

the franchise. Five years later Gladstone carried through the Ballot Act, thus granting another demand of the Chartists. Before this, the voter went to the polls and openly declared for which candidate his votes should be counted. After the Ballot Act came into force, it was impossible to tell for whom the voter cast his ballot, thus lessening very much the dangers of bribery and threatening. In 1884 Gladstone passed the third Reform Bill, which gave the right to vote to two and one-half millions of farm labourers, miners, and male servants. Before 1832, the voters were one in every fifty of the population; after 1884, they were one in six, or one to almost every family.

270. Religious freedom.—The progress of religious freedom was rapid during the reign of Victoria. The repeal of the Test and other preventative Acts had given Roman Catholics and Protestant dissenters the right to vote and to hold public offices. It was not, however, until 1858 that this right was extended to the Jews. In that year Baron Rothschild, the head of the great Jewish banking house of that name, was allowed to take his seat in the House of Commons.

From the time of their foundation, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were closely connected with the Church of England. No student was allowed to take a degree unless he would subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles, nor could a scholar be appointed to any office in either of the universities without a similar test. In 1871 Parliament, acting on the report of a Royal Commission appointed to investigate the question, removed these tests.

In 1868 compulsory rates for the support of the established church were abolished, and in 1870 dissenters were allowed to bury their dead in the parish churchyards, using their own rites and ceremonies. The Church of England still remains the established church in England and Wales and the Church of Scotland in Scotland; in Ireland there is no established church. *x ↑ x x ^*

271. The progress of education.—The marriage registers of England and Wales furnish certain proof that when Victoria began to reign, two out of every five grown men and