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Logic and the Social Order

(A Commentary on A. N. Whitehead's
Essays in Science and Philosophy*)

II.

It is greatly to be regretted that the essays we are considering are undated, and most of them contain no internal evidence we can put our finger upon to fix the chronological order of their delivery. We surmise that they have been collected posthumously, and it is at least a more sufficient explanation to our mind of their alarming incongruity of argument and sentiment that an unseen editor has discerned (like the *Thinker's Digest* cited on the dust cover) that "one of the finest minds of our time" may have his uses. What a thing does is far from being the worst description of it; and what this collection does is unquestionably to place behind the "dominant social order of our epoch" what authority there may be resident in a voice which has acquired a reputation wide and deep in proportion to the relative inability of the great majority to test its basis. Symbolisms which obey the rules of ordinary algebra, like English which obeys the rules of ordinary grammar, are quite often (we have evidence of the fact) extremely distasteful to the kind of people who compose majorities in any association, and the century which has passed since Hamilton discovered quaternions has made the symbolisms which disobey the rules of ordinary algebra more fruitful technically (in mathematics) than psychologically in preparing democracies for sound mental effort.

One can hear over and over again in these pages the earth, in shovelfuls, resounding from the coffin-lid of philosophy. We hear now and then an echo of the sentiment that, as Etienne Gilson expresses it, "Philosophy always buries its undertakers"; but we cannot clearly discern any suggestion which contradicts the criticism that no protest attends the mutual interment, while "the protest of nature itself asking justice from philosophy" goes unheard. But, had the order been different, we might have had ground for hope, if not for expectation, that Whitehead's progression might end after all as a pilgrimage, and that the Life that was so near to him was not a parallel of his plane of systematised symbolisms but a reality which intersected it, and would continue to intersect it however they should be developed. We wish we could deduce from the fact that memories are consequential to experience that a passage which appears tantalisingly in an essay devoted to 'Memories,' records a later view of our world than the reflections on "The Increasing Pressure of General Unemployment," and "The Need for Economic Statesmanship," and that, in the reverse order in which they appear in the book, they were somehow linked together by the statement that "Most of the muddles of philosophy are, I think, due to using a language which is

* *Essays in Science and Philosophy*: by A. N. Whitehead, Ryder, 15/-

developed from one point of view to express a doctrine based upon entirely alien concepts." For the 'entirely alien concept' so far as Life is concerned, is the Whig concept. Here is the passage:—

"At the present time, the system of modern universities has reached its triumphant culmination. They cover all civilized lands, and the members of their faculties control knowledge and its sources. The old system also enjoyed its triumph. From the seventh to the thirteenth century, it also decisively altered the mentalities of the surrounding populations. Men could not endow monasteries or build cathedrals quickly enough. Without doubt they hoped to save their souls; but the merits of their gifts would not have been evident unless there had been a general feeling of the services to the surrounding populations performed by these religious foundations. Then, when we pass over another two centuries, and watch the men about the year fifteen hundred, we find an ominous fact. These foundations, which started with such hope and had performed such services, were in full decay. Men like Erasmus could not speak of them without an expression of contempt. Europe endured a hundred years of revolution in order to shake off the system. Men such as Warham, and Tillotson, and Tait struggled for another three centuries to maintain it in a modified form. But they too have failed. With this analogy in mind, we wonder what in a hundred years, or in two hundred years, will be the fate of the modern university system which now is triumphant in its mission of civilization. We should search to remove the seeds of decay. We cannot be more secure now than was the ecclesiastical system at the end of the twelfth century and for a century onward. And it failed.

"To my mind our danger is exactly the same as that of the older system. Unless we are careful, we shall conventionalise knowledge, our literary criticisms will suppress initiative. Our historical criticism will conventionalize our ideas of the springs of human conduct. Our scientific systems will suppress all understanding of the ways of the universe which fall outside their abstractions. Our modes of testing ability will exclude all the youth whose ways of thought lie outside our conventions of learning. In such ways the universities, with their scheme of orthodoxies, will stifle the progress of the race, unless by some fortunate stirring of humanity they are in time remodelled or swept away . . . What is happening when an epoch approaches its culmination? What is happening as it passes towards its decay? . . . 'Spring is not a season, it is a battle ground between summer and winter.'" Not so close a follower of Mr. Attlee after all! But, "our modes of testing ability . . ."? "Our conventions . . ."? Whose? And where does this come in?—"History is the drama of effort. The full understanding of it requires an insight into human toiling after its aim. In the absence of some common direction of aim adequately magnificent, there can be no history. The spectacle is then mere chaos."? And in what order do we read: "I certainly think that the universe is running down. It means that our epoch illustrates one special type of order. For example, this

absurdly limited number of three dimensions of space is a sign that you have got something characteristic of a special order. We can see the universe passing on to a triviality. All the effects to be derived from our existing type of order are passing away into trivialities. That does not mean that there are not some other types of order of which you and I have not the faintest notion, unless perchance they are to be found in our highest mentality and are unperceived by us in their true relevance to the future. The universe is laying the foundation of a new type, where our present theories of order will appear as trivial. If remembered they would be remembered or discerned in the future as trivialities, gradually fading into nothingness. This is the only possible doctrine of a universe driving on to novelty."? We wonder whether, had Whitehead had the privilege of the blue pencil, he might not have thought of that as we do, with a later sentence in his mind, as it is in ours: ". . . we have to make our pupils feel by an acquired instinct what it means to be logical, and to know a precise idea when we see it; or, rather what unfortunately is more often wanted, to know an unprecise idea when they see it." In view of Whitehead's very definite (one might say dogmatic) views about practical life, including the practical life of "controlled" communities, it seems to us necessary to ask whether the expression 'doctrine of a universe' stood, in his mind, for a precise or for an unprecise idea—"consider the little word *of*. There is nothing about it alarmingly metaphysical. My small dictionary gives as its first meaning *Associated or connected with*. I suggest to you . . ."

"This is the only possible . . ."—"This notion of human limitations requires guarding. There is an implicit philosophic tradition that there are set limitations for human experience, to be discovered in a blue-print preserved in some Institute of Technology. In the long ancestry of humans, from oysters to apes [*sic*] and from apes to modern man, we can discern no trace of such set limitation. Nor can I discern any reason, apart from dogmatic assumption, why any factor in the universe should not be manifest in some flash of human consciousness. If the experience be unusual, verbalization may be for us impossible. We are then deprived of our chief instrument of recall, comparison, and communication. Nevertheless, we have no ground to limit our capacity for experience by our existing technology of expression." Again for a practical reason, we must quote: "The self-confidence of learned people is the comic tragedy of civilisation." And again: "The besetting sin of philosophers is that, being merely men, they endeavour to survey the universe from the standpoint of gods. There is a pretence at adequate clarity of fundamental ideas. We can never disengage our measure of clarity from a pragmatic sufficiency within occasions of ill-defined limitations. Clarity always means 'clear enough.'" ". . . the final outlook of Philosophic thought cannot be based upon the exact statements which form the basis of special sciences. The exactness is a fake." "Every scientific proposition which the great scientists of the mid-nineteenth century entertained, was erroneous in the sense in which it was then construed. Their doctrine of space was wrong: their doctrine of matter was wrong: their doctrines of evidence were wrong . . ."

The conclusion of the paragraph from which these last words are taken introduces us to a more positive assertion. "The abiding interest of Plato's Dialogues does not lie in their enunciation of abstract doctrines. They are suffused with the implicit suggestion of the concrete unity of ex-

perience, whereby every abstract topic obtains its interest. "All characteristics peculiar to actualities are modes of emphasis whereby finitude vivifies the infinite . . ."

"There is not a sentence," says Whitehead, "which adequately states its own meaning." We concur; it is when we come to read his observations concerning the dangerous world in which we live that we yearn for a closer observance of the warning, and still peer to see even darkly what it is that is being eliminated, and why it is being eliminated. Whitehead is looking for "necessary ways of developing *thought*," and his abandonment of his search to apply the ways he has already discovered, seems, despite the impeccable sentiments which accompany it, to be rather perfunctory. "I think the universe has a side which is mental and permanent. This side is that prime conceptual drive which I call the primordial nature of God. It is Alexander's *nisus* conceived as actual. On the other hand, this permanent actuality passes into and is immanent in the transient side." "A nation won't get wisdom except by the love of it. And it is here that the modern democratic demand for a due share in the opportunities of life is full of hope and of anxiety [our emphasis]. Of course, the demand is of mixed origin, for it is human. It gains its moral energy from the ultimate rights of the moral and intellectual natures of man, his right to his own creative actions directed by his own wisdom—a right based on an insatiable craving for what gives worth to existence. This cry for freedom seems at times to sleep for ages, like the fire in a volcano. When it wakes, the day of God's judgment has arrived, and the worth of human societies is being weighed in His scales. Those societies perish which exhibit mainly selfishness and cowardice. Courage and hope are your best armour in a revolution—and, above all, mutual sympathy." "In any large city, almost everyone is an employee, employing his working hours in exact ways predetermined by others. Even his manners may be prescribed. So far as sheer individual freedom is concerned, there was more diffused freedom in the City of London in the year 1633, when Charles the First was King, than there is to-day in any industrial city in the world . . . My point is that the change of scale in modern industry has made nearly the whole of previous literature on the topic irrelevant, and indeed mischievous . . . perplexing . . . But above all, and beyond all, it involves direct observation and practical experience. Unless the twentieth century can produce a whole body of reasoned literature elucidating the many aspects of this great topic, it will go hard with the civilization that we love."

We suppose that is what Whitehead would call 'clear enough.'

Let us turn to one or two further points of diagnosis, and the remedy.

Firstly the remedy—"My suggestion in its crudest, and most aggressive form is that half of the teaching of modern history should be handed over to the mathematicians. The phrase 'handed over' is not quite accurate; for the half which I mean is the half which, although the true foundation of all knowledge of nations, is hardly taught. Our classical colleagues, excellent fellows as they are, have their limitations, and among them is this one, that they are not very fitted by their mental equipment to appreciate quantitative estimates of the forces which are moulding modern society. But without such estimates modern history as it unfolds itself [*sic*] before us is a meaningless tangle. Now among other peculiarities of the nineteenth century is this one, that by

initiating the systematic collection of statistics it has made the quantitative study of social forces possible. There are in our hands [our hands] statistics of...of...of...of...(twelve 'ofs'). Well, well, well! "This method of conducting the elementary study of mathematical analysis appears to me to be eminently practical, and at every stage to carry with it its own justification." We do not demur—at any stage. "Of course, mass production underlies the modern standards of life. What we require is a close interweaving of the two forms of activity, the production of the general material and the perfection of the individual thing . . . The great producers and the great distributing corporations should include in their activities the work of craftsmen and designers . . ." Yes, Mr. Tomlinson is seeing to that, we believe. "What is defective is not distribution, but the variety of opportunity for useful activity. Thus the interweaving of mass production with craftsmanship should be the supreme object of statesmanship."

Yes, truly, "the self-confidence of learned people is the comic [why comic?] tragedy of civilization."

Eliminate a factor. It doesn't matter what factor. Ultimately all eliminated factors and every eliminated factor is God. The point about the Whig is that he eliminates the recognition of elimination and of the eliminator, who is himself.

Whitehead's argument, as it affects politics, is the familiar Whig argument: everything is wrong, and getting worse: let's have more of everything we have got. What we haven't got isn't: it's been eliminated. He himself has effected the elimination, and is determined to keep it up. It seems almost a genetic phenomenon; something to do with gender. The symbol of creativeness is merely a 'function' which may be discarded by appropriate manipulation: by the appropriate technical procedure. The Whig universe is running down. The Whig feeds entropy into his symbolism machine, and his symbolism machine delivers back entropy in a state of ever greater refinement. Entropy is eliminated, though without ectropy there would have been no height from which to decline. We grope for a word to cover the phenomenon. The word which first comes to mind is the word 'feminine.' It seems curiously adequate: what the Whig has done, is doing and should cease to do, if we are to be delivered, is to present and to persevere, if he can a vegetative universe: a universe which is feminine in gender—but sterile. What he has unconsciously eliminated (though, perhaps not so unconsciously) is something akin to masculine principle. The elimination is a fake; but its effects have all the actuality and definiteness of sterilization. The 'other point of view' just isn't. "The proper phrase," says Whitehead, "is 'technological unemployment.' But . . ." But you just go on making work and controlling workers—and others. There "is nothing" to do about it!—T.J.

THE SOIL OF THE SECRET BALLOT

(continued from page 7.)

succeeding, in some degree, to the now-silent place of the decaying Sibthorp. He is an 'independent member,' that is, no one knows how he'll vote until they see him in the lobby. He occasionally joins the standard of the Earl of Derby; but he has no particular rule in politics; beyond that of balancing the Peel interest by always plumping against his brother. He is a Liberal Conservative: and he understands that to mean—voting to-day with the Whigs, and to-morrow with the Tories: occasionally digressing in favour

of Radicalism, as on Tuesday. He was in favour of the Ballot; and described the Ballot as preferable to open voting, because it is 'a free and easy, and effective system': but the first two adjectives sufficiently explained his hopes:—he would have the country 'free,' but only on condition that it's 'easy' as well. Sir Robert represents the free-and-easy interests; that is the style of thought and talk. He's the free-and-easiest orator in Parliament; he stands with one hand in his pocket, and he twirls a cane in the other,—sometimes varying the gesture by twirling his moustache. He gives solemn advice to the country gentlemen—a sagacity he derives, perhaps, from studying his father's career—to give way on the Ballot now, gracefully, because, gracefully or not, they would be certain to have it in a few years. He said the Ballot was the Cape Horn of politics—and that was taken as a *mot*, and Sir Robert grinned heartily with the grinning House; and he particularly advised Sir James Graham not to make such a fuss about this, as, having swallowed every other political nostrum, surely he needn't stick at this. That is Sir Robert's fun; and he fancies that when the House roars at his brusqueries it is laughing with him, and in no degree at him, which is surely a mistake. He was very funny on Lord John—some people thought it was sheer impudence—but the House didn't stop to inquire if it was respectful, and laughed unreservedly; a noticeable sign that Lord John is going down.

But Sir Robert only led himself out of the country party into the ballot lobby. Lord John following, but not noticing the erratic baronet, had put his elbows into his hands, trotted out Sidney from that eternal scaffold, mentioned Sir John Eliot (he has taken to that patriot since he married into the Mintos), invoked vigour, candour, and openness in public affairs and public trusts, and suggesting, in reply to Mr. Bright, that the Massachusetts convention had not yet made up its mind about secret voting, very solemnly concluded—"Well, then, let us pause." (Loud cheers from the Whigs.) And then Lord John sat down. That is the great Whig policy. Conventions are being held in Massachusetts, while corruption is eating into the heart of England; and Lord John adjures the House of Commons 'to pause.' And the House paused accordingly; and the character of the division would appear to be this—because Massachusetts is not decided, England suspends her opinion about the question of open as against secret voting. Mr. Bright is responsible for putting the idea into Lord John's head. . . ."

"Corruption is eating into the heart of England": Quite so; but neither the House of Commons nor the journalism of Mr. Whitty, nor the *Leader* newspaper for which he wrote; neither the Opposition in Parliament nor the 'enlightened' opposition outside Parliament stayed the progress of the corruption. Rather everything, every action and every expression of opinion contributed as though by a fatality concealed within it, to advance the corruption. Such is, apparently, the inevitable effect of all activities which are not inherently *Right*. The philosophers as well as the men of the world tell us that to be *right*, totally right, is to participate in a state of perfection beyond terrestrial attainment. Only the Religious, and to particularise, the Religious of the Christian persuasion, dissent. The Christian doctrine of the Remission of Sins is the effectual point of dissent. At this point, in *imperfection*, Repentance opens the door to the Kingdom of Heaven. There is a mode of alliance with Right practicable to man: ultimately that is the justification of Social Credit.

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The Australian Banking Case and the Constitution

In its issue of August 28, *The Australian Social Crediter*, in our opinion correctly, demurs from the opinion, "too readily assumed," that "the judgments of the High Court in the actions brought by several parties against the Commonwealth Government in the matter of the Banking Act, 1947, constitute a defeat of the Government. It seems very doubtful" says the journal, "whether this is so. As Mr. Chifley has observed, the Court has up-held the Government on some of the major points at issue; and one or more of these might at a later date and without any reference to the present Act, enable this or another Government to break through the barrier of the Constitution. That, we believe, is the real objective of the centralisers behind the various Governments.

"At the present time, the written Constitution places a limit on the powers of the Federal Government, in the same way as the rules governing a game place a limit on the actions of the players. Essentially, the Government want to be in the position, not of playing without rules, but of making the rules to suit themselves as they go along. They do not say 'Let us do without a Constitution': they say 'Let us amend the Constitution so as to make the Federal Parliament supreme.' And the way they hope to do this is by including in the Constitution some power which can be made to cover any desired course of action. Insofar as attempts to secure direct amendments have failed, they have had recourse to 'interpretations' of the powers they indubitably possess. The prototype is, of course, the Defence power; and the problem is to find another which does not depend on the 'accident' of war.

"As at present constituted, banking is the nervous system of economics. The Social Credit position is that it ought not to be so; but the Socialist position is to take every advantage of the fact. The reason is the reason disclosed by Major Douglas: '*Once you have surrendered to materialism, it is quite true that economics precede politics, and dominate it . . . if you can control economics, you can keep the business of getting a living the dominant factor of life, and so keep your control of politics—just that long, and no longer.*'

"'Full Employment' is full enslavement; but the Constitution, which permits alternatives, is a barrier. And if Mr. Chifley can't get past it, he may prepare the way for Mr. Menzies."

Education by 'The State'

"Were the duty of enforcing universal education once admitted there would be an end to the difficulties about what the State should teach, and how it should teach, which convert the subject into a mere battlefield for sects and parties, causing the time and labour which should have been spent

in educating to be wasted in quarrelling about education. If the government would make up its mind to require for every child a good education, it might save itself the trouble of providing one. It might leave to parents to obtain the education where and how they pleased, and content itself with helping to pay the school fees of the poorer classes of children, and defraying the entire school expenses of those who have no one else to pay for them. The objections which are urged with reason against State education do not apply to the enforcement of education by the State, but to the State's taking upon itself to direct that education; which is a totally different thing. That the whole or any part of the education of the people should be in State hands, I go as far as anyone in deprecating. All that has been said of the importance of individuality of character, and diversity in opinions and modes of conduct, involves, as of the same unspeakable importance, diversity of education. A general state of education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another; and as the mould in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power in government, whether this be a monarch, a priesthood, an aristocracy, or the majority of the existing generation; in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body. An education established and controlled by the State should only exist, if it exists at all, as one among many competing experiments, carried on for the purpose of example and stimulus, to keep the others up to a certain standard of excellence. Unless, indeed, when society in general is in so backward a state that it could not or would not provide for itself any proper institutions of education unless the government undertook the task; then, indeed, the government may, as the less of two great evils, take upon itself the business of schools and universities, as it may that of joint stock companies, when private enterprise, in a shape fitted for undertaking great works of industry does not exist in the country. But in general, if the country contains a sufficient number of persons qualified to provide education under government auspices, the same persons would be able and willing to give an equally good education on the voluntary principle, under the assurance of remuneration afforded by a law rendering education compulsory, combined with State aid to those unable to defray the expense."—John Stuart Mill (1859).

University M.P.'s

According to a London newspaper, one of Cambridge's two M.P.'s will be out of the fight at the next election. They are Mr. Wilson Harris, Independent M.P. and editor of *The Spectator*. "I might consider standing again if a Conservative Government restores the University franchise," he says, "otherwise no."

The other Cambridge University member, Mr. Kenneth Pickthorn, will almost certainly be a candidate. Several constituencies are now considering him.

Sir Alan Herbert will not stand. He is one of Oxford's two Independent members. The other, Sir Arthur Salter, is in America, where his American wife has an estate.

Mr. Henry Strauss, Conservative M.P. for the Combined English Universities, has been unlucky. He was "displaced" from Norwich in the 1945 election, and reached the House as a university member. He goes back to fight South Norwich.

[PUBLICATION OF *From Week to Week* WILL BE RESUMED IN OUR ISSUE FOR SEPTEMBER 25.]

The Soil of the Secret Ballot

The following, from Edward Michael Whitty's *St. Stephen's in the Fifties*, continues the account by a contemporary observer of the atmosphere in which the Ballot Act was passed:—

ELECTORAL CORRUPTION

“... there is an indignant eagerness, because so many members are being unseated and so much corruption eliminated, to take for granted that the rottenness is universal, and that the whole imperial constituency is given to drink and imbecility in the rumpling presence of promises of £5 to the hand of Matthew Marshall. Whether so comprehensive a deduction from the proceedings of the committees, even as illustrated in Mr. Cobden's way, by reference to Dod,—and by recalling such a correspondence as that of the Marquis of Londonderry about his treasure in the County Down—is not somewhat unsound, may be a question; but how the gentlemen and the journals who believe all this of their race and land can find it in their faces to give themselves airs—for instance, in the criticism on Franklin Pierce's [American President] grand appeal to the States, and can go on smirking in the jog-trot faith that we are heading civilisation, and that the French are contemptible, may be allowed to bewilder the brains of persons who have a weakness for facing all sorts of facts, and first of all those under our noses, such as in the committee rooms Cloacæ. How, indeed, in such circumstances Mr. Spooner can think it worth while to devote himself to stopping the way of the people to Sydenham on Sundays, instead of arranging for a rush to Australia out of the way of the sulphuric visitation which lesser crimes called upon as good cities as London, is a question which only those are capable of answering who can appreciate the psychological phenomenon evidenced in men insisting on sanding sugar before calling to prayers, and remaining innocent of any consciousness of inconsistency. You see Mr. Spooner, who is a thorough man of business, of keen brains, and great tact, sitting in his committee-room, Group O, and getting from witnesses evidence which only the agent behind knows to be perjury, but which the impressionable Birmingham banker is convinced does demonstrate that the smaller shopkeeper and disengaged freeman class in Great Britain are rogues; and you would think that a knowledge of that fact would have some effect on Mr. Spooner's views of public life. But no; you watch him pass jauntily along the lobbies, looking good-naturedly and happily at all mankind in his way; and when you get into the gallery you are just in time to see a yellow-faced little man rising, who, you subsequently find, is this very same chairman of Group O, expostulating with the Senate upon their indecent tendency to allow the Briton that never shall be a slave to go to Norwood on a particular day called Sunday; or still more vehemently entreating the patrons of Mr. Coppock, [an electioneering agent] at present, the Government, not to unchristianise the Legislature and the age by admitting inside the bar (he is always outside—so it's a question of three feet) a large-nosed, fat-eyed, unenergetic man, who is a Hebrew, but who also has the best French, and therefore Christian cook in London. When you read or hear such confessions about the voting classes in England as were made in the course of the Bridgenorth and Blackburne debates on Tuesday, you would expect, as a matter of course, to have a resolution in favour of national mourn-

ing, or national prayers, or of the Speaker taking to sackcloth and ashes, of stopping all legislation and all action until something is done to purify the land; something which should be to the immorality of the nation what the great London Tunnel sewers will be to the filth of London—very deep draining—so as to clear away out to the Pacific that electoral sediment, from the bribed to the briber—the Brown and the Coppock—in which so many English gentlemen who despise the French nation have soiled their fingers. You would think—to continue your wonderment—that there would be no more talk of a new Reform Bill, but rather that there would be a universal demand for a return of the era before 1832 when there were pocket boroughs indeed, but which may be said to be to the Canterbury (moral Canterbury, which ruined G. S. Smythe because he fought a duel!) and the Norwiches, what a monopolised *lorette* is to a wholly lost and unhappy woman. You would think Lord John would go on his knees and ask pardon of Sir Robert Inglis and Mr. Herries old Reform Bill opponents for having led the nation into such disgrace. You would think Sir William Molesworth would recant faith in humanity, and that Mr. Roebuck would rise from his sick-bed to urge on the Senate the expediency of a monarchy, and such a *coup d'état* as would make the Earl of Cardigan first minister with Prince Albert at the Mint. You would think anything but what is done—much weeping at the frailty of an enlightened nation, but grant of the new writ nevertheless—and the orders of the day. You hope it is all right; only you are glad Lord Brougham had the courage to present that petition to the Peers from Robert Owen; and you are sure that as the committees prove the established system to be a dead failure, Robert Owen's might be worth the trial. This you are satisfied about, that while Coppock is so heartily greeted in the lobby, Mr. Spooner's mind may be more easy about the admission of one not astute Jew among 654 New Testament devotees.

“But, however determined not to act in these corruption matters, consistently with words and facts—however weakly shirking the laying down of broad principles, legislation according to which would be the Reform Bill, by revolutionising the whole electoral system—it is still evident that the shadows of the committees are over the House, that there is sorrow and regret, and that if Lord John had the boldness and the honour to become worthy of the occasion, he would carry all before him. It would not do for the irresponsible but the conscientious to propose a resolution, such as is wanted, such as the people (that is pure and honest) would rejoice at; and, accordingly, the orders of the day are read, and the thoughtless and the careless, and the cynical are allowed to carry on ‘business’—which *must* be attended to whatever the disgust of Providence at national sin. Hence a weary night of an Irish debate (an Irish row, as Lord Clarendon said, in honour of St. Patrick's Day), which was on a question whether Celtic savages or Saxon ruffians were most in the wrong in a reciprocal massacre; about which no one, out of the miserable circle of Irish partisan barristers, with Four Courts' powers of misleading and mispronunciation, could possibly care one curse; but which, in the subdued tone that has come over the conscious House, was permitted patiently to whirl and worry through a long night; the only result being a demonstration that the Irish bar, of whom the best specimens oratorised on

Thursday, is a confederation not more intellectual, and less grammatical, than the greasy class who sustain the fame of British mind and eloquence under the influence of turpentine and water, at the Temple Forum, Fleet Street. Hence, too, the very complex debate on exhausted topics, treated by used-up speakers, last night; and you could detect in the languor of the talking and still more in the languor of the hearing—a climax of that desultory weariness and want of earnestness about everything which set in with the committees—profound gratification that after the division there was to come the Easter holidays—a respite from Spooner, Pakington, and the striking of new committees, and virtuous Chairmen appearing at the bar with a 'Tekel Upharsim,' to be put on the journals, for the benefit of sitting and perspiring members. For very many years, since I took to a taste for studying contemporary history, as it is manufactured in Westminster, I have always been in the habit of asking why there were holidays at Easter; and nobody could ever satisfy me that the custom had a justification. To eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, or plum-pudding on the 25th of December because you always did so, and your fathers before you, is to make yourself ill with good and sound reasons; but if Parliament has no better reason for adjourning for a week the Friday but one before Easter Sunday Human nature could not have gone on with the new committees without a pause.

THE BALLOT

" We heard from Mr. Cobden and Mr. Duncombe on Tuesday two astonishingly novel arguments, for 'people's party' men, for the Ballot and Equal Electoral Districts. Adopt the Ballot, says one Radical, and then there will be no bribery—the purchaser would not be safe of his bargain. Says Mr. Duncombe, who deals with his own constitution as he would with the British—he is perpetually reforming it—so that now at the alleged age of 100 he looks as lively as he did when he first spited the aristocracy by turning people's evidence against them—says the member for Finsbury—Let us have constituencies in which there shall not be less than 20,000 voters, and then who'll be able to afford corruption? What faith in an enlightened nation does this show! According to the people's advocates, the people are so inherently corrupt that they cannot be trusted; and yet Mr. Cobden consents to and Mr. Duncombe insists on, a cry for an extension of the suffrage. Argument: the few to whom we give the suffrage are such scamps that we must multiply them: we cannot prevent the people being bribable—let us make the people too dear. Is not that naïve in a Liberal? This is the way to encourage and sustain Lord John in next year's problematical Reform Bill—as if Mr. Disraeli, who retains some individuality, though deposed from formal leadership in favour of Pakington, were not warily watching all these hysterical 'asides,' hardly intended for the public, and arranging the capital he will make of them in proper time; when a policy having been discovered, there will be demand for a man to be again elected to tinkle the bells on the road to the Treasury benches.

"Another hearable debate was on Tuesday, on the Ballot, when other Lord Naases used a similar argument—that it is un-English to get at the truth. Lord Naas blamed Mr. Keogh because he had betrayed confidential communications in his own defence: and Mr. Sidney Herbert blamed Mr. Berkeley, because it was suggested that secret voting would get at the true opinions of the people of England; and, if

an un-English system, would at least be preferable to the too British system of selling conscience for a few shillings and a day's drunkenness—the great characteristic of the existing electoral system, and of which the upholders of our wonderful Constitution are justly jealous. Mr. Berkeley made a most amusing speech. True, the question, as he put it, was how we can remedy general national corruption; but he had to be heard, to keep an audience a little after dinner time, and this is the British and not a Roman Senate, and he was obliged to be amusing. It is no use, he, an old and clubbable member of the club [*] knows, adopting what Mr. Cuffy called the 'integrity dodge' in politics. Virtuous indignation is not his forte, and so he treated the question of national corruption in a light, pleasant style, which did not drive away the easy moralists—the members—until he had done, when, of course, they rushed from Sir John Shelley, who doesn't quite understand the club yet, and accordingly talks at his constituents—who must be delighted to see their member so active in the House, and who are of course honoured by his reputation as a first-class bore. Perhaps, as the country is to settle the question of corruption, sterner talk would, in the end, answer better than Mr. Berkeley's jovial and careless flippancy; but as the purists seem to like democrats born among the aristocracy, and are no doubt convinced that Henry Berkeley holds exactly that moral position which enables him with effect to teach the people how to live, it was his business to show his wit—which he did—and his wit is very good—*il faut être homme blasé avant d'être homme politique*—and as Mr. Henry Berkeley, who is familiar with the tone of the governing classes, must have a high opinion of the democracy which worships those classes—sneers at the House of Lords come well from a son and brother and uncle to earls—it is easily conceivable that his bluff cynicism tells immensely on the House in June, when people are beginning to be weary of the Budget. It was hardly a good debate on the Ballot, for it was too argumentative, when all that was wanted was piquant illustration; and, on the whole, Mr. Berkeley's was the best and most serviceable speech. He was happy in the accident which left reply to no more important personages than the Secretary-at-War and the Lord Advocate (of the Lord knows what). Mr. Sidney Herbert is an elegantly feeble statesman, who reproduces the commonplaces of conversation and orthodox books with careful memory and in a nice voice; and having an immense property, and being a contingent Peer, his teasing but compact twaddle is invariably listened to with deference—nay, on Tuesday, when his plagiarisms of Sidney Smith on Ballot were so adroit as to be literal—with great 'cheers and laughter.' But to the enlightened strangers, who were not bound to be well bred towards a statesman with £30,000 a year, it was painful hearing his speech, for probably more impertinent nonsense was never talked—it should be understood that Sidney Herbert quoted Sydney Smith only at dreary intervals, when the quotations specked, so as to show the Bœotian profundity of the parentheses. The greater part of an hour he devoted to showing that it was a delusion to suppose that the Ballot would really be a secret system; his argument was, that every man's vote would be known. Mr. Cobden was in a hurry and nervous, and was intense on his own crotchets, or he might have annihilated the whole speech by the simple retort—if so, if the Ballot would make no practical change, why not let us have it? The other Min-

* The House of Commons.

isterial speech was, in a different way, more absurd. Out of respect to Lord John, no doubt a 'leader,' and opposed to the Ballot, only two Ministers who agreed with him spoke; there appeared a tacit understanding that the Radicals of the Coalition were to be discreet and quiet. Sir William Molesworth accordingly going to sleep, and snoring audibly through Mr. Herbert's wisdom; Mr. Bernal Osborne sitting out the debate as spectator on the back benches of the Peers' gallery, where he was able to enjoy private cachinnation when Sir Robert Peel made the amicable reference to the "eccentric member for Middlesex;" Mr. Bethell imitating Sir William as well as he could, but being active minded, not doing it very well; Sir Alexander Cockburn taking refuge in the smoking-room, chatting with congenial Mr. Keogh, both of them turning up in time to record their opinions practically that Lord John Russel had talked nonsense. But the Lord Advocate! He was evidently put up, with faith in his powers, by Lord John. He rose with Sir Robert Peel; but the House would have the baronet and not the lawyer, and he had to wait; and then he got a hearing, and straightway proceeded to pour out fluent futilities in an abominable forensic way—further developing his incapacity for House of Commons position, in not only not adopting House of Commons style, but in making a set speech, which might have been made last year, ten years ago, or next year—which had no reference to the current debate, contained no reply to Peel, and was utterly disconnected from the events of the year and the arguments of the day. Lord John hear, heard; Mr. Gladstone, just come in in very full dress from an evening party, did so too; Mr. Gladstone is conscientious, and, having been absent all night, thought it was his business, as an 'in,' to cheer whoever might happen to be up: but the rhetorical Mr. Moncrieff was, nevertheless, a conspicuous failure, and had foolishly displayed to a full House his third-rate nature, which, well concealed, might have been talked of as second-rate—the which would be reputation for a Lord Advocate. His argument was the stale one, the only novelty being an unparalleled loud bow-wow delivery of it, that a voter for a member of Parliament exercised a public trust akin to that of the member when he comes to vote for men and measures. Lord John Russell repeated this impudent sophistry; and Lord John, and the Lord Advocate, and the Secretary at War, spoke as if it were assumed that the question was a mere abstract question; as if, at this moment, the public trust of a vote was exercised conscientiously,—as if the people was universally an honest people,—and as if it was taken for granted by everybody that the country was a remarkably conscientious and free country, and national ruin would come if men were to 'skulk' (Lord John's word) from the profession of their political opinions; it being, to Lord John's mind, more manly to be bullied and bribed than to be secretive, and more hypocritical not to tell how you voted than to vote against your convictions. But this twaddly triad was not well answered. Mr. Bright certainly crushed Mr. Sidney Herbert's assumption that we had 'progressed' in public spirit, and that there were no more Dukes of Newcastle doing what they liked with their own, by a detailed reading to the House of the famous Londonderry correspondence about the County of Down, and Mr. Bright would have gone on to make a splendid speech, as usual, if there had been time; but it was one in the morning, and the young Lords' and the old Lords' retainers, whom he had insulted by divulging the truths of the county system which sustained them, were noisy and restive, and Mr. Bright is

getting cautious, and has lost his old partiality for talking amid Tory yells and hootings, and so he closed abruptly, and his speech stands as a truncated oration addressed only to one part of the question was an inexpressibly unwise speech: in every particular a mistake; but one specimen suffices. His peroration was a declaration that there was no cure for bribery but the ballot; and he would, consequently, oppose an extension of the suffrage if the ballot did not accompany it. That is Mr. Cobden's faith in the masses of England! It is a revelation of his real, undoubtedly not Radical nature. The accidents of the question of free trade made Mr. Cobden a popular leader: but he never had any business in connection with the working classes. Essentially a middle-class man, and a political economist, not a politician, he has no sympathy whatever with the masses, and, in fact, heartily at once fears and contemns them. And other quasi Democrats talk from the same point of view. Extension of the suffrage is asked on one ground, because it is prudent to make scoundrel constituencies so numerous that they would be too many to buy, and would, consequently, have no temptation to dishonesty; and in the same way, the Ballot, which is simply a machinery to protect the impressionable, is asked because it would prevent bribery—the calculation being that when you are not sure of the vote you won't pay a price for it. Mr. S. Herbert answered that queerly for a bold Briton, proud of his nation,—'Why,' said he 'that is not sound; for when a gentleman wanted to get into Parliament, he'd make a bargain with the voters, and pay them only on condition that he was returned, so that corruption would be increased, and you would not only have men bribed as now, but you would add another iniquitous system, by which it would be the interest of every man bribed to canvass and offer bribes for the votes of others.' How much this sort of reckless and foolish talk injures the cause of British democracy, may be ascertainable by-and-by; but let us hope it is exceptional talk, and that there is left a school of Liberals who do not believe, because there is a large percentage of scamps in the towns, and of poltroons in the counties, that therefore there is not a true and pure mass among the people, who would compel good government in England, without the protection of the ballot-box. Sir Robert Peel made a speech for the Ballot, which would justify a revolution: but Sir Robert's orations are only amusing, not important; he is droll, not a statesman. Proprietor of Tamworth, he despises corruption: and he thinks that the landed interest need not be afraid of the Ballot, because 'property, sir, will always have its influence.' In other words, if you buy up a place, and every voter is your tenant, you're sure to have the majority. But that's not altogether Sir Robert's point of view about the Ballot; he knows that his demure brother—it is the fraternity of Duke Robert and Henry Beauclerc—votes against the Ballot, and that is enough to ensure Sir Robert's vote *for*. As Coleridge said of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, that each was the half of a perfect man, so it may be remembered, that if the natures of Robert and Frederick Peel were conjoined, we should have a perfect statesman. Separated, each is afflictively incomplete: Frederick all reason:—someone asked once if he was the head of the family, and was answered, No, he is only the brains—and Robert all passion; the steam boiler in one place, and the wheels and cranks in the other, motionless and resultless for want of connection with the steam. Sir Robert is the greater success of the two in the House; he is a 'character,' and has a recognised position,

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Name, address, and approximate number of members

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We desire to follow the advice of the Social Credit Secretariat.†

To acquaint ourselves with the general character of this advice and the reasons underlying it, we agree to subscribe to *The Social Crediter* regularly in the proportion of at least one copy for every five members.

We agree not to discuss with others, without authorisation, the details of special advice received from the Secretariat.

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HEWLETT EDWARDS,

Director of Organisation and Overseas Relations.

*For this purpose an Association to consist of three or more Social Crediters.

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SOCIAL CREDIT SECRETARIAT

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An examination for the certificate of Associate will be held in March, 1949. The set books will be *Social Credit* and the *Realistic Position of the Church of England*, both by C. H. Douglas. Fee 10/6d.

Intending candidates should apply to the Director of Lectures and Studies, c/o the Social Credit Secretariat, 7, Victoria Street, Liverpool, 2. N.B. It is necessary that this address should be given on the envelope in full.

This notice does not apply to students in Australasia, for whom other arrangements have already been made.

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