

UNEARNED WEALTH.

THAT every man should be permitted to enjoy what he has honestly earned, and should be allowed to dispose of it as he pleases during his lifetime, will, I think, be generally conceded. The power of disposition after death is open to more question. It is founded rather in the law of the land than in the nature of things, and could plainly be altered by legislation if it was desirable to do so. But one of a man's chief objects in earning money is to make a provision for his wife and family in the event of his death, and to deprive him of this power would be to deprive him of one of his main incentives to work, besides introducing uneasiness and anxiety into almost every family in the kingdom. Whether the same right should be extended to providing for distant relatives, for friends who are not relatives, and for persons already possessed of adequate wealth, is open to considerable doubt; while it is still more doubtful whether, when an intestate leaves no near relatives, the State should transmit his property to persons about whom he perhaps knew nothing and cared nothing,* rather than take possession of it for

* A considerable portion of his property is sometimes squandered in litigation in trying to ascertain who his heirs or next-of-kin are: and when

public purposes. Some restriction on the law of descent, and perhaps also on the power of willing, would I think be desirable; but the broader question seems to depend on another one, viz., To what extent should a man be allowed to enjoy wealth which he has not earned, but which has come to him by gift, bequest, or operation of law?

That a man should be allowed the use of some unearned wealth seems sufficiently obvious. If no one could get a start in life until he had earned the requisite amount of capital by the produce of his own labour, the progress of every species of trade, industry, and manufacture would be retarded; while young men would be found working hard in order to save a little money at the time when they should be occupied in completing their education. But by Unearned Wealth I mean such an amount of unearned wealth as enables a man to dispense with any business or profession, and to live upon its annual proceeds in idleness. The most prominent example of this kind is, perhaps, the landlord who succeeds to his estate by inheritance or deed of settlement executed before he was born; but it is a great mistake to suppose that his is the only case in point. Many a man (or woman) lives on the annual proceeds of money lent at interest, of shares in public companies, of businesses in which he is a sleeping partner, &c. &c., or at least derives a sufficient income from these sources to live upon it if he chooses to do so—this wealth not

discovered, it is difficult to discover any rational or moral ground for preferring them to other relatives.

having been earned by the person who enjoys it. The landlords are as far from being the only drones as the tenants are from being the only working bees. But the drone, no matter who he may be, is an injury to society so long as he is merely a drone. In fact every man who earns less than he consumes is an injury to society; but there are different kinds of earning. So far from desiring the abolition of unearned wealth, I believe that its existence would prove in a high degree beneficial to society if its possessors were conscious of the duties which it imposed on them. And they might be made conscious of these duties partly by legislation, but still more by an enlightened public opinion.

If we consider society as it actually exists, we shall see that many of its most important functions are performed gratuitously. This is the ordinary case, for instance, with a magistrate or justice of the peace. The importance of speedy and inexpensive justice in small matters, and of immediate inquiries on the spot in the case of serious crimes, is manifest; and if not performed gratuitously, a large paid staff of officials would require to be engaged for the purpose. The duties of jurors are hardly less important; and then we have poor law guardians, members of school boards, of corporations, of committees of various charitable and public institutions, and other similar functionaries, very few of whom receive payment for their services. And the highest functions of all—those of the Ministers of State—fall under the same head. It is but rarely that a man who has earned or is earning a livelihood can rise

to the highest eminence as a statesman. A really great statesman must usually commence his political career at an early age, and devote himself more exclusively to it when once commenced than would be possible if he had not derived a competence from his ancestors, or perhaps from his marriage with a rich wife. There are many sciences, too, for the adequate cultivation of which amateurs must co-operate with paid investigators. Geology is one of these; and Astronomy has now, I think, reached the same condition. Putting everything together, I doubt whether the work which is performed gratuitously for the public is not of even greater value than that which is performed by the paid servants of the State. Every man who succeeds in improving the sanitary condition of a country village confers a benefit on the public.

But while a good deal is thus done gratuitously, a great deal more ought to be done; and what is done ought to be done a great deal better. Men of unearned wealth do not sufficiently recognize their duties to society, and no strong public opinion compels them to recognize it. In fact a great part of the unpaid duties which I have referred to are discharged by persons who earn their own bread and who employ their leisure hours for the purpose, rather than by those who find their bread ready earned for them. The most active magistrates, poor-law guardians, members of school boards, and committee-men, are often professional men, clergymen, or men of business, who have abundance of other work on hands; while those who have ample leisure for

the performance of these public duties take little or no part in the discharge of them. We frequently find the Government compelled to employ a paid magistracy in the very localities where men of unearned wealth are most numerous, while those of the latter class who act as magistrates take no pains to qualify themselves for the duties of that office, and are often most irregular in their attendance. The result is not unfrequently a miscarriage of justice. 'Justice's justice' is almost a proverbial phrase in England; while 'I make no more of him nor I would of a jistice of the pace' may be taken as the Irish equivalent. The practice of appointing unqualified magistrates (from the impossibility of procuring qualified ones) has indeed been carried so far, that unqualified persons are often appointed paid magistrates without a murmur of disapproval being called forth by the selection (provided that the appointee is not personally or politically obnoxious); and if the stipendiary has only the good sense not to talk too much he is secure of his post for the rest of his life.* The verdicts of juries are often not remarkable for sagacity; but unfortunately our existing law is just as ready to call away the man who is earning his bread from his daily occupation as to require the idler to perform at least one duty to the public. As non-attendance

* And the loud talker, however ignorant, may get a better post provided that his sentiments agree with those of the Government of the day—as those of an astute stipendiary usually do. The man who commits every Orangeman for trial under one Ministry would probably commit every Nationalist under the next.

is only punished by fines, those who can pay fines most easily are least frequent in their attendance. It is the struggling man, whose attendance is required at his shop or his farm, who is most certain to be found in the jury-box when the wealthy drone is at the racecourse, the concert, or the cricket-match; or perhaps engaged in hunting, shooting, or yachting. Or he may be engaged in doing mischief. Idle people are not usually amongst the most moral members of society; while the fussy activity of unqualified persons is often a source of no small evil. Landlords in particular, when they become active members of society, are apt to degenerate into petty tyrants; and the tenant is often exposed to loss by being forced to comply with his master's whims. One general impression amongst active landlords appears to be that the highest style of culture is the most profitable. This is only true within certain limits, and even then subject to the qualification that the cultivator understands the system. Give the tenant a secure tenure and freedom to manage his farm as he pleases, and you may feel pretty certain that he will adopt the mode of culture which is most advantageous under the circumstances: but if the farm is managed by one who principally regards appearances and thinks little of the profits provided that his own rent is paid, the consequences can hardly fail to be injurious. Landlords have a sufficiently wide field of duties to perform towards the public without dictating to the tenant what crops he shall grow, what rotation he shall adopt, what

fences he shall make, or where he shall grind his corn. Misdirected activity often has consequences quite as bad as those of idleness.*

In the first place, then, those who are born to wealth should be educated with a view of using it aright. Public opinion should insist on this; and possibly some legislation in this direction is also required. Every man who is expected to become a magistrate, or a member of many of the local boards, should have an University degree; and degree examinations (at least in the case of some degrees) should be re-modelled with a view of testing the qualifications of a man of leisure for the performance of his duties to the public. No man should become a justice of the peace without having previously acquired an elementary knowledge of law; and I may add that some legal knowledge is highly desirable in the case of a juror also. Every man of unearned wealth should moreover be instructed in the elementary principles of social and political science, and his future duties towards society should be impressed on his mind from an early age. When arrived at maturity, public opinion should require him to perform the duties for which he had thus been fitted. The magistrate who seldom sat on the bench, the juror who was not found when wanted, the guardian who was rarely at his post, should all (in the absence of some good excuse) become objects of public reprobation. And I think income tax might be imposed at a much

* Even this misdirected activity, however, is as frequently that of the agent as of the landlord.

higher rate on unearned incomes, unless the person in the receipt of them could show that he was engaged in the performance of some unpaid public duty. Men of business and professional men should be exempted from serving on juries altogether, unless the number of men of leisure in the district was too small to supply the want.

I may here state that it is by no means my intention to object to innocent recreations. It is, on the contrary, desirable that the majority of mankind should enjoy more recreation than they do. The end of human life is not wealth, still less is it labour; and though, generally speaking, man must earn his bread with the sweat of his brow, it is by no means necessary that every man should be constantly engaged in thus earning it. Without accepting in full what is known as the Utilitarian or Greatest-happiness principle, it is certain that pleasure or happiness is a higher and more important end than wealth, and that wealth is not the sole, or even the principal, source of pleasure or happiness. A great cricketer, a great billiard-player, a great chess-player, even a great jockey, probably confers more pleasure on the human race than the head of the house of Rothschild. Nor do I contend that everyone should enjoy the same amount of pleasure; for whether that object is desirable or not, it seems to me impossible of attainment. I merely object to men who do nothing for society—who merely enjoy pleasures themselves, without conferring them on others, or at all events whose services to society are no equivalent for the pleasures which they

enjoy under the protection of our laws. 'If any man will not work neither let him eat,' contains, I believe, a good deal of sound political economy; and though a man need not keep constantly at work in order to earn enough for his own support, he must do some work to attain that object. The man who is born to a fortune of ten thousand pounds, comes into the world with an order for ten thousand pounds' worth of the labour of other men. Should society allow him to put this order in force without giving it some equivalent? And more especially, should it do so when it exacts from some of its members numerous and important unpaid services, such as those of magistrates and jurors?

No doubt there are men born to wealth who are incapable of conferring any service on the public. There are idiots, and lunatics, cripples, and persons of hopelessly delicate health. No one, I believe, would desire to deprive such persons of a reasonable competence; but what more than that do they require? Of what advantage is an estate of £20,000 a-year to a lunatic who resides at an asylum, the keeper of which at most receives £1000, while the balance, after providing for law costs, creates a fund for relatives of whom the lunatic knows nothing. Nor indeed is there almost any case in which a man physically incapable of working can really enjoy a large fortune, while its possession sometimes exposes him to annoyance and even danger. A man of wealth may also be unable to do much for society owing to a different cause. Brought up without much education, he may succeed to a large fortune when

of mature years. But the very fact that he has been thus brought up, shows that he has not entertained the expectation of becoming a millionaire from his youth. His good fortune has come upon him unexpectedly, and the State would disappoint no reasonable expectations and arrangements entered into on the strength of them by limiting the amount of his luck. If it should not think proper to do so, at all events there is one thing that it can insist upon, namely, that he should educate his family with the view of rendering *them* useful members of society. His sons may confer upon the country the benefits which he himself is unable to confer.

There are few boys, I believe, who do not possess a taste for some useful pursuit, if this taste was encouraged from the outset. But in the case of those who have to earn their own livelihood, the parent must, to a large extent, choose what the child's pursuit is to be, and even where the father wishes to give free scope to the son's talent, his means are often too limited for the purpose. It is therefore only in the case of the children of the wealthy that the disposition and abilities of the child can be really studied, and a career moulded for him in accordance with his tastes. It is idle to suppose that mere attendance at school is sufficient for this purpose. There are teachers and teachers; and some, who are well qualified to impart information, fail to obtain a sufficient influence over the pupil to induce him to learn. Dispositions, too, often change with age. Idle boys often become studious men, and there are as striking instances of late as of early development. And if it is

known at a school that a boy is not destined for an University career, or for any competitive examination, the teacher will, I believe, usually become more or less indifferent as to his proficiency. There is, moreover, another reason why school is insufficient to bring out a boy's real abilities. Many of the subjects which are of most importance in life are almost wholly excluded from the ordinary scholastic curriculum. Such subjects are Experimental and Natural Philosophy (including Astronomy, Geology, and Mechanics), Logic, Mental and Moral Science, Sociology, and Political Economy. The boy who leaves school an ignoramus might, if some of these branches of learning had been presented to him, have become a burning and a shining light; but on leaving school he subsides into a country gentleman—or a town gentleman—and these sciences remain to him but empty names for the rest of his life. How can we tell whether a man who has never opened a book on Political Economy has or has not a taste for it? And if we sometimes hear him urging an absurd argument on a political question, it may be that the same argument was accepted by men of first-rate ability before the time of Adam Smith, with whose writings, and those of his successors, the reasoner is altogether unacquainted. Not merely country gentlemen, but men in general are not so stupid as they are sometimes described. They often repeat what they have heard, without understanding it in all its bearings, and are not perhaps masters of the art of expression; but they may, notwithstanding, have obtained a very good grasp of any subject which

they have really endeavoured to comprehend. Want of education and study, not want of ability, is the real defect here, and a considerable step would be taken towards remedying it if, in the case of the wealthy, an University education was always insisted on. University education itself however, as already noticed, is susceptible of considerable improvement. A youth may be prevented from taking a high position in some department for which he has a decided talent, by being compelled to cram up something else which he positively dislikes as a means of obtaining his degree. And I think there can be no doubt that both at schools and Universities too much stress is laid upon the languages and literature of Greece and Rome. These are not the studies which are calculated to render the pupil most useful to society in his after-life. They are capable of little or no expansion, while the sciences are advancing on all sides with giant strides; and to give to classics anything like the same proportionate weight that was given to it a hundred years ago, is simply to ignore the great feature in the progress of the century. The statue which was as large as a child of three, falls far short of the stature of a youth of twenty. The case of classics and science is similar, except that the latter has not probably attained half its full growth as yet. In classics, moreover, we can only seek for men who have mastered their subject; in science we seek for men who will advance it. The classical scholar merely preserves the intellectual wealth that has been transmitted to us; the man of science adds to the national stock. Even if

the one kind of learning was of equal importance with the other, production is entitled to a preference over preservation.

The gentleman or lady usually looks down upon the man who has earned his own money and the members of his family. There would be some ground for this feeling if the superiority of education, which ought to exist, really did so. But in most cases, I believe, no superiority will be found, except a little superficial polish in manner, dress, and accent; while in solid information the self-made man, however imperfectly educated, is often in advance of the inheritor of wealth. The manner and appearance of the gentleman, no doubt, shows that he has moved in polite society: but what good has he ever done by moving in it? Is that society either better or worse than if he had not moved in it? And what has he himself gained by the connexion? I once heard of a definition of a gentleman as 'one who never did a hand's turn for himself or any one else,' and I fear there is a considerable amount of truth in it. If indeed his intercourse with society, even in that limited circle, had made it more moral, more intelligent, more active, or more charitable, it could not be said that he had lived to no purpose. But there are few persons of whom such a statement can be made. The majority are simply no better and no worse than their neighbours; and if some are better than the average, others are worse. Their airs of superiority rest upon the slenderest basis. They ought to be really superior, but they are not. The fault, however, is per-

haps not theirs but that of their parents, or indeed that of society itself: for it is seldom that we find anyone doing more for society than public opinion requires him to do. Disinterested philanthropy is as rare as a wish to stand well with our fellow-men in common. If society wishes individuals to serve it, that wish must be plainly and clearly expressed, and must be enforced by the weapons with which society enforces its wishes—praise and blame. Anything beyond this is unnecessary and injurious; but society as a body has never, I believe, employed other weapons. Rattening, boycotting, assaults, murders, and other species of outrage, are not the weapons of society, but of particular classes, who seek to promote their class-interests by these means; and the victims of these outrages are often supported by another class whose interests run counter to those of the former. When society is unanimous, such methods are unnecessary, and are not resorted to; but they very frequently occur when the struggle is one between class and class. Class struggles, as I have elsewhere noticed, cannot be prevented by legislation; but a good Government should prevent the employment of these means of warfare. And I may add that the surest method of prevention is to make outrages injurious, not merely to the individual, but to the class in whose interest they are resorted to.* ‘There must be an end to outrages before we legislate’ is a principle which, however unpopular at

* This class almost always sympathises with the criminals. If the class—not merely its leaders—disapproved of these crimes, they would not take place. But even the expressed disapprobation of the leaders is often faint, and I fear sometimes insincere.

the present day, Governments will, I believe, be ultimately compelled to adopt. Society in general, however, is usually too inactive in the assertion of its own interests: and in urging it to do a little more than it has hitherto done, I have no fear of inciting it to outrage. It should teach men of unearned wealth what their duties are, and enforce their performance by expressing its disapprobation when they are neglected. Few men will persist in a course of action (or inaction) of which all classes disapprove and avow their disapproval.*

* But if men are allowed to enjoy unearned wealth without rendering any service to society, I fear that for a considerable time to come, at all events, there will be toadies willing to express approval of their conduct in the hope of a little base gain. The other measures referred to in the earlier portion of this Essay cannot therefore be wholly dispensed with.



NOTE ON THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

Closely connected with this question of Unearned Wealth is one which promises ere long to become a burning question—that of the House of Lords. In the future a rightly-constituted House of Lords will, I believe, be of more value and importance to the country than at any past period. As regards the Lower House, we are plainly drifting towards the result that every man (and probably every woman) shall have a vote, that no one shall have more than one vote, and that each vote shall be of equal value as regards returning a representative. Under such a system wealth, talent, and education cease to be represented. It is true, indeed, that the man of wealth, talent, and education may, to a certain extent, have a better chance of being chosen as the representative of the people, but he will not *represent* wealth, talent, or education. He will represent a constituency in which the lower classes will predominate; and he will probably be chosen for a short time, and will be set aside at the next election if he dares to oppose his private convictions to the popular feeling. And under the present system of government by party he will probably degenerate, not merely into the spokesman of his constituents, but into the spokesman of one section of his constituents.* There is not

* For as the other section will be pretty certain to vote against him in any case, his only chance of re-election is to retain the favour of his own section, though its numbers may be diminishing. In this way the representative of a

much independence to be found among the members of the House of Commons as it is. There will be less in future. The Sovereign at present never interferes with the decisions of Parliament; and if we are not to have a Democracy, pure and simple—if we are to give any weight to property, education, and talent—we must preserve the House of Lords. A peer who is in no danger of losing his vote because he records it against the mob, and who either seeks no office, or at all events can support himself without one, is not only in a position to form an impartial judgment, but to vote in accordance with his convictions; and if the House was so constructed that every peer should be competent to form a judgment on the most important political questions of the day, while a considerable proportion of the independent men capable of forming such a judgment were peers, the Upper House would form a most valuable adjunct to the Lower. But the Upper House as at present constituted does not fulfil these conditions. Public opinion apparently does not require the legislator by inheritance to qualify himself for becoming one.

Every peer who succeeds to a peerage by descent should, I think, be required to pass a qualifying examination before he is allowed to sit or vote in the House of Lords. This would be the first preservative against unqualified legislators in the Upper House. But the same provision should be extended to persons created peers, unless for public services of a non-political majority may become the representative of a minority long before he ceases to sit.

character. In addition to this a property qualification should be required. We do not want needy peers, who intend to use their hereditary powers of legislation as a means of earning a livelihood. A limitation should be placed on the number of peers to be created by the Crown. The House is already attaining formidable dimensions; and an unlimited power of creating new peers, vested in a Minister chosen by the Lower House, would be clearly fatal to the independence of the House of Lords. But I think any man possessing certain qualifications might have the right of claiming the peerage, subject perhaps to a veto, for reasons assigned, to be vested in a responsible Minister. The qualifications, both as to education and property, should in this case be higher than in that of a hereditary peer succeeding to the title; but I see no reason why, when these qualifications were high enough, the peerage should not be a matter of right. A certain number of life-peers, too, might be elected by the educated classes—the graduates of the several Universities for instance. These constituencies are represented in the Lower House, but their representatives are too few to possess any important influence there. The Lower House will ere long represent the lower classes only, and the Upper House should therefore represent the upper classes, if they are to be represented at all. But it ought to represent all that is good in the upper classes, and to represent it in the best way.

The value of such a representation has, I think, been clearly shown by the history of this country since the

last Reform Bill. Carried by a Conservative Ministry, that measure resulted in the first instance in a Liberal majority large enough to render the Conservatives almost powerless in the House; and such a majority has always a tendency to become tyrannical and irresponsible. It continued to rule the country long after the wave of popular feeling that had called it into power had died away. The Ministers still commanded large majorities on party questions, when bye-election after bye-election had proved that popular feeling was as much opposed to them as it had once been in their favour. At last a General Election took place; and substituting 'Conservative' for 'Liberal' the same history was repeated to the letter. Then came a third General Election, and with it a Liberal majority, larger, more irresponsible, and more tyrannical, than that which had ruled either of the preceding Parliaments. Has the wave of feeling that called the Liberals again to power died away once more? I do not know; but it is a significant fact that for some time past the Conservatives have been clamouring for a General Election, while the Liberals have been doing their utmost to avoid it. They are at the same time endeavouring to work again upon the popular mind in a new direction, so as to have a new election-cry when the dreaded dissolution becomes inevitable. The further extension of the Franchise will, I believe, make those features, for a time at least, still more marked. Popular constituencies will want ballast—at all events until they have been educated to make a right use of their

political privileges. It may be long before we again see a Minister at the head of one of those narrow majorities which compels him to consult the public sentiment at every step. We are, I fear, more likely to see him occupying the position of a dictator, because his clap-trap went down with the populace four or five years ago, and thus rendered him secure against all opponents until the next General Election, when he will disappear for a season—perhaps to re-appear in still greater power at the following dissolution. From faults of this character popular constituencies have seldom been free; and for that reason it is seldom safe to trust the government of a great country into their hands alone. *Vox populi* is hardly *vox Dei* when it says one thing one day and the opposite on the day following. An Upper House, not dependent on the breath of popular clamour, is therefore of great value; and its value in the future is likely to be enhanced rather than the contrary. But to be of real value it must be a properly-qualified Upper House. It must not represent merely class interests or party interests. It must represent the independent opinions of men better qualified to judge than the masses, who can apply the drag to the wheel in a manner for which the masses themselves will afterwards feel thankful—of men who can anticipate the popular feeling of the future as well as read the popular feeling of the present. It is only a genuine aristocracy of the best kind that can save us from an aristocracy of orators varied by the monarchy of a single orator. The populace, no doubt, may be educated so as to know how to

govern the country; but I fear it will be long before they possess this education. It is in fact 'the lie which is half the truth' that at the present juncture has most weight with the masses; for unadorned truth is seldom of much use to a party orator, and therefore it obtains but little hold on the public mind. Polemical language, which the orator will not afterwards repeat or defend in argument, is much more to his purpose. We ought to have one House at least where this kind of speech-making would be at a discount—where a clearly-marked distinction would be drawn between the statesman and the orator on the one hand, and between the orator and the liar on the other. This should be the function of a properly-constituted House of Lords.

Shorter Parliaments would, indeed, remove some of the evils to which I have referred. With annual Parliaments we should never run the risk of being governed by a body which represented the public feeling of the past instead of that of the present. But the greater instability of Ministries, and the more immediate dependence of the representatives upon their constituencies which this system would introduce are evils of considerable magnitude. I incline to think that the best arrangement would be septennial or quinquennial Parliaments, as at present, with a clearly recognized right on the part of the Upper House to enforce a dissolution when any question which was not before the country at the preceding General Election had become the prominent topic of the day. 'This question is an important one. It has not hitherto been before the country:

you must take the opinion of the country upon it now,' is surely as reasonable a demand as the Upper House could address to a Minister whose majority in the Lower House was the result of an election held before the question alluded to had attained its present prominence. In fact there is nothing better calculated to keep the Upper House in harmony with the people than its declaration that it prefers the judgment of the people to that of a set of gentlemen who once represented them, but do so no longer. An appeal from the existing House of Commons to the popular constituencies which returned it, is one which, even if misplaced in an individual instance, manifests at once the confidence of the Upper House in the masses, and its desire to consult the wishes of the masses. The real danger in such cases is twofold. First, that some demagogues may succeed in representing the matter as a conflict between the representatives of the people and a body of hereditary legislators, and thus obtain the verdict of the country in favour of the former upon a false issue—that the country, for example, may restore to power a Ministry of whose foreign policy it disapproves, because it believes that this Ministry is fighting for the liberties of the people against the House of Peers. Secondly, that the Upper House, desiring to get rid of some obnoxious measure, may try the chance of an appeal to the country, having previously determined to reject the Bill in question whatever the result of the popular verdict may be. Now it seems clear that when the Upper House submits an issue to the people, it is bound

to abide by their finding on that issue ; unless, indeed, the jury has been tampered with and imposed upon by false testimony and misdirection—in which case a new trial might be insisted on. But, even when the verdict was disputed on these grounds, a conflict between the Upper House and the people would be inevitable ; and it could hardly fail to be fraught with mischief to the country. There would not be much danger of such a conflict, however, with a well-constituted House of Lords. With such a body an appeal would only take place when there was a good prospect that the people would take part with the Lords rather than with the Commons ; or else when the Lords, having avoided expressing any opinion in the first instance, were ready to acquiesce at once in the verdict of the country, and could not be accused of any inconsistency or sacrifice of principle in doing so. The masses will undoubtedly form the governing body of the future. The only appeal will be from the representatives of the past to the representatives of the present or of the future ; from the people ill-informed to the people better informed ; from their hasty decision to their mature judgment ; from passing sentiment to permanent reason ; from oratory to logic ; from specious falsehoods urged by eloquence to plain truths supported by clear evidence ; from figures of speech to matters of fact. Every man is liable to be led astray at times by the influences which I have mentioned, and large numbers are often simultaneously deceived by them. In time they will discover their error ; and if the Upper House can antici-

pate this time, and truly predict its arrival, it is justified in holding its ground for a while against any amount of popular clamour. And if its forecast proves correct, and the people ultimately adopt the views of the Peers, the latter will come out of the conflict strengthened, not weakened. But I fear the present House of Lords cannot be relied on either to limit its resistance to popular feeling to the class of cases to which I have referred, or to maintain its ground firmly in cases of this class. It wants confidence in its own judgment, because it strongly suspects that this judgment is based on insufficient reasons. It is, in truth, a case of 'follow my leader' in both Houses, the followers having frequently in both cases a shrewd suspicion that the leader is about to take a leap in the dark; but want of knowledge or want of independence prevents the members of both from seriously entertaining the question, 'Is my leader right?' If we consider the number of questions not at all considered at the last General Election, and with respect to which those who were then returned had never formed any decided opinion, but on which all the Liberals now vote one way and all the Conservatives the other, we can hardly regard our representatives otherwise than as chessmen whom the principal players move at will. Is it conceivable, for instance, that all the Conservative members should in the exercise of their private judgment have come to the conclusion that the Egyptian policy of the present Ministry is wrong, while each of the Liberals arrived independently at the conclusion that it is right? This policy was one which could hardly be

said to result from the previous declarations of the party or any of its members, for the whole question did not arise until after the General Election. No impartial man, I believe, can arrive at any other conclusion than that a number of men voted for this policy simply because it was the policy of the Ministers, and that a number of others voted against it for the same reason. Some of these, doubtless, formed no opinion on the subject, and simply followed their leaders. Others, I fear, voted in opposition to their own convictions in order to keep their own party in office, or to get them into office. And these remarks are as true of the Lords as of the Commons. What we want in both Houses is men who will form an independent judgment and adhere to it. It is not merely in the Cabinet that the intended measures should be discussed and decided. The members of the party at least should be consulted; and no course should be adopted by any Ministry which would not be approved of by the House of Commons on a really independent vote. 'Vote contrary to your private convictions, or else I will resign and denounce you as a traitor to the cause,' is a demand which no Minister should address to his followers; but it is practically addressed to them more than once in almost every session of Parliament. A good Upper House would prove a material check to such proceedings. But does the present House of Lords operate as such a check? I fear not.