

The Gleaner

AND

NORTHUMBERLAND SCHEDIASMA.

VOLUME II.]

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

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THE GLEANER.

FROM THE NEW-ENGLAND WEEKLY REVIEW.

OUR COUNTRY.

Until very recently, it has been the common, and almost unavoidable custom of our writers, and our writers generally, to speak in the most extravagant terms of eulogy, in relation to our Country. They represent her as beyond—infinitely beyond, all the nations of the great globe—marked out for a higher and holier and more enduring existence—a nation set apart and sanctified, like another Israel—under the peculiar guardianship of the Great God. As if, indeed, the very elements of our political and moral institutions were imperishable—as if the fair tree of Liberty which the blood of the Revolution watered and nourished, were indeed a thing of immortality, so that neither the knowing of the worm at its root, nor the visiting of the thunder in its branches, could wither its green vigour, or smite its luxuriant foliage with the yellowness of decay. As if the same causes, which have, in the silence and apathy of luxury, or in the thunder of battle, destroyed other nations, withering their strength slowly, and, for a time, almost imperceptibly, or crushing them at once, and overturning as by the shock of an earthquake, the pillars of their defence and the monuments of their glory—might not hereafter work the overthrow of all that is great and glorious in our own country—her institutions of government, of morality, of religion, and of benevolence.

Of late, however, a new race of orators and writers have risen up—men who are directly the reverse of those who have gone before them. They have looked upon the mutations and changes of earthly empire—they have seen through the shadowy dimness of history—the history of long gone years—the rising and the going down of nations; and from thence have drawn a lesson of solemn warning for ourselves and children. Prophet-like they have spoken that warning in the ears of the people—with a zeal and conviction that warning in the ears of the people—from the walls of the doomed city of the Jew, day after day, even unto the dreadful fulfilment of his prophecy—"Wo—wo—to Jerusalem!"

These remarks have been elicited by a pamphlet now before us—an address delivered at Waterville, (Me.) by John Neal. It partakes, in no small degree, of the wild imaginations—the exuberant fancies—the magnificent obscurity, not to the author, nor to those intimately acquainted with his language and manner—but to the generality of his readers, the plain, uneducated, matter-of-fact people—which characterize with a never-failing in lividality, the productions of his pen. But it contains truths—naked, all important truths, in relation to our Country, which should be remembered and pondered over by all. It is better to look steadily at the danger while it yet lies like a sullen cloud in the distance, than to veil our eyes until the earth is quaking to the stroke of its thunder-belts, and the red pathway of its lightning is visible above us.

We have selected a beautiful and eloquent passage from the commencement of the address as a specimen of the author's power of language and accurate conception of truth:

"Call up the soothsayer and astrologer of our day—in other words, the accomplished and prepared statesman—and let him cast the horoscope of any earthly power, as it should be cast, with histories and maps and statistical tables before him, and he may prophesy with as much safety concerning its final overthrow, and the causes and consequences thereof—though neither he nor the angels above, may be able to foresee the day or the hour—as if a chart of the future were outspread upon the sky, showing the lighted pathway of every shipwrecked empire, and of every missing star, from the day of their unheeded birth on the shore of the firmament or the desert, in the heart of the wilderness or among the isles of the sea—forward thro' all their magnificent changes and terrible phenomena, till having touched the paused, and dwell for a single moment upon their meridian, they pass away, and disappear forever in the sepulcher of lost worlds—forever and ever—with the crowns and sceptres—the Caliphs and the Pharaohs—the Assyrians and the Babylons of the past.

"Believe as we may, or pretend, or TRY to believe as we may, each in favor of himself or of his country, acknowledging the great universal truth by our language, but denying it by our behaviour, it is a fact—let it be remembered as a fact of stupendous import—it is a fact, that Nations, like men, are mortal: that every step they take whether upward or downward, whether forward or backward, is but another step toward the burial-place of Nineveh and of Tyre, or Carthage and of Rome—and why not of Poland, or Spain, or Turkey? And it is equally true that with nations, as with men there is no returning to youth or to innocence—no going BACK to the age of unvisited health and strength, of unwearyed efforts, or of unsullied virtue—no second birth to unimpeachable character—to unquestionable supremacy, however there may be to a period of comparative health and strength, of comparative enterprise or virtue—of comparative ascendancy. With nations as with individuals, character once gone, is gone forever—the fountains of life, the sources of health and strength and virtue, once defiled, are defiled forever. With nations as with men, too what are called restoratives, are at the very best, but palliatives. The most that can be done,—all that can be done—perhaps, for either; is to stay the approach of immediate death—to turn aside a few of the commensal arrows with which the whole atmosphere is burning; to purify with a fire that of itself destroyeth; to put off the evil day, not for ever and ever, but for a few miserable months,

or years, or ages. Above all, it were good for us—ay, and for the greatest and wisest of our earth, to bear in mind forever, by night and by day, and all their lives long, that the downward step of nations, as of men, is always taken in prosperity; always when least expected; always in their greatest prosperity, following the moment of their greatest health and strength, 'as the thunderbolt pursues the flash,' with no interval; no pause; no time for prayer or preparation.

"Behold how the cities and wealth of Asia have faded away from the eastern sky, like a vision of turrets and battlements; or like the bright colors of a picture crowded with life and beauty, over which the breath of centuries hath passed. And so with Africa. And so with Europe. And why may it not be so hereafter with America? Who shall say? Are we to read the stars for ourselves?—Would you leave the decision to America, or to the children—or to the sages of America? As well may you interrogate the golden dust of Babylon, the sepulchre of Kings and princes; or the unapproachable hiding place of Palmyra, that imperial spectre of the desert: that architectural phantom of the solitude; or Carthage, or Tyre; or push aside the pyramids and call up the Pharaohs of old; one by one;

With blasts of unseem trumpets, long and loud, Swelled by the breath of whirlwinds—

and ask what THEY thought of the future, in the fulness of their strength, or what their people thought; or their sages; when the roar of the great world broke upon their solitude, with the uninterrupted heave and swell of the far ocean. Were THEY afraid of the future! Did their astrologers or soothsayers tremble when THEY read the stars? Did their philosophers, their law givers, or their statesmen, ever foretell or foresee the overthrow that has made the country of each a proverb, the power of each a by-word; the birth-place of nations, the nursery of empires, a desert. Or if they had foreseen the issue that we see; if they had interpreted the stars aright, and prophesied truly; would they have been believed? Would they have been listened to; would they not rather have been pitied, or scoffed at, or peradventure put to death for the outrage upon their magnificent destiny?"

After thus pointing out to our view the examples of departed nations, who remained quiet and secure until the spoiler came upon them; he applies his remarks more immediately to the present situation of this country; alluding to the danger of luxury, and stating boldly, but perhaps justly, that in point of moral energy, we were weaker than we were at the time of the Revolution, that our day of chivalry and virtue has gone by: that there are dangers in our own country,—signs of disunion between the North and the South,—and the East and the West,—the striving and the bitterness of party,—that religious intolerance exists among us, an intolerance heavy and evil,—and that priesthood predominant and powerful is cherished among us,—that our lawyers, "the UNANNOUNCED rulers of the land," hold the two offices of law-makers and law expounders,—that our laws are not American laws, but those of England,—and last but not least, that our politics are full of corruption, and our newspapers the bond slaves of party, instead of the sentinels of Liberty. We cannot forbear to quote the author's language here.

It is MORNING, that our ten or twelve hundred newspapers, none thrive, unless they are willing to incorporate themselves, body and soul with the doings of a party,—that in consequence thereof, instead of being what they should be,—the watchman of our borders,—the incorruptible and sleepless guardians of our liberty,—they are almost all the wretched accomplices of our worst enemies, the miserable and sneaking subordinates of ANY BOOBY,—they care not whom, so they are well paid. Instead of sounding an alarm at the approach of the destroyer, they are occupying our attention with sham-fights in another quarter. They are watch dogs that sleep when they are most needed, or bark just loud enough to drown the entry of the house-breaker.

MISCELLANEOUS EXTRACTS FROM ENGLISH PAPERS.

NEW BATCH OF PEERS.—A correspondent of the Globe says, "Having observed so many conflicting opinions, relative to the new creation of peers, I beg leave to give you, as far as my knowledge on the subject may be deemed authentic, the following list:—The Earl of Sefton, Mr. George Byng, Mr. Wm. Russell, member for the county of Durham, Lord Wm. Russell, Sir Francis Burdett, Bart. Edward T. Foley, Sir Sandford Graham, Bart. Sir Thomas Baring, Bart. T. W. Coke, Lord Palmerston, Mr. John Smith, and Sir John Blount, Bart. who is not a member of the House of Commons."

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.—The apple of discord seems likely to be thrown into this society. Several persons are determined not to suffer the next or any future anniversary to pass without bringing forward a specific motion as to the introduction of prayer. This measure is regarded by the majority of its most enlightened friends, including many highly respected ministers and laymen the established church and the leading ministers and laymen among the congregationalists, as nothing short of a plan formed

to overthrow that important society, to violate its fundamental constitution, to scatter the good men of various nations who are associated in its peaceful union, and to substitute, for their harmonious labours in the distribution of the inspired volume, controversy, contention, and mutual ill-will.—The Christian Advocate.

JACK IN THE PANORAMA.—An amusing incident took place at Laidlaw's exhibition, at Brighton, on Thursday evening. A thorough-bred tar, who had been at the bombardment of Algiers with Lord Exmouth, had paid his money and ascended to the gallery, as the routine of pictures, involving the details of that gallant exploit, were in motion. The tar, three sheets in the wind, or, more familiarly, half seas over, for an instant was struck dumb at what he beheld; he hitched his trowsers, turned his quid, looked wild, hitched his trowsers and turned his quid again; and then, with Stentorian lungs, hallooed to the crew of the Queen Charlotte, with nautical technicality, to warn her of a fireship which was bearing down upon her to windward. Surprise for a moment kept all other persons silent; and, during that interval, the tar, finding that his cautionary words had produced no visible alteration on shipboard, actually sprang over the dwarf fence of the gallery, as he supposed, to plunge into the sea, that he might swim to the Queen Charlotte and convey the information upon which, to him, her immediate safety depended. The shock, with those present, was electrical, and shrieks were uttered; but no harm followed: the tar had alighted on the green cloth, short of the paintings, which let him through, and might have precipitated him to a depth of many feet, had he not fortunately grasped the timber frame work, which stayed his progress. Judging from the noise above that efforts were making for his release, he manfully exclaimed "All's right, my hearties! no need of the life-boat, for, d'ye see, I have fastened on the rock." Terror was now completely superseded by mirth. The sailor, with some difficulty, was made to comprehend the precise situation he occupied, and his blunt but honest drolleries, for some time after, gave to laughter undisputed dominion.—Brighton Guardian.

JOHANNA SOUTHCOLE AND HER SHILOH.—The flagrant circumstances which came to light a few weeks since at Ashton-under-Lyne, and which reflected much disgrace upon a leader of a certain sect of religionists in that town, were fraught with such abominable atrocity as to lead to the supposition that they must have opened the eyes of the most bigotted fanatic in existence; but there really seems to be no limits to human folly and credulity, for there is now at Ashton one of the boldest impostors that has appeared for ages in this or any other country in Europe: he unblushingly asserts that he has been taken up into Heaven, and has received his credentials from Almighty God! He impiously declares that he is the Shiloh whom the followers of Johannah Southcole have been so anxiously expecting, and that in his person is concentrated the power of Christ and the divine essence of the Holy Spirit, and that he is sent immediately from God to redeem mankind! with a vast deal more of mystical absurdity that has already appeared in sundry pamphlets, sealed with the dove of peace. In this enlightened age, when the schoolmaster is abroad—when the march of intellect is striding over the face of the earth and driving away the clouds of ignorance—can it be imagined that this man has his followers and believers? It is certain that he and his companion, who travels with him under the name of his Prophet, have been caressed, feasted, and entertained for several days at Ashton, by a set of people, many of whom hold a respectable station in society, calling themselves Israelites, and are many of them distinguished by a long beard and light brown hat, and, whose general demeanour and moral conduct cannot be impeached, but who blindly suffer themselves to be deluded by such impious impostors. These two worthies are not altogether so heavenly-minded as to refrain from a glass or two of brandy