

daily. Every Sunday he exhibited himself after service to the peasantry of Montbard, dressed in a rich lace garment, and attended by his son and principal retainers.—*The Naturalist's Library: Memoir of Buffon.*

POLITICAL EXTRACTS.

SPIRIT OF THE BRITISH JOURNALS.

LONDON ATLAS.—*Libel Law.*—Mr O'Connell has brought forward a motion for an alteration in the libel law, which has received the partial sanction of ministers, who reserve to themselves the right of exercising their judgment on the details of the proposed measure. If there be a law in England which may be regarded as the climax of inconsistency, folly, and injustice it is certainly the Libel Law. Mr O'Connell's views are not sufficiently clear and cautious; but even Mr O'Connell can hardly make the libel law worse than it is. He rushes to the opposite extreme. By the present law, or rather by its expounders, truth is declared to be a Libel—worse than that the judges have committed the verbal paradox of assuming, that the greater the truth the greater the Libel, as if magnitude had any thing to do with fact; but Mr O'Connell, seeing very distinctly the enormity of this principle, would take from truth the responsibility of utterance, so that any man may write or say what he will of another—provided it be true. This is despotism the other way, striking at the very root of private liberty.

We have had already so many instances of the iniquitous working of this Law, in which unfortunately, trial by jury appears under very capricious, and occasionally, unamiable shapes, that further illustrations are unnecessary to satisfy the public of the necessity of a change in the principle on which it is based. In one case a periodical that had published an original libel was amerced in 6d damages—while another, that had only copied the same Libel, was sentenced to pay £200. This is no doubt one of the accidents that arise from the uncertain nature of jury adjudications, and is inseparable from the freedom of popular institutions. But there are cases more enormous than this, because the evil of them lies in the law itself, rather than in the fluctuating measures of jury morality. Such is that of the *True Sun*, the proprietors of which journal have been recently condemned to six months imprisonment for having done that which the *Times* newspaper has done repeatedly with impunity. The offence of the *True Sun* consisted in having advocated the doctrine of passive resistance against the assessed taxes. The offence was undoubtedly a contravention of law, but the law it contravened was a law which the voice of the million had already declared to be a bad law, and which government had partially consented to repeal. We do not argue that attempts to bring the authority of the law into contempt are not dangerous, and ought not to be punished; but we maintain, that in such a case as this, where the law is dying of its own unfitness, and where not only other journals, but public men have treated it in a similar spirit of contumely, the sentence is partial, and consequently unjust, severe, and consequently unwise. If the *True Sun* had been the only paper that had declared war against the Assessed Taxes, let the *True Sun* answer for its hardihood. But the *True Sun* was not alone in its declaration. Even the *Morning Post*—Jesuitically enough—sneered at the house and window light imposts; the *Times* brawled at them—the *Chronicle*, affecting great respect for order, thought that the people were oppressed by them; and there was scarcely a metropolitan member on the popular side who did not, in his wooing speeches to his constituents, condemn them without let or hindrance. Why, then, should the *True Sun* be selected for correction, when it is surrounded by offenders as wicked as, but, possibly, more subtle, than itself? or, being selected, why was not the punishment apportioned to the circumstances under which it infringed legal propriety? It would almost appear that the ability with which it is conducted, had tempted the chastening hand of the public prosecutor.

In the case of Mr Barrett, of the *Dublin Pilot*, a new feature of this tyrannical law has been discovered. Barrett is not only sent to prison for publishing a treasonable article, written by Mr O'Connell, but forbidden henceforth to publish his Journal. It appears that a forgotten act of Parliament contains a clause by which the Commissioners of Stamps are compelled to refuse to a person so situated, the means of pursuing his avocations as a journalist. We do not sympathise with Barrett in his imprisonment, because we think he has suffered the liberty of the press—its true and virtuous liberty—to be violated in his person and because he has degraded the character of a public writer by allowing himself to be made the instrument of another man's guilt; but there is no imaginable weakness or excess which can justify the cruelty of prohibiting from the cultivation of those pursuits by which he lives. His imprisonment is a matter of indifference, for it must have been voluntarily, or worse—the sudden destruction of his property, however, involves a power which is utterly subversive of the rights of the subject. It is a blow from the code of the autocrat, and ought to be condemned by every man who values the blessings of freedom.

LONDON TIMES.—*The Navy.*—It must be gratifying to the country to reflect, that since the present Ministry came into office, and since the accession of Sir James Graham to the Admiralty, the Naval expenditure only has been reduced by no less than £1,200,000 per annum. Considering the unsettled state of the East of Europe, it is not surprising that the House of Commons should receive with symptoms of more than ordinary coldness the perverso absurdities of the hon. member for Middlesex, who seems resolved to make the highest exertion of whole-some economy on the part of any minister of the crown, a thankless and humiliating duty. On Monday evening the house took care to show that it did not partake the shallowness of providence of what that hon. gentleman mistook for a system

of 'frugality.' We have only said that it is the reverse of 'frugal' to pinch the public service in any of the essential departments. It is not economy, but flagrant waste and folly to reduce the army or navy so low as to encourage foreign powers in their schemes of encroachment, and in their manifestations of contempt for England, until by dint of outrage, she may be compelled to raise on a sudden—that is, tenfold cost—the establishment of both these necessary arms; and to run the risk of frequent failure in the beginning of a war, as occurred in 1794; and afterwards, from committing the interests and honour of the country to the hands of incapable defenders. The most efficient force, man for man, is always the most economical, and the most timely and systematic preparations are ever the most to be confided in. To shew what may be expected from a man of an understanding like Mr Joseph Hume, one imagine his arguing (as we collect from Sir James Graham's reply) that a great portion of the present Navy might be dispensed with, because with our present dock-yards we might build the whole of it, or nearly so, in about six years! He was properly answered by Sir James Graham, who asked him, 'But what, suppose we should want a powerful navy at the end of six days?' Joseph may be penny-wise, but he is any thing but a statesman. So, with regard to the promotion of officers. Would any sane man presume that superannuated and broken down captains, of more than sixty years of age, are those to whom the command of our ships ought to be intrusted, on the breaking out of a war, which must be the case if they received no reinforcement to their numbers from the ranks of younger and more vigorous men? The difference of the half-pay list at present, and the amount of it in the year 1792, arises from the enormous number of officers employed in the course of the last war, and the extensive reduction at the peace. There is no sense in vague and general murmurs, without coming to chapter and verse.

LIVERPOOL ALBION.—*Dissenters Marriage Bill.*—Lord John Russell, as the organ of the Ministry, has brought forward the promised bill for Legalizing Marriages of Protestant Dissenters and Roman Catholics by clergymen of their own persuasions. If the parties claiming relief in the article of marriage are satisfied with the measure proposed by his Lordship, they will, in our opinion, make themselves the laughing-stock of the world. It merely relieves the Dissenters and Romanists from the necessity of being married according to the Church formulary, while it surrounds the ceremony of marriage with so many disagreeable and vexatious circumstances as to make the parties feel that they are harshly and unjustly treated. It is, in short, a wretched expedient to preserve what its noble author calls 'the rights and liberties of the Established Church' under the miserable pretext of relieving the Romanists and the Dissenters from one of the numerous practical grievances of which they now complain, and the complete relief from which is frustrated by the union between the Church and the State. Pass such a measure as this, and the degradation of the Dissenters will be complete. For what are its leading provisions? Not only must the Dissenter have recourse, as now, to the Established Church, for the publication of the bans of marriage, or to the surrogate, as now, for a License to be married, paying the fees as usual, by which, doubtless, Lord John Russell means 'the rights and liberties of the Established Church,' but the ceremony must be celebrated in a chapel duly licensed for that purpose! Nor is every place of worship to be licensed, but only one in a district, and that on petition to two justices of the peace, who will be armed with a power over the places of worship so licensed, strongly resembling that which they now exercise over public houses. And this is pronounced a measure of relief for the Dissenters! Well might Mr Ewart declare, that 'it was not a sufficiently impartial measure, and did not fully redress practical grievances. Nothing less,' he added, 'than a general system of registration of births, marriages, and deaths would be satisfactory to the Dissenters.' Our worthy representative is quite right. But so long as the Dissenters tamely submit, as they have hitherto tamely submitted, to have their civil and religious rights either denied or curtailed because the full enjoyment of those rights is deemed incompatible with 'the rights and liberties,' that is, the fees and emoluments of the Established Church, so long will they not only be treated as sectarians, but will deserve to be so treated,—so long, in short, will they bear the badge of civil and religious slavery. Lord John Russell's marriage Relief Bill is a specimen of the kind of relief they may expect generally to receive from his Majesty's Ministers. It falls so far short of what they expected, and what they had a right to expect, that they will spurn it with indignation. Can the Churchman wonder, that many of the Dissenters demand the separation of the Church from the State, when it is evident that the union of the two is the cause of the wrong and the injustice of which they complain.

Irish Church.—When the trouble which the Irish Church occasions to our statesmen is considered, we are filled with admiration of a zeal on her behalf which seems to undergo neither diminution nor abatement. Strong, indeed, must be their attachment to an establishment which causes them so much trouble and anxiety. The Whigs, during the three years they have been in office, have made several attempts to strengthen the walls of the Irish Sion; but every attempt has proved as abortive as its predecessors. Tithe bill follows tithe bill in endless succession; and, unless some bold man take the subject in hand, commutation and compensation bills promise, like the spectres in Macbeth, to "stretch to the crack of doom." Things temporal, not things spiritual, are the cause of all this trouble and of all this anxiety. Money is the root of evil in the church as well as in the world. "The wisdom of our ancestors" created what is called church property—which exists in land and in the produce of land; and, though the preservation of that property is the cause of open rebellion in one island and of avowed dissatisfaction in another, our statesmen

seem determined to preserve it at all hazards and at any cost. Instead of boldly resuming the property of the Church for the use of the state,—appropriating out of it, at the same time, a fund adequate to the support and the maintenance of a standing ministry, for the diffusion of religion and the promotion of piety among the people,—they try expedient after expedient, scheme after scheme, and seem as far as ever from promoting the great aim of all their exertions—the tranquillization of Ireland. The scheme just broached for the extinction of tithes is not likely to be more successful than the schemes which experience has proved not to work. It is another piece of political legerdemain, by which, it is hoped, the Irish people will be deceived. It is another attempt to make them swallow physic, at which their gorge rises, by changing the form and the name. Paddy is, however, too quicksighted to be deceived by the one, and too shrewd to be cheated by the other. So long as he is compelled to pay towards the support of a sinecure, and, as he believes, an heretical church, it matters not whether he pay the landlord or the parson. As Mr. O'Connell says, he is resolved not to pay; and any attempt to make him do so will be followed by a repetition of the agitation, and the confusion, and that all but open rebellion which have distracted Ireland for the last three years. The clergy have been the victims up to this time. If some bold, comprehensive, and decisive measure be not speedily adopted, by which tithes shall be abolished in reality and not in name merely, and by which the Irish Church shall be rescued from odium, the landlords, who are by the new plan to be the receivers for the parsons, will become the next victims. Better at once seize the property for the use, under the aforesaid conditions, of the state.

COLONIAL.

CANADAS.

QUEBEC GAZETTE.—The weather is chill, compared to what it has been for one or two weeks back. There are hard frosts at night, and the winter roads are as good as they have been at any time this season. The ice at Carouge is still stationary, and has acquired great strength by the cold following the rain and mild weather. The first permanent mild weather has occurred, on the average of a number of years, in the first of April; and should it then again occur this year, the small quantity of snow on the ground would disappear much earlier than in ordinary years.

The navigation below Quebec has been open for a week or two past. Boats have come up to town from as low as Malbaie, ninety miles distant. Other boats have sailed for Riviere de Loup, which is fifteen or twenty miles lower down. The ice has, in some places, left the shore, and admits of small craft being secured. Supplies have already been dispatched to the distressed parishes, where considerable hardships had been experienced.—*March 26.*

It is understood that the Quarantine Establishment at Grosse Isle will be put into operation in the ensuing navigation season, under the regulations that were enforced there last year.—*March 31.*

(From the *Mercury* of the 29th inst.)

This day at one o'clock, pursuant to previous appointment, a number of the most respectable merchants and other inhabitants of Quebec, friendly to the Constitution as it now exists, waited on the Governor in Chief with an Address to His Excellency, soliciting that He would be pleased to transmit, to be laid at the foot of the Throne, their dutiful and loyal Petition to His Majesty, praying Him graciously to preserve the Constitution of this Colony, as by law established, to redress certain grievances which they labour under, from certain hastily enacted laws, designing men, falsely pretending to speak the sentiments of the people, but in reality bent upon subverting those Institutions, and destroying that Constitution which the Parent State in its bounty, bestowed. The Petition has upwards of 3000 signatures, and amongst them the names of all the leading commercial men, who are wholly unconnected with the Government, as well as of other independent persons in different situations of life.

His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply to the Address:—

"Gentlemen,

"I will not fail to transmit your Memorial, addressed to His Majesty, to the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, for the purpose of being laid at the foot of the Throne.

"It must be confessed that recent events, to which I refrain from alluding more particularly, are calculated at first sight to excite apprehensions for the safety of the Political Constitution of the Province—fortunately, however, as the wild schemes of those who would effect a change in that Constitution develop themselves, the utter incapacity of the innovators to exercise the power to which they aspire, becomes in the same degree more manifest: so that the evil brings its own remedy along with it.

Castle of St. Lewis,

Quebec, 29th March, 1834."

MONTREAL VINDICATOR.—*A few more Moves.*—The County and City of Montreal meet on the 2nd of April, and Beauharnois on the 31st inst., to take into consideration the state of the Province. Delegates from the several Counties of the District, are to meet in this City, in Convention, on Monday, the 7th of next month, to agree upon the draught of a Petition. This is what we call doing business. We hope every County will send a delegation on this occasion. Should it be inconvenient for any person to attend from a distance, the County Committee ought to appoint as their delegate, some person of the city, in whom they have confidence.

NEW-BRUNSWICK.

ST. JOHN COURIER.—*New Mayor.*—Benjamin L. Peters, Esquire, has, we understand, been appointed Mayor of this