

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.

CHARACTER &c OF SEVERAL CELEBRATED INDIVIDUALS

CHARACTER OF MR STANLEY.—Mr. Stanley displayed, in his very first recourte with Mr. O'Connell, so much acuteness, dexterity, fearlessness, and so much of that subdued and polite virulence which constitutes the highest merit in the sarcastic oratory of the House of Commons, that his antagonist was taught to beware of him, and since that time nothing more has been heard of 'shave beggar,' and of the other somewhat contumelious designations which were attached in the miscellany of tribunitian invective to the Secretary for Ireland. Mr. Stanley gave still higher indications of ability in his reply to Sir Robert Peel, and in a little while established his character as by far the ablest debater on the Treasury Bench. His progress in improvement was singularly rapid: it was not that his faculties were much more fully developed, but that every night he acquired a still stronger confidence in his own powers, and that consciousness of high talents which gives them so ample and so strong a wing. He who rises to speak with a beating heart, and retains the palpitation, cannot, no matter how eminently he may be endowed, achieve any thing in a public assembly. Perfect coolness and self-possession are among the most useful attributes of Mr. Stanley. Some sketch of him in a debate may not be destitute of interest. While his adversary is speaking he shows little self command; he listens with a spirit of mockery which is not intended to be offensive, but causes displeasure; he turns round to his neighbouring minister and whispers and laughs; he tosses up his head, and exhibits a restlessness and impatience of what he considers to be either sophistry, ignorance, or absurdity. He cannot sit for a moment in tranquility, but alternately throws himself back, or upon his knees, and putting the palms of his hands together, bends down his head, and after remaining in this attitude suddenly recovers himself and seems ready to spring forward to reply. This sort of parliamentary pantomime, is not relished by the Opposition. When, however, he has got fairly on his legs, he shows an utter absence of the nervousness and susceptibility which one might have anticipated from an orator whose silence is so much on wires. With a clear, distinct voice, whose fault consists in its approach to occasional shrillness, and with a surprising facility of neat and simple phrase, which is admirably adapted to the purposes of exposition, he takes up every argument and every fact which have been pressed upon the other side, and leaves no assertion untouched. If he cannot contradict, he qualifies—if he cannot refute, he embarrasses—and where he cannot contradict, and cannot refute, he performs one office with asperity and the other with desision. His gesture is easy, graceful, unaffected, and impressive. His attitude is manly, and free from any of the artifices of deportment which Sir Robert Peel is supposed at times to employ. He has great strenuousness and even ardour, and after having laid his antagonist prostrate, exults in his overthrow. Is he then a great orator? That is a question which as yet it would be difficult to answer. What he possesses has been told; the qualities which he wants, or, I should perhaps say, which he has not yet exhibited, are of importance as ingredients of the highest excellence in one to whom the distinctions of such an appellation as that of a true orator should be assigned. He addresses himself exclusively to the reason, and seldom, or ever, and certainly with little success if ever he does so, to the heart; he does not exhibit, and, therefore, does not create much emotion, and satisfies the understanding without bearing the passions, over which he has little control, away.

His manner is fervid, but is never raised to that high pitch of excitation which in Plunkett, Brougham, and Canning, and lately in Macaulay, wrought so much effect in men who sympathize through the eye and ear as well as through the mind. He does not, like the last distinguished speaker, indulge in any general reflections and although a metaphysical character is by no means commendable in a parliamentary orator, still we would desire to hear occasionally some general remark indicative, of his having meditated upon the interests and progression of society. Mr. Stanley never indulges in large views, or in lofty sentiments; no generous exclamation ever breaks from his lips, his eyes are never on fire with a moral inspiration, he is never 'lifted beyond the ground' by any ascendancy of emotion. His language, although it is faultless and flows from 'the well of English undefiled,' is not rich, coloured, or diversified; his expression does not sparkle: it has neither the glitter of fancy nor the splendour of imagination. He does not afford, like Mr. Macaulay, (I refer frequently to him because he strikes me to be the man of most genius in the House of Commons,) a proof of the possibility of uniting with success the vigorous logic of parliamentary debate with the most striking embellishments of composition, for Mr. Macaulay leaves its vigour to a syllogism, while he clothes it with the richest attire which the finest wardrobe of diction can supply, and does not shut out or envelope his arguments because he curtains them with the gorgeous awnings of a richly coloured phraseology. Still, for ordinary and practical persons, Mr. Stanley would be far more efficient in debate, and however a mere critic might be disposed to assign the palm to the one, it is to the Secretary for Ireland that a minister would always, I suspect, even independently of the weight of great rank and extensive connections, be inclined to give the preference.—*New Monthly Magazine.*

KING LEOPOLD.—The Prince Leopold was among the first to start from an inactivity which was so irksome to him; and, long before the campaign had commenced, he was in the midst of the Russian army, leaving all that was most dear to him at risk, for the great cause of his 'fatherland.' He accompanied the allied army to Silesia and Saxony, was engaged in the battles at Lutzen and Bamzen, and, on the expiration of the armistice, proceeded with the army to Bohemia, and thence to the Saxon frontier, where he particularly distinguished himself with the division of cavalry under his command. For his eminent services on those days, the Emperor Alexander invested him, on the field of battle of Nollendorf, with the Cross of St. George, and the Emperor of Austria subsequently conferred on him the order of Maria Theresa. He was at Leipsic, and throughout the whole of the campaigns which ended in the capture of Paris, in 1814. Many of our countrymen formed their first acquaintance with the prince when he was in the French capital at this period 'the gayest of the gay.' Hence he passed over to England with the allied sovereigns, in a natural anxiety to visit the land which had aided so greatly the cause which had been so nobly consummated. At this time the Prince Leopold was a young man, twenty-four years of age, remarkable for his good looks, and distinguished from the crowd of princes with whom he was associated, for good amenity of manners, equanimity of temper, and every accomplishment of good society. The Princess Charlotte of Wales was, at that time, in her eighteenth year, and remarkable, above her years, for great insight into the characters of those with whom she had associated. It is not, therefore, surprising, that she should have been captivated with the qualities of Prince Leopold; nor is it necessary, at this time of day, to doubt the excellence of her judg-

ment, in her preference of an individual who made her, without any dispute, the happiest of women during the short period which she was permitted to call happy, in her short, but eventful life. It is well known that her hand had been destined for the Prince of Orange, by the policy of the British cabinet, as well as at the desire of her royal father; and the princess had so far yielded to these wishes, as to consent to appear with him in public at the queen's drawing-room. She was not, however, of a disposition to be willingly made an instrument of others in a matter so near her heart; and, when she found a man more suited to her mind, she at once broke off a forced attachment, and loved him alone with all the intensity of woman's affection. The British people unaccustomed to marriages of convenience, admired the spirit which influenced her conduct; and she felt encouraged by their approbation to carry her point with all the resolution she inherited from her family. When, one day, her equerry, Colonel Addenbroke returned from Kew to Cranbourne Lodge, in Windsor Park, where the princess at that time resided, and told her the report of the day—that her royal highness was to marry Prince Leopold—she at once evinced the settled determination of her breast, by the reply, 'He is the only man I ever will marry.'—*National Portrait Gallery.*

QUEEN ELIZABETH.—Her Majesty was, however, far from being always accommodating; and it often required no small degree of patience to bear the effects of her violent passions and unreasonable caprice. The manners of that age were much less refined than that of the present; yet, even that, it appeared no ordinary breach of decorum in a queen to load her attendants with the coarsest epithets, or to vent her indignation in blows. The style of gallantry with which she encouraged her courtiers to approach her, both cherished this overbearing temper, and made her excesses be received rather as the ill humour of a mistress than the affronts of a sovereign. It was customary for her statesmen and warriors to pretend not only loyalty to her throne, but ardent attachment to her person; and in some of Raleigh's letters, we find her addressed, at the age of sixty, with all the enthusiastic rapture of a fond lover. To feign a dangerous distemper, arising from the influence of her charms, was deemed an effectual passport to her favour; and, when she appeared displeased, the forlorn courtier took to his bed in a paroxysm of amorous despondency, and breathed out his tender melancholy in sighs and protestations. We find Leicester, and some other ministers, endeavouring to introduce one Dyer to her favour, and the means they employed was, to persuade her that a consumption, from which the young man had with difficulty recovered, was brought on by the despair with which she had inspired him. Essex having on one occasion, fallen under her displeasure, became exceedingly ill, and could be restored to health only by her sending him some broth, with kind wishes for his recovery. Raleigh hearing of these attentions to his political rival, got sick in his turn, and received no benefit from medicine till the same sovereign was applied. With courtiers who submitted to act the part of sensitive admirers, Elizabeth found herself under no restraint; she expected from them the most unlimited compliance, and if they proved refractory, she gave herself up to all the fury of passion, and loaded them with approbious epithets.—*Dr. Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia, Vol. XXI. Lives of British Statesmen.*

ELLISTON.—If ever an actor obtained credit for identifying himself with the character he represented, it was certainly due to Mr Elliston more than to any man on the stage; for it is a well known fact, that, during the celebrated representation of the coronation