

TO THE WORKING CLASSES OF ABERDEEN.

FELLOW FRIENDS,---We have now got Parliamentary Reform, and, as a matter of course, expect Burgh Reform, but what, I would ask, will it signify to us or our children, if this Reform only amount³ to a different mode of election our Magistrates and Town Council? I say, none at all, unless a reduction be made in the payments that are at present demanded before a man can be a Burgess. At present, a man commencing business as a merchant in Aberdeen, must pay no less a sum than L.55, 15s. This is a most unreasonable demand. But if an industrious tradesman, however well qualified, open a shop in town, a demand will be made upon him for about L.100, if he be 40 years of age. Is this right or reasonable? That something should and must be given for the support of our municipal government, no rational person will deny, but what right have the Incorporated Trades to form themselves into Friendly Societies, and compel entrants to join them? What a tradesman has to pay for the common good, may be too much or too little for aught I know; however, for this purpose every Burgess ought to pay what is fair, but this Friendly Society concern is one of the most absurd things ever heard of; and what is very remarkable, the right of the Incorporated Trades to establish these Societies, has never yet been called in question. It would be well if the public in general would turn their attention to this subject. At present we must take our bread, our clothes, and our shoes, and almost every thing, from persons who are able to pay so much into the funds of these Societies, whether well or ill qualified for their work. There is no fear of a man being found apt and able, by the Trade, who has the cash in his hand.

It is really very hard that the public should be deprived of the service of a good workman because he happens not to possess £80 or £100 more than is necessary for the purpose of his business. A man, I believe, who has served an apprenticeship of 5 or 7 years to a Burgess, may be allowed to work at his own trade upon paying, in some cases, probably less than £80; but, my friends, if you would only consider how many have sons serving as apprentices who are not able to advance, when their time of service is over, even L.10 or L.5, you will see at once how little advantage a poor man has by making his son a tradesman. The fact is, there is nothing to prevent these Fudal Bodies to say in the course of a week that no man shall bake a loaf or make a coat within the Burgh, unless he pay into their Society L.10,000! For my own part, I do not believe they have any right to demand one penny more than what goes to the common good, and I would most earnestly recommend that no time be lost in forwarding a petition to the new Parliament, to do away with these most iniquitous monopolies, for I have no doubt but any such petition will be attended to. This is the very time that the Working Classes should bestir themselves, and if they do not there is no doubt but they will have cause to repent their carelessness.

Yours &c.

ONE OF YOURSELVES

October, 1832.