

Earl Grey—that which now gives him a distinguished niche in British history—was the work of parliamentary reform. In 1793 he first introduced into Parliament his celebrated motion on this subject, and found, in a house of two hundred and twenty-three members, only forty-one supporters. The revolutionary tornado in France had reached its extreme height at the time, and had prostrated, in its fury, the king, the aristocracy, and the Church; French principles were spreading among ourselves; some of the more infidel writings of Paine had just appeared, and were circulating among the people by thousands and tens of thousands; many of the more timid Whigs, alarmed at the very appearance of change, hung back from their old allies; with this timid class the great bulk of the more sober portion of the British people made common cause; and so the motion of Earl Grey was negatived by a majority that served not only to extinguish the measure for the time, but to leave scarce any hope of its ultimate success. The terrible storm raised in France blew full against it, and bore it down; and it was not until a more salutary storm arose in the same country nearly forty years after, that it fairly righted again, and, under the influence of the now auspicious gale, bore into harbour. His Lordship held the helm in both cases; and the tempest that so signally baffled him in the one, and the gale that carried his bark so directly into port in the other, blew from off the same land.

When Earl Grey introduced into the House his first unsuccessful motion for parliamentary reform, he was in his twenty-ninth year. Thirty-eight years passed ere he originated the motion on the subject which was to be ultimately successful, and he was now in his sixty-seventh. In the long intervening period, the change so common to the mind of man, which modifies the Whiggism natural to youth into the semi-Toryism natural to age, seems to have taken place to