

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

21 OCTOBER, 1895, TO 27 MAY, 1896,

WITH

Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

No. XXXVIII.

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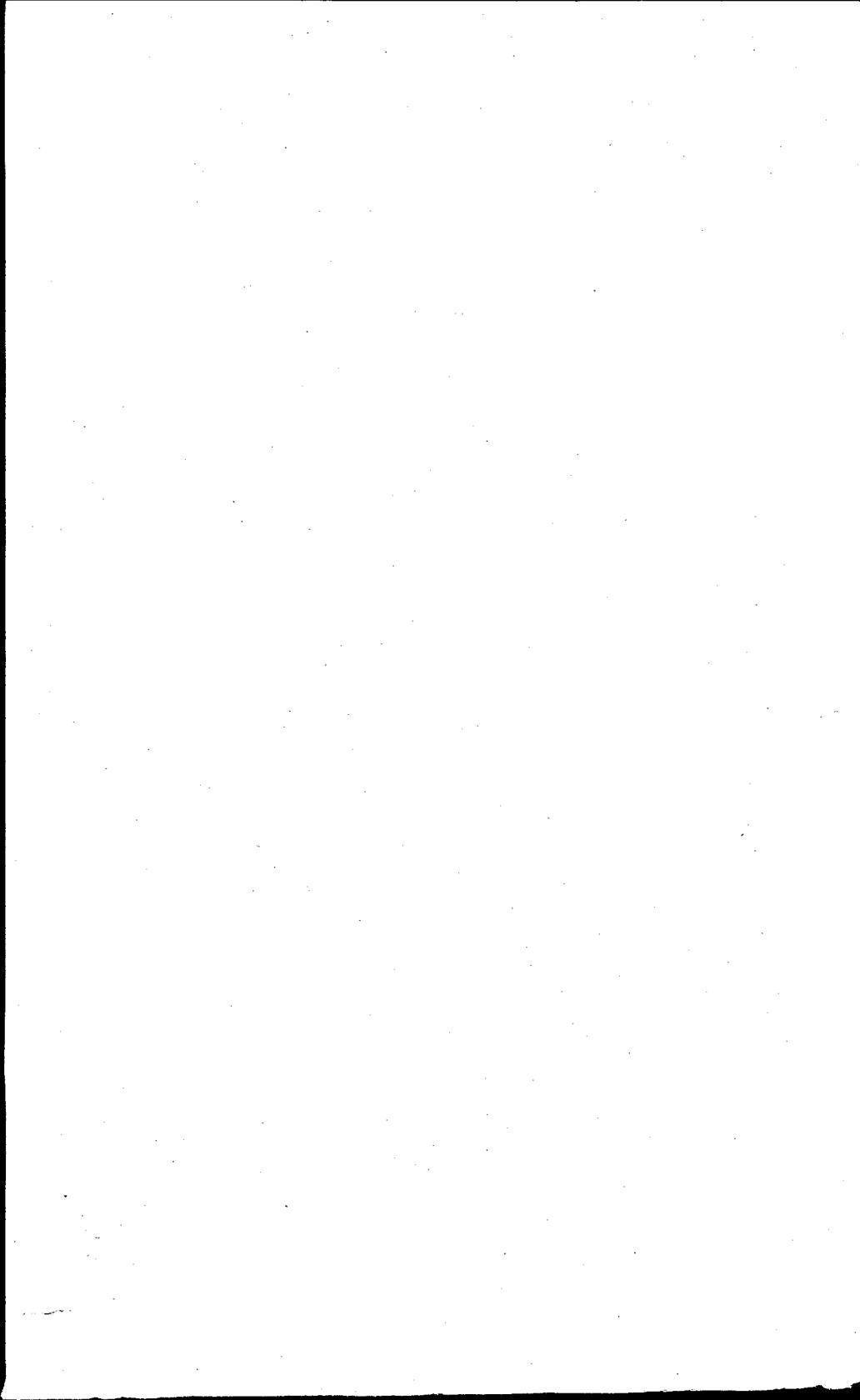
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The President made the following Communication :

ON PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AT CAMBRIDGE
SIXTY YEARS AGO.

The hand-bills which I exhibit this evening cover the years from 1829 to 1839, and discover in varied forms the popular agitations of the day. Whatever wit and humour there may have been in the addresses and speeches that were delivered from time to time, there is little to be found in the hand-bills which must have been issued pretty freely; the humour, in most instances, not rising above the level of a school boy's attack and repartee. But in some cases there is a certain amount of ingenuity displayed, and the abuse is toned down to a quiet sarcasm.

Of all the popular prejudices that flourished at the time, perhaps none had a greater hold on the public mind than the fear of University Influence. Joshua King was President of Queens' College and Vice-Chancellor of the University in 1833, and a long squib was issued against University "Bribery, Coercion, Corruption and Intimidation." It is called a chapter from the 999th Book of Corruption and is written in Biblical form.

"And it came to pass in the reign of William the Fourth, there was a great talk of Corporation Inquiry and 'Church Reform.'

And Joshua said to himself—'I am *King* of this town, and will therefore make the people vote according to my judgment.' So he rang the bell for Jobson—[the University Marshal].

And he said unto him—'*Jobson, Jobson*, go thou into the high-ways and hedges, to my tradesmen, and to all my people, and thus say unto them My commands are that they vote for Sir Edward [Sugden] whether they have promised or not.

Therefore put on thy gown that it may make a better appearance."

After several other verses, too long to quote, we come to the point.

“Now it came to pass that three days before the election ‘Joshua’ sent unto his gardener and demanded his vote.

And the gardener said unto him—‘I cannot give it you, because I intend to vote for Spring-Rice.’

And when Joshua heard this, he was exceedingly wroth, and said ‘Thou fool, thou knowest not what is right; leave me, for I will not have a man on my premises who differs from me.’

So the gardener is now out of the garden, because he would not break his word and oblige his master.”

All the above alludes to the so-called bribery and corruption of James King, the President's gardener, and the squib was considered of sufficient importance to call forth a long and indignant letter from an ardent Tory, addressed to Professor Henslow. A sharp contest followed, Henslow taking a prominent part in exposing cases of bribery, and though perhaps there are few now with a personal knowledge of the Professor, we can judge of the feeling he raised by the still unobliterated letters on Corpus, which a shower of rain brings out more distinctly—“Henslow common informer.”

So great was the crusade against Bribery that at the election of 1839 a sermon on its evil consequences was re-printed and distributed—a sermon of more than a hundred years old, that had produced such a wholesome effect on its first reading, that many were reported to have returned the bribes they had taken, and to have voted another way. But the political conscience had become tougher in the meanwhile, and though the sermon was re-published to emphasize what the Whig paper called the Great Bribery Case, when one Samuel Long was examined on the charge of bribing a voter, its pious reflections do not seem to have moved the heart of any voter.

Professor Pryme is known, by name at least, to most of us, and his personality may still be familiar to many. He issued a letter with the usual modest allusion to his own capabilities, and the usual appeal to the profound intelligence of the electors, who could only act, he was sure, from disinterested motives and a high sense of duty.

The smart squib issued by the opposite party is scarcely in

That *Jim Crow* represents Thomas Milner Gibson can only be assumed from the fact of his having "ratted" on one occasion.

The old rhyme I quote may be familiar to some. Its meaning, to me at least, is absolutely obscure.

"Turn about, and wheel about, and do just so,
Turn about, and wheel about, and jump *Jim Crow*."

One or two lines of this description are quite enough, on which to hang a squib! The Tiger is probably the agent he employed.

Wado must be a playful allusion to Mr Edward Wade of Petty Cury.

There are many squibs of this character, and I wish there were space in which to quote a few more. One in connection with the Poor Law Bill must not be omitted.

"This is the New Poor Law Bill,
And this is Spring-Rice
Who ventur'd the price
Of his seat for the Town
By sending us down
This New Poor Law Bill.

This is Don Julian
The retired Civilian
Who keeps ready made speeches
In the fob of his breeches
When spouting for Rice
Who ventur'd the price, etc.

And this is old Gunning
O sly fox and cunning
Who gets hundreds a year
For doing nothing here
But carrying the maces
And making grimaces
And all for Spring-Rice, etc.

And this is Eb. F.....r [Ebenezer Foster]
The slate pencil poster
Who votes for Spring-Rice
Because in a trice

He'd give him degrees
 Where ever he'd please
 If he'd vote for Spring-Rice, etc.

Then Knight you shall see
 Our member shall be
 And let Rice go and halt on
 Peterborough or Malton.
 Because the said Rice
 Without asking advice
 Of his friends in the town
 Sent Commissioners down
 With this New Poor Law Bill."

The Poor Law Bill struck at the very roots of the sufferings of the poor, but with its efforts to remedy some of the grosser evils of pauperism laid itself open to many and serious charges.

But in most of the hand-bills the subject is approached from the sentimental side, and the Poor Law itself is scarcely attacked, but rather the unnecessarily cruel manner of its enforcement. It is difficult to guess how far public feeling is influenced by these appeals, but the growth of national feeling is too vigorous and healthy not to survive the violent reactions to which it is at times subjected.

No account of the Elections would be complete without noticing the part taken by Undergraduates, and one act in the conservative interest perpetrated by an ardent undergraduate, who in after years attained high distinction as a valiant officer, is worth preserving, though it did not escape severe censure in certain quarters.

A number of voters, whose judgment was doubted at such a crisis, were invited on polling day to partake of breakfast, and be driven afterwards to the poll.

The breakfast, probably, was protracted beyond the usual limits of the meal. Breakfast at an end, the voters in more or less of a muddled condition, and with a somewhat confused sense of the needs of their country, were packed into a covered vehicle to convey them to the poll; but the route taken was circuitous, and by the wit of their host, the unfortunate voters found themselves, at a time when they should have registered

their votes, far beyond the town of Cambridge, and with no hope of returning at an hour before the poll would be closed!

We can all walk about safely now, even in electioneering times, without the fear of assault, but an indignant letter from a whig supporter shows us some of the difficulties of sixty years ago. H. G. writes: "To avoid being surrounded, I went up Field's Court, and whilst engaged with two or three men, someone from the street threw a stone which struck me under the eye, and at the same instant a quantity of fresh mortar was thrown in my face." H. G. was taken to an adjoining house and had his eyes bathed, and was accompanied by a daughter who hoped to protect her father. But at the end of Market Street, we hear that the driver of a Tory fly attempted to drive against them, but succeeded only in driving over the curb-stone. "On passing up Andrew's Street," I quote the letter, "the marks of blood on the bandage were greeted by shouts of laughter from well-dressed females from the opposite windows, accompanied by loud expressions of satisfaction at what had happened to me!" H. G. can be no other than Henry Gunning referred to in the verses above.

But if there was the unfortunate display of personal violence, and outraged dignity, the same spirit actuated a grand *spectacle* to celebrate a party victory. On the success of the Tory Party in 1839, Mr Sutton and his supporters mounted a decorated car, and there was a grand procession headed by two masked men on horse-back, and several flags, followed by two trumpeters heading the first band; these were followed in their turn by a great number of horsemen three abreast. "At the top of the Maid's Causeway," (I quote from the *Chronicle*), "there was a spectacle of more than ordinary splendour, when a very beautiful picture of the Marquis of Granby was exhibited from the window of Mr Leach—a humble but very clever artist—the Marquis of Granby being one of the most illustrious of Mr Sutton's ancestors." "From that moment," says the *Chronicle*, "there was a universal determination to forsake for ever the delusions that the specious promises of the Champions of Whiggery had entrapped us into."

We take things more quietly now and are doubtless more circumspect. We do not blazon abroad our politics, and any voter can register his vote silently and secretly without let or hindrance. Some of us may regret the boisterous fun and ingenious tricks that have given place to greater order and dignity, and it is a melancholy fact that even the demonstrations that are got up to celebrate a success are for the most part feeble and unconvincing.

Public spirit may be just as strong as ever, but we are more reticent in our expression, and have lost a taste for the exuberant fancy that make former elections appear more like the passing pageant in a serio-comic play, than an important page in the history of a University town.

Professor HUGHES made a Communication on the derivation of the boomerang and the battle axes of the Fijian type from cetacean ribs.

Professor HUGHES then made the following Communication :

ON THE EARTHWORKS BETWEEN THE TYNE AND THE SOLWAY.

Since the publication of the short communication which I had the honour of making some years ago, much work has been done along the line of the Roman Wall, and as some of this has an important bearing upon the special point which I then brought before the notice of the Society, I have ventured to return to the subject. I then considered the character of the earthworks known collectively as "the Vallum." They consist of one or more deep fosses with banks along them on either side formed of the earth which was dug out of the fosse. The distribution of the Roman Camps seemed to me to point to there having been here some more or less defensible line along

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