

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CHARTIST CO-OPERATIVE LAND ASSOCIATION.

My Dear Friends.—You will learn from this week's receipts, as published in the *Star*, that the people have not yet become tired of waiting for the day when their slave labour is to terminate. Among the many interesting incidents of this week, there is not one that will give you more pleasure than the following fact:—A gentleman, who, I believe, has always been a friend to progress, and a great admirer of the *Northern Star*, since it made its appearance, called upon me on Sunday last, but as he was not in my power to see him upon that day he called again on Monday, and I shall not keep you long in suspense as to the object of his visit. He told me that he had always looked to the possession of the land by the working classes as the only means of improving their condition, and that since he had seen through the *Star* that an association was formed, that he had since read attentively my several letters upon that subject, and that seeing from my letter of last Saturday that we were now in a state to commence operations, he came to tender me a loan of £2000 on behalf of the Society, if we had not a sufficient amount already subscribed to make a purchase, or if we required it for other improvements.

Now, this is not the only offer of the kind that I have had since the Association was started, but I mention this one because the gentleman brought his money in his pocket, and said that it was ready at an hour's notice. I have received some advertisements of different properties to be sold in different counties this week, but have not yet had time to pay attention to them; however, I beg most sincerely to thank the several secretaries and persons attending themselves to the Association, but wishing the project success, for having forwarded them. I have much more pleasure in writing my letter to some portion of the working classes weekly, than I have in the discharge of all other portions of my duty, and especially in writing my letter to my own, my dear, agricultural children—and I will tell you why; because, although I am, I confess it, a very violent politician, as well for the purposes of justice as to take vengeance upon a horrid, a beastly, a tyrannical oligarchy, that hunted my family like wild beasts for their devotion to liberty; yet I have a better right to love the Land Chartists than any other Chartists, and I will tell you why—because they are sincere Chartists. And I will tell you more—that I am really suspicious and doubtful about the Chartism of a ranging, hawking fellow, who won't give a shilling a week, sleep a week, or three pence a week, to purchase out only own liberty, but to enable him to grant emancipation to his fellow man; while I am very much flattered at the unexpected success of the project. Nevertheless, if the working classes know their own interests; if they spend the one-half or the two-thirds in trying to procure an independence for life, that they spend in the purchase of newspapers alone, not to speak of money otherwise spent, they would soon be the landlords of the country.

Another reason that I prefer my letter to any other portion of my work is this, that I am unshackled by the vulgar fashion that regulates newspaper writing. I have not to ensure my character as an editor by the amount of mysterious nonsense that I can cover in a high sounding sentence.

I hate all the forms of the press, and, however the *Star* may live, and SHALL LIVE, as my living monument, and shall adhere to the principles of the Charter, and show how they are to be made serviceable to your order when the measure is carried, nevertheless it is my intention to establish a free cottage family newspaper, full of simple truths and interesting anecdotes, for men, women, and children, making you pleasantly familiar with all the interesting news of the week, that is exciting to those who live upon your labour, and contrasting its fashionable folly with that rational intelligence that I mean to communicate to you and to your families. I have a great deal of work in me yet; indeed I feel convinced, that if I felt the necessity of doing it, that I could edit two daily papers in addition to my weekly labour. As soon as ever the Land Association is in full practical operation, I will give it the full benefit of my labour gratuitously, by writing such a work weekly, upon the very lowest paying terms, as will bind up in monthly numbers in beautiful and useful volumes, thus leaving you a library, with a handsome engraving as a frontispiece, thirteen volumes each year. These I will expect every subscriber to have handsomely bound and preserved in their cottage library. In them I will publish the best selected letters from the fathers, mothers, and children of the Association, and in this work I shall take the greatest possible pride.

I shall soon turn from the consideration of our social to our political expectations. I am sure that the manner in which the awkward squad of Protectionists have "stood up to receive," in the battle which is now going on between them and the practised hands, hired by Sir Robert Peel to govern this country by a new system of policy, will have opened the eyes of every working man to the necessity of struggling for a share of that power by which the other classes protect their interests. It must be clear to every man that Sir Robert Peel's present policy is to carry out the principle of centralisation by the aid of an aristocracy of talent. He has tried the aristocracy of capital, and has failed; he has tried the aristocracy of land, and has failed; and he is now about to try the aristocracy of talent. This may appear to be the best aristocracy for the purposes of representation; but at the same time it would be the most dangerous, if not the critically watched. He is getting rid of the school of politicians, and calling to his aid all the young blood that he can enlist at any price; and the science upon which this school is to be formed is the science of political economy—the most undefined, the most dangerous, and the most cruelly interpreted science that ever was proposed to the mind of man. The accepted interpretation and definition of political economy is, the best means by which the powerful slaveholder can amass money from the labour of the powerless slave. Believe me that, however Sir James Graham misinterpreted Mr. Stratford O'Brien, when he affected to say that political economy meant extensive peculation, but that it did mean distribution, when I tell you that he knew that it meant the speculation of the powerful in the labour of the powerless.

I have already written so much upon the debate now going on, that I shall make but one further observation upon it—it is this: That it very much resembles the triumph of an enthusiastic party holding up their hands on the day of nomination, while the quiet, conscious candidate still remains satisfied of the triumph that awaits him in the polling booth. The confidence of the Commons reminds us of the enthusiasm of the unrepresented; while the suspicious quietness of the Lords assures us that they expect their triumph in the polling booth. Now, I very strongly suspect that the fate of Peel's measure in its first trial will be similar to the fate of Catholic Emancipation, which Sir Francis Burrell denominated the "Annual Fares," and very like the fate that the Reform Bill met at the hands of their lordships; and if so, it will then become our duty to convulse an extensive convention of the working classes, to sit in London until the struggle is over; and if the frightened Lords are ready to offer more than the confident free traders, we will let them see upon whose side the balance of power is. But, come what will, I am resolved that my present struggle shall not cease without forcing a knowledge of our strength, our union, and our resolution into all corners of the earth. Believe me, when I tell you that I am not an idle or unobservant spectator of the events of the day, but that I have a thousand times, and I hope a million times, to be ready to follow him in his leap into that gulf that swallows up his properties. Now, I wish to prepare you for the times that I have described, and I hope to give you another proof, that when your interests are at stake, and your battle is to be fought, that I am the first in the field, and the last to shun the fight.

I am, ever,
Your fond and faithful friend,
FRANCIS O'CONNOR.

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Grades' Movements.

THE "CONSPIRACY" CASE OF THE BELFAST JOURNEMEN SHOEMAKERS.

The editor of the *Cordwainers' Companion* communicates to us the following extract of a letter from Belfast:

"With regard to your inquiry about the precise nature and origin of our strike, the facts are these:—The prior dispute began wholly in resisting reductions on the several shops we had to contend against; which were all of that class called third and fourth-rate shops, with only one exception; and which shops had monopolised the greatest part of the trade of the town. After being routed by the opposition these employers experienced, they immediately formed themselves into what they termed *The Mutual Defence Society*, and continued meeting weekly till the 30th of December, at which time they came to a resolution, along with two other masters of the town, to discharge every man employed by them, and to re-engage them on the hands of a discharged man, who was to be engaged by the hands of a discharged man, and so they would be necessitated to come to their terms. These men, besides, had in general overdone their work on Christmas Eve; and when they thought to begin to work on the 1st of January, they were put off till Tuesday, the 30th, and then told what was expected of them. We all refused, however, to submit to this baseness; and then, on the 3rd of January, the town secretary of our society, myself, as well as the district secretary, and five members who formed our committee, went to work on the 1st of January, and on the 2nd, and on the 3rd, and on the 4th, and on the 5th, and on the 6th, and on the 7th, and on the 8th, and on the 9th, and on the 10th, and on the 11th, and on the 12th, and on the 13th, and on the 14th, and on the 15th, and on the 16th, and on the 17th, and on the 18th, and on the 19th, and on the 20th, and on the 21st, and on the 22nd, and on the 23rd, and on the 24th, and on the 25th, and on the 26th, and on the 27th, and on the 28th, and on the 29th, and on the 30th, and on the 31st, and on the 1st, and on the 2nd, and on the 3rd, and on the 4th, and on the 5th, and on the 6th, and on the 7th, and on the 8th, and on the 9th, and on the 10th, and on the 11th, and on the 12th, and on the 13th, and on the 14th, and on the 15th, and on 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Prosecutors and Witnesses in cases of Felony and Misdemeanour from the Wapontakes of Strid and Tickhill, Osgodcross, and Staincross, must attend the Sessions at Sheffield; and those from the Wapontakes of Staincliffe and Eweross, Claro, the Ainsty, Agbrigg and Killy, Skyrack, and Barksdonall, being the remainder of the West-riding, must attend the Sessions at Wakefield."

C. H. ELSLEY, Clerk of the Peace, Clerk of the Peace's Office, Wakefield, 9th February, 1846.

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Mr. T. Cooper proposed, as an amendment, the petition proposed by him to the meeting at Turnagain-lane, which that meeting rejected. A gentleman in the body of the meeting seconded Mr. Cooper's petition.

The question was then put from the chair, when a few hands only were held up for Mr. Cooper's petition, and a vast majority in opposition thereto. The original petition was then put, and unanimously adopted.

The meeting then dissolved.

