controversy involves.

First, then, we considered the objections made to the efficacy of the ballot;—that it could not produce secrecy;—that it could not prevent the obtaining of votes by intimidation;—that it could not prevent the obtaining of votes by certain kinds of bribery. These objections were all shown to be futile: that the ballot could produce secrecy; that it could prevent the obtaining of votes by intimidation; and prevent the obtaining them by bribery. From this we proceeded to the next branch of objection, the evils ascribed to the ballot. We found that they might be considered as all summed up in the word lie; and entering upon the moral question, we soon perceived, not only that lies were of all degrees of criminality, from the highest to the lowest, but that there were lies even moral and obligatory; that the occasions, however, of good obtained by deviations from truth were so few, compared with those obtained by adherence to it, that the deviation was an undesirable means, and should only be admitted when the good could not otherwise be obtained. Can the good we look to from the ballot be obtained without it? was then the question. Yes, if landlords can either be persuaded, or compelled, to abstain from the impure exercise of their power. The 'Edinburgh Review' says they cannot. We then entered upon an inquiry, which has led us to an affirmative conclusion upon both branches of the inquiry: we found that landlords would soon be persuaded, if not by other people, at least by their own experience, that asking promises was a useless and discreditable labour:—we next found, that their powers of intimidation might be so effectually taken away, that a dependent would risk but little in refusing to tell in what manner he intended to vote, and that the landlord

might be made to risk a great deal by attempting to force him. It appears to me, therefore, that we have arrived at this most acceptable conclusion—that we may, by the natural course of things, have all the benefit of the ballot without the evil of the lie; and at all events, may secure that result by a very obvious and simple piece of legislation.

FAR.—This being so, the inquiry is undoubtedly at an end; for what more can we desire to have, than proof that the ballot may be made really to produce the good effects which its friends expect from it, and without any of the ill effects which are imputed to it by its opposers?

Sq.—I do not see that anything more is necessary, if our conclusions are really sound. But however strong the chain of reasoning by which we have arrived at them, and by which I have found my assent to them compelled, I still feel that my reliance on them is imperfect.

SCH.—We have already adverted to the state of mind you are in—not an unnatural one, nor of rare occurrence; your old belief is contending with your new convictions; what you want, is to be familiarized with your own convictions. A conviction becomes a practical principle only by being made familiar; and many people continue through life acting contrary to their convictions, because they have never been at home with them, and have therefore continued under the influence of some contrary notion, because an old acquaintance. This is one of the shapes in which mental weakness displays itself; stronger minds easily incorporate the new conviction, and master the bias of merely habitual belief.

Sq.—A fair warning to me.

SCH.—You need not take it so, unless you please. I would rather consider you as an example of those who master, than of those who are mastered by, the mere habit of a belief.

Sq.—But have we really then brought the inquiry to a close?

SCH.—Logically speaking, or, for the satisfaction of reason, I think we have; but, rhetorically speaking, or, for the purpose of popular persuasion, something perhaps is still wanting. The rhetorician in the 'Edinburgh Review'—a master in that commanding art—has handled, with much appearance of persuasion, a topic which we have not yet considered. Going upon his own hypothesis, he runs out in a display of consequences of a very odious character, and then concludes that the ballot, even if it produced all the good we contend for, would still be the cause of a balance of evil. It is true we have refuted his hypothesis, and his consequences, therefore, are consequences of nothing. Still I think we ought to consider them; because

there are many people to whose old habits of thinking they will prove very consonant. Even upon his own hypothesis we can show that his consequences do not hold.

Sq.—That will be an important addition to our argument.

Sch.—The Reviewer affirms, that landlords will continue to extort promises, and will receive lies; that this habit of lying will taint the character of the voters; and that this is not all; for the voters, to protect themselves from the vengeance of their landlords, must continue to speak sentiments in accordance with the promise they have made and broken; that is, to profess sentiments different from those which they hold—to pass, in short, a life of lying. A very formidable train of evils, doubtless; but a state of things the possible existence of which, even to the mind of a theorist—and here the Reviewer is a rank theorist—ought to have appeared doubtful. There have been seen states of things in which a handful of men in a nation have been compelled for ages to profess sentiments which they abhorred;—the poor Jews, for example, in Spain and Portugal, —to whom, however, on that account, nobody ever imputed moral depravity; but a state of things, in which a mere handful of men in a nation compelled a great and influential portion of the whole to continue professing sentiments which they abhorred, never yet was seen in the world, and we may safely pronounce never will.

First of all, what are we to think of a Reviewer, even of the rhetorical class, who, discussing a question, which he informs us turns upon a comparison of evils, leaves his argument lop-sided; that is, gives us an overcharged catalogue of evils on the one side, but wholly omits those on the other?

Sq.—What is it you mean? For I do not willingly admit this charge.

Sch.—Observe, that I mark it only as a charge of inadvertence, not of design. But it is a proof how easily the fairest minds are betrayed into controversial injustice, and how much it imports us all to be on our guard against it. For do you not think, that he ought to have given us a catalogue, as fairly made out, of the evils from which the ballot would deliver us, as of those which it would bring along with it? And has he done any such thing?

Sq.—I must say that he has not; and I see the necessity we are under of doing it for him.

Sch.—I cannot help remarking upon one part of the conduct of the men who signalize themselves by their zeal against the ballot—and that is, the wonderful horror they have of a lie,

when it accompanies the ballot; and the want, at least, of all sign of any horror of the lie which attends open voting.

The comparison of these two lies is, in this question, a matter of cardinal importance. If they were lies of the same degree in the scale of moral depravity, the evil, as far as they go, would be equal on both sides. If there is the greatest possible difference between them in this respect, the balance of evil rests with the more criminal of the lies.

Sq.—Explain to us what you mean by the lie on the side of open voting?

Sch.—It appears to me surprising, that it should need explanation to you, or to any body; and yet I imagine the fact is very generally overlooked. Such is the effect of evil custom, and so little is ill looked for in a practice which has long been unconsidered. You will allow that, in undertaking a trust, there is an engagement to discharge it honestly—a promise, in short, solemn and binding in proportion to the importance of the trust.

Sq.—Undoubtedly, I allow that.

Sch.—What do you think of the trust of choosing a member of parliament? Is it not important exactly in proportion to the importance of having a good parliament?

Sq.—Yes, I must certainly allow that; because a parliament can be good, only as the members of it are good.

Sch.—And I suppose you will allow that the goodness of a member depends upon two things—his having intelligence to see what is good for his country; and his having no prevailing motive to betray it.

Sq.—Certainly.

Sch.—I know you have reflected enough upon this most important of all subjects, to have determined in your own mind the reason why an oligarchy, or combination of a small number of the richest men of a community, is necessarily a bad government; and a government genuinely representative is necessarily a good government.

Sq.—I think I understand the reason of that. An oligarchy is necessarily a bad government, because its members have the means, and hence the temptation, to benefit themselves at the expense of the community. A representative government is a good government, because its members have not the means of benefiting themselves at the expense of the community, and are therefore left to the influence of the motive which all men have, to seek the good of the community of which they are a part.

SCH.—We shall also agree, I imagine, that an oligarchy does not change its nature, by a mere change of its outward forms. I mean, that whether the members of it act directly in their own persons, or by means of instruments, so long as the acts of the government are dictated by their wills, and by their interests, the case is nearly the same; bad government is necessitated.

Sq.—That I am far from denying, and as far from denying what I see you are coming to—that a House of Commons, chosen by the members of an oligarchy, is merely an oligarchy acting by its instruments, and as certainly producing bad government as if they acted in their own persons.

SCH.—Now, then, we have got pretty close to the matters of fact which we are interested in understanding. When a voter, voting openly, yields to the intimidation of his landlord, he lends his vote to the production of the oligarchical power, while his covenant with his country is, to use it exclusively for the purpose of good government. This is not a simple lie. It is a lie with the strongest circumstances of aggravation. It is a breach, not of an ordinary promise, but of a promise on which good and evil, to an incalculable extent, depend. Have you anything similar to say of the lie which may be forced upon the secret voter?

Sq.—The evil of the lie which is committed by the secret voter, is the evil of a deviation from truth—which, however, not only taints the character, but produces more or less of a tendency to disregard truth.

SCH.—The Reviewer produces two cases of evil, springing from the mendacity of the ballot; and that is the first of them. The second is, the course of mendacity, which terror of his landlord makes the voter continue, to cover the breach of his promise. The first of these is what we have first to consider. As you have now put his position—which, as far as I remember, you have done correctly—this evil consists of three particulars: the deviation from truth; the taint of the character; and the greater readiness to lie. Now the two last of these, I imagine, are one and the same thing. By tainting the character, I suppose is meant, making the character worse, that is, making it more disposed to the commission of crime. Taint, in any other moral sense, I do not understand.

Sq.—I do not suppose the Reviewer meant it in any other sense; and I agree with you, that the last two items in the enumeration must be considered the same.

SCH.—The whole charge, then, consists of the simple evil of lying, and the tendency which one lie may have to produce other lies.

Sq.—Agreed.

SCH.—But it has been found, that there is a lie on each side of the account—a lie with the open vote; and a lie with the secret vote. As far, then, as the two items of the reviewer go, the simple evil of lying, and the tendency of a lie to produce more lies, the cases are equal; and there is no reason, on this score, to dislike secret, any more than open voting. The prodigious preference given to open voting, therefore, must come from something else than reason.

Sq.—As far as this point is concerned, I grant it you.

SCH.—Such are the two lies in themselves. We have next to compare them in their circumstances. For we have already seen, that in point of morality, the difference between one lie and another is prodigious; and that the circumstances make all the difference. Thus, the lie by which a wicked son takes away the life of his father is not, in itself, a greater deviation from truth, than the lie by which a general deceives an enemy, and saves his country.

Sq.—I not only agree to this, but am satisfied, from what you have said, that it is an important article in the science of morals, too often obscured by vague and sentimental terms.

SCH.—I think, then, after what has already been explained, we may proceed, in a summary way, to our conclusion. The open voter, who votes under intimidation, having promised to his country to vote for the man he thinks best, and having broken his promise by voting for the man he thinks worst, is the cause, along with others, of establishing an oligarchy, and perpetuating all the consequences of misrule—that is, a combination of all the worst evils, both physical and moral, incident to human beings, upon all the millions who constitute the body of the community. This is not exaggeration. Though these evils may not anywhere be seen in full aggregation, and though there may be counteracting causes, in some places of more, in some places of less, efficacy, that does not alter the natural tendency of the horrid cause, nor imply any abatement of its effects, further than as other causes obstruct its operations. In the case of the open voting, therefore, we have the lie, in conjunction with all the unspeakable evils of misgovernment. In the case of the secret voting, we have the lie, in conjunction with all the unspeakable blessings of good government. I will not ask you which of these two lies is most to be deprecated. But I will ask you, and ask all the world, whence comes it we have so many personages expressing the utmost horror at the lie attended with the good consequences, but without a word to say against the lie attended with the evil consequences?

Sq.—The contrast, as thus presented, is most striking. I know not how far habit, to which we have so often had recourse for a solution of moral difficulties, will account for this strange phenomenon.

Sch.—I think it accounts for it in a great degree. But the phenomenon thus accounted for is a most remarkable exhibition of the mode in which the moral sentiments of the ruling class—I mean their habits of moral judging—become depraved under the operation of a system of government habitually pursuing the good of the few at the expense of the many.

Sq.—But still you allow, that the lie is so much of a drawback from the good of the ballot.

Sch.—I do not think that this much concerns our argument. In most deliberations for public good, we have to content ourselves with a compromise. Seldom any arrangement produces pure advantage. That is the best, which produces equal good with the least evil. But we must look a little more narrowly at the lie which produces the good, and see what the common reason of mankind has taught them to think it. By the supposition, the good is not to be obtained without it. For, if it be, the lie should be condemned. The lie of the ballot, then, does for us two things—it saves us from all the evils of bad government; and it bestows upon us all the blessings of good government. You will tell us—for you are well acquainted with this branch of science—what the moralists of all ages have determined, as to the character of a lie of this description.

Sq.—I must own, without reserve, that they have all determined it to be a moral act.

Sch.—But you will allow, that a moral act cannot taint the character—cannot create a propensity to immoral acts.

Sq.—To say so, would, I think, be a contradiction.

Sch.—The Reviewer's imputations, therefore, on the lie of the ballot are groundless. He said, it was in itself a bad act; and that it produced a bad tendency. We have seen that it is, in itself, not a bad act, and that it cannot produce a bad tendency. We might, therefore, proceed to his second list of evils—those subsequent lies with which he says the lie of the ballot must be followed up. But, as the point is of great importance, I wish to hear the grounds upon which moralists go, in determining, that when a deviation from truth is found to be the only means of warding off an evil, or obtaining a good, it loses its culpable character, and becomes a moral act.

Sq.—I need not go to any remote source for the illustration of this point, when I find an approved one at my hand. In Dr. Paley's chapter on 'Promises,' he has a section entitled,

‘*In what cases promises are not binding.*’ Among other cases, he says:—

‘Promises are not binding, where the performance is *unlawful*; as where an assassin promises his employer to despatch his rival or his enemy: a servant to betray his master: a pimp to procure a mistress: or a friend to give his assistance in a scheme of seduction. The parties in these cases are not obliged to perform what the promise requires, because they were under a *prior* obligation to the contrary. From which prior obligation, what is there to discharge them? Their promise—their own act and deed. But an obligation from which a man can discharge himself by his own act is no obligation at all. The guilt, therefore, of such promises lies in the making, not in the breaking them; and if, in the interval betwixt the promise and the performance, a man so far recovers his reflection, as to repent of his engagements, he *ought* to break through them.’

He adduces another case, and says, ‘Promises are not binding where they contradict a former promise.’ He adds, ‘because the performance is then unlawful; which resolves the case into the last.’ In the chapter on ‘Service,’ he says:—

‘A servant is not bound to obey the unlawful commands of his master—to minister, for instance, to his unlawful pleasures, or to assist him by unlawful practices in his profession: as, in smuggling, or by adulterating the article in which he deals. For the servant is bound by nothing but his own promise; and the obligation of a promise extends not to things unlawful.’

Paley has a chapter on ‘Lies.’ Here he lays it down, that ‘there are falsehoods which are not lies; that is, which are not criminal.’ He then gives an enumeration of the kinds of falsehoods which are not lies, nor criminal; and in particular mentions these:—‘Where the person to whom you speak has no right to know the truth; as, when you tell a falsehood to a madman, for his own advantage; to a robber, to conceal your property; to an assassin, to defeat or divert him from his purpose.’

SCH.—This is enough, and a few words will suffice to show the application of the doctrine of Paley to the case of the ballot. First of all, Paley says, that ‘promises are not binding where the performance is unlawful.’ Surely nothing can be more unlawful than promises to rich men to combine in bringing all the evils of misrule upon the community to which men belong. If there be wickedness in promises, this is wickedness which cannot be surpassed. Paley says next, that ‘promises are not binding where they contradict a former promise.’ The voter’s original promise to his country was, that he would vote for him whom he thought the fittest man. A subsequent promise to vote for him whom he does not think the fittest man contradicts the former as flatly as it is possible for one promise to

contradict another. Paley says, further, that 'a falsehood is not a lie, that is, not criminal, where the person to whom you speak has no right to know the truth.' And what right has the man of wealth to know how the poor man, his dependent, votes; when the law has given the poor man the privilege of secret voting, on purpose that his rich master should not know, and who, therefore, cannot take measures for knowing, without a violation of the law; a violation which ought to be punished? The illustrations of Paley import that a falsehood is not a lie, whenever it is told to defeat a person, who has intentions leading to evil, in carrying them into effect. As no intentions can lead to greater evil than those of the man who would establish oligarchy, no falsehood can be more remote from the imputation of criminality than that which defeats him in such a design.

Sq.—Paley says, the guilt of such promises lies in the making, not in the breaking them, but he does not exempt them from guilt.

Sch.—A promise, however, given under terror, can produce no habit of promising without terror. In the breach of the promise there is morality, not immorality; and in the promise there is no tendency to a habit. What becomes then of the vehement fears of the reviewer, about the evil habits which the falsehood of the ballot must engender? It is thus proved to be exempt from all such tendency?

Sq.—Still, would it not be better that the secret voter should refuse to promise?

Sch.—Yes; and I can mention to you what would be better even than refusing the promise; that it should not be asked. If there be guilt in making the promise, there must be tenfold guilt in extorting it. The promise is given by a trembling dependent, to save himself and family from some of the worst of evils. It is extorted by the master to procure to himself certain advantages, which are to be secured by bringing evils without number upon the great body of the community to which he belongs. The giving the promise is so far innocent, that it injures nobody; and it is given under a motive which few men can be expected to have the power to resist. The extorting tends to incredible evil; and arises purely from that sort of motive, which the law, under penalty of death, requires all men to resist, the desire of getting what does not belong to them. What, if we cannot hope that the extorting will not go on? What also, if we cannot hope but that men in dependence will not act like men out of dependence? What is the consequence? Only this; that we must deal with things as they are, not as

if they were what we wish them. If we cannot get good voting without a promise which is broken without injury to any body, and without the smallest tendency to produce bad habits, we must be contented to get good voting upon these terms, and be glad that they are no worse.

Sq.—I think you have so fully exposed the attempt to discredit the ballot, on account of the broken promise, that we may now proceed to the remaining allegation of the reviewer,—that the breach of promise must be followed by a life of lying.

Sch.—There is one thing, before we proceed to that topic, which I think it may be well to notice. It may be said by others, though it has not been said by the reviewer, that a lie not only creates a tendency to tell more lies, but an entire relaxation of principle, and a greater readiness to yield to every temptation to crime; as we consider that the moral character of a woman who has lost her honour is not partially but entirely gone.

Sq.—Well, what have you to reply to this objection?

Sch.—First, that it proceeds upon a very shallow view of human nature. What is it that makes a breach of chastity in the one sex be thought so complete a subversion of the moral character; and to have not even a tendency that way in the other? Whenever the objector has solved this question, he has made out an answer to himself.

Sq.—I am anxious to know how it is solved by you.

Sch.—The solution is too obvious to be missed by any body. In the one sex the breach is regarded as one thing, in the other as another thing. When a man commits a breach of chastity, he knows it will not be thought by the world, nor is it thought by himself, that he has done anything seriously wrong. The woman both herself thinks, and believes that others will think, that she has committed a great crime. This it is which degrades, which impairs the moral character—the inward thought of having violated an obligation. There can be no doubt, that in every instance in which a man violates a known obligation, he weakens his habit of obedience to obligations. But this has no operation in the case of the ballot; for, in voting as he thinks best, notwithstanding his promise, he knows that he is not violating, but fulfilling his most sacred obligation. On the other hand, the moral contamination we have spoken of would assuredly adhere to the keeping of the promise; when he would act under a sense of violating his most sacred obligations, and would thence be the better prepared for every species of crime. And now for the reviewer's life of lies.

Sq.—Ay, do satisfy me on that point; and then I shall hardly have a scruple remaining.

SCH.—The objection supposes a general opposition of sentiments between landlords and tenants. A few instances would be unimportant. It supposes that the landlords would generally receive promises from their tenants to vote for anti-reform candidates, and would vote for reformers; that the landlord would watch them afterwards, and take vengeance on those who should utter the sentiments of a reformer, as being those who had voted in opposition to his wishes.

Sq.—Yes, this is the real import of the objection.

SCH.—My answer to this is twofold: 1. That the landlords could not exercise the oppression—of the will to which the reviewer supposes them to be in full possession. 2. That the power of such oppression, if they had it, must necessarily be taken away from them; and that it might easily be so.

Sq.—If you make good these two positions, assuredly you will remove the objection.

SCH.—First, I am to show that the supposition of the oppression is absurd. We have inquired what are the landlord's means of oppression; and we have found that they are two: the power of turning tenants out of their farms; and that of pressing them for arrears of rent. But we may defy the most ingenious orator to produce a proposition which will excel in absurdity that in which it is asserted, that the landlords of a country will choose to beggar themselves, to go without income; for that must be the consequence of turning off their tenants.

Sq.—Do you not here exaggerate? The argument does not suppose all their tenants, but some only.

SCH.—As many as are necessary to the end?

Sq.—Yes, certainly.

SCH.—That is all. For where would be the use of turning off a few and leaving the rest; when the void must be filled up by men of the same stamp; and when the next time they will all vote as they did before?

Sq.—The supposition is that they will not; because the example made of a certain number will strike terror into the rest.

SCH.—This is not the least absurd part of this tissue of suppositions. Suppose a certain number of men were taken up at a venture, one in every thousand, for example, of those that pass at Charing-Cross, and were hanged for the prevention of thieving; would not such a practice be truly operative in the prevention of theft?

Sq.—This would have no effect in preventing theft; because

the thief would see that his chance of the punishment would not be increased by his thieving; but that he was just as likely to be hanged if he kept from stealing, as if he did not. It is not, however, in your style, to resort to such a medium of refutation. This is not argument. It does not even come up to rhetoric.

SCH.—What is the fault of it? Your objection, I suspect, arises not from its not being argument; but from its being an argument which strikes harder than you were prepared for. What can be more in point to prove an absurdity, than to produce a parallel case, the absurdity of which all the world must acknowledge?

Sq.—What I object to the case is, that it is not parallel.

SCH.—And I affirm that it is exactly parallel. The men are taken up at Charing-Cross without its being known whether they are thieves or not thieves. The tenants are turned out without its being known whether they have broken their promises or not; for that the secrecy of the ballot renders impossible to be known. The man who is to vote knows he runs the same chance of being punished if he keeps his promise, as if he breaks it. The two cases, therefore, I affirm again, are exactly parallel. And the dread of such punishment affords no motive whatever to regard the promise.

Sq.—You must allow this difference at least; that of the men taken up at Charing-Cross nothing is known. Of the tenants, this at least is known, that they speak such and such sentiments.

SCH.—True. But do you observe what this comes to? To this; that the men are punished for holding such and such sentiments. This is a new hypothesis; but which I am willing to examine, if you have leisure to hear me.

Sq.—I am well inclined to hear you.

SCH.—I say that this supposition is, if possible, still more absurd than the former. For I beg you to say, whether you can conceive anything more 'contrary to credibility, than that the great body of a people should be held in such terror, by a small number of the men of the same community, as to be made to profess opinions all their lives which they hold in abhorrence. The supposition implies a passiveness and servility, such as the most degraded state of our nature has never exemplified. In the present state of Europe, the attempt could not be made without the ruin of the attempters. This would be to set up a war, not between property and the want of it, but between a few great properties on the one hand, and an overwhelming superiority of property, in moderate portions, in many hands,

and all the rest of the community along with it, on the other; a war, the event of which would not be one week in deciding. Surely the circumstances involved in this supposition the reviewer cannot have considered for one moment.

Sq.—It does seem a little wild, I must confess; and will not serve as an engine to batter down the common-sense advantages of the ballot.

SCH.—To show the impossibility of it still farther, let us consider once more what are the means possessed by the men of large property of effecting so strange a coercion. We have seen that they are but two—the power of dismissing tenants, and the power of pressing them for arrears of rent. We have also seen, what is too evident not to be immediately recognized, that to realize the supposition of the Reviewer, landlords must ruin themselves. Now we may be satisfied, that if landlords cannot defeat the ballot but by ruining themselves, it is pretty safe.

Sq.—I do not question that; but show me a little more distinctly how they are to ruin themselves.

SCH.—You allow that their income depends upon their tenants; and according to the supposition of the Reviewer, they will deprive themselves of tenants.

Sq.—I do not remember where the Reviewer says so.

SCH.—That shows you have not read what he says attentively. He says they must turn out all those of their tenants who do not invariably speak oligarchical sentiments. Three-fourths, at the least, must be supposed to hold sentiments directly the reverse; and the Reviewer tells us, that men of that class cannot go on for any length of time successfully counterfeiting sentiments they do not hold. Three-fourths of them, therefore, will fall under the rule of condemnation: that implies, that three-fourths of all the land of the country are thrown out of cultivation, and that the great landlords of the country deprive themselves of three-fourths of their income. They render themselves, therefore, men of small incomes, and ruin their influence by endeavouring to make it exorbitant.

Sq.—But the supposition of the Reviewer is, that the landlords will not need to turn out all their anti-oligarchical tenants; that a few of them turned out, for the sake of example, will make all the rest vote as they are required to vote.

SCH.—And we have already proved the absurdity of that supposition, by showing its similarity to the plan of preventing theft, by hanging every thousandth man at a venture. That a man should be hindered from voting as he pleases, by fear of an evil, which it is twenty to one he will never feel, and of which

he does not lessen his chance one atom by voting according to his conscience and his wishes, is a supposition at the very summit of extravagance. To press for arrears of rent, as means of coercion, would fail for the same reasons—as might be shown by similar explanations. But as they are abundantly obvious, and I would not be tedious, we may omit them, unless you think otherwise.

Sq.—I agree with you.

SCH.—It is only necessary then to add—and this also we have already proved—that if the landlord's power of turning his tenants out, and harassing them for arrears, were not incapable of destroying the securities for good government, which we expect in the ballot, but as potent to destroy them, as the argument of the Reviewer supposes, we have another remedy. It is the easiest thing in the world to take away those powers—either by forbidding the existence of large properties, or by taking away the arbitrary power of landlords over tenants, by giving the question of the renewal and terms of leases, as well as of the exaction of arrears, to the decision of an equitable tribunal.

Sq.—These last conclusions of yours I do not find myself more able to resist than those which preceded them; and I believe, according to your doctrine of the necessity of being familiarized with the conclusions which have satisfied one's reason in order to convert them into practical principles, that I want nothing more, to be a practical friend of the ballot, than to have incorporated the reasons for it with the rest of my habitual associations.

SCH.—Having shown, as I think, effectually, that the arguments of the Reviewer, by which he undertakes to prove that the ballot is impotent for good, but potent for evil, are untenable, it seems to me that we have cause for the highest exultation.

Sq.—What is it you mean? Not mere triumph over a controversial opponent?

SCH.—Something very different; I mean the assurance of exemption to the human race from the train of evils which would have been their inevitable lot had the arguments of the Reviewer been found to be just. Admit his conclusions; and it follows, that good government is an impossibility; mankind are born to be the spoil and prey of a small number of their wretched fellow-creatures, whom their position renders of necessity the most worthless of their species.

Sq.—The train of consequences you thus adumbrate I see too faintly to be able to trace them; I therefore wish you would point them out somewhat more distinctly.

SCH.—I shall only have to repeat what I have already said, that, according to the Reviewer, a small number of rich men command a majority of the votes of poor men, and that for this there is no remedy; that the promise held out by the ballot is illusive, besides which it is accompanied with peculiar and overbalancing evils. This, I say, is an argument against the representative system, and if the argument were good, a conclusive one; for it would prove that the representative system leads necessarily to oligarchical power, the very worst of all the bad shapes of power, and enables it to act with more security under the mask of representation. Most assuredly, if a majority of the persons sent to serve in parliament must be sent by a few rich men to do as they are bidden, that is, to rule the country for their masters, it would be much better that the masters should rule it directly, without the farce of representation, and all the lying and hypocrisy which attends it. The extent of misrule is not abridged by that scheme of deceit, it is enlarged. The remarkable thing is, that the Reviewer goes on establishing this doctrine with an air of gaiety, and of something even more exulting than self-satisfaction. Yet the prospect, we should think, is such as to strike a damp into any heart which is not made of stone. Admirably was the nature of oligarchical morality understood by Plato, when he made the oligarchical advocate lay it down seriously that moral good is that which is good for the strong man, moral evil that which is not good for him. Habit so conciliates us to this doctrine, that even a man like the Reviewer, who has not an oligarchical wish in his mind, is not startled when he arrives by a train of reasoning at this monstrous conclusion.

Sq.—If it be true that his argument would prove the impossibility of good government,—and I confess I see not how it can be obtained, if not through the representative system, which his argument sets aside,—I must pronounce his apathy wonderful.

SCH.—As we contemplate the case now, setting the real circumstances before us, it would seem impossible that any thing, having the senses and feelings of a human being, should not be melted at the thought of all the miseries with which misgovernment overwhelms the mass of mankind, all fixed on them irremovably from generation to generation to the end of time. But it is not so wonderful that men who contemplate the case in another point of view; who are familiar with the delights of those on whose account these miseries are produced; whose thoughts have been accustomed to run in the same channels, to think with approbation of what brings delight to them, with disap-

probation of that which brings uneasiness; while the pains and pleasures of all the rest of mankind, still more the great causes of their pains and pleasures, are too little thought of to weigh in their minds as objects of much comparative regard, should have their sensibilities little affected by the general idea of misgovernment; and should not feel greatly shocked when brought, by a train of their own reasoning, to the terrific conclusion that such is the inevitable lot of mankind.

FAR.—This apology may do for them so far as it accounts for what I have often observed; a disposition to protect and uphold the poor, in men who were zealots for institutions that would crush them. But surely men enslaved by habits of such partial and insufficient observing and thinking, men whose conclusions may be founded, without their knowing it, upon ideas which embrace but a fraction of the subject on which they presume to decide, are little to be trusted as rulers of nations,—far unfit to judge, in the last resort, of what is good and evil for mankind. And now I think we have provided an answer to all the objections of the no-ballot men. At least I, for my part, cannot think of another.

SCH.—There is, however, yet another which goes upon a very different ground from that which the Reviewer has taken in the greater part of this article; not upon the ground of the ballot's not being efficient, but on that of its being too efficient. And it is curious enough that there are even two sets of arguers upon this single ground: one set complaining that the ballot will destroy the influence of property; the other that it will destroy the influence of poverty.

FAR.—That is an admirable ground which supports contradictory conclusions.

SCH.—I hope you have observed that something like this characterizes most of the allegations against the ballot: one set of them is pretty regularly a negation of another; and yet its adversaries seldom scruple to urge them both. The Reviewer, however, does not associate himself with those who complain that the ballot would destroy the influence of property. He would be ashamed to advocate that only influence of property which the ballot would destroy. He declares that he reprobates that influence. But he says the ballot would do great mischief by precluding the influence of poverty. This, at any rate, has an air of generosity, this is the tone of a protector.

FAR.—But how is it that the ballot can prevent the influence of poverty? Or what influence is poverty possessed of?

SCH.—I had no doubt this allegation would surprise you. And no wonder. The theory, however, of the allegation is this.

The greater portion of the people are not allowed the privilege of voting. If those who possess the privilege (people of some property) vote in secret, that other portion of the people (those of no property) have no influence on their voting. And this is an evil of which they have a right to complain.

FAR.—I doubt whether I understand this doctrine; because it looks to me like an argument not against the ballot, but for universal suffrage.

SCH.—Do you not think the Farmer sees into this subject with clearer eyes than some of his betters?

SO.—His observation makes me ruminate. I will not venture to say it is wrong.

SCH.—If you consider it a moment longer, you will find it is right. We may go to the bottom of the subject at once; which for the most part, I think, is better than scratching the surface.

FAR.—Only take me along with you.

SCH.—The sole ground and justification, in reason, of taking a part, and not the whole, of the population for the basis of a representative system is, that a part may be taken, much less than the whole, but yet sufficiently extensive to be thoroughly identified in interest with the whole. The inference is, that the general interest is thus secured. The security of the general interest is that which is sought for by good government; and in that is included the interest of the non-voting, as well as that of the voting part of the community. The share of the non-voting part in the general interest, that is, in the blessings of good government, is, by the supposition, perfectly ensured to them without their exerting any influence on the voting. By the supposition, therefore, they cannot possibly exert any influence counter to the natural tendency, but for evil; and if the ballot protects the voting part from such influence, it is a necessary instrument of good.

FAR.—The arguments of those who are against the ballot do turn out, upon your shewing, to be very poor things; they are just nothing at all.

SCH.—A mistaken argument naturally appears so, whenever it is opened up, and seen with its disguise taken off. Your suspicion that the argument against the ballot—ascribing benefit to the influence of the non-voting over the voting part of the population—was an argument in favour of universal suffrage, you see, is perfectly just. If that influence could be of any use, it must be because the voters would not make the best choice without it. But if the non-voters can induce others to make a fitter choice, it must be because they are fitter to choose themselves. This conclusion, I think, is inevitable.

Sq.—I cannot dissent from it, and therefore I do think that this argument, if it does any thing, goes to prove the superior fitness of universal suffrage.

SCH.—The argument, it is evident, goes upon the assumption, that the constituency is defective, and that it needs external influence to keep it right. But a constituency can be defective in only two ways, either by not wishing to make the best choice, or by not knowing the best. It cannot have a will not to make the best choice, but by having a sinister interest, that is, an interest opposed to the general interest. It cannot mistake the best choice, but for want of intellect. The argument, therefore, implies, either that a constituency short of the entire population cannot have the will to make a good choice of representatives, or that the entire population is fitter, in point of intellect, to make a good choice than any section of it; at least than that section which we at present take in this country.

FAR.—Certainly nothing can be more clearly proved than the inconsistency of those who maintain the goodness of our present constituency, and yet say that it needs to be kept right by the influence of those who make no part of it.

SCH.—The extreme inconsiderateness with which the arguments against the ballot show that they have been brought forward, is not one of the least remarkable things attending them. To tell us in one and the same breath that we have two sets of men in this country, one set who are the fit and proper men to make the choice of representatives, the other altogether unfit; but that the unfit men ought to have the power of influencing, that is, altering, the choice of the fit men, is a monster in the way of deduction, at which one stares with astonishment.

Sq.—You should have added, of altering *by intimidation*; for that is the necessary supposition; and that an argument should land in such an absurdity, and the arguer not perceive it, does certainly imply a want of consideration which is nearly incredible.

Note, by the Editor of the Dialogue.

This talk about the responsibility of the elector has been recently renewed, and with such bragging assurance, that the futility of it may require to be a little more minutely set forth. The 'Times' newspaper of 21st January, 1835, publishes a speech of Lord John Russell; and in its leading article remarks that Lord John had settled the question of the ballot by 'one

'neat observation,' or words nearly the same with these; and the 'neat observation' lauded by the 'Times' is, that the ballot relieves the voter from responsibility.

The heads which lend themselves easily to the delusion of names are not the small class. Responsibility here does the business of Lord John. He has got the name, and the thing, he imagines, goes along with the name, as the substance with the shadow.

Lord John would be puzzled if he were called upon to tell what he means when he talks of the responsibility of the *people*. The electors are the people, if your representative system is not a mockery. They are a portion of the people such, that in their political interests the interests of all the rest are included; that, when their interests are pursued, the interests of all the rest are pursued; when their interests are sacrificed, the interests of the rest are sacrificed. The electors, therefore, and the rest of the people, are the same in point of interest, or your pretended representative system is radically vicious, and calls for a radical reform.

What responsibility does Lord John think applicable to a man in the management of his own affairs? When Lord John appoints a housekeeper and a butler to look after his interests in the kitchen and cellar, does he need any other responsibility than his own responsibility to himself, that is, his own sense of his own interest? can there be any other security so good for his making the best choice he is capable of making?

What does he imagine is done by the people in choosing their representatives? Do they not make choice of agents to look after their interests in the business of legislation, just as Lord John chooses agents to look after his interests in the business of the kitchen? and can they need, or can there be, any other responsibility for their choice, than what Lord John is under in choosing his servants, the knowledge that a good choice will be good for them, a bad choice will be bad for them?

Lord John must not think it impertinent, after the way he has talked, if we ask him a plain question,—if he knows what is meant by responsibility? Lord John knows many people, and admires some, who are very ready in the use of the word, but know the meaning of it no more than what name it goes by in the language of Brobdignag.

What is it we do to a man when we make him responsible for any act of his? Do we not contrive some means or other of making it contrary to his interest not to perform it as we desire he should? that is, in other words, of making it his interest to do it? Responsibility means always this one thing, an interest

created to a man by external agency to do something which we wish done and which he would not have a sufficient motive to do without the operation of that agency. When he has that motive, responsibility is a word without a meaning. Where would be the use of saying a man is responsible for eating when he is hungry, for resting when he is tired? When it is made a man's interest to do so and so, whether by the hand of nature, or the hand of art, the object is gained. But where nature does the business without art, the latter is useless and absurd.

Lord John, however, and the 'Times' newspaper, scorn this mode of reasoning. They say that art ought to be added to nature in securing the good choice of representatives. And how is it they think the art is to operate?

By the supposition, nature has secured, by making it the interest of the voter, the best choice he is capable of making. But, say the two heads of Lord John and the 'Times,' we must have something more, we must have publicity, which makes the voter responsible. But this responsibility must either operate in the same direction with the voter's own previous interest, and then it is not wanted; or it must act in opposition to it, and then it is pernicious.

Having thus seen, that the responsibility of the voter, which Lord John and the 'Times' newspaper are so anxious to provide for us, would, on the most favourable supposition, be altogether useless, let us entreat them to consider (for it appears they have not yet done so) the price they would have us pay for this mock security, this insignificant instrument, this gew-gaw of theirs.

To obtain it we expose the voters to the force of all the influence which wealth possesses on poverty, that is to say, we place the votes of the great majority of the voters at the disposal of the rich, who thus become the absolute masters of the country, and constitute an oligarchical government with all its abominations.

The publicity certain persons are so eager for, produces, therefore, two responsibilities. It makes the voters responsible, they say, to the non-voters, and it makes them responsible, as we say, and they must confess, to the class of men whose riches give them a power of good or evil to a great extent over their poorer neighbours.

Who sees not that the responsibility of the poor man to the poor class of men is as nothing; his responsibility to the class of rich men is commanding? For the *name*, then, of responsibility, without a grain of the reality, operating in the right direction, these patriotic enemies of the ballot desire us to

constitute a responsibility, operating in the wrong direction, with a force which is irresistible. Such is the bargain they recommend to us, and that with a zeal which, considering the nature of the bargain, is enough to startle us.

The zeal with which they recommend such a bargain is the more remarkable, that they themselves declare and proclaim the utter worthlessness of that responsibility for which they would have us to pay so fatal a price. Is it not they who affirm with assurance, that if voting were secret, the farmers would keep away from polling at the bidding of their landlords, that this coercion would be complete? And what does that declare with the voice of a trumpet? What but this, that the motive created by the power of good or evil in the hands of the poor multitude is as nothing; the motive created by the same power in the hands of the rich few is irresistible. Can there be a stronger argument for the ballot than this? can there be a more pointed satire on the pretence that the knowledge by the people whether a man did or did not vote according to his conscience would be a security to us for honest voting? The farmer who stays away makes proclamation of the fact. He says to all those around him, the opinion you may hold of my conduct is of small importance to me compared with what I have to hope and fear at the hands of my landlord. My responsibility to you is something in name; my responsibility to him is something in terrible reality.

The tendency of all the arguments against the ballot being to bestow unlimited power on the small class of rich men in the state, or to persuade us that their hold of it cannot by any means be prevented, gives rise to serious reflections. Is it that the enemies of the ballot see not these obvious consequences? or, that seeing them, they have no aversion to them? Some of them are not like the 'Quarterly Review' men, and the other enemies of the Reform Bill. The consequences of that Bill *they* speak of with an abhorrence which amounts to frenzy, the furious language of madmen. It shows what interest they had in the consequences of the unreformed state of things. Wherever there are abuses, there are men to profit by them; and whenever profit is taken away by the reform of such abuses, there will be men to curse the reform, the men who have produced it, and all those whose train of thinking awakens the dread of more such reforms.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE our Article on the political state of the country was sent to press, the experiment which, when that Article was written, was but in an early stage of its progress, has been completed. By the result of that experiment, it is ascertained, first, that even with all the defects still inherent in our representative system, the crown and the aristocracy can no longer force upon the nation a ministry against its will; and, secondly, that the nation will not endure a conservative ministry. The time, indeed, is not come for a ministry of thorough Reformers; and the Tories, as little as the Whigs, now profess themselves thorough anti-reformers. Tories may grant reforms; and Whigs, as the people well know, will often refuse them, or pare them down into insignificance. But there is this difference between the two parties: the Whigs at least profess to *love* reform; the spirit of examination and change which is abroad is no subject of lamentation to them; they declare themselves gratified by it, and take credit to themselves for having helped to produce it. The Tories, on the contrary, look upon that spirit with avowed suspicion, most of them with absolute terror; they make no pretence of sympathizing with it; and whatever concessions they are willing to make to it are made avowedly to necessity.

By such persons the nation has now declared, in a manner not to be misunderstood, and which has carried conviction to the minds even of those to whom such a fact is least palatable, that it will not be governed. It will not have for ministers men who confess that their hearts are not in the cause of reform—who lay claim to support, not for what they will, but for what they will not, do, to forward the amendment of our institutions. Men who would govern this country from henceforward must not be men who thought our institutions perfect five years ago, and who declare that their opinions have not changed. They must either have the sincere belief, or the decent pretence of a belief, that those institutions were and are imperfect—that there are changes, which are not merely necessary evils which the people unthinkingly demand, but a good in themselves.

This is a lesson, not without its value to those who still needed it. In all other respects, the prospects of the nation appear to us, after this change, exactly as they appeared three months ago. The progress of reform appears to us certain; and we know

full well that it will be slow. Any ministry which can be formed out of the scanty and inefficient materials afforded by the present houses of parliament will leave much to be desired—much to be criticised—much to be pardoned. We do not call upon the thorough Reformers to declare enmity against them, or to seek their downfall, because their measures will be half-measures, often not more than quarter-measures; nor even because they will join with the Tories in crying down all complete reforms, and will fight the battle of half-reform with anti-reform artillery. This the thorough Reformers are prepared for, and we believe they will disregard it. But we do implore them not to implicate themselves in the responsibility of a half-reform policy. They may support a ministry, where it deserves support, with far greater effect out of office; and they will retain the inestimable advantage of being at liberty to advocate what, as members of a cabinet, they would not have it in their power to carry into effect. Let them not allow themselves to be circumvented by the time-serving doctrine, that it is imprudent to propose anything which has no chance of immediate success. All great things which have ever been accomplished in the world, since Opinion became the ruler of it, have been accomplished by attempting things which for years, or generations, or ages after the first attempt, had not the remotest chance of success. Whoever, as a statesman, acts upon any other maxim, aims not at the glory of himself exercising any influence over the fortunes of his country or of mankind, and aspires only to register decrees, in the framing of which he voluntarily declares himself unworthy to have any voice.

If the ambition of the thorough Reformers be not limited to this paltry object, they will penetrate themselves with the conviction, that it is for others to consider what can be carried through the House of Commons; but that *they* are there to stand up for what is good in itself, let who will be minister, and however small a portion of the House may go along with them.

From the ministry we neither expect nor demand all this; nor has the time yet come when so manly a course would be consistent with their remaining a ministry. But there is one thing which is not too much to require of them. We cannot expect that they will propose measures which are in advance of the House of Commons; but, unless they would be utterly contemptible, let them not, this time, confine themselves to such as they trust will be agreeable to the House of Lords. That this was the principle, the systematic principle, of Earl Grey's ministry, we have the public testimony of Lord John

Russell, in a speech to his constituents in Devonshire; and Lord Melbourne's answer to the Derby address was in the same spirit. If the new ministers act upon a similar principle; if, as often as they believe that the House of Lords would throw out a measure of improvement, they mutilate it, or refuse absolutely to introduce it, and perhaps even assail it when introduced by others; if they again place themselves as a barrier between the Lords and public odium, and, to shield the real culprits, take upon themselves the responsibility of withholding from the nation its just demands,—their administration will assuredly not last one twelvemonth. Recent events are proof more than sufficient, if proof had been wanting, that it is impossible to please the Tories and the people both. The people will not have the Tories, even on a promise to act like Whigs; and ridiculous indeed would the expectation be, that they would tolerate Whigs who should again make it their avowed principle to act like Tories.

A.

