

State. A minority of the minority organises, and the whole minority tolerates or approves a plan of misusing the forms of the House of Commons, under which no business can be got through. Representatives are too deeply disgusted to attend, and Ministers are worn out with work about as useful as polishing shot or picking oakum. Under cover of exposing grievances during the debates on supply, a band of members consume the whole of the time of the House in discussions which, were it not an object to paralyse the Executive, would never be raised, or would be concluded in as many minutes as they now occupy hours.—*Spectator*, 1889.

Politicians of every shade had long agreed in regarding the British Constitution with pride, until the veneration of many had degenerated into fanaticism.—*Erskine May*, "*Edinburgh Review*," 1854.

Pure party feeling demands the prostration of the reason and the will. It requires that a man should not only believe in the infallibility of his leaders, but also in the mortal errors and delinquencies of his opponents. He must not only defend and follow his party, even when they are wrong, but he must attack and resist the opposite opinions even when they are right. He is bound by ties almost as strong as those of military obedience; and he dreads the consequences of deserting his flag, even when he condemns the policy to which he is bound.—*Maine*, "*Edinburgh Review*," 1886.

I think it is evident that the people are tired of the system, and that it will have to be got rid of by one way or another in the course of time.—*T. E. Kebbel*, "*Nineteenth Century*," 1888.

In 1882 Mr. Gladstone informed Parliament that his domestic legislation had been a total failure, not because of the Tory party, but because of the rotten procedure of the House of Commons.—*Churchill*.

About the reform of the House of Commons there is absolutely no difference of opinion. Everybody agrees that it is a worthless and a useless House of Commons, and that a reform which takes place in it cannot possibly be a reform for the worse.—*Churchill*, speech, October, 1884.

Mr. Bright has added the weight of his authority to the general protest against political servility. What will be the value of party, he very truly asks, when its whole power is placed at the disposal of a leader from whose authority no appeal is allowed? This principle of absolute obedience is the principle of Jesuitism—a principle which secures wonderful results in the success of a particular set of interests, but is fatal to that individual freedom which is the soul of English political life.—*Public Opinion*, 25th June, 1886.

Parties strive to engross the prizes of office by the means which faction everywhere employs. The consequences are, the increasing ascendancy of the worst men, and the political demoralisation of a community, which, if a fair chance were given it, would furnish as sound a basis for good government as any community in the world.—*Goldwin Smith*.

Settlement in legislation depends upon the perturbations of the balance of conflicting interest. . . . Take the desire and faith of mutual help, the virtue of avowed brotherhood, for the accomplishment of common purpose, without which nothing great can be wrought by multitudinous bands of men. . . . Let the devil put a few personal interests into it, and you have all faithful deliberation on national law rendered impossible to the Parliaments of the world by the antagonism of parties. . . . The taunt of personal malignity and studied disrespect ignore the decencies of debate and lower the dignity of the House.—*Ruskin*.

Those who are not in the House of Commons cannot realise how the members must feel when, night after night, they see devices tried which entirely check their activity, and which not only defeat the measures which are being proposed, but degrade the great Assembly of which every member of the United Kingdom ought to be proud.—*Goschen*, speech, 1885.

These feelings of distrust and disapproval, if I do not mistake, are generated and maintained by this accursed system by which the party here strive to murder the reputation of parties on that side, and leaps over the dead bodies of murdered reputations to the Treasury seats. That these fruits of party government are not of mere local growth, but are natural and universal products of the system could be shown by evidence from all the countries which are ruled under it.—*E. G. FitzGibbon*, "*Melbourne Review*," 1887, speech by Mr. Higginbottom.

Each party, when in Opposition, must assist in bringing Government itself into contempt by holding up those who hold the reins to public ridicule or detestation.—*Froude*.

Probably no member of Parliament quite knows how scandalous and intolerable the present state of the House of Commons appears to the great body of quiet reasonable people throughout the country. . . . The actual truth is that people outside the House of Commons regard the confusion into which it has fallen, and its apparent helplessness to extricate itself, with ever-deepening disgust and shame.—*Matthew Arnold*, "*Nineteenth Century*," 1887.

The time of Parliament is, beyond all comparison, the most precious possession of the people of these kingdoms. Whether we consider its mere money value, as measured by the earnings of its professional and mercantile members, or its potentiality for good to the nation, this is demonstrably and obviously true. Notwithstanding this, it is notoriously wasted as nothing else is wasted; worse than this, its waste is attended by an amount of mental discomfort to all patriotic men, and a loss of health and energy to members of the House which it is impossible to exaggerate.—*Samuel Plimsoll*, "*Fortnightly Review*," 1886.