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LIBERIA HERALD.

From the Christian Watchman.

LETTER FROM EUROPE.

Great Meeting on the Corn Laws—Number of Ministers present—Great public interest—Character of the Discussions—Sufferings of the poor described, illustrating the oppressive nature of the Corn Laws—Means proposed to effect their repeal.

LONDON, Sept. 3, 1841

In my last communication, I was just able to announce the meeting of the conference of christian ministers on the Corn Laws, in Manchester. That remarkable convocation has since performed the task assigned to it, and, in the opinion that an assembly so entirely unprecedented with respect to its composition and its objects, must possess an interest bounded only by the limits of the globe itself, I proceed to make it the subject of the present communication.

The Conference was held in the town of Manchester, in a beautiful and spacious building, which was appropriately fitted up for the occasion. The sittings commenced on Tuesday morning, August 17, at ten o'clock, and closed on Friday evening, August the 20; so that thanks to our railways and locomotives, those of the ministers who came from the remotest parts of the kingdom, were enabled to perform their usual Sabbath labors. The number of ministers present was 636, of whom, on analyzing the list, I find 276 were Independents, 182 Baptists, 52 Presbyterians, (Scottish and English,) 59 Methodist, (of various sorts, but including two only of the old Wesleyan body,) 23 Unitarians, 10 Roman Catholics, 2 Church of England, 2 Church of Scotland, the rest belonging to various minor sects. Nothing, you may be sure, but a very urgent case, could have brought together so diverse a collection of men. You will observe, however, that the great bulk of the Conference consisted of truly *evangelical* ministers. But the 636 who assembled, numerous though they were, afford but an inadequate notion of the feeling which is abroad amongst ministers of the gospel on the subject of the Corn Laws. There were not fewer than 1500 answers to the invitation, all which, with the exception of half a dozen, (including the Rev Doctor Chalmers, and the Rev. Hugh Mc Neil, of Liverpool,) were favorable to the design. Nearly 700 pledged themselves to attend; the other 800 were prevented from attending by various causes, but principally by the inability of their churches, through these very Corn Laws, to pay their expenses. From 460 ministers, were received detailed written answers to a string of practical questions, relating to the operation of the Corn Laws: the valuable information thus accumulated, will, when carefully digested be published.

The members of the Conference were entertained at the houses of the leading inhabitants of Manchester, without distinction of sect, either in the hosts, or their guests. A particular friend of mine was at the house of an Alderman of the Borough, a Churchman, who assigned as his reason for adhering to the establishment, that it required cleansing too much for him to leave it yet. This gentleman began life as a working weaver, and is now with a million of money or more. He told my friend that he had never less than between £200,000 and £250,000 in cotton goods afloat upon the sea, and that the repeal of the Corn Laws, would not add less than £6000 or £7000 a year to his clear income.—This may serve to inculcate the vast extension of the field of employment, which would be consequent on the repeal of the Corn Laws.

Manchester was full of strangers during the Conference, bnt thousands went away unable to get into the hall, which overflowed the whole time.—Amongst the working men the sensation produced was remarkable; all looked upon the members of the meeting as so many angels from heaven sent for their deliverance. The moral effect of the movement upon the minds of the poor will be highly beneficial.

The Conference sat twice each day, from 9 to 1, and from 4 to 9 or 10.

The Rev. Dr. Cox, the leading minister of our denomination was chosen provisional chairman, and for each of the successive days, chairmen were appointed in the following order:—the Rev. Thomas Adkins, of Southamton, a highly respectable Independent minister, eloquent, warm-hearted, and well informed; the Rev. William Chaplain, of Bishop Stortford, an aged Independent minister, possessing much weight of character and sound intelligence, and, as coming out of the great agricultusal country of Essex, peculiarly well acquainted with the state and feelings of farmers and operative husbandmen; the Rev. Dr. Cox, of Hackney, an accomplished scholar, capable of taking large views possessing the tenderest sympathies, and well-known and highly respected by many of our leading Whig statesmen, and lastly, the Rev. Thomas Spencer, M. A., a beneficient clergyman of the Established Church, who has distinguished himself by his firm and discriminating attachment to the interest of the poor. Each of them made a speech on taking and another on leaving the chair, and all of them acquitted temselves with eminent tact and discretion.

The first day was occupied in settling preliminaries, and hearing speeches on the general question, but chiefly with detalls of facts derived from personal observation and experience. On the second day, after a speech from Mr. Curtis, from Ohio, resolutions were moved, discussed, and carried. The third day passed in receiving deputations from the Mancherter operatives, and in eliciting from them the facts of their case, and in adopting resolutions, petitions and addresses. On the fourth day, other resolutions were adopted, and a deputation from the great Anti Corn Law league was received

Perhaps never was more business done in so short a time and with such perfect unanimity.—The only question on which the slightest difference of opinion was manifested, related to prayer On taking the chair provisionally, Dr. Cox, called for a prayer from the Rev. Dr. Vaughan, our accomplished historian, and the Independent minister of Kensington, upon whose ministry several of the Whig nobility are occasional attendants Dr V. obeyed, after which it appeared that the Roman Catholic priests and the Unitarian ministers objected, and in deference to them it was agreed that in future devotional exercises should take place elsewhere. With this exception, there was not a jarring vote in all the proceeding of the Conference.

I will just indicate the prominent features in the four days' discussion. The venerable and learned Dr. J. Pye Smith, read a masterly paper in indication of the calling, constitution, and objects of the Conference. The Rev. J. W. Massie, who was mainly instrumental in convoking the meeting, gave an account of what had been done by the provisional committee, and stated facts as to the results of their labors. Mr. Richard Cobden, Mr. P. J. Stockport, was introduced to make a speech, exposit ory of the general question. The Earl of Duice, a large land proprietor, was present during the whole proceedings, and declared that he had no idea till then of the powerful bearings of the question on morals and religion, although previously convinced of the impolicy and injurious character of restrictions on importation of foreign corn.—Mr. Curtis, from Ohio, strikingly illustrated the baneful influence of the Corn Laws upon the commerce of England and America. Dr. Vaughan, distinguished himself by an admirable historical speech on the futility of apprehensions from a state of dependence for food upon foreign countries, instancing Phenicia and Venice in their palmy days. The Rev. Thomas Spencer made some admirable remarks in defence of ministers of the gospel caring for the poor, and contended that to do so was to be "a successor of the apostles indeed." The Rev. J. E. Giles, Baptist minister of Leeds, handled in an effective style, the commercial view of the question, as did the Rev. Dr. Payne its relations to the science of political econmy, of which he maintained it was the duty of every minister to be a student. Many other speeches of singular excellence were delivered, but I have not space to enumerate them. Suffice it to say, that the members of the Conference fully proved their mental competency to the task undertaken. I must not omit, however, to mention that on the last day Mr. George Thompson addressed the Conference with electrical effect.

But the most important part of the proceedings consisted in the facts detailed from the personal experience. So full were the ministers of information as to the distress in their several localities, that it was found impossible to hear a tithe of what they had to offer. Nearly a hundred of them, however, made brief statements, which drew tears from every eye. It appeared that in many instances whole families had not tasted flesh for years, that 3*s*. to 5*s*. a week was frequently a family's whole income for full work, that multitudes of children were detained from Sunday schools, and multitudes of adults from public worship, by want of decent clothing, that contributions to religious institutions were rapidly declining, and that amongst the masses the difficulty of obtaining a bare livelihood had wholly suppressed all considerations of eternity. And besides all this deep and deplorable distress, it was stated that in many of the manufacturing districts, there were thousands wholly devoid of the means of living and exposed to inevitable starvation. And this was clearly traced both by the sufferers themselves, and their advocates, to the Corn Laws.—The statements of the ministers were effectingly confirmed by those of a deputation of Manchester weavers, who stated that several thousands of their body were entirely without employ, and that when emyloyed they had but a shilling a day for fourteen hours work.

Such being the state of our working population, especially in the manufacting districts, you will be able to anticipate the tone adopted by the Conference in its address to the Queen, its petitions to Parliament, its address to the people of England, and its various resolutions. You will find them at length in the patriot and other English juornals. I must content myself with assuring you that the members of the Conference have concealed from no party in the state its conviction and its intention. They have plainly declared that in their deliberate judgment, the Corn Laws are incompatible with morality and religion, that without their repeal the people cannot live, nor the public peace be maintained, and that they, as ministers of religion, shall feel it to be their duty to insist until a free trade in corn has received the sanction of the legislature. And they are in earnest. In conformity with the suggestion of the Conference, Monday next will be set apart, in thousands of churches, as a day of humiliation & prayer on account of our national sins and our national sufferings In the mean time the members are kindling in their several localities the holy fire of a benevolent patriotism; petitions by thousands will flow into Parliament, and, before many months, a socond Conference, four times as numerous as the first, will be convened in the metropolist itself. These are movements which Sir Robert Peel, who has this day received the seal of office from his predecessors, will not be able to resist, and although the Tory papers affect to pour contempt upon them, their effect will soon be seen. Once let the religious public of England be fairly roused, and no prudent government will fail to yield their just and reasonable demands. I confess that I look forward to the repeal of the obnoxious Corn Laws, at no distant period, as an event which shall bind England and America by a chain of mutual interest, which nothing will be able to dissolve. Brethren, pray for us.

INFORMATION WANTED.—The editor of the Boston Daily Mail ask the following questions of his readers.

Did you ever know a lady with white teeth to put her hand-over them when she laughed?

Did you ever know a gay lad and a sprighly lass who could't pick berries into one basket?

Did you ever know a woman that never had any thing stolen from her clothes yard?

Did you ever know a young lady who was too weak to stank up during prayer time at church, who could not dance all night without being tired at all?

Did you ever know a young man to hold a skein of yarn for his faverite to wind, without getting it strangely tangled?

Did you ever know a man with a shocking bad hat, a long beard, and a ragged coat, who could find a respectable hotel that was not full?

Did you ever know a very prettey young lady that had not a cousin to wait upon her to lectures and parties?

Did you ever know a young lady that did not have some very curious piece of sewing, that she wouldn't let the young gentleman see?

VERY DEAF.—One day last week, a man was fishing in a pond near Chichester when the owner came up to him, and ordered him off; the man playing the deaf ear, answered in return, that the fish would not bite, and that he did not think there was anything in the pond but carp. The owner was so enraged at the fellow's answer that he threatened to throw him in the pond, when the intruder offered to lend him one of his rods to fish with. Unable to suppress his anger, the proprietor ran up to him for the purpose of giving him a ducking, but at the moment the deaf man bobbed his head down, and the incensed gentleman's foot slipping, he fell headlong into the water, a depth of 6 feet, and was obliged to call upon the deaf man to assist him in getting out, who told him he did not expect to catch such a large fish in the pond, or he would have brought a larger line.

READING.

MR. EDITOR,—The age in which we live, is often spoken of as a reading age: and yet when we reflect upon the small amount of information acquired, we are led to the supposition that there is something wrong some where. It may not be altogether unprofitable if we inquire briefly, where lies the error? In the first place, to acquire information, sufficient time should be allotted every work, to give it a fair, and thorough perusal.

The amount of time usually spent in reading, (or rather looking over,) pages to the amount of one hundred, should all be spent in the perusal of twenty-five. A work should be read, whether aloud, or silently, in a slow, and cautious manner; every word should be correctly pronounced; every stop faithfuily regarded; every emphatic word, or sentence, distinctly observed, and the meaning of every word deeply impressed on the mind. The reader should always have by his side a Dictionary; and when a word of which he does not understand the definition occurs, he should turn to the word, and endeavor to fix the meaning of it in his mind; by this means a greater amount of information would be attained, in one quarter the number of pages, which are now to so great an extent, merely looked at, and hurried over, as though life, and death, depended upon the number of pages to be read in a limited space of time Every idea of the author should be examined, and the reader should inquire whether the idea, correspond with sound philosophical truth; if so they should be cordially received, and if not they should be peremptorily rejected.

In the second place, readers should choose works of standard merit. Too much time is thrown away in reading those works, which contain not one particle of truth, or literary information, and are only circulated to defraud the ignorant and unwary of their money, and what is far worse of those golden moments, which should be better, and more profitably employed. The money also that flows free as water, for novel and useless works, would furnish an amount of literary information, hardly credible. Works of standard merit are in circulation, and at prices which bring them within the reach of almost every individual; if these works were encouraged as they should be, and to the extent they justly merit; other works would be circulated, and the pens of able and distinguished men would be cheerfully employed to increase the stock in the market; and we should soon have an assortment of literary works in circulation, that would astonish even the most enlightened, and refined.

Who will set the example in bringing about this desirable state of things in the reading community? I would suggest that it commence in the church among Christians; I speak of the church and of Christians universally. Choose for your own use, and the use of your families, (I would not say always religious) but always valuable books. Books of standard merit. Books from which may be obtained information profitable to yourselves, to your families, and that will enable you to be useful to your fellow men around you. Choose such works when you would make a present to a friend; works of sterling value, that will enlighten the mind, and shed abroad a healthful, and delightsome influence. I have suggested that this work commence with Christians, because they are the light of the world, and the salt of the earth. AMICUS.

How many sensible men of thirty there are in the world, wha have not yet discovered that they are not men of genius!

Maryland Historical Society

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