

it did no harm—(if indeed it did no harm)—in that Bill. That Bill placed power in the hands of the middle classes,—the body which, as the medium between the upper and lower social extremes, Aristotle declared to be the safest.¹ The majority constituted by it was a majority of the select, if not of the best, at least of those who, as large experience has proved, can be most safely intrusted with political power. The majority now proposed to be established may form a majority of the lower and sub-middle classes against the middle and upper classes; and there lies the fault. The first care of a wise Reform Bill at the present crisis, should be not to disfranchise the natural civic aristocracy of the country in favour of the democracy. It is a law of God which cannot be contravened, that the high should rule the low; and that civil government should not be thrown into the hands of those who, by nature and the unchangeable constitution of things, are least capable of governing. Do I then mean to treat the working classes as serfs,—to give them no voice in what concerns their own life and liberty, to declare them for ever incapable of social manhood? Not at all. I do not grudge them representation; I only refuse them domination. If a Reform Bill must be brought in to 'settle the question,' to allay some real and much imaginary discontent, and to stifle the demagogues (though this will never be possible), let us have a Reform Bill which, instead of crouching to John Bright, and borrowing stale formulas of French liberty-mongers, shall distinctly and decidedly denounce the insufficiency of the democratic principle, and give us some reasonable guarantee for the preservation both of our civic and of our family aristocracy. Let us show the world that our British brain is capable of containing more than one idea at a time, and that we are not to be clamoured out of our common sense or cheated of our historic memories by the silly admiration of an ambitious theory. Let us give the working classes votes, that is to say, more votes than they have now,—for their actual influence is already considerable; but let us represent other things besides hands and labour. Every wise politician will agree

¹ ὅπου δὲ το τῶν μέσων, ὑπερτείνει πλῆθος, ἐνταῦθ' ἐνδέχεται πολιτείας εἶναι μόνιμον.—*Pol.* IV. 12.