

THE GLEANER

AND

NORTHUMBERLAND SCHEDIASMA.

VOLUME II.]

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

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THE GLEANER.

EUROPE.

THE MARQUIS OF BLANDFORD'S ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE KING'S SPEECH.

In this its first address to the Throne of a new King instead of making itself the mere echo of the Crown, this House feels that it ought to show itself to be the very mirror of the people; and to do so, that it must not fail to lay before your Majesty all their thoughts and feelings, all their wants and wishes, as well as their loyalty to your office and attachment to your person.

The discharge of this important duty, and the serious aspect of public affairs, renders it impossible, as well as improper to address your Majesty otherwise than at length.

Your Majesty is to be informed that this House, in common with the great majority of your people, holds the memory of the House of Commons of the last Parliament in utter hatred and contempt, for the following reasons.

First, because the last House of Commons uniformly turned a deaf ear to the just complaints and petitions of your people; and secondly, because, instead of acting upon the old constitutional principle of withholding the supplies until the grievances of the people were redressed, which it was earnestly and seriously urged to do, it seemed to consider itself of no other use, and chosen for no other purpose, but to vote, night after night, immense sums of money, to be drawn from the pockets of the people; exhibiting at the same time, the utmost indifference, and often the most sovereign contempt, of all consideration in what manner such enormous sums could be obtained, without the risk of involving the great productive interests of the country in the most extensive embarrassment and ruin.

That in proof of this, your Majesty has only to look at the unprecedented numbers of bankruptcies and insolvencies of farmers, traders, and others of your honest and industrious subjects, through all the years of the existence of the last House of Commons; and your Majesty will thereby be convinced that while great numbers of landed proprietors have been driven from their paternal mansions, and have been compelled to see them occupied by loan-mongers and stock-jobbers; while others have removed themselves, their families, and their fortunes for ever from your shores; and while the middle classes of your subjects have been reduced with frightful rapidity to the labouring class, the labouring class has been reduced to absolute beggary and want. That numbers have actually died from starvation, and others have been obliged to submit to the most degrading services, and to see themselves and their families the victims of fever, induced by famine, that thus, in a short time, instead of ruling, like the two first princes of the House of Brunswick, over a nation devoted to your Government by the happiness and blessings it should enjoy, your Majesty may find yourself ruling over a nation of paupers and of placemen—of those who live upon the taxes and the poor rates on the one hand, and on the other hand of loan-mongers and borrow-mongers, wallowing in the stagnant and unproductive accumulations of their joint and several monopolies. Such, Sir, are the effects of the accursed and unnatural funded system, in its last agonies; and the vain attempts to save this monster in England, are at this moment overturning the Governments of other countries far more rapidly than the folly, or even, the wickedness of their rulers. That the acts of the late House of Commons, both of omission and commission under which the people of this once happy country, have been brought to such a state of wretchedness and suffering, inculcate all concerned in the highest degree of criminality, from which nothing can excuse them but a sincere and contrite confession of their sins, and a total and immediate alteration of their conduct, without which it will be the duty of this House to ex-

pose by name to your Majesty all those who are feeding upon the vitals of the country, as the only chance left, since argument has failed, of saving itself, and perhaps even the Throne of your Majesty, from the storms of convulsion.

That in order to have obviated such complicated evils as are hereinbefore set forth, it was the duty of the House of Commons to have done more and to have talked less.

That that House was told, both within these walls and without these walls, that the reason why it did nothing for the people, why it felt no sympathy in their sufferings, no anxiety for their relief, was because the majority of its Members had an interest directly opposite to the interests of the people: that this majority was not chosen—as of right and what it ought to have been, by the majority of the landowners and householders of England, but was nominated and appointed by a few individuals, who partly by the effects of time and accident, but still more by a barefaced perversion of the spirit and meaning of our laws and Constitution, had acquired the power of selling, or otherwise disposing of, the seats in this House, in such a manner as best suited their own purposes.

That the late House of Commons was also repeatedly called upon, entreated and implored, to set about reforming such a monstrous abuse, but that it uniformly refused to listen to such call; and, though hesitating, fluctuating and changing, upon other questions of vital consequence to the country, upon this question of reform it determined to follow the advice of one of its own Members, and one of its own temporary, elective, Dictators, dependent upon its own corrupt and prostituted votes, which had been truly called 'the most odious of all forms of tyranny,' to oppose reform in every shape, to the end of its political existence;—and that, to the eternal disgrace of the last House of Commons, it kept this profligate determination obstinately to the last. But your Majesty may be assured that, if your Majesty had not been advised to dissolve the last Parliament in the sudden and unexpected manner in which it was dissolved, the late glorious events which have taken place in France, would have had a mighty effect in shaking this profligate determination of the said house, and of inducing it to consider the difference between the guilt of bringing on death upon a nation by slow poison, or by a sudden blow; and that, by the law of England, there is such a thing as treason against the people as well as treason against the King. Your Majesty may also be further assured that, when great numbers of the Nobility, being Members of the Privy Council, were charged, in despite of the constant prayers of the church, with being traffickers of the seats in this house, and that one of the fruits of such traffic was—not an endowment of 'grace, wisdom, and understanding,'—but an endowment of more than half a million a year of the public money among themselves, and that another fruit was the patronage of the Church, of the Army and Navy, and of the collection of about sixty millions a year of taxes among the families, friends, and dependents of the masters of seats in the House of Commons; if these things had been seriously considered, it is not to be believed that the blood of Englishmen would submit to be for ever tainted with such political disgrace, but that there would have been a race among the said masters and the buyers and sellers of seats in Parliament who should be foremost in lying down upon the altar of his country (this unallowed and most damned property of power of trafficking in the representation of the Commons of England. Your Majesty may consider it as the firm conviction of the people, that if the last House of Commons had done its duty, it ought, upon every principle of justice, to have reduced the taxes at least in the same proportion that it raised the value of the currency; and thus half the present amount of taxes might and ought to have been taken off, including the whole of the cruel and harassing Excise Laws, and all those cheating, indirect taxes by which every labouring man who ex-

pends thirty pounds a year, has eighteen pounds taken from him. All the just expenses of the equity, in the same proportion as the taxes; and all the just expenses of Government in useless and sinecure places—Diplomatic, Colonial, and all other departments, kept up solely for the purpose of corruption—might and would have been done away with, if the last House of Commons had been the real, and not the sham Representatives of the people. That the late attempt to destroy the freedom of the press and the freedom of Election in France, and thereby the more effectually to rob the people of that country of their rights and property, never would have been made, if the last House of Commons had had the sense and honesty to have restored freedom of Election in England: that the King of France might still have been upon his throne, and all danger have been prevented from the mischief of anarchy and confusion, which have only been avoided by the unexampled wisdom of the brave and learned youth of France, and the splendid forbearance of the brave and honest working men of Paris, who did not hesitate to risk their lives when they saw that a system of tyranny and taxes were about to be fixed for ever on them and on their children. And in reference to this affair, so important in its consequences, too much praise and thanks cannot be given to your Majesty for the honor you have conferred on England, whose sons were heretofore famed as 'ever first and foremost in the achievement of liberty,' in taking the lead and setting the example of acknowledging the new King of the French; who like your Majesty, sits upon his throne by the best and highest of all titles, that which is said to be the voice of God himself—namely, the voice of the people. For this great honour and service, it is the unanimous opinion of this House, of the whole nation, not to say of all Europe, that this act may justly be ascribed to the personal character of your Majesty, and to your own sense of justice, and of the true interests of your subjects; and your Majesty therefore deserves to enjoy the hope, that your name may be remembered by millions still unborn, for the lasting blessings of peace and friendship between France and England which this act of your Majesty has every prospect of consolidating. And the Members of this, the first House of Commons in the new Parliament, promise your Majesty, as it is fit they should, that, if others learn nothing by example, they will; and as they do not doubt that a King who has already given such proofs of his desire of being beloved by his people, and of promoting the welfare and happiness of the industrious classes—that a King, who more than thirty years ago, from his own mouth, in Parliament denounced the 'monopolies as the canker of the State,' and called upon the Legislature 'to root them out,' will never endure to see his people ruined and his crown put to hazard by that worst of all monopolies, the monopoly of the seats of the House of Commons. So they employ your Majesty to withdraw your confidence, and the patronage of the Crown, from all persons engaged in, or resolved upon upholding, this odious traffic, and thereby implicating your Majesty in such connexion. And if, in so doing your Majesty, who as yet stands clear of this system, and above all suspicion in the eyes of the country, should have to encounter a factious opposition to your government, or if the usurping proprietors of seats in the House of Commons should be so lost to every sense of justice, and to their own interest, as to dare to set up their usurpation against the ancient, just, and undoubted prerogatives of the Crown, your Majesty may rely upon the zealous and determined support of this House, and of your people, even to the last drop of their blood.