

**CONSTITUTIONALISM OF
THE FUTURE: OR,
PARLIAMENT, THE
MIRROR OF THE NATION**

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Constitutionalism of the Future: Or, Parliament, the Mirror of the Nation by James Lorimer

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JAMES LORIMER

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CONSTITUTIONALISM OF
THE FUTURE.

*"The grand principle of all * * * is, that the representative body should be the image of the represented."*—LORD RUSSELL'S English Government and Constitution, p. 255.

"I would have every one (not convicted of any infamous crime, especially bribery, and not having received parochial relief since 1832, and paying rates) a voter; but (I would give) those who possess certain property, two, three, four, or more votes, up to a certain point, as is the case in vestries. Thus a due weight would be given to property, and yet every one would feel that he had some voice in making the laws he is to obey, and imposing the taxes he is to pay."—ARCHBISHOP WHATELY'S Life and Correspondence, vol. i. p. 88.

CONSTITUTIONALISM

OF

THE FUTURE

OR

PARLIAMENT THE MIRROR OF THE NATION

BY

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ETC. ETC.

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LONGMANS, GREEN, READER, AND DYER

1867

To the

Working Men of Great Britain.

IN the following pages I have maintained that the fruits of our labours are the chief sources of our rights; and nothing surely can be more appropriate than that I should dedicate such an argument to those who claim, by pre-eminence, to be "the sons of toil." Nor is the case altered though I ascribe to this source those rights which we claim to have inherited from our fathers, and which we hope to transmit to our children, as well as those which our own hands or heads have won for us. That the family is the root of the state is a fact which I know is familiar to your minds. Much as you prize your rights as citizens, your rights as children and parents are dearer to you still; and from the latter the rights of inheritance are inseparable.

But the fruits of men's labours are not equal, because God has not given us equal powers, and we do not all use our powers alike. And these inequalities are rendered greater by inheritance and transmission. The labour of one single man often raises him and his from poverty to wealth. The labours of

two or three generations make all the difference between "the very rich and the very poor." If we accept labour, then, as the source of our rights, these rights cannot be equal; and if I preach to you the rights of labour, I cannot preach to you the rights of equality. It is in this circumstance that my difficulty in approaching you lies; and many will think that in approaching you at all, I exhibit a quixotic confidence in your willingness to listen to the truth. My own feeling is, that in exhibiting this confidence I pay you a much higher compliment than those which are commonly addressed to you; and a compliment of a kind which British workmen are far more capable of appreciating than those who court their favour are accustomed to imagine. I am quite aware that he who tells you the truth must not look for the guerdon of him who flatters you. For me there will be no banquets and no banners. I cheerfully accept the condition, and ask of you nothing but your *thoughts*. But if you will kindly grant me this boon, I am not without hope that at some future period you may add to it the very sincere good wishes, which, in the meantime, I pray you to accept.

J. L.

CONTENTS.



DEDICATION TO THE WORKING MEN OF GREAT BRITAIN v

CHAPTER I.

THE DECADE OF DOUBT 1

CHAPTER II.

THE NEW-BORN FAITH 12

CHAPTER III.

THE RADICAL'S ANSWER 31

CHAPTER IV.

THE WHIG'S ANSWER 41

CHAPTER V.

THE CONSERVATIVE'S ANSWER 78

CHAPTER VI.

CONSTITUTIONALISM REALISED 103

CHAPTER VII.

TESTS OF CAPACITY, AND MEASURES OF RIGHT 124

CONCLUSION 175

CHAPTER I.

THE DECADE OF DOUBT.

I CANNOT imagine a more interesting, instructive, or withal novel study than the course through which political thought and feeling have passed, in this country, during the last ten years; and yet, so unobtrusive has been its character that it has been unobserved and unthought of by the vast majority even of observant and thoughtful persons. Men's minds have not been stimulated by stirring events. Within our own borders we have been too happy for revolution, too contented even for gradual change; and the voice of the breakers on other shores has but deepened the sense of domestic tranquillity. It has been a day of rest, a period of national reflection and meditation, not of action