THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND THE REFORM BILL OF 1832

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In his introduction to Mr. Veitch's book *The Genesis of Parliamentary Reform*, Ramsey Muir makes the following comment: "Nearly all the writers who have dealt with the history of England during the 18th and 19th centuries have allowed their work to be vitiated by one capital blunder; they have concentrated their attention unduly upon the proceedings of Parliament, the strife of organized parties, and the words and deeds of ambitious politicians. The process of economic and social change and the movement of ideas, which form the most vital elements in the life story of the nation, are, by this mode of treatment, either neglected or disproportionately treated." Such an observation is surely of great import, for all social and economic change sooner or later effects a change in the political system, and government is but an institution that is the outcome of the play of powerful existing economic and social forces. Perhaps there is no clearer example of this relation between economic and social changes and alteration in the governmental system than that to be found in the case of the Industrial Revolution and the Parliamentary Reform of 1832 in England.

To understand the forces which motivated that Reform, one must turn from the ordinary histories of reformers, parliaments, and speeches made and ideals propounded, to a history of that tremendous revolution in machinery and industry which found its beginning in England in the 18th century. It was not the endeavors of the earnest Parliamentary Reformers, nor the many speeches and moves in Parliament which really forced the reform of the House of Commons, but rather Watt's steam engine, Cartwright's power loom, Brindley's canals, and the presence of coal, iron, and water-power in the north and west of England. It was the Industrial Revolu-

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tion which was the fundamental cause of, and motive force compelling, the Reform Act of 1832.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND GROWTH IN POPULATION

Arthur Young, in his Political Arithmetic, was among the first to propound the now basic theory that growth in wealth and industry and growth in population are interdependent facts; that wherever men can make a living easily, they increase and multiply. The Industrial Revolution, by revolutionizing production methods in all industries, made it possible to employ and to support a vastly increased number of persons, and, by so doing, it produced the inevitable concomitant of increased productivity,—increased population.

Although all census figures for England, before 1801, are only estimates, based on more or less expert conjecture, they are sufficiently accurate to give a general picture of the effect of the Industrial Revolution on the population of England. It appears from these estimates and from the official census figures for England, after 1801, that up to 1750 the population of England and Wales increased slowly, that the rate of increase in the period from 1750 to 1801 was four to five times as great as that of the preceding period, and that the rate of increase during the years from 1801 to 1831 was over three times that in the period from 1750 to 1801.

In a country like England, where almost all the boroughs were in the control of close corporations, patrons or limited numbers of freemen, and where the county seats were, for the most part, under the control of the gentry, such a tremendous increase in population could have but one result. As the Industrial Revolution gained momentum, and began to force throughout the social and economic structure of England its momentous results, the connection between population and representation, though meager and slight before, now became ridiculous and practically nil. Misrepresentation grew as population grew. In 1793 it was stated that the majority
in the House of Commons were "elected by less than 15,000 voters," but more than this, the share in elections of even the 15,000 "chosen" was only nominal, for 309 out of the 513 members for England and Wales owed their election to nominations by the Treasury or to the efforts of 162 powerful patrons.

It seems to be a rule in politics that to awaken opinion and secure reform an evil must be very apparent and very deep-seated in the political life of a nation. The Industrial Revolution, by indirectly producing, as one of its many results, a rapidly increasing population, magnified and exaggerated the discrepancy between electors and population inherent in the unreformed basis of parliamentary representation, until that discrepancy became so great and so indefensible as to make reform of Parliamentary representation inevitable.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND SHIFTS IN POPULATION

If the Industrial Revolution, by greatly increasing population, created a force demanding parliamentary reform, it also, by shifting that increasing population, made a Reform Act inevitable. When, in 1831, the population of Lancashire was more than four times as great as the population of Cornwall, and yet Cornwall as a whole, taking county and boroughs together, had more than three times as many representatives in the House of Commons as did Lancashire, then the contradiction was too obvious.

The great shift in the English population after the first quarter of the 18th century was the result of the fact that the three basic elements of the Industrial Revolution—iron, water-power, and coal—were all to be found in the north and Midlands of England. Before the introduction of power-driven machinery by the Industrial Revolution, the population of England had, for economic reasons, been centered in the south, along the southeastern and southwestern seabords, where domestic industry and foreign trade flourished, and where the English, a pre-
dominantly rural people, were able to support themselves by the cultivation of a fertile soil. In the north and northwest, however, a clay soil discouraged farming, with the result that in those sections of England the population was sparse and the towns small and few in number. Such had been the condition of England in the centuries before the Industrial Revolution, when the basis of representation in Parliament had been determined. The basis established had, quite correctly, given predominant representation to those sections of England possessing the greatest population and the greatest towns, and, since it thus allowed seats to sections of the nation according (roughly) to the population and importance of those respective sections, it was acceptable as long as the center of population remained in the southern and southeastern sections of the country.

This old system of representation, determined in the 13th and 14th centuries, remained, therefore, and was in operation when the great revolution in industry began. That revolution was, in its simplest terms, the substitution of power-driven machinery in factories for the domestic system of manufacture. Iron now became the essential factor in the development of large and powerful machinery; water and coal became the furnishers of power for that machinery. Because these three essentials and bases of the Industrial Revolution were, as a result of natural forces, all in the barren and sparsely populated north and northwest of England, the development of factories and the use of power-driven machinery occurred there. Factories grew up near the coal and iron deposits of the north like mushrooms, so great was the intent upon benefitting by the possibilities presented by the Industrial Revolution. As an example of the tremendous increase of machinery, in 1813 there were 2,400 power looms in use, while by 1829 the number had increased to 60,000 and in 1833 had reached a total of 100,000.

Shifting population was the inevitable result, since the revolution in industry, bringing with it employment for thousands, occurred in that part of England hitherto
but sparsely populated, and was not possible to any de-
gree in those densely populated southern sections. The
Industrial Revolution shifted, from the south and east to
the north and west of England, the center of the nation's
industry, and the middle- and lower-class population
followed. For instance, Manchester had, in 1774, a popu-
lation of about 42,000; in 1801 the number of people in
that new industrial center of the north had risen to
84,000; and when the Reform Bill was finally enacted, the
population was 182,000. Birmingham in 1760 had a
population of about 30,000 and in 1832 one of 146,000.

Such phenomenal population increases in the new
industrial sections of the north were not confined to the
cities themselves but extended to the small towns and
industrial suburbs situated around them. The growth of
Oldham is typical of the growth of the small towns around
Manchester and around all the large cities of the north.
About 1760, this place was a village of 400 inhabitants;
by 1801 the population had reached 17,000. Turning to
the counties, this rapid shift of population can be sur-
veyed in a more general way, as the doubling of the
population of Lancashire between the years 1801-1831
affords an excellent indication of what was happening in
the new industrial north.

Meanwhile, in the south, southwest, and southeast,
growth during these years was slight, and in many of the
old industrial centers it actually stopped altogether. Thus
the county of Dorsetshire had, in 1801, a population of
114,500 and of 159,000 in 1831, while in Tiverton the
population during these years fell from 9,000 to 7,000.
Population for England as a whole increased because of
the increased productivity of the nation, but the increase
was so far from being uniform that in the 100 years
between 1700 and 1801 the whole face of the map of
England, so far as population was concerned, was changed.

Such immense changes in the centers of England's
population, while the basis of parliamentary representa-
tion remained as it had been established in the earlier
centuries, created such a host of anomalies and contradic-
tions that, as Mr. Veitch puts it, Parliamentary Reform became inevitable. If the case against the old basis of representation had been good before the Industrial Revolution, that Revolution certainly completed it and magnified the obviousness of the evils to a degree which practically caused the system to topple of its own weight. The Revolution in Industry, by creating a populous northern England at the expense of the old densely populated sections of the south, caused the anomalous situation in which the south of England had a relatively small population and a relatively large representation, while the industrial districts of the north possessed a relatively large population and a relatively small representation; it created the impossible situation in which towns of a few thousand population, and less, were returning two members to Parliament, while Birmingham, with 146,000 inhabitants, and Manchester, with 182,000 people, had no representation at all.

Thus the Industrial Revolution was, through these two effects on population, a force making reform in parliamentary representation a vital necessity if England were to be a representative government in anything but name. It must be remembered that the Industrial Revolution was not the creator of the rotten boroughs or of misrepresentation. Lord Caledon’s borough of Old Sarum was a green mound before the Industrial Revolution made its appearance; the whole close electoral system, with its lack of connection between electors and population, long antedated the late 18th century. What the Industrial Revolution did was to magnify and increase this discrepancy between population and electors, to create the most serious kind of non-representation, and to increase greatly the tendency toward rotten and pocket boroughs and indefensible misrepresentation. Through its effects on population, the Industrial Revolution widened and deepened the evils of maladjusted representation until they became such cancerous sores in the political life of the nation and such contradictions and anomalies that parliamentary reform was essential.
Great as was this shift of population from the south to the northwest and north of England, the Industrial Revolution forced a second shift in population—a shift from country to city. Although this shift is of primary importance in its creation of the possibilities for organized action and a powerful public opinion, and in its creation of the psychology of change peculiar to large city populations, still it is also of significance in that it combined with the growth of population and with the shift of population from south to north to produce the intolerable situation of a grossly distorted representation in Parliament. This second shift produced by the Industrial Revolution through its tendency to assemble the great laboring class in factory towns, rendered the existing relation between county and borough representation rather untenable, for that relation had been determined when England was an agricultural country and the people lived not in cities but in the country. By being largely a shift from country to the industrial cities of the north, it served to increase the number of people in those populous cities who were at least grossly underrepresented and in many cases not represented at all; it merely combined with increasing population and with the shift from south to north to create the impossible situation in which about a quarter of the population was electing about one-half the representatives and in which the industrial cities of 150,000 inhabitants were practically not represented at all in Parliament.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND CHANGING ECONOMICS INTERESTS

Government by the unreformed House of Commons was government by the landed aristocracy. The franchise in the boroughs had been gradually restricted, beginning with the 15th century, by custom, charter revisions, and usurpation of the right to nominate members to Parliament. Consequently, there was no uniformity in borough franchises, but however much the franchises varied there was one common characteristic—the borough franchise
was restricted to certain limited groups and in the great majority of boroughs a member of the aristocracy was in control of the election either through his ownership of the borough or through his purchase of the votes of the few qualified electors. In the counties the electorate was larger than in many of the boroughs, yet it was relatively small and readily susceptible to control by the aristocracy. The country gentry brought great pressure to bear upon the tenants who composed the small and easily influenced electorate, and at the beginning of the 19th century many of the counties returned the nominees of the great landowners as a matter of course.

Thus the landed aristocracy, through their influence and power, were in practically complete control of both county and borough representation in Parliament. Popular election was impossible and by far the greater part of the members of the House of Commons were the nominees of the aristocracy and given their position in Parliament through the power of that landed gentry. As such they represented not the interests of the English nation but the interests of one class,—that class which had placed them in Parliament.

As long as England continued to be primarily an agricultural country, this system of representation by the landed aristocracy, with all its evils of distorted representation and with practically complete control of elections by the gentry, was tolerated. It was tolerated because the great majority of the English people felt that since their interests were those of the landed aristocracy, they were virtually represented even though they had no actual direct representation. In the England before the Industrial Revolution, government was conducted by the aristocracy and the other classes tolerated and accepted such government because, being run by a class with economic interests similar to their own, it gave satisfactory support to those main economic interests with which they were concerned.

The Industrial Revolution utterly destroyed similarity of economic interests among the various English
classes. It produced from the old all-inclusive agricultural population two great new classes, the capitalistic and the industrial laboring, neither of which could have economic interests similar to those of the old aristocracy. Men laboring long hours in factories, under extremely unfavorable conditions, cannot have the same basic interests as a landed gentry, nor can there be any similarity of interests between a landed gentry and enterprising capitalists and industrialists.

This inevitable dissimilarity of economic interests between the old gentry and the new classes soon made itself manifest. The manufacturers opposed Pitt's plan of laying taxes on such raw materials as iron and coal, and agreed to act together to force the dismissal of the scheme. They soon became bitterly hostile to the whole protectionist system favored by the landowners, because they were seeking foreign markets and unlimited commercial expansion. Moreover, the interests of the workers early came to be at variance with those of the gentry. The great mass of the laboring classes were no longer agricultural workers, but wage-earners in the industrial cities. Their interests had changed with their change in occupation. The landowners were, through their control of the government, developing a policy of protection in order to increase the price of food products. Such a policy opposed the economic interests of the laborers, since it meant an increase in the price of foodstuffs just at the time when wages, owing to excessive competition in the labor market and to the lack of organization among workers, were falling.

Nor is this by any means all, for, if these new classes differed from the gentry in economic interests, they were at extreme variance with each other also. The manufacturing capitalists were seeking combination laws and a policy of laissez-faire; the workers were appealing to Parliament to protect them against the power of the capitalists through the regulation of wages and working hours. The Industrial Revolution thus created two powerful struggling groups, both of which had no direct
representation and no virtual representation because their interests were not those of the class in control of the government, and both of which demanded representation in order to protect those interests against the landed class and against each other. In short, the English people no longer felt themselves to be virtually represented by a conservative landed class.

The Industrial Revolution, then, precipitated Parliamentary Reform by giving a deadly and damming blow to the doctrine of virtual representation. The great majority of Englishmen, before the Industrial Revolution, did not have direct representation, but they did have a virtual representation through a controlling class having the same economic interests. Though some agitation against such a system was made, the majority accepted it because it gave them the desired protection of basic interests. Then the Revolution in Industry occurred and, by altering the economic interests of most of the English people, utterly annihilated the old virtual representation and made reform a necessary step. Virtual representation could be tolerated, but no representation at all, especially when the transformed economic interests were precipitating a bitter class struggle, could not permanently exist without causing some kind of an upheaval in government. Thus it appears that the Industrial Revolution, by destroying the old similarity in interest, made Parliamentary Reform essential, that it so completely transformed the economic and industrial structure of England as to render the old pre-industrial basis of representation too honeycombed with contradictions, anomalies, and injustices of nonrepresentation and misrepresentation.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POWERFUL PUBLIC OPINION

In 1814 Lord Liverpool, a Protectionist Minister, with a Parliament of landowners, was forced, by the pressure of public opinion, to drop a fresh measure of protection for the landed class. To Mr. Walpole, writing in his History of England from 1815, this is one of the
most singular circumstances in the history of England, for it denotes the rise of that all-powerful modern political factor—Public Opinion. The same author, in considering this new factor of public opinion, remarks on this comparison: "In May 1782, Pitt's proposal for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the state of representation in England was rejected by the House of Commons in a vote of 161 to 141. Fifty years later to a day, the Peers, by a vote of 151 to 116, postponed consideration of the disfranchising clauses of the Reform Bill and Grey resigned as Prime Minister. In 1782 there was no popular excitement; in 1832 the popular excitement compelled the ministry to resume the reins of office and carried the bill through all its remaining stages."

According to another writer, the year 1832 saw all England shaken by a storm of political excitement utterly outside the experience of the fiercest partisans of today. Factories were closed and all ordinary business of the nation suspended. Petitions, despatched by huge mass meetings, called upon the House of Commons to refuse supplies. Resolutions to pay no taxes until the Lords passed the Bill were voted at meetings throughout the country. England was determined upon the Reform of Parliament, and so great was the popular demand and excitement that the nation was on the verge of anarchy. Only the inability of Wellington to form a Ministry and the decision of the King to create Peers prevented an organized insurrection in the great cities and a general revolution through the entire country.

This impelling, irresistible pressure of public opinion, which, by 1832, had become so all-powerful as to sweep King and Ministers and Parliament before it, and to make resistance to reform comparable to the hope of a child in attempting to arrest the tide with a sand castle, was mainly the result of the Industrial Revolution. For that Revolution in industrial life, through its concentration of thousands of workers in cities, its creation of distinct, solidified social classes, and its development of cheap, rapid means of communication and extensive, low-
cost printing, created a coherent, closely knit nation in which organization and unity of action were possible.

The first application of power to the printing press was made late in 1814 by the London Times. As a result of the introduction of machine printing, the paper was printed nearly three times as rapidly as before and yet at lower cost. Steam power removed the two great restrictions on the press—the excessive cost of printing and the slowness of the hand-press—and the result was a tremendous increase in newspapers, pamphlets, and books. Newspapers especially increased in numbers, the circulation of stamped newspapers more than doubling between 1800 and the Reform Act. Cobbett, in his Political Register, the Hunts in the Examiner, and others chorused for parliamentary reform as the first necessary step in alleviating the ills which beset the country. All sorts of political literature was circulated among all the classes of English people, for the middle classes had their own presses and writers while such men as Cobbett devoted their newspapers to a consideration of the interests of the working classes.

As long as political discussion was confined to the few of the upper classes, the ruling aristocracy was able to direct the thoughts of the country and any reform was almost impossible; but when the Industrial Revolution introduced quantity production at lower cost into the printing world, political discussion became possible in all classes, and a means provided by which the nation could be aroused effectively to demand parliamentary reform and by which the dispersed elements of public opinion could be encouraged, fostered, and united into a powerful and effective political force. The Industrial Revolution took out of the hands of the landed aristocracy the direction of political thought.

Moreover, the revolutionary improvements in the means of communication resulting from the demand on the part of the new industrial cities for cheaper and more rapid transportation, had a most fundamental effect on the success of parliamentary reform, for it was the
improved means of communication which, by enabling the spread of reform ideas through the distribution of printed literature and by welding the separate parts of the nation firmly together, made possible a united, nation-wide pressure for parliamentary reform.

Systematic turnpike construction began about 1745 and, between 1760 and 1774, Parliament passed 450 Acts dealing with road construction and maintenance. About 1800 there was developed by Macadam, Telford, and others, a scientific method of road construction and in the early part of the 19th century England was covered with a network of quasi-permanent roads, one thousand miles of new turnpikes being built in England and Wales between the years 1818 and 1829. The building of the canals was the direct result of the growing demand for coal and iron on the part of the great industrial cities. James Brindley constructed a canal for the Duke of Bridgewater in 1767, in order that the latter might be able to move coal more cheaply and quickly from his mines to Manchester. The success of this and other canal construction was so great that England entered upon a great era of canal building, with the result that by the time of the Reform Bill the nation was completely covered with a network of canals in which no town was more than fifteen miles from water transportation. It is true that the canals were used primarily for freight carriage, but, together with the improved roads, they created a great intercourse between the various sections of England, and linked up the isolated fragments into one coherent and related whole. Although the railroads, which found their beginning in the latter part of the 18th century in connection with the carriage of coal from mine mouths to canal basins, had not, by 1832, reached any great stage of development, yet they were beginning to supplement turnpikes and canals in binding together the sections of England into one indivisible whole.

Thus these improved means of communication, by so completely welding together the various sections of the nation, permitted of the dissemination of parliamentary
agitation and of the free and easy movement of both reform ideas and the agitators for reform. They made possible a common understanding and endeavor throughout England and the union of the scattered elements of public opinion into an organized, nation-wide political force. That invincible public opinion, which in 1832 swept all before it like an ocean wave, was the direct result of this unification and binding together of the nation through the revolutionary improvements in the means of communication. Before the Industrial Revolution, the movement for reform had been localized and quite powerless; the Industrial Revolution made possible a powerful, general movement. As Walpole comments, "Parliamentary Reform might have been almost infinitely delayed if it had not been for Telford, Brindley, and Stephenson."

But the Industrial Revolution did not merely create a closely knit nation in which unity of action and a really nation-wide public opinion and discussion of reform were possible. By concentrating great populations in the industrial cities, it also provided the most ideal conditions for the development of local organized public opinion which could be nationally united by improved communication and thus made into a combined and irresistible English Public Opinion. The Industrial Revolution, therefore, created both the conditions which made possible the development and organization of forceful local public opinion, and also those conditions which enabled these various local organized opinions to be gathered nationally into one universal demand and pressure for parliamentary reform.

The concentration of population in industrial and commercial cities created a situation in which men were constantly together, and in which ideas on reform were freely and easily exchanged. It inevitably caused restlessness and a desire for change in the system of representation, for when men are maladjusted and in misery, as they were then owing to the transition to a new type of industry, close contact and exchange of feelings and ideas
breeds a universal dissatisfaction. And thirdly, concentration of thousands of people in the cities of England made organization of the rising public opinion possible. The new cities meant, at once, the immense development of public demand for reform through the spread and interchange of ideas, and a compactness of people which made possible the organization and guidance of that public pressure for the reform of Parliament. The unity of action in parliamentary agitation, the increasing intensity and force of public pressure for reform, the Political Unions which united the middle and lower classes in their agitation for reformation, the huge mass meetings in the cities—none of these things could have been possible without the concentration of population which permitted, at the same time, the interchange of political ideas, the spread of parliamentary agitation, and the organization of the resulting public sentiment into a powerful and coherent public opinion. It is always in cities that public opinion becomes a dominating political force, for concentration of people brings that unity and strength of action which is necessary to the creation of a large, organized, and therefore powerful political opinion on the part of the masses of the people. The rise of that public opinion which forced the reform of 1832 found its basic cause in the concentration of population by the Industrial Revolution. The progress of the Revolution in Industry and the growth of public opinion demanding a change in parliamentary representation went hand in hand, for one was the result of the other.

It is impossible in this discussion to trace in detail the growth of this public opinion and perhaps it is unnecessary, as we can see its main significance by examining the years from 1810 to the Great Reform in 1832. It was during the first years of the second decade that the middle classes, influenced by the distressing economic and political situation in the country and by their own exclusion from representation in Parliament, seem to have become convinced that parliamentary reform was the indispensable prelude to any effective betterment of the
nation. Before this, the middle classes had quite naturally favored a reform of Parliament and had adhered to the Whigs, but they had feared the reform agitation conducted by the working classes. After 1820, however, they ceased to remain aloof from the lower class agitation. Their own increasing numbers, wealth, and influence created among them an ever-increasing demand for representation, and their interest in property convinced them that parliamentary reform was not only desirable for them but necessary if a revolution among the working classes were to be avoided. From this time, then, the middle classes used their influence in favor of reform, and, in 1830, through the Political Unions, an effective union between the middle and laboring classes was established. During the years 1831-1832, these Unions, especially those in Manchester and Birmingham, became so powerful, so large in numbers, and such influential factors in concentrating public opinion, that some writers believe them to have been more powerful in reform than the press. When the third Reform Bill was in the House of Lords, a protest meeting of the Birmingham Union had 150,000 men in it.

The agitations for parliamentary reform in the two years preceding the passage of the Reform Bill, agitations in which the Political Unions were a central figure, reveal the pitch to which popular excitement had risen, and the tremendous pressure of the growing public opinion in favor of a reform in the basis of representation. While Lord John Russell was drafting the plan for the first Reform Bill, he wrote that two considerations decided him in favor of a sweeping measure, "the authority of Lord Grey" and "the dangerous excitement consequent upon the Duke of Wellington's denial of all reform." In the national election of 1831, after the dissolution of Parliament by the Ministry, popular ferment was so great that it was able to overcome even the close electoral system of the unreformed Parliament, and the influence of the landowners was overborne by the determined cry for reform.
After the defeat of the second Reform Bill in the House of Lords, the country was on the verge of anarchy. The whole social body was sick with internal maladies, and employers and laborers together believed reform to be necessary. The Birmingham Political Union, under the leadership of Attwood, held a monster mass meeting of 100,000 men in favor of the Bill. Business in London was practically suspended while a mob of 70,000 shopkeepers held a huge demonstration of like character. Property was endangered throughout the country in the riots of the workers, yet the middle classes were so strongly in favor of reform that the riots did not cause them to react against the lower classes.

When the Lords, in their consideration of the third Reform Bill, passed an amendment for the postponement of the discussion of the two disfranchising clauses, the King refused to create new Peers, and Grey resigned. This was followed by the crucial Days of May, in which the whole of England was shaken by a storm of political excitement. Business was suspended and factories closed; huge mass meetings were held everywhere, at which petitions were drawn up asking the Commons to refuse supplies; unions of working people voted to withhold taxes, and resolutions to that effect were displayed in windows. The idea of armed resistance became daily more familiar to the middle and lower classes, and they now prepared to give forcible resistance to the formation of a Wellington Ministry. The Political Unions were now quasi-military organizations with hundreds of men joining each day. A Mr. Wood, in presenting to Parliament a petition from Manchester, declared the whole of the north of England to be in a state impossible to describe. He felt, however, he said, that if the Lords would pass the Bill, the country might be saved. Thus by 1832, the Industrial Revolution had created such a powerful and universal demand for parliamentary reform that the question had resolved itself into one of Reform or Revolution. It was this fear of revolution and of the destruction of property which was the power that com-
pelled and forced the Parliamentary Reform Bill of 1832.

The Industrial Revolution, through its concentration of population and its tremendous improvements in communication and printing, had made possible the free interchange of ideas and the creation of a powerful, nation-wide, organized public opinion in favor of parliamentary reform. The huge mass meetings, the many clubs and societies favoring reform, the activities of the Political Unions, the organization and direction of opinion by such men as Place and Hunt and Attwood, the great numbers involved in the demand for reform, the country-wide unity of action—all these things which created the overwhelming public sentiment of 1832 would have been impossible without the concentration of people in cities and the improved means of communication and printing which came as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Public opinion is a matter of numbers, organization, and intensity of feeling. The Industrial Revolution provided these three basic essentials of public sentiment to a very high degree, and, by so doing, enabled and caused the development of such a powerful public opinion that in 1832 King and Lords were forced to choose between Reform and Revolution.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AS THE MOTIVE FORCE IN REFORM—CONCLUSION

The true relation between the Industrial Revolution and the Reform Bill of 1832 is thus made clear; the former created the forces which made the latter necessary and inevitable. So great were the forces of the Industrial Revolution which impelled reform that in 1832 the only alternative to revision of parliamentary representation was revolution. As Walpole states the situation, "the Tories refused to read the writing on the wall and thought a handful of Peers might hold a breach through which a nation was swarming."

As the motive force compelling reform, the Industrial Revolution was singularly complete and conclusive, for it is to be noted that it not only created an unjustifiable
condition of nonrepresentation and misrepresentation, which, by its obviousness and magnitude, developed a demand for reform, but that it also created a power of public opinion that enabled the demand for reform to become all-powerful and irresistible. It created such an anomalous situation in the system of representation that parliamentary reform was vitally necessary, and at the same time it provided that powerful political force which compelled the reformation that was so essential. This dualism in the motive power which forced the Reform of 1832 is of significance not only in showing us the fundamental cause of parliamentary reform, but also in giving us the reason for its long delay. The reform of the English House of Commons was long delayed, because, until the Industrial Revolution, it was neither possible nor necessary. There was no crying need for reform while England was predominantly rural and its people not grossly misrepresented and nonrepresented in the Commons. "The forces which later on made reform a vital question," says Butler in his book on the Reform Bill, "had, at this time, scarcely passed out of their infancy in the great towns of the north. Until they reached their strength, Reform was but one of several expedients for curbing royal domination."

Before the Industrial Revolution, parliamentary reform was impossible to secure; after the Industrial Revolution, it was impossible to prevent.

The force compelling the reform was, then, the Industrial Revolution; the leadership and direction of that force came from the great Whigs in Parliament and from the Reformers in the country. To say that the Reformers only gave leadership to the movement and that they were not the force which impelled reform, is not to belittle their importance, but merely to indicate their true relation to the Parliamentary Reform of 1832. Leaders are essential in any movement and their work is of great importance and tremendous purport. Yet the fact that leaders are directors shows that the motive force is not with them but elsewhere; they are in reality the necessary
directors of a powerful pressure which is the true dominating force. Mr. Trevelyan has accurately analyzed the place of the Industrial Revolution and of the Reformers in the successful Reform of Parliament in 1832. In discussing the connection of Grey with Reform he says: "In the new century (the nineteenth) he (Grey) did nothing to create a stream of reformed opinion, but he kept the parliamentary channels open and the Whig machine ready to act as the popular instrument, against the day when the flood should come . . . ."

Two brothers, John and Edmund Cartwright, were born within three years of each other during the fourth decade of the 18th century. John, the elder brother, became an English reformer and pamphleteer, and was, in his later years, known as the "Father of Reform." Edmund Cartwright became the inventor of the power loom and was never identified with the popular movements for parliamentary reform. Yet, in reality, he, rather than his brother, deserves a surname of "Father of Reform." He was a far more influential force in the actual achievement of parliamentary reform, for he was one of the men who were responsible for the Industrial Revolution. The English Reformers were not the cause of the Reform of 1832; the fundamental cause of that reformation in parliamentary representation was the Industrial Revolution.