

# The Gleaner

AND

NORTHUMBERLAND SCHEDIASMA.

VOLUME III.]

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

No. 8.]

MIRAMICHI, TUESDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 1, 1831.

## THE GLEANER.

FROM THE METROPOLITAN MAGAZINE.

### THE "SPIRIT OF THE MOVEMENT."

WHAT has been dreaded by some, and hoped for by more, the last few months have at length brought to pass—the movement has taken place. Europe—we may say the world—has become revolutionary; and, as if by common consent, men of almost all climes have come forward together to assert the privileges of the people. This singular coincidence in international opinion forms a remarkable epoch in the history of civilization. Any strong resemblance between the objects of the popular will in separate states is, so far, an indication that the mind of society has made considerable advances, for ignorance does not admit of harmony; but when this analogy is manifested so strikingly and so practically, as in the present instance it has been, then may we mark down a distinct era in the progress of enlightenment. Men differ in ideas not from any capability of real variance on the subject of their controversy, but because knowledge being incomplete, passion has placed it in two lights.\* Were truth fully divulged, the different shades of opinion would merge into one luminous certainty, and all individuals would think alike. The prejudices or the nationality, as it is sometimes called, of states, are the passions of men in tribes, and are governed by the same law: as those of mankind when considered more distributively. They spring from ignorance, they lead to conflict, and, betimes vanishing as the light shines stronger, gives place to that unity of sentiment which full information shows had been illusively varied and multiplied. The European movement is a splendid illustration of this mighty concord. The sturdy Englishman in his counting-house, the volatile Frenchman in his faubourgs, the arable Flemish in his cornfields, the lion-hearted Pole on the Vistula, all—all are looking in one direction, seeking in one way or other one object, the rights and privileges of the people.

The manifestations of public opinion which have been made throughout the world during these last twelve months, have naturally engrossed the minds of men and absorbed almost all other considerations; but so rapidly and in such magnitude have they been supplied, that we have scarcely had time to do more than to act the part of simple recipients, whilst the process of reflection was left to calmer moments. The movement has taken place, but "the manner of it," "whence it comes," and "whither it goeth," have scarcely as yet been inquired into. Marvellous, however, as it may at first sight appear, we believe it requires no very searching analysis to discover its origin and nature. That whilst knowledge was in progress and institutions stationary, there should in the course of time exist an incongruity between them, is merely stating the simple case of a necessary consequence. The best formula of a constitution at any time adopted is, at most, commensurate with the wisdom of the age; it is in fact its product. A new epoch of augmented intelligence finds present establishments below its level, and demands a new product. It sweeps in a fresh set of elements, from which, in connexion with those already obtained, the great political induction of good government is to be made, and thus must the science of rule keep pace, like every other, with the advance of truth. When this necessary operation is procrastinated, the disparity between the demands of the age and the scope of established systems is increased so considerably, that reform, when it does come, comes with the violence of revolution, and either the old materials are wholly rejected, or they bear a very small proportion to the new. The world, in 1830, felt that these operations had been procrastinated; they perceived that they had far out-grown the maxims of polity held a century before; the world therefore repudiated those maxims. Formerly the interests of the many were held to subserve the interests of the few; later doctrine has reversed the proposition—and hence the movement. Simple as the enunciation of this proposition may appear, it is not in practice universally applied towards the solution of late occurrences. There is a tribe among political speculators with whom chance is a deity, and any convulsion in society a *LUSUS NATURÆ*. Again, there are those who recognise a law in the sequence of events, but who never look beyond a proximate cause. The overthrow of the Wellington administration is, in the opinion of these speculators, the origin of the present reform-movement in England. The schism against Villele and the instalment of Martignac's ministry—the balanced number of Belgians and Dutch in the Flemish Chamber, and the intrigues of the Catholics—the incapacity and barbarity of Constantine—and the bad example of other states, are respectively set down, according to the same system of analytics, as the causes of the French, the Belgian, and the Polish revolutions. As far as they go, possibly these politicians may draw just conclusions; but had the Duke sustained no defeat in the British House of Commons—had Villele struck down schism—had the members of the Chambers of the Netherlands been all Dutch—had Constantine, instead of being an idiot and a barbarian, been a sage—still would the movement have taken place, though perhaps at a later period and in deeper and bloodier tracks.

There are others again, who, in looking out for the genesis of these great events, go as far back as we would ourselves. There is this difference however between us, that they, regarding as a curse what we recognise as a blessing, attribute to propagandism what we ascribe to knowledge. The criterion which we would

select as the best to decide between two such opposite conclusions namely, the effect produced, is thus in itself a subject of controversy. We may however suggest, that it appears scarcely more credible that propagandism, by which they mean the diffusion of error, should prevail over true knowledge, than that pure barbarism could. It can only in the end appeal to what the barbarian appeals, namely, brute force, and if the latter cannot turn this instrument to any account, neither could the former: error is not less unskilful than ignorance, and both must equally yield to the superior control of wisdom. We can suppose a case such as that of the first French revolution, where the genius of anarchy might for a time prevail; but this is scarcely an example of error contending with truth. France sooner to its core, afforded but a comparatively small portion of intelligence to stand between the living and the dead and to stay the plague. But withholding for centuries popular rights, by debasing instead of enlightening, by superinducing ignorance, not by diffusing knowledge, the bulk of the nation was rendered barbarous; whilst those in power, besotted by friction, became imbecile. Here then brute force, opposed to folly, was for the season victorious. We do not assert that error, from whatever source it arose, might not prevail if it contended with error; but we maintain that against knowledge it is impotent, and not more to be apprehended than the powers of pure barbarism. The conservative party, if their principles be those of truth, will always count among their supporters the men of honesty, of intelligence, and of property. These are the sinews of war. The propagandists against them may bring a numerous, but at the same time it will be an unprincipled and an unarmed force. Our fears that the latter might have a triumph, would only imply that we had doubts of the wisdom, and consequently the strength, of the conservative party to which we belonged—would only imply that we were conscious we were procrastinating too long that necessary reform in our institutions, which would replenish us with means all-powerful to crush the efforts of anarchy. The conclusion we then come to is, that the legitimate and only effectual means of checking the diffusion of error is by opposing to it the diffusion of truth—that these two principles will never conspire—that they are essentially antagonist—that the powers of light must prevail over the powers of darkness—and that consistently with this doctrine, which we conceive is just and rational, the universal success of the liberals throughout Europe against their rulers is strong presumptive evidence that the movement is not to be ascribed to the effects of propagandism, but to the diffusion of true knowledge.

The natural peace at which intelligence generally advances has been materially accelerated during the fifteen years of universal tranquility preceding the last. This has antedated the movement War and military transactions distract public attention from internal concerns and serve to direct national jealousy against foreign objects. Amidst this spurious emulation, the higher powers of the mind are kept in abeyance, and the pamphleteer assumes the chair of the philosopher. When peace is universal, nations, instead of vying in physical exertion co-operate in mental; intellect is elabored and their separate stores of knowledge amassed together in one common repository; genius and ingenuity are applied to their proper objects: trade in information becomes free—the sciences of useful products are the subjects of study, and discoveries are the consequence, which, whilst they minister to the wants of mankind, serve also to enlighten them. It is now the absurdities and defeats of internal polity become apparent: they stand in full sunshine and are manifest. The public perceive the cause of former and present sufferings, and they call for tribunes of the people.

Such is a general account of the origin of the late events which have agitated all Europe. An investigation of their characteristics naturally follows. The spirit of the movement is peculiarly a democratic one. This it is which distinguishes the revolutionary world for the last fifty years from all other stages of public commotion—not that the latter were wholly destitute of the popular principle, or that the former is devoid of the aristocratic, but in each case respectively these two elements are vastly disproportioned. Heretofore the magistrate was the leader, the people the follower—now the former abets what the latter propounds, whilst the corresponding transactions are respectively coloured by the views of each as they predominate. The English revolution of 1641, however democratic complexion might for a time have appeared to be, was virtually a struggle between the Crown and the House of Commons on grounds of their own prerogatives. The popular rights evolved in the conflict, however valuable, were not so much a cession to demands originally expressed by the great body of the people, as a salutary consequence derived to them from the circumstance of Parliament's determination to assert its privileges.

It was not so much as representatives of the people, but as a co-ordinate estate with the Crown and to illustrate the powers with which such a condition invested them, that the Commons originated democratic measures: not that we would detract from the merit of the Pym and the Hampdens; it is no small praise that they should have directed the public mind, and have exhibited a coincidence between their own interests as a body and the general welfare. The fact however, remains, that Parliament led the nation, not the nation the Parliament. Aristocracy gave the impulse to democracy, and the ultimate endeavours of the former to perpetuate its influence and secure its interests independent of the latter, whilst they are amply and notoriously illustrated by the tran-

sactions of the Long Parliament, clearly show the large portion of aristocratic spirit with which the whole movement was impregnated. As to the revolution of 1688 it was manifestly an aristocratic manoeuvre, in which the majority of the nation concurred, and the Bill of Rights grew out of the same circumstances (namely, the independent spirit of the House of Commons,) as the Petition of Right half a century before.

In Holland, the revolution under Philip the Second, though comprising somewhat of the popular element, was still a movement concerted by Dutch nobility, headed by a Prince of Orange, and arising as much from an affront received by the Counts Egmont and Horn, as from the wrongs which had been suffered by the people—its character therefore corresponded with its origin. It is unnecessary to quote any more cases: we have selected those revolutionary manifestations in which the voice of the people was most audible; yet, comparing them with transactions of the same nature within these last fifty years, we are sensibly struck by the vast augmentation which the democratic element has undergone, and the consequent decrease of the aristocratic. In fact, we now find that the former bears the same proportion to the entire compound of the two principles, which the latter had held before. Here the people lead and the privileged orders follow.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH'S NAVY.**—The English Navy in the time of Queen Elizabeth, consisted of two ships of 1000 tons, each having 340 mariners, 40 gunners, and 120 soldiers; three of 900 tons, each having 260 mariners, 32 gunners, and 100 soldiers; three of 800 tons, with the same number of men; two of 700 tons, with 350 men each; four of 600 tons, with 300 men each; four of 500 tons, having 88 mariners, 12 gunners, and 30 soldiers; two of 400 tons, and ten of 350 tons, having each 70 mariners, 10 gunners, and 20 soldiers; and nine smaller vessels. The number in all was 39.

**BORING FOR WATER.**—A waiter at a tavern being reprimanded by the master for not attending to the frequent calls of a particular guest, excused himself by saying, "Oh, Sir, that gentleman's only boring for water!"

**MODE OF BURIAL IN WALES.**—In ancient times, it was customary for all who attended a funeral, to carry each a sprig of rosemary in his hand, and throw it into the grave as the minister was reading the last words of the funeral service. A custom analogous to this prevailed among the ancient heathens; they used to throw cypress wood into the grave in the same manner. The reason why they made choice of the cypress was, because its branches do not bud when thrown into the earth, but perish altogether; it thus was an expressive symbol of their opinion, that the bodies of the dead would never rise again. On the other hand, the Christian threw the rosemary into the graves of their brethren, to express their hope of a joyful resurrection with which their faith had inspired them.

**TURTLE CATCHERS ON THE COAST OF DARIEN.**—At San Blas, on the coast of Darien, a small settlement of Indians is established for the sole purpose of taking turtle. The settlement is situated among a group of kays, and has a small but very secure harbour, in which coasters may safely ride. It is under the management of three English, two American, and three Columbian traders, who make a vast profit from the shell. The quantity of tortoise-shell taken by them amounts on an average to 15,000 lbs. per year, the value of which is about £23,000. The produce of their employment varies very much according to the nature of the season, as in many years they take as much as £32,000 worth of shell; an enormous produce for one out of the many like establishments on this coast. It is a curious fact, that the handsomest shell and consequently the most valuable, is stripped from

\* Locke's Essays.