

which were returned by the gentlemen on the platform and the people on the face of the hill referred to. The trades that had the largest and most tasteful display and the most attractive mottoes were cheered to the echo.

On the motion of Mr John Crombie, jun., Daneston, Rev. C. C. Macdonald, St Clements' Established Church, was called to the chair. The other gentlemen on the platform were:—Messrs John Park, Chief Magistrate, Fraserburgh; William Robertson, Farm overseer, Mill of Birness, Ellon; Alex. Bremner, Sandbank, Kemnay; Alex. Duncan, 27 Jute Street, Aberdeen; Sir A. H. Gordon, M.P.; Messrs A. D. Ainslie of Delgaty, H. D. M'Combie, Milton of Kemnay; W. S. Marr, Tarves; John Mac, Laurencekirk; D. A. Pearson of Johnston Lodge; J. B. Greig, Laurencekirk; J. Kerr, Laurencekirk; John Officer, Laurencekirk; David Japp, Laurencekirk; Andrew Ritchie, Laurencekirk; W. Meston, Peterculter; John Crombie, jun., Daneston; J. Hay, Little Ythsie, Tarves; Douglass Duncan, advocate; J. D. Milne of Melgum, W. A. Mellis, Huntly; William Benton, Craigmoré; W. Murray of Mastrick; James Smith, Easter Tolmads; A. H. Hall of Campfield; Sylvester Campbell, Col. Fordyce, Brucklay Castle; Messrs A. Finlayson, Aberdeen; Harvey Hall, advocate; George Stewart, Aberdeen; W. Findlay, Albyn Place; Baillie Kinghorn, Baillie Gordon, Messrs W. Alexander. *Free Press*; J. W. Crombie, Balgownie; John Crombie, Balgownie; W. Greig, Bridge of Don; D. C. Macdonald, solicitor; James Fobes, solicitor, Banff, &c.

The Chairman, who was received with loud cheering, after a few introductory remarks, said—What is the meaning of this great gathering from hill and glen? It is an inspiration of freedom that makes us one—(cheers). We are here to take up a position from which we shall not be driven, to assert with all the emphasis of numbers, order, and enthusiasm that the government of this country, whatever it may seem, is in reality a democracy; that the law makers are the people—(cheers). We come to support our chosen representatives against what I venture to believe shall be a great effort of an effete aristocracy to bar the way of national development and to control for the preservation of a caste the legislation of the country—(cheers). Whatever it be in form the constitution of the State is in reality democratic. Since the great struggle of '32 that fact has been becoming every year more apparent—(cheers). In 1832 the king put his sign manual to a charter greater than that of Runnymede—(cheers). In that crisis too the nobles signed their death warrants—(laughter and cheers). Since then in every serious conflict with the people the House of Lords has ignominiously succumbed. In 1867 Disraeli—(hisses)—gave in his adhesion to democracy and prepared the way for the collapse of Toryism. In this year not yet ended, and which we are determined shall be memorable, the Tories of the House of Commons threw up the sponge. In the records of that House it is written that the Franchise Bill passed without a dissenting voice—(cheers). The Lords themselves while pulling their gilded chamber about their ears to oppose the development of democracy, accept the principle of the franchise. And last of all that master of bounce,

Lord Salisbury—(laughter)—strutting imperiously in the torn tails of Elijah's mantle, plainly declared at the Manchester picnic that when the people spoke out he would obey—(laughter and cheers). Speaking of the Government he said "It is from the present constituencies they got their power, and if they are not satisfied it is to these constituencies they must go, and I venture to say that if they obtain a verdict substantiating and approving what they now propose they will meet with no further difficulty from the House of Lords." So far then the battle is fought. 1832 established the supremacy of the people. Slowly but surely, decade by decade, the fignment of the House of Lords as a governing caste has been breaking up, and a new constitution, in which in all great questions the Lords must submit to the Commons, has been established—(cheers). The question, then, is not so much what is to be done with the House of Lords, but what has been done with it already—(laughter and cheers). It is dying a natural death—(cheers). Like slavery, it cannot live among free institutions—(cheers). In another 50 years, if it had been peaceable, it would have been an antiquarian relic laid up in the British Museum—(laughter and cheers). Such then being the condition of the House of Lords, we are not here to-day from any serious alarm that it can stop the Franchise Bill. Who doubts that the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill shall become law?—(loud cheers.) Who fears for the fate of a measure that is perhaps the last gift of the genius of a tried friend of the people, the best memorial of the old man eloquent—(loud cheering)—incorruptible, indomitable?—(renewed cheers.) For his own sake and in token of all we owe to him of liberty, we will not suffer his work to perish—(cheers). We will not tolerate that strange hands should touch it—(cheers). It is the best portrait we have of Gladstone—(loud cheers). We will set it up in our history as his monument for ever—(prolonged cheers). He is still, after half a century of work of the noblest kind that any man ever did for his country, in the van of reform—(cheers). Not one of his captains can wield his battle axe. The country will not see him dishonoured—(cheers). He has borne contumely—the insolent gibes of aristocrats—(hooting). That is not to be forgotten. The bill is safe—(cheers). The days are past and gone when any serious conflict between the people and the peers was possible. They dare not meet us now—(loud cheers). What then? Is this muster of the nation disproportionate to the crisis? ("No, no") The Franchise Bill is safe because we have set our hearts upon it—(cheers). We shall have it and we shall have others like unto it—(cheers). It is not this that moves us. To-day our hearts are set on another triumph of democracy. I have said that in reality the will of the people is law. We must have it so written on the statute book. We will have no fictions in our government. The House of Lords is a fiction—(cheers). It has no real power. It cannot be made to accord with representative government. It is a caste, a class, a caucus, a council of land-owners, an assembly that perpetuates the memory of slavery. We are a free people—(cheers). We govern ourselves. We make our own laws. We will suffer none but such as we depute and can control to rule us—(cheers). It is a shame to us longer to tolerate an institution that we will not and cannot respect