

suffrage as the grand panacea for all political evils. I am willing to allow as much excellence and efficiency in American democracy as can be proved. But the shield is not all gold. I have turned round the copper side. Let those who are capable of judging judge.

The subject of this lecture does not absolutely require me to say anything about the schemes of Parliamentary reform at present being agitated in this country. Nevertheless, it would be affectation to pretend that what I have brought forward in reference to the vices of democratic government has no reference to the present movement. On the contrary, nothing could have induced me to expose these hideous details of social corruption, had I not seen with open eyes that not a few of my countrymen are on the point of rushing into a course, which, unless wisely checked, must infallibly end in a similar ruin. I do not say that the majority of the working classes, any more than the learned and eloquent gentleman, the late Lord Advocate of the Whig Government, are democrats in principle, and mean seriously to do anything that will seriously disturb the fine social balance of our mixed constitution ; but from my position as a thinking man, uninfluenced by the movements of parties, I can distinctly discern that they are being borne along by a current which they will not long be able to control, that they have been submitting to a dictation which they ought to have scorned, and that they are using levers with which they will shake the foundations of the house in which they dwell. It is because the proposed Reform Bills of the most recent epoch of our legislation are democratic, and purely democratic, in their tendency, that as a student of history and a friend of reason, I have from the beginning decidedly opposed them. Let no man imagine, however, that I am opposed to the recent Reform Bills, because they propose to give a large increase of electoral power to the working classes. I have not the slightest objection to the working classes. Many of them are doubtless more intelligent, and more trustworthy, in a political capacity, than some classes of those immediately above them in the social scale. But what I object to is the principle on which it is proposed to give these classes additional votes ; the principle of representing numbers alone,