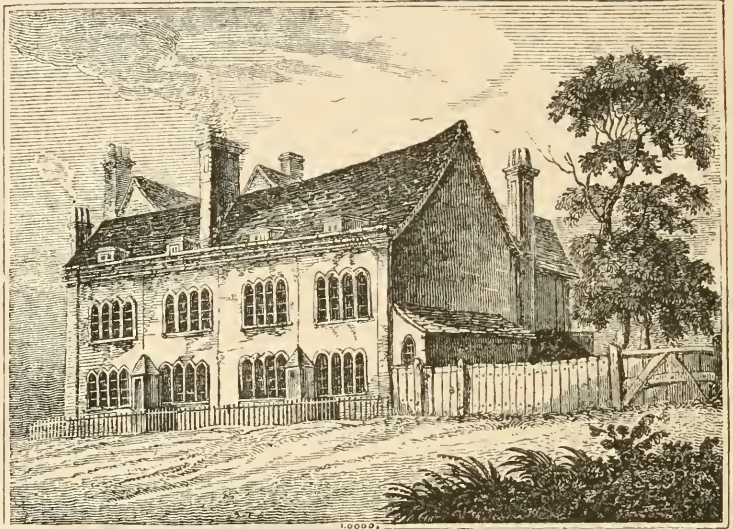


A PROPOSAL

FOR PUTTING REFORM TO THE VOTE

Fac-simile of Shelley's Manuscript

*The issue of this book is strictly limited to
five hundred copies*



ALBION HOUSE, MARLOW, BUCKS,
SHELLEY'S RESIDENCE IN 1817.

*Fac-simile of a Woodcut published in
"The Mirror of Literature, Amusement,
and Instruction," for Saturday the
2nd of March 1833, No. 593,
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A PROPOSAL

FOR PUTTING REFORM TO THE VOTE

THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM

BY
THE HERMIT OF MARLOW
[PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY]

Fac-simile
OF THE
HOLOGRAPH MANUSCRIPT
WITH AN
Introduction by
H BUXTON FORMAN

London
PUBLISHED FOR THE SHELLEY SOCIETY
BY REEVES AND TURNER 196 STRAND
1887

PR

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P7

1887

The substance of the following Introduction, although intended in the first place for the present purpose, was read at a Meeting of the Shelley Society on the 13th of April 1887, and has also appeared in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for May 1887, in the form of an article entitled "The Hermit of Marlow: a Chapter in the History of Reform."

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION	PAGE I
------------------------	-----------

APPENDIX—

I. SHELLEY'S "FREE LIST" FOR <i>A Proposal etc.</i>	33
II. PETITION FOR REFORM SIGNED AT DUBLIN	34
III. RESOLUTIONS OF A MEETING OF THE LONDON TOWN COUNCIL	35
FAC-SIMILE OF SHELLEY'S MANUSCRIPT	41

FRONTISPIECE

SHELLEY'S HOUSE AT MARLOW REPRODUCED FROM "THE MIRROR"
FOR MARCH 2, 1833

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION.

IN the year 1817 the wretchedness and unrest of the lower classes in England had taken a form sufficiently marked to be the occasion of grave disquietude on the part of the government and the privileged and predatory classes, while, to the liberal-minded and tender-hearted, the need for some alleviation of a general kind for the wide-spread misery and oppression was fast becoming more and more visibly urgent. To make matters worse, the year 1816 had been a bad year for the farmers. There were countless mechanics and labourers who had been thrown out of work in consequence of the introduction of machinery, and the already growing power of foreign nations to compete with us in trade and manufacture. Then, as now, there were plenty of demagogues engaged in stirring

up the people to rash action; and then, as *not* now, there were government spies who earned a good living by mixing with the disaffected, inciting them to acts and utterances which could be construed into sedition or treason, and then betraying their poor dupes to the gaol or even the gallows. The people were practically unrepresented in Parliament, and were to a great extent at the mercy of those who had no mercy, the shameful Liverpool administration,—Castlereagh, Sidmouth, Eldon, and Company. Moreover, in the previous year, 1816, the working classes, ignorant though honest in the main, had been sufficiently rash and tumultuous in their agitations for reform to create a strong feeling against them in the great and powerful middle class; and the last complete year which Shelley passed in his own country was marked by a positive decline of the cause of reform. It is true the people had still their staunch and hardy advocates of several kinds and degrees. Major Cartwright and Sir Francis Burdett and the Honourable Douglas Kinnaird were their strong and bold supporters among public men; William Cobbett and William Hone were performing

rough literary labour in the popular cause ; Leigh Hunt, whose nature fitted him better for the purlieu of diletantedom, had thrown himself into the hurley-burley of the same cause, and was doing good work in *The Examiner*; and there was altogether a goodly and growing "cloud of witnesses" for the rights of the people. And yet, when Shelley passed his latest Christmas at an English fire-side, the year was closing in utter blankness as to any public good which had been accomplished. The reform meetings and petitions had for the moment failed ; an attempted interference with the legal robbery carried on by the holding of sinecures had ended in smoke ; and the popular cause was for the moment as a stream returning towards its source. It may possibly have been a perception of this retrograde tendency in the politics of his country that called into fresh and strengthened activity the reforming spirit of Shelley, and goaded him not merely to produce the two essays in concrete politics which mark the year 1817, but also to compose his largest work, that daring *Laon and Cythna* whereby he hoped to awaken the better classes of his countrymen and

countrywomen from their apathy, and startle them into a moral and intellectual fermentation calculated to bring about reform in all departments, radical, sweeping, and conclusive. But I think he can hardly have perceived the retrogression so early as February, when his reform pamphlet was probably written, for at that time the great crusade that was going on in the early part of the year,—the crusade of the reform meetings held by influential people, and numberless petitions for reform addressed to the House of Commons,—had not yet failed of its object. I think he must have been urged to issue this particular pamphlet by a wise perception that some of the most prominent reformers were asking not only what it was next to impossible to grant, but what the people were not ripe to exercise—universal suffrage. It was certainly not that he had nothing particular to do just then, no urgent personal cares to occupy him, no members of his own more intimate circle claiming help and active sympathy, no dreadful memories of recent events to harass him, and no impending disasters to struggle against. On the contrary, the year 1816 had not only seen the death of Harriett Shelley and Fanny Godwin

by suicide, incidents unspeakably harrowing to him,—not only did the close of that year witness the beginning of his troubles about Harriett's children ; but the fiery planet Byron had come into the Shelleyan sphere and left him with the charge of Claire Clairmont, about to become the mother of Allegra Byron ; while Godwin, Leigh Hunt, and Peacock, with their "large claims of general justice," were never far off.

During the first two months of 1817 Shelley was greatly occupied with preparations for the Chancery suit, which eventually deprived him definitely of the charge of Ianthe and Charles ; and in January Claire's little Allegra was born at Bath, Mary Shelley being also there, and Shelley in London. Shortly Mary joined him in London ; and it was seemingly during the busy time immediately preceding their settlement at Marlow that the political situation appeared to him so pressing as to call forth *A Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote throughout the Kingdom* : it was apparently while the Chancery suit was still pending ; for the pamphlet came out about the middle of March, and Lord Eldon's decision on the suit was not given till the 27th.

The house which Shelley had taken at Marlow, to occupy "for ever" with Mary and her child, if not with Claire and the little Allegra and many regular or desultory camp-followers, bore the propitious name of "Albion House." The household migrated to Marlow "in the last week in February," says Professor Dowden,¹ "before the house was ready." Shelley was back in London before taking possession, and finally "seems to have entered the house in the week March 9—16."² This perpetual residence was secured, it seems, just in time to yield a pseudonym for the poet, who was then suffering keenly from the baleful effects of two early works filed by the Westbrooks in the Court of Chancery, in support of allegations made to deprive him of the custody of his children. The fact that *Queen Mab* and the *Letter to Lord Ellenborough* had been used against him, though with results not then disclosed, may have influenced him to conceal his authorship of the reform pamphlet; for, though moderate compared with much writing of the period on the Liberal side, the *Proposal* was still sufficiently daring, and would, in the eyes of Lord Eldon, the

¹ *Life of Shelley*, vol. ii, p. 110.

² *Ibid.*

Westbrooks, and other magnates and nobodies, have added to his religious and social enormities a definite attempt at political agitation. For whatever reason, he elected to place upon the pamphlet no author's name, and to let it go out to the world as from "The Hermit of Marlow,"—a designation which it pleased him to keep during the greater part of his residence in that primitive Buckinghamshire town on the banks of the Thames, though it must be confessed that "Albion House," albeit not then cut up into tenements and turned in part into a public-house as it is now, was not in any respect like a hermitage. It stood, as it stands to-day, right on the roadside (West Street is the name of the road; but it is still not much like a street); and solitude was not a marked characteristic of the conditions of residence at Marlow. Whether Shelley's friends knew him in 1817 as "The Hermit," I cannot say; but he himself brought out the title for use again in November, when he issued his second political pamphlet of 1817, ostensibly *An Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte*, but really an eloquent appeal against the iniquitous execution of Brandreth,

Turner, and Ludlam, the victims of the government spy Oliver and one of those bogus conspiracies which were an ugly feature of the anti-popular tactics in those days of "Murder, Fraud, and Anarchy."

But to return to the Hermit's first Marlow pamphlet, the manuscript of which (first and last manuscript, I should judge), now in the possession of Mr. Thomas J. Wise, is reproduced in the following pages. The same good fortune which, as we shall see anon, attended the scheme of reform advocated in the pamphlet, attended also the tangible substance incorporating that scheme,—that is to say if preservation is to be regarded as a *desideratum*. Unlike the Hermit's other pamphlet, of which no manuscript, or proof-sheet, or copy of the original issue is known to be extant, the *Proposal* is preserved in all three stages. Not only have copies of the extremely rare print come down to us, but the proof-sheets revised by Shelley, and bearing sketchy drawings from his pen, were preserved by Leigh Hunt, and are now in the collection of Sir Percy and Lady Shelley; while the original manuscript, roughly and rapidly written, and full of erasures and corrections, remained in

the hands of Mr. Ollier, the publisher, whose family, in the fulness of time, sold it. This took place in July 1877; and I refrain now from any textual examination of the manuscript, because Mr. Francis Harvey of St. James's Street, who bought this holograph at auction in the ordinary way of business, gave me, with exemplary courtesy and generosity, full opportunity to exhaust the subject when I reprinted the pamphlet in my edition of Shelley's *Prose Works* (4 volumes, 1880). I believe the foot-notes to the *Proposal* give all that can be given in the way of variorum readings and cancelled passages; and it is a pleasure to me to think that Mr. Harvey, of whom I had no previous knowledge, and on whom I certainly had no claim, entertained an angel unawares. Not that I was the angel; but it was the record of the particulars of the manuscript in my notes that eventually found Mr. Harvey a customer for his costly treasure in the person of Mr. Wise.

But the luck of preservation connected with the *Proposal* goes further yet. As far as I know there is but one reference to the Princess Charlotte pamphlet in all the extant Shelley correspondence. Mrs. Shelley's diary

records that he began a pamphlet on the 11th of November and finished it on the 12th; and there is a little note to Ollier, dated the 12th, sending a part of the manuscript for press.¹ These are doubtless references to the *Address*; but in the case of the *Proposal* we have Shelley's instructions to his publisher in some detail. The following letter is undated, un-post-marked, and, I believe, unpublished:—

DEAR SIR,

I inclose you the Revise which may be put to press when corrected, and the sooner the better. I inclose you also a list of persons to whom I wish copies to be sent *from the Author*, as soon as possible. I trust you will be good enough to take the trouble off my hands.—

Do not advertise sparingly: and get as many booksellers as you can to take copies on their own account. Sherwood Neely & Co, Hone of Newgate Street, Ridgeway, and Stockdale are people likely to do so—Send 20 or 30 copies to Messrs. Hookham & Co Bond Street without explanation. I have arranged with them.

Send 20 copies to me addressed to Mr. Hunt, who will know what to do with them if I am out of town.—

Your very obedient Ser^t

P. B. SHELLEY

¹ Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, vol. ii, p. 158.

The list which Shelley sent to Mr. Ollier in the foregoing letter was a pretty considerable one, designed to dispose of fifty-seven copies of the pamphlet, besides the forty or fifty referred to in the letter ; and the instructions as to advertizing and so on indicate regular publication. According to entries made on the list, thirty-one copies were sent out "from the Author." A copy also appears to have reached either Southey or *The Quarterly Review*; for in the heading to his article on "The Rise and Progress of Popular Disaffection,"¹ the title of Shelley's pamphlet figures, though the *Proposal* is not alluded to in the text of the article. On the whole the pamphlet ought not to be so extremely rare ; and the Shelley Society will probably stir up hiding-holes and bring copies to light.

In another extant letter to Mr. Ollier, written at Marlow on the 14th of March 1817, the Hermit asks "How does the pamphlet sell?" Of the answer we know nothing ; but it was probably the negative to which he was already well accustomed ; and in this case the incongruity between the bold title and the shy retiring pseudonym

¹ *Quarterly* for January 1817, published the following April.

might not unnaturally have deterred from purchase even the very elect of reformers.

When one wants to form an idea of the influences working from without, at a particular time, on a man vitally interested as Shelley was in the progress of public affairs, it is no bad plan, leisure permitting, to consult a file of some contemporary daily newspaper and the relative volumes of Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*. In default of leisure or opportunity for bringing this cumbrous apparatus to bear on the present subject, I will turn over the leaves of a weekly newspaper of 1817 instead; and how can I do better than take Leigh Hunt's ultra-radical print, *The Examiner*, with its audacious "Leontian" leaders, its excellent parliamentary and other reports, and its varied and multitudinous notes of news? Moreover, this paper for 1817 is not unembellished by the genius of many of the Shelley circle; and it is a pleasure to glance over pages in which we are conscious of the presence of Leigh Hunt *passim*, stumble upon sonnets by Keats, meet once and again Haydon and Hazlitt, fall in with dear delightful Horace Smith, and even

get a taste of the quality of Shelley himself, who was a contributor of Hunt's as well as a constant reader.

Before we take to our *Examiner*, it will be worth while to glance down that list of persons to whom Shelley ordered his publishers to send the *Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote*. This list I printed in *The Shelley Library*, Part I, page 67; but I reprint it now, for convenience of reference, in the Appendix to these remarks. In it we read the names of most of the persons marked by liberal views on whose track we shall presently come in our radical newspaper.

The year opens propitiously for us; for on New Year's Day the patriarchal reformer Major Cartwright took the chair at a meeting of the Westminster Electors at the Crown and Anchor, convened to receive from their popular and gallant representative in Parliament, Lord Cochrane, his answer to an address which they had voted him in assurance of their continued confidence and admiration. Lord Cochrane's manly reply alludes to the support and protection he has had from liberal Westminster during three years of persecution

for those well-known attacks on naval abuses to which his position in the navy had given the sting of truth. "After many strong and interesting statements, he recommended to the Meeting to continue to support Parliamentary Reform, for without it the people of England would remain oppressed, persecuted, enslaved, and starving." In the course of the proceedings a Mr. Wells was hissed for proposing so weak a measure of reform as triennial parliaments: he explained that he really wanted annual ones, but thought "if that object could not be obtained, it were better to go step by step until they could obtain it." A Mr. Walker¹ having remarked that he "was for arriving at the wished-for object at once," the redoubted Major delivered his conviction that triennial parliaments could not be beneficial if obtained. He mentioned as evidence of the exertions then being made that he had five hundred petitions in his house to present at the meeting of Parliament, and had issued three hundred more forms to be filled up: he named 2,400 as the total number of petitions likely to be presented; and he

¹ See Shelley's list.

concluded by emphatically stating that annual representation was the only cure for existing evils.

Five days later, for anything I can hear to the contrary, Shelley may have attended a huge meeting at Bath. Claire was certainly in that city; and Shelley and Mary had secured places in the coach, for the 1st of January, to join her: it was still early in January when he left the two ladies at Bath, to return to London on his Chancery business; and if, as I think, he was at Bath on the 6th, he would hardly have missed the occasion to attend a meeting of upwards of 6,000 people to petition Parliament for a redress of grievances and particularly for parliamentary reform. On this momentous occasion "large bodies of military, both horse and foot, were in readiness in case of a riot; and most of the principal inhabitants were sworn in special constables on the occasion," when "Orator" Hunt was "to the fore," and made a long speech in his usual rough and ready, pugnacious style, specially condemning the attempt of the authorities to intimidate the assembly. Turning the page again, we find our *Examiner* recording that four

sailors, on the day after this meeting, were hung for stealing ships; and here was another call for reform which must have seemed desperately urgent to our tender-hearted and tolerant poet.

To *The Examiner* for the 19th of January he contributed his *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, of which, by the bye, I am pretty sure he must have revised a proof; and immediately after his signature comes the word REFORM at the head of a report of a "Select Meeting of Independent Gentlemen, friends of economy, public order, and reform,"—which had been held on the 17th of January. The most prominent names on this occasion are those of Curran, Alderman Waithman, and Alderman Goodbehere, names which are all in Shelley's list referred to above. Curran made a capital speech, wherein he remarked that parliamentary reform did not "consist in breaking windows or getting drunk in the streets,"—a remark not wholly inapplicable to some of the so-called reformers of our own day.

The report of this meeting is followed by one of a meeting held at Dublin on the previous Monday, the

13th of January, under the eye, as one of the speakers (O'Connell) observed, "of ten regiments of soldiers under arms, and two troops of artillery ready for immediate action." This meeting, described as "a vast concourse of people," dispersed and "returned in the greatest order to their homes," after passing several resolutions, and agreeing to a petition, which I give in the Appendix as a representative document whose terms must have been familiar to Shelley.

The day after this meeting, a boy who bore the suggestive patronymic of Dogood was sent to prison in London for tearing down some bills posted in Long Acre, headed "Mr. Hunt hissed out of Bristol." The animus of the authorities against the "Orator" and the cause he represented is obvious.

On the 22nd of January another reform meeting took place at the Crown and Anchor,—William Cobbett, Henry Hunt, and Major Cartwright being the most prominent speakers. Mr. Jones Burdett¹ brought word from the London Hampden Club that he and Major Cartwright were deputed by that Club to lay before

¹ See Shelley's list in Appendix.

the Reform Delegates assembled at the meeting the heads of a bill to be submitted to Parliament. The material principles recognized by this bill were (1) household suffrage, (2) division of counties and cities into electoral districts, each returning one member, according to population, and (3) annual elections. Major Cartwright said that, though in favour of universal suffrage, he must admit that many "sound reformists entertained other opinions on the ground of practicability." Cobbett spoke most contemptuously of the Club, but excepted from his denunciation Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Jones Burdett, Major Cartwright, and "that sound patriot Mr. Hallet of Berks."¹ Henry Hunt, while endorsing Cobbett's contemptuous view of the Club, managed to carry, against him, a resolution in favour of "representation co-existent with taxation." A skirmish between the "Orator" and the reporters of *The Morning Chronicle* and *The British Press* gave variety to the proceedings :

¹ Note that this same gentleman, "Mr. Hallet of Berkshire," was to receive five copies according to Shelley's list, and the London Hampden Club ten. I suppose Berkshire was not a sufficiently definite address for Ollier, no copies having apparently been sent to Mr. Hallet.

Hunt, always in hot water, accused the daily press of systematic misrepresentation of reform meetings ; and the two reporters resented the insult and denied the charge.

One day later (23 January 1817) Alderman Goodbehere and Alderman Waithman¹ took a prominent part in a reform meeting of the Common Council, at which the resolutions were so significant that I give them in the Appendix.

Turning to other parts of our *Examiner* for the 26th of January, we come on some occult allusions of Leigh Hunt's to Shelley's Chancery case, and on an inaccurate little report, taken from *The Morning Chronicle*, of the proceedings on Friday the 24th of January in the matter of Westbrook *v.* Shelley. "His Lordship is to give judgment on a future day," says the report. On the same page begins the report of the trial of a sailor named Cashman and others in the matter of the musket-stealing connected with the riots of two months earlier. Cashman was found guilty and condemned to death.

On the 28th of January the Prince Regent opened

¹ See Shelley's list.

Parliament: on his way back to the palace he got hooted and pelted; and the windows of his carriage were broken. On the following Sunday *The Examiner* was of course full of the attack and the opening of Parliament. On the 29th Lord Cochrane began the reform petition campaign by presenting a petition from Bristol signed by over 50,000 people; and, after a full parliamentary report, we find in *The Examiner* for the 2nd of February in an appropriate setting of reform paragraphs, an editorial correction of inaccuracies in the report of *Westbrook v. Shelley*, immediately followed by Horace Smith's sonnet, commencing with the line

"Eternal and Omnipotent Unseen!"

Shelley's battle to regain possession of his children was of course regarded in his immediate circle not only as a personal question of desperate interest, but as an important issue in the general question of fundamental reform. The issue was indeed momentous—being no less than a dispute as to the right of a father, of what opinions soever in religious, moral, and social questions, to control and educate his own children. Note

that in this, as in most of the reform battles fought in the reign of Eldon, Castlereagh, Sidmouth and Co., the popular party, the party of freedom and equal laws, failed grievously and utterly.

But we must keep to our *Examiner* a little longer.

On the 3rd of February, as reported in the paper of the 9th, the reform petitions to Parliament were varied by one from the boy Dogood, who had been sent to prison for tearing down scurrilous posters about "Orator" Hunt. That petition was rejected; and the boy was referred to the Law Courts.

Sir Francis Burdett and Lord Cochrane now appear in constant collision with Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Vansittart, or some one else of the kind,—every petition brought forward being subjected to obstruction, and Brougham¹ frequently rising to put in a pregnant word for the petitioners.

The Examiner of the 10th of January has the agreeable variety of a sonnet from Keats, that to Kosciusko, flanked by reports of Henry Hunt's vulgarity at a reform meeting and of a discreditable fracas between

¹ See Shelley's list.

him and Morley the hotel keeper. Perhaps this blundering coarseness, which was characteristic enough of the "Orator," prevented Shelley from sending him the pamphlet: at all events his name is conspicuous for its absence from the list, though two years later, *à propos* of "Peterloo," Shelley commended his conduct. The same day's paper has a report of a meeting in Palace Yard, Westminster, on the 13th of February, to vote an address of the inhabitants of Westminster to the Regent concerning the attack on his carriage. As usual, Sir Francis Burdett, Major Cartwright, Lord Cochrane, and Henry Hunt were in the van. The address voted was a clever, sarcastic document, really, with mock humility, making light of the attack, and inculcating on his royal highness the urgent need for reform.

From *The Examiner* for the 23rd of February we gather in passing that, at that time, seventy-three men and fifteen women were lying under sentence of death in Newgate gaol. Mr. Bennet¹ used this fact for an indirect attack

¹ The only M.P. of the name that I can trace in 1817 is the Hon. H. G. Bennet. Shelley's list includes Captain Bennet, M.P., to whom a copy of the pamphlet seems to have been sent.

on Lord Eldon ; and Lord Castlereagh “ deemed the Hon. gentleman’s speech very inflammatory, and directed against high legal officers. The delay,” he said, “ did not rest with the Chancellor.” Mr. Bennet’s object seems to have been to force the Chancellor and the Secretary of State to prepare a list of these wretched people for the Prince Regent, with a view of getting their miseries abridged either one way or another. It appears there was hope that the majority would not really suffer the penalty of death. Turning from this disgraceful business to another page of the paper, we find relief (and let us hope Shelley did) in Keats’s sonnet

“ After dark vapors have oppress’d our plains ” . . .

One more leaf turned, and we meet “ Orator ” Hunt in the Court of King’s Bench before Shelley’s old bugbear Lord Ellenborough, urging, but without any satisfactory result, the case of the boy Dogood, whom Parliament had referred to the Law Courts.

The accounts of reform meetings, and of the proceedings in Parliament about the petitions occupy a great deal

of space in *The Examiner*. We know that Shelley was a regular reader of the paper ; and the chances are that he read every word of what we have been glancing at, and a vast deal more on these subjects. The petition phenomenon seems to have struck Mrs. Shelley ; for, in a letter to Leigh Hunt inviting him to Marlow, she says, "You shall never be serious when you wish to be merry, and have as many nuts to crack as there are words in the Petitions to Parliament for Reform—a tremendous promise."¹

Now Shelley's small contribution to this reform agitation is a really practical and not impracticable one. Seeing how the contest raged in Parliament, how little real impression on that corrupt chamber and insolently unprincipled administration was being produced by the fiery onslaughts of Sir Francis Burdett, the frank and gallant pertinacity of Lord Cochrane, the logical incisiveness of Henry Brougham, the cool, consistent, decisive hammering of Major Cartwright, at the close of his forty years' experience in popular agitation ; seeing behind the parliamentary spectacle the great surging ocean of misery

¹ Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, vol. ii, p. 112.

and agitation; and hearing the repeated question, "Is parliamentary reform the will of the people,"—he said "Let us see." How? By taking the sense of the people. The object of Shelley's pamphlet was to hold a meeting in order to organize a deliberate *plébiscite*, and to abide by the result. If reform should prove to be the will of the majority, Parliament must grant it or be deemed in rebellion against the people. If only a minority demanded reform, it would rest with them to go on petitioning till they attained their end by attraction and accretion.

Not only was this proposal for a meeting at the Crown and Anchor tavern a reasonable and practicable one; but the Hermit was ready to give a tenth of his year's income towards the expenses of the *plébiscite*. Moreover, he expressed surprisingly moderate views. Major Cartwright's position as to universal suffrage he admitted to be logically impregnable; but he also pointed out that, logically, the preëminent advantages of a republic could not be disputed. He did not think England ripe either for republican government or for universal suffrage, because the men of the lowest class had been

rendered "brutal and torpid and ferocious by ages of slavery." He therefore thought that "none but those who register their names as paying a certain small sum in *direct taxes* ought, at present, to send members to Parliament." As to annual elections, he endorsed unhesitatingly the views of Cartwright and Cobbett.

In the long run, Shelley's reputation had the advantage proper to the moderate and sagacious tone of this pamphlet; for, as Mr. Rossetti says,¹ "The whirligig of time has brought-in many revenges to Shelley, and this amongst others—that the Tories found it their interest and necessity to pass in 1867 almost the very scheme of Reform which the poet and 'dreamer,' the atheist and democrat, had suggested in 1817; for it makes little difference whether we speak of a payment of money in

¹ *A Memoir of Shelley (with a Fresh Preface)*, Shelley Society, 1886, p. 80. Note another of Time's revenges: a great poet in 1817 advocates a scheme of reform carried out by the Conservatives in 1867; and then an admirable poet still among us characterizes the year, the men, and the deed thus:—

"In the Year of the great Crime,
When the false English nobles and their Jew,
By God demented, slew
The Trust they stood thrice pledged to keep from wrong, . . ."

(*Odes*, by COVENTRY PATMORE, 1868.)

‘direct taxes’ or in ‘rating.’” Meanwhile, the leading ideas of that gallant Major whom Shelley regarded as unanswerable, and who was one of the most influential politicians of his land and day, await fulfilment. Indeed, although the rushing wheels of our civilizing machine are fast driving out of any living place in our memory men whose work, like that of Cartwright and Burdett, is not of a form and visible substance to command integral preservation, I cannot leave John Cartwright without a few more words.

It is difficult for us to realize at the present day the importance of the position which he occupied in 1817, as well as earlier and later. When Shelley wrote his *Proposal*, the mere reference to Major Cartwright was sufficient to carry with it four clear and very advanced ideas, to wit, universal suffrage, equal representation, vote by ballot, and annual parliaments: it was as the “firm, consistent, and persevering advocate” of those principles that he was described at the base of a statue of him erected in Burton Crescent just before the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed. This was under the administration of Earl Grey, who was an old

adherent to the principles of Major Cartwright, however much it may have been found expedient to water down those principles in the work of 1832, so as to give the power to the middle class and not to the people. This "firm, consistent, and persevering advocate" of righteous views, whereof some yet await fulfilment, had been a genuine force in England: born far back in the eighteenth century,¹ his eventful and philanthropic life was drawing to its close when Shelley became convinced of the need to retrench those magnificent schemes of reform. Cartwright's *Reasons for Reformation* (1809) and *The Comparison, in which Mock Reform, Half Reform, and Constitutional Reform, are considered* (1810), familiar far and wide in 1817, succeeded a long array of political pamphlets, treatises, &c.; and Shelley would doubtless have thought it as impertinent as it was unnecessary to particularize the views and arguments to which he alludes in *A Proposal*

¹ Born 1740—died 1824: he was brother, by the bye, to that Edmund Cartwright who invented the power-loom; and another brother, George, was the intrepid navigator who made six voyages to the coast of Labrador, passed in all nearly sixteen years there, and published in 1793, in three quarto volumes, a *Journal of Transactions and Events* during that long residence in an inhospitable country.

for Putting Reform to the Vote. That *Proposal*, good as it is, was a poor little tract compared with Cartwright's achievements; but we must take the world as we find it; and, while the splendour of Shelley's intellectual and literary gifts makes it natural for us to attempt to gather, investigate, and illustrate all he ever did, the true, honest men who only worked hard for the enfranchisement of their less fortunate fellow men, only gave their lives, their hearts, their heads, and their energies, must be deemed fortunate if allowed even to sit on the lowest steps of the temple of fame, while the upper steps are reserved for the men of genius who are already beginning to be crowded and jostled out of the inner sanctum.

H. BUXTON FORMAN.

46, MARLBOROUGH HILL, ST. JOHN'S WOOD,
March, 1887.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX.

I.

The "Free List" for Shelley's "Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote."

Sir Francis Burdett M.P.*	Mr. I. Thomas, St. Albans, Mon.
Mr. Peters of Cornwall	Mr. Philipps, Whitston, Mon.
Mr. Brougham M.P.*	Mr. Andrew Duncan, Provost of Arbroath
Lord Grosvenor *	Mr. Alderman Goodbehere *
Lord Holland *	Mr. Jones Burdett *
Lord Grey *	Mr. Hallet of Berkshire (5 copies)
Mr. Cobbett *	The London Hampden Club (10 copies) *
Mr. Waithman *	The Editors of the Statesman * the Morning Chronicle * and the Independent Whig *
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The Lord Mayor *	Mr. Bruce
Mr. Montague Burgoyne	Mr. Sturch (of Westminster) *
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Messrs. Taylor Sen. & Jun. of Norwich	Genl. Sir R. Ferguson M.P.*
Mr. Place, Charing Cross *	
Mr. Walker of Westminster	
Lord Essex *	
Capt. Bennet M.P.*	
The Birmingham Hampden Club (5 copies)	

* Against the names distinguished by asterisks the word *sent* was written in the original list, and not by Shelley. I presume this was done at Messrs. Ollier's office, and that copies were really sent to the persons thus indicated.

II

*Petition¹ for Reform adopted at a Meeting held in Dublin on the
13th of January 1817.*

PETITION.

Sheweth—That your Petitioners have a full and immoveable conviction, a conviction which they believe to be universal, that your Honourable House doth not, in any constitutional or rational sense, Represent the Nation.

That, when the People have ceased to be Represented, the Constitution is subverted.

That Taxation without Representation is a state of Slavery.

That there is no property in that which any person or persons, any power or authority, can take from the People without their consent.

That your Petitioners hold it to be self-evident, that there are not any human means of redressing the People's wrongs, or composing their distracted minds, or of preventing the subversion of liberty and the establishment of despotism, unless by calling the collective wisdom and virtue of the community into Council by the Election of a free Parliament.

That your Petitioners have peculiar reasons to deplore the substitution of the system of corrupt usurpation of popular rights, in place of the genuine Representation of the People; inasmuch as one of the consequences of that system has inflicted on the great body of your Petitioners, particularly the Manufacturing and Labouring Classes, *by the measure of the Legislative Union*, the permanent existence of Poverty and Distress.

¹ The text of the petition is taken from *The Examiner* for the 19th of January 1817.

Wherefore your Petitioners pray, that your Honourable House will, without delay, pass a Bill for putting the aggrieved and much-wronged People in possession of their undoubted rights to Representation, co-extensive with direct and indirect Taxation; to an equal distribution throughout the community of such Representation; and to Parliament of a continuance according to the strict letter of the Constitution, namely, *not exceeding one year.*

III.

Resolutions¹ passed at a Meeting of the Common Council of London on the 23rd of January 1817.

Resolved—That this Court, at a crisis of such general and unexampled pressure and calamity, feel themselves called upon to lay before Parliament a faithful representation of their grievances.

Resolved—That these grievances, so deeply affecting all classes of Society, are not of a temporary, unforeseen, or unavoidable nature, but are to be traced to a long and fatal course of wanton and wasteful extravagance in the expenditure of the Public Money—to a profusion of useless Places, Sinecures, and unmerited Pensions—to an enormous and unnecessary Standing Army in time of Peace—and to the want of that vigilance and constitutional controul over the Executive Government, which can only spring from a free, equal, and pure Representation of the People in Parliament.

¹ The text of the Resolutions is given from *The Examiner* for the 26th of January 1817.

Resolved—That this Court feel it unnecessary to enter into the afflicting details of Distress and Suffering so universally felt, because they have become too manifest to have escaped the observance of Parliament—the decayed state of Trade—of the Manufactures—of the Agriculture of the Country—with the great depreciation in the value of Property, and the enormous and vexatious weight of Taxation, have grievously affected the inhabitants of the United Kingdom, particularly the middle and laborious classes, and a large portion of the population are compelled to seek subsistence upon charity, or to take refuge in a workhouse.

Resolved—That the present complicated and alarming evils demand immediate and effectual remedy—that, as they have chiefly arisen from the corrupt and inadequate state of the Representation, all attempts to provide an effectual remedy, without a complete and comprehensive Reform in the Commons House of Parliament, would prove delusive, and could neither allay the irritated feelings of the People, or afford security against future encroachments.

Resolved—That we conceive the inequality in the Representation is too notorious to require to be pointed out, when it is known that Cornwall alone returns more Borough Members than 15 other Counties together, including Middlesex, and more than 11 Counties, even including County Members.

Resolved—That the mode of Election, the Influence and Patronage, the distribution of Places and Pensions among the Members and their Relatives, are facts that cannot but be equally well known: and, even in prosperous times, would afford sufficient motive to every friend of freedom and lover of the Constitution to seek for reformation: but, under the present accumulation of distress, which this system has so unhappily engendered and matured, we conceive the motives are become too powerful, too imperious, any longer to be resisted or delayed.

Resolved—That as Extravagance and Corruption in Governments have been the destruction of all free States, so is it impossible that a system, which has proved fatal to other States, should be innocently pursued in this. We trust, therefore, that there may be at least one exception to the remark of the Historian, who has so well described the rise and fall of other Empires, “*That Individuals sometimes profit by experience—Governments NEVER*”—and that, by timely reformation, the ruin of the British Constitution may be averted.

Resolved—That this Court, knowing the misrepresentations and calumnies that are at all times thrown upon those who are seeking, in a peaceable and constitutional manner, a redress of grievances, declare, that we entertain no projects inconsistent with sound practice and experience. It is to the restoration of the British Constitution—to the drawing of it back to its true principles that we look—the shortening the duration of Parliaments, and a fair and equal distribution of the elective franchise among all Freeholders, Copyholders, and Householders paying taxes—with such regulations as will preserve the purity and integrity of the Members, and render the House of Commons an efficient organ of the People.

Resolved—That for the attainment of these great and national objects, by effecting a general union and co-operation, and giving to the national feeling a firm, temperate, peaceable, and constitutional direction, it is become no less the duty than interest of all persons of rank, character, and property, to give their cordial and zealous assistance to the people at large; and we do hereby invite them thereto, as the best means of promoting and securing the peace, liberty, happiness, and prosperity of the British Empire.

Resolved—That Petitions, therefore, be presented to Parliament, praying them to take these matters into their serious consideration, and that they will be pleased immediately to take the most effective measures for abolishing all *Sinecures* and unmerited Pensions—for reducing the present enormous Military Establish-

ment—for establishing a general System of Retrenchment and Economy—and for the more effectually obtaining a Redress of all Grievances, and guarding against future Evils, they will cause such a Reform in the Commons House of Parliament as will restore to the People their just and fair weight in the Legislature.

FAC-SIMILE OF SHELLEY'S MANUSCRIPT

A Proposal

~~for a National Meeting of the~~
for putting Reform to the Vote
throughout the Kingdom

by the Hermit of Marston

London

Printed for. G. & J. Allen
Welbeck St. Cavendish Sq.
1817

~~An Address~~ !
to the Reformers

* A great question is now agitating ~~in~~ this nation, ~~which needs~~
which no man or one party of men is competent to decide, ~~or~~
~~to pass a verdict in the manner of the decision of which~~
~~there are no matters of evidence which can afford a freight of the result.~~
~~or the one is able to predict, for its issue depends whether~~
we are to be slaves or freemen. Got on their's

It is needless to recapitulate all that has been said about reform.
Everyone is agreed that the House of Commons ~~is~~ not a
representation of the people. The only theoretical question that
remains, is whether the people ought to be represented or not
legislate for themselves, or be governed by laws enacted
which ~~is~~ imposed by taxes originating in the edicts
of ~~some~~ less an assembly which represents somewhat
less than a thousandth part of the entire community.
I think they ought ^{not} to be so taxed & governed. The
Hospital for Lunatics is the only theatre where we can con-
ceive so manifest a comedy to be exhibited as this
English nation now exhibits: as that a single person
battered & winding a thousand of his comrades, or
all they proceed in the work, & then hampers &

Spit upon them, tho' he were ² the most contemptible & degraded of mankind, & they had strength in their arms & courage in their hearts. ~~To see~~ such a parable realised in political society is a spectacle worthy of the utmost indignation & abhorrence.

The prerogatives of Parliament ~~have been exercised~~ in contempt of a sovereignty which has been exercised in contempt of the people, & it is in ~~strict~~ ^{strict} consistency with the laws of human nature, that it sh^d. have been exercised for the people's misery & ruin. Show whom they despise, men virtuously seek to render slavish & wretched. That their scorn may be secure. It is the object of the Reformers to ~~rest on the people to~~ ^{rest on the people to} ~~these rights which have been~~ ^{these rights which have been} ~~exercised~~ ^{exercised} ~~in their~~ ^{in their} ~~contempt.~~ ^{contempt.} It is my object, or I would be silent now.

Slavery is sometimes voluntary. Perhaps the people choose to be enslaved, perhaps it is their will to be degraded & ignorant & furnished ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~sanctification~~ ^{sanctification} of custom had so ~~securely~~ ^{securely} ~~ruined~~ ^{ruined} them to its ~~instruments~~ ^{instruments} so ~~securely~~ ^{securely} that they

no man rather ³ part with their wives & their children
see their wives & children stam'd by smoke, than ~~see~~
~~to~~ rather hear, without indignation all the contumacies
of the ~~powerful~~ ^{powerful}, rather walk ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~powerful~~ ^{powerful}
a ~~day~~ Perhaps custom is then only God, & they
its fanatic worshippers, ~~so~~ they will show in fact
& ~~prove~~ ^{walk} in favour rather than deny that fact.

Perhaps the majority of this nation decree that
they ~~shall~~ ^{will} ~~be~~ ^{be} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~equanimity~~ ^{equanimity} & want, that they
~~will~~ ~~not~~ ~~be~~ ~~represented~~ ~~in~~ ~~Parliament~~, that
they will not ^{to} ~~deprive~~ ^{deprive} of ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~power~~ ^{power} those who
have reduced them to the miserable condition of
~~being~~ ~~the~~ ~~in~~ ~~which~~ ~~they~~ ~~now~~ ~~exist~~. ~~Is~~ ~~such~~ ~~to~~
~~of~~ ~~such~~ ~~to~~ It is their will - it is their own concern.

If such be their decision, the champions of the
rights, of & the masons over the errors & calamities
of man, must return to their homes in silence, until
~~supposing~~ ~~a~~ ~~accumulated~~ ~~sufferings~~ shall have produced the
effect of reason:—

The question now at issue, is whether the majority
of the adult individuals of the United Kingdom of
Great Britain & Ireland, ~~a~~ ~~complete~~ ~~body~~ ~~or~~ ~~are~~
a complete representation in the legislative



Assembly.

~~If that question is answered in the affirmative~~
 I have no doubt that such is their ^{with} desire, &
~~that they wish~~ I believe this ~~is their private~~
 opinion of most persons conversant with the
 state of public feeling. But it ought the
 fact ought to be formally ascertained before
 we proceed. ~~If the Reformers are really in the~~
 If the majority of the adult population
 shall should ~~solemnly~~ state their desire to be, that
~~they should be adequately represented~~ the representatives
 whom they might appoint should constitute the
 common house of Parliament. ~~if there is an~~
 end of the dispute. Parliament would then be
 required, not petitioned to prepare some effectual
 plan ~~for carrying the sense of will into effect~~ ^{for carrying the sense of will into effect} and if Parliament should
 then refuse the consequences of the contest
 that would ensue, would rest on ^{its} ~~their~~ presumption
~~of tameness~~ ^{also} Parliament would have whether
 against the people, ~~then~~
 If the majority of the adult population

shall, when seriously ⁵ called upon for their opinion, be
determined, on grounds however erroneous, that the
experiment of innovation ^{by reform in} Parliament is an
evil of greater magnitude than the ~~obscure~~ ~~of~~ ~~par~~
consequences of misgovernment which ~~spring~~ ~~from~~
its ~~being~~ ~~made~~ ~~the~~ ~~instrument~~ ~~of~~ ~~reform~~ which
we all ~~desire~~ ~~to~~ ~~which~~ ~~to~~ ~~afford~~ ~~a~~ ~~constitutional~~
sanction... then it becomes us to be silent. - &
we should be guilty ~~of~~ of the great crime of
which ~~we~~ I have conditionally ~~imposed~~ ~~on~~
the House of Commons, if ~~after~~ ~~the~~ ~~consequence~~
of a ~~total~~ ~~expulsion~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~House~~ ~~of~~ ~~Commons~~, ~~that~~ ~~we~~ ~~will~~ ~~the~~ ~~national~~ ~~will~~, ~~that~~ ~~to~~
~~the~~ ~~acquiescence~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~existing~~ ~~system~~, we should,
by partial assemblies of the ~~people~~, ~~as~~ ~~well~~ ~~as~~
by any party ~~act~~, excite the minority to
assume ~~distinct~~ ~~the~~ ~~decision~~... ~~let~~ ~~the~~
~~national~~ ~~will~~ ~~be~~ ~~expressed~~ ~~by~~ ~~the~~ ~~people~~
~~be~~ ~~free~~ ~~if~~ ~~it~~ ~~wills~~ ~~to~~

Let this ~~then~~ ~~point~~ ~~to~~ the first step
towards reform us to ascertain the point

I ~~see~~

For this purpose I think the following plan would be effectual.

~~To call a meeting that you, Sir, should call a meeting to be held that a meeting should be appointed to be held at the Crown & Anchor Tavern on the seventeenth of March, & that all the friends of reform be invited to attend that meeting. For this purpose ^{to take into} consideration the most effectual measures for ascertaining whether or no, a Reform in Parliament was the will of the majority of the individuals of the British Nation.~~

~~That the friends of reform be invited to attend in any part of the country should be earnestly entreated to be present at this meeting.~~

That all the friends the most eloquent & the most virtuous & the most venerable among you should employ all your authority & industry to persuade men to lay aside

all discussion respecting the topics on which they
are divided, & by the loss which has been
to their suffering country ^{convinced} ~~excited~~ them to combine
all their energies to set this great question
at rest. - ^{Whether} Does the nation desire reform in
Parliament or no?

That the friends of Reform residing in any
part of the country, be ~~required~~ be earnestly
intreated to lend perhaps their last effort ~~in this~~
& the decisive effort to set their hopes & fears
at rest. - that those who can, should come
to London, & those who cannot ~~should~~ address
a letter to the ~~chairman of the meeting~~
but who yet feel that the aid of their ~~statements~~
might be beneficial should address a letter to
the chairman of the meeting explaining their
sentiments. - let these letters be read aloud, &
all things be transacted in the face of day.

Let the following resolutions be proposed.
~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~meeting~~ which should resemble
at least

Let Resolutions of an ^o import similar to those
that follow be proposed.

1. ~~That the~~ ~~reference~~ ~~be~~ ~~the~~ ~~implication~~ ~~is~~
That ~~those~~ who think that is the duty of the
People of this Nation to exact a full representation
such a reform in the Common House of Parliament
as should make that House a full & complete
representation of their will, & that the People
have a right to perform this duty, ~~and~~ ~~not~~
~~have~~ ~~assumed~~ ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~purpose~~ ~~of~~ ~~collecting~~
evidence as to how far it is the will of
the majority of the People to acquit themselves
of this duty & ^{to} exercise this right. ~~for~~ ~~they~~
~~may~~ ~~say~~ ~~that~~ ~~perhaps~~ ~~they~~ ~~ought~~ ~~the~~

~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~to~~ ~~majority~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~nation~~ ~~should~~ ~~be~~ ~~found~~ ~~on~~ ~~examination~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~determined~~
to continue to be government ~~and~~ ~~they~~ ~~are~~ ~~now~~
governed, the

This ~~meeting~~ shall be continuous to be held
day after

For that purpose they divide the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Ireland into ~~40~~ ⁴² Districts equal in each of which ~~as this purpose they divide the population~~ ^{of inhabitants is 300 persons or} of Great Britain & Ireland into 300 ~~of distinct portions, each to contain an~~ ^{distinct portions, each to contain an} equal number of persons; ~~the Commission~~ ^{of 300 persons or possibly 300 persons} ~~300 persons of different~~ ^{persons who might} to be ~~sent for the purpose, to visit personally~~ ^{be sent for the purpose, to visit personally} to visit every individual within the district named in his commission, & to inquire whether ~~so no that individual is willing to sign~~ ^{so no that individual is willing to sign} declaration No 2. the ~~second resolution,~~ ^{declaration} ~~requesting him to annex to his signature~~ ^{requesting him to annex to his signature} any explanation he might think fit or exposure of his sentiments which he might choose to place in record. ~~That the following declaration be~~ ^{That the following declaration be} ~~That the House of Commons do not~~ ^{That the House of Commons do not} does not represent the ~~people of the British~~ ^{people of the British} Nation; ~~that it is the duty of~~ ^{that it is the duty of}

to ~~request~~ ¹⁰ ~~to require~~ ~~that~~ ~~House~~ ~~to~~ ~~originate~~
~~such~~ ~~measures~~, ~~as~~ ~~shall~~ ~~concern~~ ~~the~~ ~~employment~~
~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~public~~ ~~revenue~~ ~~or~~ ~~the~~ ~~property~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~people~~
~~and~~ ~~we~~ ~~do~~ ~~not~~ ~~think~~ ~~it~~ ~~proper~~ ~~to~~ ~~publish~~
declare, & our signatures annexed shall be evidence
of our firm & solemn conviction that the
liberty, the happiness & the interests of the
great Nation to which it is our boast to
belong, ~~are~~ ~~not~~ ~~in~~ ~~danger~~ ~~of~~ ~~being~~ ~~degraded~~ ~~by~~ ~~the~~
~~corrupt~~ & ~~inadequate~~ manner in which
the members of that Assembly ~~which~~ ~~is~~
~~falsely~~ ~~assumes~~ ~~to~~ ~~itself~~ ~~the~~ ~~title~~ ~~of~~ ~~representatives~~
~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Nation~~, ~~are~~ ~~members~~ ~~are~~ ~~chosen~~ ~~to~~
sit in the Commons House of Parliament.
We hereby express, in the before God & our
Country, ~~calling~~ ~~for~~ ~~deliberate~~ & ~~unbiased~~
persuasion, that it is our duty if we ~~are~~
~~found~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~minority~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~great~~ ~~question~~
~~to~~ ~~petition~~, if among the majority to require
that that House should originate such
measures of reform, as would render its

in
separately

members the actual Representatives of the Nation."

4. ~~to~~ That this meeting shall be held day after day, until ~~its object~~ ^{it shall have} ~~been~~ ^{been} determined on the ^{whole details, the} manner in which the plan for collecting evidence as to the will of the Nation on the subject of a reform in Parliament shall be put in execution.

5 That a subscription be set on foot to defray the expenses of this plan.

In the foregoing proposal of Resolutions to be submitted to a National Meeting of the Friends of Reform, I have purposely avoided detail; it being the principal feature in my ~~design~~ ^{design} to excite others to a task of which I am no less incapable than habits of seclusion & delicacy of health, ~~then~~ ^{if} it shall prove that I have in any degree beneficially ^{practically} or beneficially afforded a hint to men of established popularity who have earned & established their popularity by personal sacrifice & intellectual

eminence, ~~which such~~ ¹² as I have not the presumption
to rival, it belongs to them let it belong to
them to pursue the suggestions afforded by the
& develop the cause which they suggest which
in the retirement of my chest have modestly
~~presented a cause and suggestions which relating~~
to ^{a the great cause of Liberty} ~~the~~ ^{alone} ~~cause~~ which has been mentioned (I am
scarcely conscious of a metaphor) with that very
great & true & fear: Some have ^{found} ~~found~~ it in
dungeons, others have cherished it in famine
all have been constant to it amidst persecution
& calumny, & in the face of the sanctions of Rome
— So accomplish what ye have begun. —

I shall mention ^{three} only one ~~technical~~ point relating
to the practical part of my proposal. ^{consequent} expenses
according to my present conception, would be
exceedingly necessary in order. This must be met by
funds should be created by subscription to meet these
expensive demands. I have an income of
a thousand a year ^{on} from which I support my

154
wife & children in decent comfort ~~to form~~ ^{to form} the form
which I satisfy certain large claims of general
justice. - Should ~~any~~ any plan resembling that
which I have proposed, be determined on by you
I will give £100 being a tenth part of my
yearly income towards its object. And ~~without~~
~~confidently~~ I will not deem so friendly of myself
as to believe that I shall stand alone ^{in this} ~~crafty~~
~~like devotion to the public good~~ when any
~~temperate & rational & consistent~~ scheme for the
for the ^{benefit} good shall have received the sanction
of the great & good men, who have devoted
themselves for its preservation.

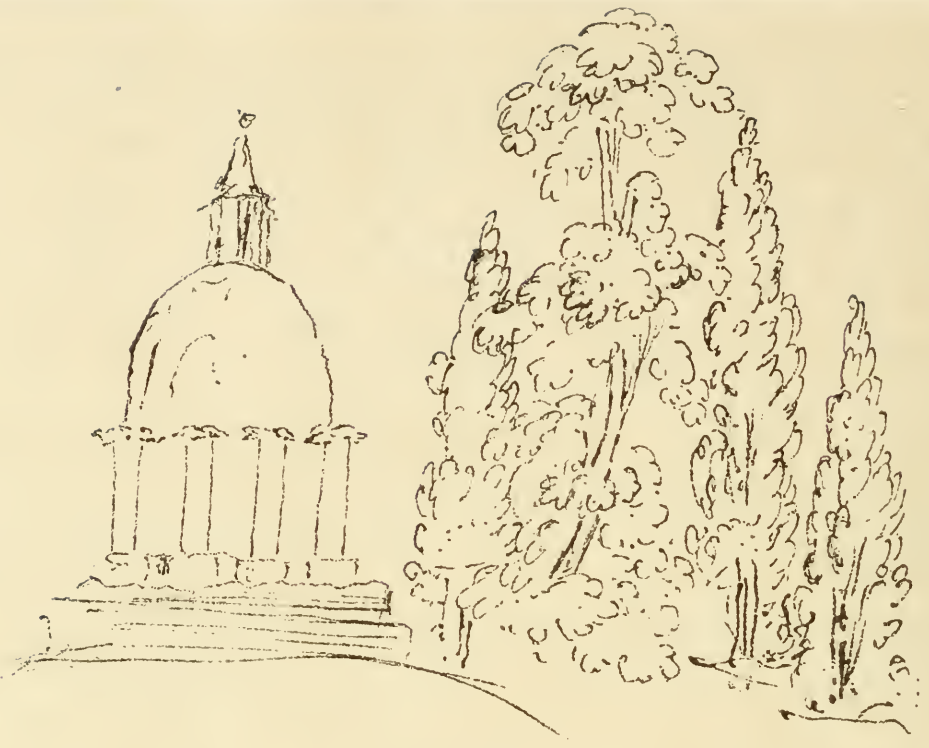
The leading feature in my plan is

~~The only~~ ~~the~~ ~~only~~

A certain degree of coalition among the sincere
friends of Reform in whatever shape, is indispensable to
the success of this proposal. ~~The advocates of annual~~
~~Parliaments & universal suffrage~~ requires some
~~sacrifice of the spirit of the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ The friends of
Universal or of limited suffrage, of Annual or Triennial
Parliaments ought to settle these subjects of

on which they disagree, ¹⁴ when it is ~~certain~~ that persons
whether the Nation will ~~any~~ that measure on
which they are all agreed. It is trivial to discuss
what species of reform shall have place, when it
yet remains a question whether there will be ~~any~~
reform or no. — nothing remains for me, but

Meanwhile, it ~~will be asked~~ ~~as I am bound~~ to
state explicitly our sentiments on this question of
reform. — ~~Some Annual Parliaments appear~~
It appears to me that Annual Parliaments ought
to be adopted as an immediate measure, the one
which strongly tends to preserve the liberty & happiness
of the Nation, ~~by enabling men to cultivate energies~~
~~which have~~ It would enable men to cultivate
those energies on which the performance of the
political duties belonging to the citizens of a free
state as the rightful guardian of its prosperity,
eventually depends. It would familiarise men with
liberty, by multiplying them to an habitual
acquaintance with its forms. ~~It would send us~~
~~about~~ Political institutions are ~~not~~ unthought of



I have no doubt that the above is a sketch by my dear friend Shelley's own hand.

Leigh Hunt.

possibility of such improvements as no rational person
 can consider as possible in the present degraded
 condition to which the vital imperfections in the
 existing system has reduced the
 vast multitude of men. - The securest method of
 arriving at such beneficial innovations is to proceed gradually
 & with caution, or in the place of that order &
 freedom which the friends of reform ~~ought~~ assert to
 be violator now, anarchy & despotism will follow.

Normal Parliaments have my entire assent. - I
 will not state those general reasonings in their favour
 which Mr. Collet has placed ~~before~~ beyond the reach
 which, Mr. Collet & other writers have already made
 familiar to the public mind. -

With respect to Universal Suffrage, ~~I cannot but~~
~~I~~ confess I consider its adoption in the present
 unprepared state of public knowledge & feeling, a
 measure fraught with peril. I think that now
 but those who ~~pay~~ a register their names as
 paying a certain small sum in direct taxes
 ought, at present, to ~~pay~~ to send members to

16

Parliament. The consequences of the immediate extension of the elective franchise to every man adult would be to place the ~~supreme~~ power in the hands of men who have been rendered brutish & stupid & ferocious by ages of slavery. It is to suppose that the qualities belonging to a demagogue are such as are sufficient to ~~fit~~ ^{enable} a legislator. I allow Major Cartwright's arguments to be unanswerable; it is the right abstractly it is the right of every human being to have a share in the government. But Mr. Parnell's arguments are also unanswerable; & who is bold enough to say that he would abolish the Lords & pull down the King, careless of all the ruin & ~~loss~~ ^{distress} that must ensue. I am intimately persuaded that theoretically a pure republic is ~~the~~ a form of politics may be shown by experience the most obvious & it is visible to be that system of social order the fittest to produce the happiness or and promote the greatness.

wisdom of man. It ^{is} better to can use comes to with
reason, or offer smaller helps of any beneficial
kind than the plan which stands alone to
the great & the aristocratic power in branches
of our constitution, before the public mind, that
many generations of improvement, shall have arrived
at the maturity which can disregard those symbols
of its childhood.

~~Get if the Sub Nation will~~

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1887

The Shelley Society

PUBLICATIONS FOR 1886—7

THE SHELLEY SOCIETY.

PUBLICATIONS FOR 1886.

1. Shelley's *Adonais*: an Elegy on the Death of John Keats. Pisa, 4to, 1821. A Type-Facsimile Reprint on hand-made Paper. Edited, with a Bibliographical Introduction, by Thomas J. Wise. (*Third Edition, Revised*). Price 10s. Boards. [Issued.]
2. Shelley's *Hellas, a Lyrical Drama*. London, 8vo, 1822. A Type-Facsimile Reprint on hand-made Paper; together with Shelley's *Prologue to Hellas*, and Notes by Dr. Garnett and Mary W. Shelley. Edited, with an Introduction, by Thos. J. Wise. Presented by Mr. F. S. Ellis. (*Third Edition.*) Price 8s. Boards. [Issued.]
3. Shelley's *Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude; and other Poems*. London, fcap. 8vo, 1816. A Type-Facsimile Reprint on hand-made Paper, with a new Preface by Bertram Dobell. (*Second Edition, Revised.*) Price 6s. Boards. [Issued.]
4. Shelley's *Cenci* (for the Society's performance in May), with a prologue by Dr. John Todhunter; an Introduction and Notes by Harry Buxton Forman and Alfred Forman; and a Portrait of Beatrice Cenci. Crown 8vo. Price 2s. 6d. Wrappers. [Issued.]
5. Shelley's *Vindication of Natural Diet*. London, 12mo, 1813. A Reprint, 1882, with a Prefatory Note by H. S. Salt and W. E. A. Axon. Presented by Mr. Axon. (*Second Edition.*) [Issued.]
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8. *The Shelley Library: an Essay in Bibliography*. London, 8vo, 1886. Part 1. "First Editions and their Reproductions." By H. Buxton Forman. Wrappers. [Issued.]

NOTE.—Copies of Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 can be purchased from the Society's Publishers and Agents at the prices quoted above, less the usual discount. They can also be procured through the

trade in the ordinary manner. Nos. 5, 7 and 8 are not on sale. The complete set of books (8 volumes) for 1886 can, however, be obtained upon payment of the subscription (one guinea) for that year.

PUBLICATIONS FOR 1887.

The Society's Publications for 1887 will be so many of the following as the funds at their disposal enable the Committee to produce. The first three are already delivered; the succeeding four are in an advanced state, and will be sent out to Members at an early date. These seven volumes will complete the Society's first issue for the current year.

1. *The Wandering Jew*, a Poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley. Edited, with an Introduction, by Bertram Dobell. 8vo. Price 8s. Boards. [Issued.]

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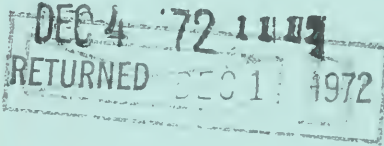
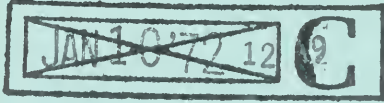
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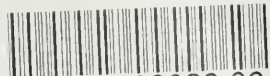
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