

# THE GLEANER

AND

NORTHUMBERLAND SCHEDIASMA.

VOLUME III.]

"Nec araneorum sane texus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt nec noster vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes."

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## THE GLEANER.

### POLITICAL EXTRACTS.

#### STATE OF EUROPE.

WE should be blind to the most obvious consequences of the events which have already taken place, if we were to suppose, that the triumphs which liberal opinions have already attained in France, Belgium, and England, are likely to stop there. Russia, Austria, and Prussia clearly do not think so; for they are armed, and still arming, for the purpose of defending the contrary class of opinions which they entertain, and upon the continuance of which their thrones essentially depend. From an extraordinary complication of motives, those three anti-liberal powers have joined the two liberal ones in giving an apparent sanction, in Belgium, to rebellion, and to the progress of those very ideas against which their fortresses at home are manned, and their artillery charged to the very muzzle. They have moreover declared Belgium to be a neutral territory, as if such a neutrality were possible to be realized after all that has occurred! The French diplomatists engaged in this arrangement well know, that they have been all along enacting a mere farce, and that, upon the first signal of war with the Northern league, Belgium will become an integral and important Province of France. Leopold has become, in truth, what he was really intended to be, a mere shadow of a King. At the first battle at which he was engaged, his troops all abandoned him; for what was he to them? England is too much engaged at home to attend to the deep game which the northern league is playing against France, and France against it; for all the conferences which have been going on these twelve months had for their object, not the independence of Belgium, but preparation for war—for the grand war of opinion which is about to break out with awful fury. There is little doubt, that this war would have commenced before now, if the Polish insurrection had not disconcerted the calculations of Russia. The suppression of that revolt will liberate her legions, and the vans of the armies destined for the European conflict, will then be in the presence of each other, and with the speed of lightning committed in the field. For one of two things must occur. Either the continental powers must voluntarily disarm, or be disarmed by a superior force. It is not in the nature of things, that they shall go on for ever threatening each other; and that too, at an expense which is almost as ruinous as war, without its chances of amelioration. Continental Europe is at this moment an universal camp; and it is impossible to suppose, that men shall be mustered, provisions collected, ammunitions heaped up, and artillery mounted, and so kept on together for years in perfect inactivity. There is, indeed, another alternative, which is not beyond the range of possibility, should the present armaments much longer continue unengaged in active service. The soldiers, by being much together in masses, and having nothing better to do, may possibly become mutinous, turn against their masters, and, taking up the tale of liberty where Poland may have left it, decide the contest by acclamation. This is a result at which we should not be at all surprised. The Prussians cannot forget, that a constitution was promised to them in 1814, and that the promise has not yet been fulfilled. The events which occurred upon the accession of Nicholas demonstrated, that there was 'something rotten in the state of Denmark.' As to Austria her deliverance might, perhaps, come from Hungary, if circumstances were favourable. But, happen what may, either by civil war, or by international war, the opinion of Europe must, sooner or later, be settled for

or against a free system of Government. The days of mere feudalism have long since been numbered, and the question must soon be put to rest, whether, under any circumstances, hereditary monarchy and hereditary aristocracy can possibly maintain their ground much longer in Europe.—*Monthly Review.*

#### THE WAR OF OPINION

ONE cannot revert to Mr Canning's speech on the occasion of sending troops to Portugal in 1826, without feeling that one is listening to a superior intelligence, shadowing out, though dimly, the coming events. 'It will be recollected,' said that gifted statesman, in a speech which the present author truly designates as one of the boldest that ever dropped from the lips of man, 'that when, some years ago, I took the liberty of diverting to a topic of this nature, when it was referred to in this house, with respect to the position of this country at the present time, I then stated, that our position was not merely one of neutrality between contending principles and opinions; that it was a position of neutrality which alone preserved the balance of power the maintenance of which I believed necessary to the welfare of Europe. Nearly four years, or rather three years and a half of experience, have confirmed and not altered the opinions then declared; and I still fear, that the next war in Europe, if it should spread beyond the narrow compass of Portugal, and Spain, will be a war of the most tremendous nature, because it will be a war of conflicting opinions; and I know that if the interests and honour of this country should oblige us to enter into it,—as I trust we shall always do with a firm desire to mitigate rather than exasperate, to contend with arms and not with opinions,—yet I know that this country could not avoid seeing ranked under her banners all the restless, and all the dissatisfied, whether with cause or without cause, of every nation with which she might be placed at variance.' In the first part of this bold denunciation, we behold the prophet; in the latter the erring intellect of the man, for he evidently spoke with reference to the disaffection which prevailed towards the throne in France; but which disaffection he conceived that throne sufficiently powerful to curb. It was a threat held out against the Bourbons, whose second, or rather whose third expulsion from France, he, with all his power of prognostication, could not then foresee. But with how much more of certainty might he not now, if his spirit still dwelt amongst us, expatiate upon the dangers of that coming war of opinion, when those who were then the disaffected, have become the predominant party in France, have collected their thunderbolts in their hands, and are ready to hurl them upon that part of Europe which shall be the first to provoke their anger! But what do we say? has not this war of opinion already begun? Did it not, in point of fact begin on the very day that Charles X. signed the ordinances? What was the resistance to those ordinances, but a successful war of men who conceived that they ought to be free, against a despot who wished that they should be enslaved? Has not the progress of this conflict between the two principles already dissolved the union between Belgium and Holland, and raised the Poles in insurrection against the 'great military Juggernaut' of the North? Do we not see and hear this war in our own country, carried on, indeed, as yet, by the means of that ample latitude of discussion which our legislative constitution and habits sanction, but ready to be converted into a war of arms, if the dire necessity for such an alternative should ever occur; that is to say, if the party already conquered by public opinion, do not submit to go under the yoke?—*Monthly Review.*

#### THE "SPIRIT OF THE MOVEMENT."

The privileged orders in France are now virtually extinct; and the abolition of the hereditary peerage, which the present Chamber is pledged to effect, will also extinguish the name. The subdivision of property has crumbled into particles, the influence of what was once the great landed proprietary; and mercantile wealth, subjected to the same process, is unable, by its mere temporary accumulations to engender amongst its possessors that unity of action and esprit de corps, which is always to be found in a corporation of hereditary magnates. Here then the democratical nature of the revolution of July, supposing we did not refer to national manifestations as criteria, is plainly to be inferred a priori from the fact, that in France an aristocracy, comparatively speaking, does not exist. One of the most perfect indications, however, of the spirit of the movement is the share which the press had in contributing to it. This is a democratic feature, which is not discernible in the series of revolutions which took place before the eighteenth century; and there could subsist no very pervading sentiment of a popular nature, where this sole but mighty engine of intercommunication was wanting. The very circumstance which constitutes the physical power of the people, namely, their numbers, renders feeble their deliberative, except where such an organ is established. By means of it millions can meet in council, and the national mind be marshalled to act with unity. The French press, in the recent transactions, amply fulfilled its functions, and illustrated by its influence the power of the people. Another strong indication of the spirit of the movement was the political eminence which the National Guard, that is the middle classes, the trades-people, the shopkeepers, of which this popular force is composed, held amidst the convulsion. The destinies of France were and are plainly in their hands. The system of government to be adopted was and is manifestly at their arbitration, that is at the arbitration of the people. It is unnecessary to go more into detail to prove that the characteristics of the revolution of July, as contrasted with those which took place before the eighteenth century, were highly democratic.

The remarks we have made with respect to the case of France, apply with little modification to that of Belgium. There also the popular manifestations have predominated, and the acts of the Provincial government have been conceived in the spirit of freedom. The press and the Burgber Guard, in other words the people, have in Belgium conducted and confirmed the revolution after the same manner that the press and the National Guard effected the same end in France, and here again the spirit of the movement is democratic.

With respect to the valiant and high minded nation which is still struggling on the Vistula for its liberties, we can only speak in terms of sympathy and hope. Their magnanimity and courage in the field are good earnest of their final success, whilst the national scope of their councils, the manumission of serfs, and the abolition of all aristocratic exactions, give ample promise that the spirit of their movement will not be an illiberal one; but will, on the contrary, be comprehensive and free. It already forms a striking contrast with the last revolution in that country, when Kosciusko, unfortunately for his perfect fame, was placed at the head of a junta, instead of in the front of the nation.

Last of all, England—the peculiar region of the earth, which boasts itself the birth place of liberty—England has marched with the intelligence of the age, and has commenced the work of regeneration on the most enlarged and popular principles. That even in