

Dinton - Dalwood Letters

'The Close,' Salisbury. 13th May 1839

My dear George,

My conscience smites me for having so long deferred writing to you, but as I know a barrel will speedily be sent off I will send this as an inside passenger. On Wednesday last it was announced that the Whig Ministry had ceased to exist. The Queen sent for the Duke of Wellington, who recommended that Sir R. Peel should form a Conservative ministry, which, after having audience with her Majesty, he immediately set about, but when he requires that the ladies of the Bedchamber be changed our little Vic turns rusty, and talks of rather resigning her crown than the right enjoyed by every subject of choosing her own immediate attendants, so nothing remained for the Hon. Bart. but to decline the honour of having to form a Ministry, every measure of which was to be subject to the surveillance of a Whig Camarilla at the Palace. Consequently, Lord Melbourne is again going to take office, which he cannot hold for a month, for the Radicals cannot be reconciled, and, even if they were and he was to go with them what is now vulgarly termed the whole hog, he would have all the old Whigs against him; in fact, we are in a precious mess, and England wants a firm steady hand at her helm as much as at any period of her history. There is scarce any institution or rite but what is being tampered with of late years; the more ancient the sooner has the cry been raised, 'Down with it, even to the ground.' It seems they are determined to swamp the House of Lords, Coronets are as plentiful as cowslips, and eight new Peers were created the other day, and I see in today's paper that it is projected to make 40 more. However, I trust there is such a strong feeling throughout the country against further innovations that we may yet weather the storm. Some fellows calling themselves Chartists have lately been making disturbances in several parts of the country, but a proclamation has at length been issued against them, and, it is a rope of sand that unites them, I have no fear on that score. But a truce to politics! I fear I must have well-nigh tired you; from the above you may see which way of thinking am I.

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May 20, - To-day is expected to be the great mustering day of the Chartists. I see that stores of ammunition have been set off into many of the manufacturing districts from the Tower. I still trust that they may not be needed. Several arrests have lately taken place of the leading Demagogues; it was a pity they were allowed to go to such lengths to disseminate their revolutionary doctrines. Paris has again been in a state of insurrection; indeed, I think we in a great measure owe our present unsettled state to what the Parisians are pleased to term 'the three glorious days.'

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I must now walk to the reading room, as the present times make us all politicians. The Whigs have succeeded in electing Shaw Lefevre as Speaker, but they are a house divided against itself. The mob now worship the Duke of Wellington as their idol, whom only a few years ago they tried to knock on the head.

Your ever affectionate brother,

JOHN WYNDHAM