

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."

No. 6.

MIRAMICHI, TUESDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 18, 1831.

THE GLEANER.

SPIRIT OF THE ENGLISH JOURNALS.

FROM ENGLISH PAPERS UP TO THE EVENING OF THE 23rd AUGUST.

CHRONICLE.—We do not wonder that the higher classes of this country should for the most part be opposed to the diffusion of knowledge among the poor; for the circulation of any account of the proceedings of the privileged classes having reference to the poor, can hardly fail to excite a feeling of indignation in the latter against the former. For many years the course of legislation with regard to the poor, had been uniformly that of restriction, restraint, and encroachment. The most unjustifiable measures have been passed almost *sub silentio*. Who ever heard any of the higher classes opposing the atrocious law for the stopping of footpaths, or advocating the rights of the poor, till the patience of the people was exhausted by the incessant perpetration of acts of the most flagrant injustice under the law? One deviation from the system of encroachment took place under the Ministry of the Duke of Wellington—namely, the Beer Act; and ever since the passing of that act, have Lords, spiritual and temporal, been incessant in their attempts to render the concession unavailing. The whole of the complaints, we have no hesitation in saying, from a number of communications received by us from impartial sources, are without a shade of justification. The complaints are dictated by that bad spirit entertained by the Aristocracy of England towards the lower orders, which of late years has led to such melancholy results. Even the Duke of Wellington seems, on reflection, to feel ashamed that, in an unguarded moment, he was betrayed into anything like consideration for the comforts of the lower classes, and to have returned to the more congenial spirit of his order, while his hounds were abundantly fed, while the soldiers that broke the very biscuits for them were starving. Franklin tells a story of a man who had a good and a bad leg, and who used to form an estimate of the temper of those who approached him, by observing whether their attention was fixed on his good or his bad leg. The Bishop of London would most assuredly have fixed on the bad leg. The Right Reverend Father in God, would seem to look abroad on nature, merely with a view to discover means of abridging employment, and circumscribing freedom. That a poor man should ever relax from his toils, seems to him an abomination of the first order. Why must these people be incessantly driving on the poor? The feelings which are not this sort of arbitrary interference engenders, are not favorable to the improvement of those who are subjected to it. What would the rich say, were the poor to assemble before their doors when they have routs and assemblies, and insist on the immoral tendency of these doings? But in society we ought all to respect each other. It is for the good of the poor that the rich should not be molested; but then the rich ought to consider that the condition of their being respected is to respect others. Let the poor man enjoy himself if he can, so long as he does not interfere with others. If his habits are susceptible of improvement, have recourse to persuasion. Where there is liberty of action there will be an occasional abuse of it. When the abuse amounts to an infraction of the rights of others, let the law step in, but the law ought not to supply the place of the moral teacher. The lower orders ought not to be treated as slaves, but as rational beings, entitled to respect even in their aberrations, as well as their more fortunate fellow citizens. If the Bishop of London could prevent them from sailing in a steam boat, or

prevent them from walking in a green field, or from all relaxation (which he would if he could) the improvement would be such as he himself might be the first to lament.

HERALD.—It is said, and we believe not altogether without authority, that a party, or rather faction, has been formed, consisting of pretended reformers, and what are called moderate Tories, for the purpose of defeating the Reform Bill. The plan of this faction, we are informed, is something like the following:—The Bill is to be allowed to go into Committee in the Lords, without a division. Schedules A and B are then to be passed, with a view of satisfying the people as to the peers being favourable to a substantial reform; and then the details are to be ridiculed and exposed in debate, after the manner of the House of Commons, for the purpose of increasing the reaction which the faction imagines has taken place with regard to the measure. After this object has been accomplished, it is thought that the bill may be safely kicked out, with an understanding that a new reform scheme shall be introduced in the next session of Parliament. Of course we do not pledge ourselves as to the truth of this statement; but this we will say, that the opinion is becoming very prevalent that an unprincipled coalition has been formed amongst certain anti and mock reformers, and we repeat that we do not think that this opinion is altogether unfounded. The outcry that has been suddenly raised against the division of counties has a very suspicious look. We were the first to disapprove of this measure, but our objections were not factious, and, after it had passed the House of Commons, we never dreamt of pushing our opposition to such lengths as to endanger the success of the bill by exciting a reaction in the public mind. For our part, we have no fears on the subject; we have no apprehension that the bill will be lost in consequence of a reaction, or even the apathy of the people. As we observed yesterday, let those who think otherwise 'try it on,' and they will soon discover their mistake. Indeed, it would seem from the altered tone of certain journalists, that they have already discovered their mistake. No, if the bill be rejected by the House of Lords, it will be in spite of the people, not with their concurrence; and we are quite satisfied that, in such case, the taxes will not be paid. It appears pretty clear, that the anti-reformers really believe that there is now little or no excitement in the country in favour of the reform bill; but we can assure them that they are labouring under a delusion, which, for their own sakes, as well as for the sake of the tranquillity of the nation, we would advise them to get rid of as speedily as possible. As to the division of the Counties, we must say, that our objections to it, as well as to the voting of farm leaseholders, is, in some degree, removed by the alterations of the Bill, with regard to the town freeholders being allowed to vote for county Members. This change is in our opinion, a very popular and a very admirable one, and will go a great way in defeating the aristocratic influence, which, under the provisions alluded to, would most assuredly have been exercised with a very pernicious effect. For our part we see no reason to suspect the honesty of Ministers, and, therefore we say to the people, "Do not play into the hands of the corruptionists, by listening to factious objections to the details of the Bill, which we are ready to allow are in many respects objectionable." After all, however, the great test of the sincerity of Government consists in whether they are prepared to create a sufficient number of Peers to carry the question in the House of Lords. If they do not, they will lose, and justly lose, the confidence of the country, and prove themselves traitors, rather than friends to the cause of reform.

POST.—Conformably to convention, the brave Dutch army, after having vanquished and dispersed its rebel Belgian opponents in all directions, commenced its retrograde movements on Sunday last. It retires from the scenes of its victories covered with glory immortal. Fighting in a just cause, and animated with a due spirit of loyalty, success in every instance crowned its gallant efforts; and it retires with the applauding voice of all good subjects, of whatever state, who must feel rejoiced in the splendid example it affords of the invincibility of genuine patriotism opposed to the utmost efforts of disaffection and rebellion. Our private accounts inform us, that the conduct of Leopold, in having invited a French force to enter Belgium, is generally condemned; and as there is no rational hope of saving that country from becoming a Province of France, the idea of his speedy expulsion is already broached, with a view of propitiating France by the choice of the Duke of Nemours in his stead. The outcry in Brussels is universal—that once prosperous city, being by the late revolutionary events, being reduced to the most pitiable state of distress in all departments of trade and commerce. From the Paris papers we have extracted a Report of the proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies which furnishes an admirable picture of revolutionary legislation. The outrageous spirit of the worst stage of the first sanguinary Revolution, when Jacobinism bore sovereign sway in the National Convention, promises to be revived in the uncontrollable licentious spirit which now so obviously prevails in France. In a dispute respecting the right of precedence of speaking from the Tribune, the contest progressively arose to manual effort, in the violence of which even the Prime Minister was imminently in danger of personal violence; and all the endeavours of the President, aided by the utmost sounding of his bell, failed of restoring the slightest degree of order. This is a direct manifestation of return to the brutal violence which characterized the conduct of the most outrageous periods of the Reign of Terror, and may not unreasonably be considered as a specimen of what may be expected in England, should it be our lot to be subjected to the proposed Revolutionary Parliament.

MIDLAND REPRESENTATIVE.—There never was a baser imputation, in point of untruth, than that of attributing the crimes and distresses of the 'lower orders,' to the influence of the new Beer houses; and the Magistrates and Clergy must know it too, since they cannot be ignorant, that at the hours when persons are most apt to indulge in excess of drinking, the beer retailers are forbidden by law to sell, which is not the case with licensed publicans and victuallers. But, in the name of all that is just and merciful—instead of ascribing the 'growing depravity and wretchedness of our working people' to the influence of Beer houses tea gardens, and the like nonsense—why not, (we say) ascribe them to their true and palpable cause?—the tyrannical legislation of boroughmongering parliaments, during the last fifty and odd years? Why not ascribe them to the progress of an accursed funding system, which has mortgaged the industry of one portion of society, to support the idleness of another and saddled us with a debt, the bare interest of which does actually maintain 270,000 families in idleness and luxury, and would maintain a million of labourers, with their families, in a better condition than their present one, giving to them, each, from £28 to £30 a year? Why not ascribe their wretchedness and depravity to the effects of corn laws, high rents, tithes, game laws, and the law of primogeniture, with its entailed property, and its entailed pauperism?—Why not attribute them to a system of unequal and unbearable taxation.—How strange that we never hear the clergy and