

THE GLEANER:

AND
NORTHUMBERLAND SCHEDIASMA.

VOLUME III.]

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

No 4.

MIRAMICHI, TUESDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 4, 1831.

THE GLEANER.

SPIRIT OF THE ENGLISH JOURNALS.

FROM LONDON PAPERS UP TO THE EVENING OF THE 15th AUGUST.

TIMES.—We have uniformly held it as our opinion, that from the construction, and above all, from the extension of the franchise to various modes of property not heretofore enjoying it, the fair and general influence of property—of independent property, as contradistinguished from a turbulent democracy on the one hand, and from a condensed and overgrown monopoly on the other—would receive a prodigious increase. Even the parties exercising the right of electors for towns, will hold their qualifications under the Lords of the soil, and will choose representatives on any but democratic principles. But what was the professed object of the bill?—what the grand necessity for any reform whatsoever, in the eyes of his Majesty's Ministers themselves?—unless, indeed, it was (what, of course, we cannot conceive it to have been) their game to have thrown dust in the eyes of the people of England. Why, the national grievance was, aristocratic power,—more properly speaking, oligarchic power,—and to talk of 'mere popularity' having too much weight in the county representation in the present system, is a direct insult to the common sense of the country, though Lord Althorp would be the last man deliberately to offer such an insult. If, indeed, there were, first, any such thing in existence as a legitimate oligarchy, which there is not; and next, what all the world knows was not the case, if there had been any thing like a fair equilibrium in the old parliament between the oligarchic and the public interest, as a point to start from in the readjustment of powers, we might be able to imagine some excuse for Lord Althorp's idea of the usefulness of reinforcing the aristocracy. As it is, they are too strong; as it is, a great deal too much wealth has been collected in the hands of 100 or 200 families, and, by inevitable consequence, too much power also. This is an evil not perhaps to be avoided, while the laws of inheritance remain as they now exist in England. Let Lord Althorp, therefore, and his colleagues, beware lest, by unnatural and even audacious attempts to clothe with new means of oppression the already tremendous arm of the oligarchy, they provoke the nation itself to consider how much might be gained by a radical reform of that branch of our legislation which has fostered the inordinate monopoly of riches, and whether a less feudalizing law for the descent of property might not rid the 'independent interests' of a burden which has weighed heavily upon them. Mr Hughes Hughes, warned ministers of the possibility that the ballot might be called for as a counterpoise to the rotten county system. We, too, advise them, and most earnestly, to beware. There is not an argument in Lord Althorp's speech of which the prototype may not be found in those of Goulburn, Wetherell, and Sugden, on behalf of rotten boroughs. Another absurdity in the construction of the bill was adopted on Saturday. It will be seen that some of the counties are to return three members to parliament; and that such counties are inferior in size and population to those to which four members have been allotted. But the treble membered county is not to be divided, as the quadruple membered will be. It therefore follows, that the electors inhabiting small counties, will have the choice of three representatives each, while those of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Devonshire, &c. must content themselves with two. There never, surely, was so much clumsy blundering fuss, undertaken for an end at once so mischievous and so foolish. A corres-

pondent who is unfortunately or says he is a 'Senator,' asks us how we are to guard against the possibility of coalitions between great families at different extremities of the same county. We answer we are not bound to overcome difficulties which are inherent in the nature of things, and which therefore must be put up with. To such coalitions the country is always subject, but the country is not yet subject to the more certain, and far more crying grievance of the return of a county member by the fiat of one individual, not requiring a jobbing coalition with any county friend, and setting at defiance the more salutary coalition of independent adversaries.

MORNING POST.—The hasty persons who imagined that the Reform Bill was to pass through the House of Commons in a week, and who have been in an ungovernable fury with the opposition ever since the period they so rationally deemed sufficient for the purpose, has been exceeded, will learn with some surprise, perhaps, but we hope, with all commendable patience and resignation, from the declaration of Lord Althorp on Saturday last, that Ministers themselves have yet at this time of day, not much less than a dozen important amendments to introduce in their own bill. These amendments have not been sufficiently explained to warrant us in pronouncing upon the whole, or any one of them, a very decided opinion. But we think we see enough in their general character, to justify the inference that ministers are alarmed at the democratic tendency of their original measure, and that they would now rather strangle it altogether, than suffer it to pass into a law with that tendency unweakened. Upon those parts of the bill which go to perpetuate their own dominion over the country, by imparting to the property and local influence of Whigs, a decided preponderance as compared with the property and local influence of Tories, they are, as might naturally be expected, sufficiently firm and inflexible. The partial selector of boroughs for disfranchisement, the rank favouritism which has guided every ministerial decision as to the towns and counties upon which new or additional representatives are to be conferred, are fixed and unchangeable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. But in respect to those portions of the measure which will determine the relative proportions of popular and aristocratical influence in the future representation of the empire, the original determination of the popular and reforming ministers, is rapidly and manifestly melting away. They are retreating from their former position with a haste which might be ascribed to panic, if their very judicious choice of time did not imply forethought and deliberation. Having obtained the sanction of the committee to those clauses of the bill which establish the ascendancy of the Whig aristocracy over every other, they instantly begin to unfold the means by which they propose to render the ascendant aristocracy as overmatch for the democracy, which, up to the present moment, it has been their steady policy and their constant aim to flatter, allure, and excite. We will say nothing of the division of the counties, since that formed part of the original measure; further than that it is decidedly aristocratical in its tendency, that it is peculiarly favourable of course to that portion of the aristocracy to which the other arrangements made by the bill, shew the greatest favour, and that ministers by their tenacious adherence to it, have both astonished and offended that particular order of the community whom the same ministry never before, upon any occasion or any question, have dared either to surprise or displease. But what are we to think of the amendments which give the right of voting in these departmental districts to leaseholders of £50 per annum for seven years, and of £10 per annum for sixty years? Can any thing be more plain than that this will enable

landlords to create votes among their tenantry, and that this power will be exercised by every landlord in proportion to the extent of his estate? The tenant-at-will, with respect to all the rent of his farm, will always, we may be sure, be punctually at the hustings in the interest of his kind friend and landlord in the character of a sixty years' leaseholder, with respect to some single field, close, or paddock, of the required value. This is, in our opinion, an unequivocal good; but what will our eager and sanguine friends, the radicals, think of it? And what need, between such good friends as the landlord and his tenant, of the expense and formality of a lease? None in the world, surely. And what difference can it make whether the landlord enjoy his estate by the freehold or copyhold tenure? Evidently none at all. Hence two other amendments on the all-perfect bill, to make an agreement equivalent to a lease for election purposes, and to impart the right of bestowing these convenient pieces of paper upon their tenants equally to freehold and copyhold landlords. Excellent provisions all, no doubt, whatever may be thought of the honesty or consistency of the administration which has kept them so closely locked up until the preservation or creation of Whig boroughs and Whig departments was adequately secured!

EXAMINER.—*The Wisdom of our Ancestors living in the Backwardness of Semi-civilized States.*—Much time, temper, and ingenuity are consumed in references to history, for the examples by which we should be governed in the art of government, and the modelling of institutions. It is a whimsical instance of the blindness of men to things immediately adjacent, that they prefer grouping into antiquity for questionable proofs of our forefathers' manner of thinking and acting, to deriving their instruction from existing nations in a state of civilization parallel to that of our ancestors at the periods when they were worthy to be models. It fortunately happens that there are always countries backward in civilization which will serve as living examples of the state of policy quoted, as of standard excellence from the doubtful pages of history. Often when we hear eloquent members of parliament referring to the sagacious expedients of their forefathers, we wonder that they can miss of the immediate living example of Ireland, which seems kindly continued in semi-barbarism, as if to body forth for our guidance the social state to which institutions and government should be adopted. Last week, we quoted a lecture on Poland by Dr. Mitchell, in which it is observed—"The antiquary, whose mind is familiar with the state of things as existing in the times of our Edwards and our Harrys, will at once conceive the state of Poland. The feudal system still prevails in all its vigour, with this difference, that many of the nobles themselves being educated and enlightened, are much more elevated above the feelings of the peasantry, and therefore enter with less sympathy into these rough sports which form the consolation and pleasure of men in an uncultivated state." Now, bating the superiority of the Polish aristocracy, have we not in Poland a state to which, as it is existing and visible, the most convenient references can be made for our guidance in the remodelling of our decayed constitution. How much better is living evidence than historical evidence! How much more distinct is it to see in other people what our forefathers were like, than to judge what they were like by reading various musty records of different degrees of authority. Horace's rule bears us out in this position; and Horace is greatly respected by eloquent members of Parliament to whom our suggestions are addressed. Let, therefore, honourable gentlemen, who have been wasting time, words, and ingenuity, in reference to the state of things in the times of Edwards and Henrys, rather cast their eyes at the actual condition of