

# THE GLEANER.

And Northumberland, Kent, Gloucester, and Restigouche Schediasma.

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*Nec aranearum sane textus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt, nec noster vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes.*

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## THE GLEANER.

### THE BRITISH PRESS.

From the London Shipping Gazette.

#### THE CORN LAWS NOT THE SOLE CAUSE OF DISTRESS.

We on Tuesday last referred to the impolicy of those advocates of commercial reform who confine their arguments and their speculations to a repeal or an alteration of the Corn Laws; thus shutting out in a great measure, from public consideration other questions connected with the tariff of most momentous import to the trading welfare of this country. The imprudence of such a course could not be made more manifest than it was rendered by the circular of the Manchester cotton houses, which led us to make those remarks,—for while in that document the Corn Laws are made exclusively the great head and origin of the evils which beset our manufacturing interests, it is proved by statistical returns in the same circular that the exports of the country are increasing, and that the whole falling off in the consumption of manufactured cotton in the last year, has been at home. This fact at once demonstrates that the Corn Laws, however unfavorable they operate upon our trade in their existing state, are nevertheless but one ingredient amongst the many of which the origin of the mischief is composed, and that a prudent alteration of these laws would not therefore by any means serve to remove the great impediments by which the progress of our manufacturing prosperity has been so seriously obstructed.

It is in some measure natural that those who are exclusively engaged in the cotton manufacture—the raw material for which is, comparatively speaking, untaxed—look, in seeking for relief, in the first place, to those imposts which affect the price of labour engaged in their own trade, and check the facilities which should exist for procuring returns from foreign countries for their produce,—and this of course leads them immediately to the consideration of the Corn Laws. But let them weigh well the fact which they have demonstrated so clearly in the Manchester circular, that the great falling off in the consumption of their wares has been at home, and the necessity of seeking for other causes of this evil than the Corn Laws, to the removal of which they should sedulously apply themselves, will at once develop itself. It is evident, from the fact that the exports of manufactured cottons has increased, that want of employment for the operative (although the want of employment be felt to a lamentable degree) did not exist to a serious extent in excess over the want of employment in the previous year: neither could the difficulties of obtaining returns have been increased, nor was the price of corn higher than in 1840. The two former facts are proved, as we have stated, by the increase of the export cotton manufactures,—the last statement is universally known,—the falling off, therefore, in home consumption of cottons is attributable to other causes, acting in vigorous and mischievous combination with the existing Corn Laws, and not less injuriously than those laws; and it is also evident that amongst other classes of the community than amongst the vast masses of employed in the manufacture of cotton, we must look for a share of the distress which has decreased our home consumption of cotton manufactures.

If then commercial classes, who so naturally and anxiously desire to remove the causes of our trading distress, would act effectively in procuring their object, they will devote their attention and their efforts to the origin of the distress amongst other branches of trade as well as that in cotton. Let them for instance look closely to the evils which result from our timber duties. Let them contemplate the vast amount of employment which would be the consequence if a proper impetus were given to our Shipping Interest by such an arrangement of these duties as would enable our shipbuilders to build vessels which would not only compete in cheapness with those of foreigners, but obtain a market in foreign countries. Let them consider the state to which a vast number of operatives have been reduced by the present timber duties—that not only are more than two thirds of the shipwrights of the kingdom out of employment, but that the cabinet trade has been almost annihilated by the effects of our tariff. Let them look to the linen trade—daily decreasing because of our import duties. Let them view the results of those duties directly upon almost every other trade, and indirectly upon the agricultural classes, and they will find that the duties upon raw materials employed in those trades are at least equally mixed up with the origin of the inability

to consume our manufactures at home as the Corn Laws can be identified with it.

We have made these observations, not because we consider that the question of the Corn Laws should cease to be urged upon the attention of the Government, but because we fear that other evils at least as injurious, and extensively active in their operations, may be overlooked in the effort to obtain a repeal of the duty on corn. Besides this, it is evident that her Majesty's Government will immediately propose a plan for the alteration of the Corn Laws,—and we feel convinced that the consideration which has been almost exclusively bestowed upon them may be well given, at the present time, to the means by which a general and prudent revision of the tariff may be effected.

From the London Britannia.

#### THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

The withdrawal of this distinguished friend of the agricultural interest from the Cabinet is to be regretted, because with a new Ministry, and with a mean, virulent, and intriguing enemy on the watch, the Cabinet cannot be too strong,—yet as we cannot bring ourselves to suppose that Sir Robert Peel has the slightest intention of sacrificing the rights of the farmer, or of any other class of society, to a thing so trivial, and temporary too, as the popularity of the streets, we must hope that the Duke's retirement has resulted rather from his going too far forward, than from the Minister's falling too far behind.

A similar instance occurs in Lord Ashley. We are convinced that no man can be more conscientious than his Lordship, and that he thinks himself perfectly in the right; and yet many a man who has thought so before his Lordship, has proved to be in the wrong after all. That the factory children should be protected is clear, but the best mode is the question: and the mode which Lord Ashley so vigorously and so conscientiously urges, may not be the most certain to attain even its own ends. Protection as often overshoots the mark as falls below it. On the whole, we are most disposed to confide in the great experience of the Minister, and in his remarkable discretion, than in the generous inexperience of a senator, but just coming into public life, wholly new to office, and excited by a personal ardour for a particular cause.

Another instance is the Marquis of Londonderry. We have always had a great respect for the Marquis, as an honest politician, a manly asserter of his opinions, and a steady and consistent Conservative. We know the miserable attempts that have been made by the coxcombs of fashion to laugh him down; but we equally know that there is not among all our diplomatists a nobleman who would have made a better Ambassador to the first Court of the Continent—who would have sustained the honors of his country in a higher style, or conducted its negotiations with a more acute and intelligent sense of duty. A brave officer in the field, a splendid noble at Court, and a shrewd, yet straightforward negotiator, no man could be more fitted for the highest trust abroad. Yet we have his own declaration, that such a trust was offered to him, and he declined. The reason has not been given, but we cannot doubt that it was an honorable one, and we as little doubt that it was a mistaken one. The state of the general case between the Minister and those distinguished persons is this; he has much experience and large views; he must consult for many, and he must regulate his measures so as to meet the fair interests of all; it is his duty to look at public measures on all sides, and having principle and intelligence, nothing in the shape of opposition to thwart either way, it is only rational to judge that he is right; while those who necessarily take more limited views are wrong. A short period will decide, whether the Minister deserves the opinion which the country has already formed of him. If he is manly, steady, and unbiassed, he may possess power as long as Pitt, and transmit his memory side by side with Pitt's to fame. If he swerves, he is undone,—he may purchase a slippery popularity, or recruit his failing forces from a treacherous partizanship, but the question of his permanency is at an end. Yet he is too sagacious not to see this result, and too intelligent not to know how fatal to England would be another tyranny of Whiggism. The country relies, and rightly, on Sir Robert Peel.

From the London Atlas.

#### ARRIVAL OF THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

What with the arrival of the King of Prussia and the christening of the infant Prince of Wales, the lieges of this happy and loyal land have been kept in a boiling state of excitement for the space of some nine or ten days. Of a verity the good people of England do dearly

love a nine day's wonder; and, so long as they have the enjoyment of the holiday, the bustle, and the throng, your thorough bred sight hunters are blessed with a philosophic indifference as to the cause that has assembled them together in masses. The christening of a Prince, or the funeral of a Monarch will serve their turn equally well. The execution of a criminal or a Lord Mayor's shew alike allures its crowd of gazers. We have little faith in the genuineness of popular feeling, in spite of all its noisy demonstrations. We know that, if it exist at all, it is mutable and unstable as the wind. And there is this evil quality in the manifestations by the populace of approbation and attachment—that with mean servility they are offered up to the rich, the titled, and the fortunate, with scarcely ever a reference to desert. Certain events, indeed, may bring this or that conspicuous person into disrepute with the mob; but, as a general rule, the observation of the caustic Juvenal holds good—

“Tarba Remi sequantur fortanam, at semper, et odit Damatos—”

Be this, however, as it may, the King of Prussia has arrived, and is still our honored guest,—the heir to a nation has been solemnly installed an unconscious member, and the probable future head, of the Protestant Church of England. And all this has been done with great pomp and magnificence of ceremonial well becoming this mighty country, the merchants of which are princes, her landowners magnates, and her operative producers starving paupers. Processions were marshalled, and troops arrayed; guns were fired, and trumpets sounded, colours were presented, and knightly protestations made. Prayers were said, and hymns sung in the temple.—Anacronisms were chanted, and toasts proposed over the festive board. Limners were encouraged to prolong by their “serenely silent art” the memory of the scene, and poetsasters were made joyful by the appearance of their effusions on the auspicious occasion in the newspapers. Moreover, the Times, in charitable consideration for those who might not possess a Common Prayer Book, did reprint “the ministration for the public baptism of infants” in the body of its report of the christening ceremonial in St. George's Chapel.

But amidst all these rejoicings—amidst the booming of cannon, and the clangour of trumpets,—the hallelujahs of choristers and the shouts of multitudes, the pageantry of processions, and the glare of illuminations—amidst all this ‘pride, pomp, and circumstance’ of royalty, were there no reflections which pressed themselves, painfully and oppressively, upon the mind of an unexcited observer far different from the holiday feelings caused by the mere gaiety of the scene? For ourselves we admit that the gorgeous display of concentrated wealth, magnificence, and lavish expenditure that we beheld—the gathering together of rank, power, and monopoly in all their forms and phases—struck us in direful contrast with the want and misery that pervade the land. Let our rulers look to it, and that right soon. The political horizon is darkling. Discontent is in the hearts of the people—a discontent that may neither be disregarded nor suppressed, nor yet conciliated with temporary palliatives and sectional mitigations.

From the same.

#### THE SUFFERINGS OF THE PEOPLE.

For many months past the provincial journals have teemed with narratives of distress. The London papers, unable to report these miseries in full, or even to furnish any thing like an epitome of them, have been compelled to treat the painful subject in general terms, and to speak loosely, and therefore vaguely, of the appalling want that has been so long stalking through the land. The inhabitants of the metropolis, consequently, have had but little opportunity of estimating the extent or the intensity of the misery under which so many thousands of their fellow countrymen have been so long suffering. The images of agony piled up in the leading articles of some of our daily contemporaries have exercised but a slight influence in awakening the public—we mean the well housed public—to the wretchedness of all the manufacturing and most of the agricultural districts. People get used to the rhetorical compassion of the newspapers, and gradually learn to regard it with indifference, just as if it meant nothing, or as if the sufferings it sometimes too truly depicts were really a fictitious grievance in disguise. Besides, the general description of a famine is not calculated to make a very deep impression on the casual and hasty reader. When we read of thousands and tens of thousands of human beings cast out of employment, and roaming

about for work or food, we are apt to be struck by a feeling of astonishment rather than sympathy, and to shudder at the magnitude rather than the severity of the woe. A quick sense of the multitude of sufferers overwhelms the sense of the suffering itself. Individual privation is obscured in the immensity of the accumulation. A solitary case of want would make a deeper impression than the starvation of a legion. It would be distinct and intelligible. We should see in it the lineaments of a common humanity; we would make the case our own: we would imagine our own children perishing in like manner in the midst of plenty,—and we should thus realize those horrors that are lost in the crowded picture.

Until very recently the people of London entertained extremely indistinct notions of the distress that prevailed throughout the country. But it has at last knocked at their own doors, and come before them in a shape too palpable to be mistaken or evaded. There is no longer any danger that the nature or the pressure of the misery shall be misunderstood. It has appeared in the streets of the metropolis, and cried aloud for bread, and cannot be set aside by magisterial apothegms or workhouse etiquette. Until very recently the ordinary way of speaking the distress was to express the gentlest commiseration in the briefest terms, to add a small commonplace about the severity of the season, or the surplus population, or some other exhausted platitude, and to hint a doubt whether, after all, these things were not greatly exaggerated. But within the last week or two such evidences have been displayed of the reality of the distress in the streets of London as to deprive everybody of the slightest excuse for affecting insensibility to its demands.

We drew attention last week to the startling fact that crowds of men, in groups of thirty or forty, had collected in the public streets, and that some of their number, without violence or clamour, had entered the shops of the bakers, and taking out loaves of bread, openly shared them amongst their companions. We need not remind the readers of history—especially those who do not wholly regard it as an old manac—that revolutions have sometimes begun in this way, and that no revolutions have ever been so decisive in their issues as those that commenced in the granaries.

But the sequel of these seizures of bread presents the most remarkable feature in the case. The men who had thus availed themselves of the tempting stores of the bakers made no attempt to evade the responsibility of what they had done, and, when the police were called upon to take them into custody, they yielded themselves up without a syllable of remonstrance! Indeed, in most instances they even appeared to rejoice at the circumstance, because it gave them a legitimate opportunity of stating their grievance before a magistrate. In these facts we have a complete reflection of the sufferings and conduct of the people under a greater amount of actual distress than has at any former time been known in this country. There never was a time when Englishmen were plunged into such a depth of almost hopeless poverty; and never was there a time when Englishmen bore their poverty with such resignation, firmness, or tranquillity. “It is hard to perish for want of bread,” exclaimed one of these brave men, when a magistrate reminded him that he ought not to steal. And long had they endured that want before they hid hands upon the bread; and when they did, conscious of the illegality of the act, conscious that, wherever the original evil lay, the baker at least ought not to suffer, and ready to make all atonement that might be required of them, they frankly and unhesitatingly resigned themselves into the hands of justice. Are these men common depredateurs? Are these men criminal in the eye of the law? Does not the criminality rest morally with that crushing system of legislation, which for the maintenance of a class theory, condemns multitudes of men to violate their own principles of right and wrong?

We will not here discuss the source of the distress. Our whole object at this moment is to impress upon our readers the necessity of recognizing its existence. Some measure must be devised speedily to mitigate the misery of the poor, or it will, in all human probability, take a shape that will leave us no more time for deliberation. It is at our doors and must be met face to face. Yet, notwithstanding these visible and tangible evils, that have been gathering upon us for the last few months, Parliament was prorogued in the teeth of hundreds of petitions, and is not to reassemble until next month. That single fact is in itself a voluminous commentary upon the present high handed administration.