

ANSWER OF THE  
**TYPOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY**

TO COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED FROM

**ROBERT DALE OWEN.**

*At a General Meeting of the New-York Typographical Society, held on the Evening of the 5th of December, 1829, the following Report was submitted by a Committee, and adopted, unanimously, with the exception of 3 votes.*

(we 289)  
The Committee appointed at the General Meeting of the Society, on the 6th of November last, for the purpose of examining a communication received from Robert Dale Owen, enclosing a paper, purporting to be the plan and character of an "*Association for the protection of Industry, and for the promotion of National Education,*" Report,

That they have examined these communications with no small degree of surprise, inasmuch as they are not aware of any attempt to impede the progress of education, or in any way to abridge the liberties which we enjoy, and which descended from our fathers.

Robert Dale Owen, (the only name affixed to these communications,) informs us, however, that "*these are the times that strenuously demand union among all the advocates of equal rights.*" He farther states, that "*if we hold it our duty to oppose all unrepblican influences, he tenders us the hand of fellowship,*" and requests to be informed of the "*object, character, and intention of our Society;*" and also, "*what we consider a System of Education befitting this Republic.*"

The communication enclosed sets forth, as "*Reasons for the formation of the Association,*" that "*industry is unprotected, oppressed, despised, and indirectly deprived of its just reward;*" that "*there is no system of education which secures the instruction of the children of the poor as of the rich; none which is free from clerical and sectarian influences, and from aristocratical distinctions; none which is calculated to induce in the rising generation habits of indus-*



try, principles of morality, or feelings of brotherly love," &c. &c. The remainder of the paper recapitulates the means by which the object of this association is to be attained : by printing and circulating Tracts among mechanics and the working classes ; by promoting the extension of the association throughout the United States ; by a regular correspondence with the distant branches thereof ; by watching the clergy, &c. &c.

Your Committee were desirous of acquiring some knowledge of Robert Dale Owen. Their inquiry resulted in the fact, that he was a native of Scotland, recently emigrated to this country ; in all probability not naturalized, and either directly or indirectly connected with one Miss Frances Wright, (also an exotic of some notoriety,) in her plans of reformation. It did appear unaccountably strange to your Committee, that a native of that section of the world, where thousands are daily groaning under the yoke of severe oppression, where there are such a vast field and opportunity for the exercise of philanthropy, should place himself at such a distance from them, in the midst of a people enjoying liberty in its fullest extent ; that liberty which was sealed by the blood of their fathers, and has descended to them in all its purity ; and, proclaiming himself the champion of "*equal rights*," call upon these freemen to rally under his standard, tendering to them the hand of fellowship against their *oppressors*.

Your Committee would stop here, and recommend that this insolence be treated with contempt, were it not that circumstances induce us to believe that a band of "*choice spirits*," of foreign origin, have united among us, and, availing themselves of the mild forbearance of our laws, are determined, by the most insidious arts, to sow the seeds of discord and rebellion. We believe that this association had its origin with Miss Frances Wright, and her accomplices, for this reason : the association was not heard of until Miss Wright had lectured on the subject of "*National Education*:" the principles and plan which it sets forth are the principles and plan she promulgated, and we conceive them to be entirely visionary. These reformers have addressed themselves almost exclusively to that class of citizens among whom they suppose there is the least intelligence, that they may the more readily succeed in their designs : we trust,



however, that there is too much intelligence among mechanics and working men in this republic, to become the ready dupes of such pretenders.

It is true that there is some distress among the laboring classes throughout the civilized world, but it has grown out of circumstances about which the wisest men differ in opinion. It is a fact that labor is not as productive as it has been in times past; that is to say, a man, by the labor of his hands, is unable to provide as well for his necessities as he could have done in times past. But in this country, the pressure arising from this state of things is nothing, compared to the overwhelming poverty, want, and misery which are exhibited in every nation in Europe, among the laboring classes. Your Committee would beg leave, while on this subject, to hazard one opinion, which is, that the cause of this distress, in a great measure, if not altogether, may be found in the rapid introduction of labor-saving machines, within the last thirty years. We are not prepared to say that they ought or can be suppressed, but we do say, that the subject merits the attention of wise legislators. But what do our reformers say? They call upon the laboring classes to rally under them, in defence of their rights, when no right has been molested, nor the shadow of an attempt made from which such an inference can be drawn; on the contrary, it has of late been the principal object of all our legislative assemblies to enlarge the rights, and extend the privileges of every class of their fellow-citizens.

They would destroy the Christian religion, the pillar that sustains moral obligation, the light of the blind, the solace of the afflicted, the only hope planted in the human heart which carries it triumphant beyond the pale of this, at best, but miserable existence, and in its stead would substitute misrule and confusion, to terminate in nothing but the hope of annihilation.

Your Committee view this interference with indignation, and in that spirit would reply; indignant, that the sanctity of a Society, established exclusively for the purposes of charity and the cultivation of good feelings among members of the same profession, should be broken into under such insolent pretensions; and indignant, as freemen, that the institutions of our land should be falsified. Industry is not unprotected, not despised, nor deprived of its just reward.



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It is not true, that there is no system of education in this republic befitting a republic; it is not true, that there are no schools free from sectarian influence, or that the poor are denied an education. The Mechanic School is free from sectarian influence; it was founded and is sustained by mechanics and working men, and the poor are educated gratuitously; it is capable of being enlarged to suit any emergency, on the same principles that now sustain it; it has not called for the sacrifice of any moral virtue; it has not intimated the necessity of a revolution; it stands a monument of fame to its founders, a blessing to their offspring, branding with falsehood the declaration of these pretenders.

What right has been invaded, suppressed, or molested? We know of none, except the natural right which a quiet, satisfied, intelligent, and free community ought to exercise in silencing such mischief-makers. Do the laws bear heavy and unequal on any class of citizens? Let them so represent it to their rulers, whom they assisted to place in power, and they will be listened to, and their grievances redressed: it is their right to be heard; that right has never been denied to any class of citizens.

Your Committee refrain from entering into any farther argument on this subject; our whole feelings relax into pity and contempt for these pretenders, when we see them hanging to the skirts of a deluded woman.

We would say, by way of conclusion, to Robert Dale Owen, that the "*object, character, and intentions*," of this Society are entirely at variance with his views; we trust that its members will never depart so far from its object, as to lend their aid in promoting the visionary schemes of his associates; and although they are "*working men*," they hope to be always found laboring in better company than with those who would destroy the dearest of all social ties, and the hope of the great reward of the "*good and faithful servant*."

ADO. CHANDLER,  
W. E. DEAN,  
D. H. REINS, } Committee.

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