

Preface.

Those who have done me the honour of reading my former writings, will perhaps receive no very strong impression of novelty from the present: for its principles are those to which I have been working up during the greater part of my life, & most of the practical suggestions have been anticipated either by others or by myself. There is some novelty, however, in the fact of bringing them all by other, & exhibiting them in their connexion; & also, I believe in many of the arguments & illustrations by which they are confirmed[?]. I do not at the same time disguise from myself that several of these opinions, if not new, are for the present as little likely to meet with general acceptance as if they were.

It appears to me, however, from various signs, & notably from the recent debates on the Reform of Parliament, that both Conservatives & Liberals have lost confidence in the political creeds which they still nominally profess, while neither side seems to have made any progress in possessing itself of a better. Yet such a better doctrine must be possible; not a mere compromise between the two, but something wider than either, & in virtue of not neglecting any side or aspect of the great problem of politics fitted to satisfy the legitimate requirements of both. When so many obscurely feel the want of such a doctrine, & so few even flatter themselves that they have attained it, any one may without presumption offer what his own thoughts, & the best that he knows of those of others, are able to contribute towards its formation.