

YESTERDAY'S MAIL.

FIRST MAY BRITISH MAIL.

The British Steamer Caledonia, with the first May mail, arrived at Halifax on Friday morning last, in the short passage of 124 days. The news is important, a summary of which will be found below, copied from Willmer & Smith's European Times of May 6.

Amongst the many signs of the progressive tendency of the present age, by far the most important, both as regards the nature of the measure, the influence of its promoters, and the important consequences it involves, is the new reform movement, which is now ramifying its operations throughout the entire kingdom. The history of its origin is simple. A number of Members of the House of Commons, comprising some of the moderate, and many of the extreme Liberals, believing the Reform Bill to have failed in its most important features, and the popular mind was ripe and eager for change; formed themselves, for the first time, into a compact party in the House, in order to obtain certain reforms in the franchise, taxation, and other departments, which they considered necessary for the welfare of the community; and set forth, as the basis of their principles, household suffrage, vote by ballot, triennial Parliaments, and equal electoral districts. That the Reform Bill has failed to be of much practical use is sufficiently evident. The single fact that small boroughs, such as Thetford or Chichester, with constituencies of less than 200 each, should have a numerical weight in the Imperial Parliament equal to Manchester, Liverpool or Glasgow, with their population of some three or four hundred thousand each, is an abuse that not all the redeeming features of that bill can counteract; whilst the composition of the House of Commons (supposed and intended to represent the people), made up for the most part of noblemen or gentlemen connected with the Government, or with existing institutions, which they are interested in perpetuating—as well as the corrupt practices resorted to, and these especially in the smaller boroughs, to obtain seats in the house, strongly attest the necessity for some change. The expenditure of the country, too, which it was thought the Reform Bill would have materially curtailed and lessened, has been increased by some millions in a time of protracted peace, involving in its train an amount of taxation absolutely ruinous to almost every class in the community.

To remedy this state of things, obviously at variance with the true principles of Government—the new reform Association was organized, and the feeling with which it has been taken up in the country—the powerful support from the middle classes which it is every where receiving, and the adhesion of some of the most popular leading men of the day—all augur a successful termination to its labors, although a protracted struggle may take place in the interim. The centre of action of the new party will be, as in the case of the Anti-Corn Law League, in the manufacturing districts, and its chief promoters the gentlemen who brought that important movement to a triumphant issue. The chief difficulty in the way of attaining their object lies, in the first instance, in the want of fusion between the middle classes and the operatives, but the points of difference between the latter and the Reformers are now so few and unimportant that we hope they may, on reflection, co-operate in the movement, as they have already done in some places; more especially as there is a probability, an almost absolute certainty, that the household will eventually vote in universal suffrage. Indeed, many of those who advocate the former view, do so on the ground of expediency, as by limiting their demands they conceive they will secure the co-operation of a large number of members of Parliament who are not prepared at present to go for universal suffrage.

The desire of the Government, expressed by Lord John Russell, that individual members of Parliament, rather than the Ministry, should bring forward measures suited to the wants of the country, has had its effect, no doubt, in originating this movement, and will afford a substantial reason for its being urged upon the attention of the Cabinet. If successful in its issue, it cannot fail to purify the Lower House of Parliament, and make it what the constitution designs it should be—an exponent of the true feelings of the people.

There has been more activity in the several departments of trade and commerce during the past week. The returns of the elections in France, and the general tenor of our advices from all other parts of the European continent, lead to the agreeable hope that the political ferment which has distracted the several kingdoms and states therein, will now quietly settle down; and were it not that a general war may ere long burst forth, and involve England, France, Germany, Prussia and Austria against each other, there would we are confident, have been visible effects of a still greater improvement. There is yet an abundance of money, and Bank accommodation can still be had on moderate terms.

The weather has set in delightfully fine, and is now everything that can be expected or wished for. The young crops are shooting forth with the most promising appearance, and everything betokens a rich, luxuriant, and seasonable harvest. These circumstances have a telling effect upon the corn markets throughout the three kingdoms during the week.

REFORM AND CHARTIST MOVEMENT.

These movements are continuing throughout the Kingdom, in proof of which we subjoin brief reports of their proceedings in the following localities:—

Glasgow.—A very large and influential meeting was held in the city on the 4th inst. Mr. Councillor Anderson, chairman.

Birmingham.—Two immense meetings have been held here during the week. That on the 1st inst. was attended by about 8000 people, principally of the working classes, and was addressed by Messrs. Munz and Scholfield, the members for the borough, Messrs. George Dawson, Henry Vincent, &c. The majority were decidedly in favour of universal suffrage.

Manchester.—A league, similar in its formation and composition to the Anti-Corn Law one, has been formed here, for the purpose of endeavouring to obtain from parliament household suffrage, vote by ballot, triennial parliaments, and equal electoral districts.

In connection with the movement, similar meetings have been held at Bury, Bradford, Leicester, Sheffield, Newcastle, &c. at all of which almost unanimous resolutions were come to.

The Chartist Convention has resumed its sittings in London, but the proceedings are not of much general interest. There is not so large an attendance as at the former sittings, and less confidence seems to be placed in Mr. Feargus O'Connor. Meetings in favour of the Charter continue to be held throughout the Provinces.

GENERAL SUMMARY.

The tide of the revolutionary wave in France flows on with impetuous force. One mighty event succeeds another with unintermitting rapidity. After a whole history, crowded into the brief space of little more than two months, France has struggled through the first pangs of political birth, and a new born representative assembly constitutionally formed, now sways the destinies of France. Every lover of freedom, from the bottom of his heart, wishes success to the mighty experiment; and we earnestly hope that the new assembly will give to all nations unity, peace, and concord, that it will be endued with grace wisdom, and understanding to govern prosperously the French people; and will execute justice and maintain truth in all its laws and ordinances. The blessings of mankind will accompany it accordingly.

After a week of comparative tranquillity in Paris, but of frightful violence at Rouen, Limoges, and in many of the provinces, the elections terminated by a decisive majority in favour of the moderate republican party. We have already said that M. Lamartine, whom the whole of Europe seems to idolise as the genius of peace and order, was elected in about a dozen departments by a transcendental majority. Copious statements of the relative positions of the chief candidates will be found in our continental news, it will suffice here briefly to repeat that the triumph of the moderate party was signal and complete. The effect has been to create the impression in almost everybody's mind, that Lamartine will be unanimously elected the First President of the Republic of France. No doubt can be entertained that a republican form of government will be decided upon by the new assembly.

We had written thus far, when the French journals of Tuesday reached us, and other contents verify the painful forebodings which, in spite of ourselves, prevail in our minds, and which cannot but be betrayed in our language when treating of the affairs of France. The frightful scenes which have taken place at Rouen, have been repeated at Nantes, Rhodes, Nîmes (where martial law is proclaimed), Marseilles, and Limoges (which place holds out steadfastly against the Provisional Government) with more or less degree of violence; and from the concurrent testimony of all the Paris journals, the French capital seems in greater danger of some violent outbreak of popular fury, than at any period since the 24th of February. The clubs have assumed a tone similar to that adopted by Robespierre in 1793. In fact, the declaration of the Rights of Man, drawn up by that portentous tyrant, is made the basis of action by one of the clubs, holding his principles, and a proclamation to that effect was posted all over Paris, but instantly torn down by the agents of the Government. This step of Robespierre, for he is the head of the club, has created a profound sensation; and, as the Provisional Government will, in a few days, resign their authority the question arises who will have sufficient power, with the troops and the National Guards, hereforth to maintain order. It is plain that a great party is being organized for mischief; and the very unwelcome information is circulated, that the protection of the new Assembly is to be confided to the Lyonsese self-instituted guard, with the unruly 'guard on foot' of Paris, the two bodies being incorporated. The greatest alarm prevails lest some attack will be made on the Deputies; and a proclamation of the Provisional Government enjoining confidence, and ending by saying that 'madness can alone deprive France of the democratic consequences of the revolution of February,' only proves that the members of the Government are fully aware of the secret and universal dread which prevails that the whole country is on the verge of civil war.

As a sign of public opinion, M. Thiers, the ex-President of the Council, the most celebrated his orator, and no insignificant statesman of the time, a man of unquestionable talent, and an opposition leader, has been rejected by the elections of Les Bouches du Rhone, and at present has no seat in the new Assembly.

bly, Lucien Murat, son of the former King of Naples, is elected for the department of the Lot.

The Legitimists are not idle, for the *Inde-pendant de l'Ouest* has proclaimed the accession of the Duke of Bordeaux to the throne of France.

Our continental news continues to be of undiminished importance and interest. The postscript of our last number contained the intelligence of a very decisive battle between the Danes and the Prussians, and the capture of Schleswig and Flensburg. The Danes having been completely overpowered by the superior forces brought against them, retired first to Gravenstein, and afterwards withdrew further into the small island of Alsén, where they are making preparations for further defence. The astounding intelligence reached us early in the week that Baron Von Oxholm, chamberlain of the King of Denmark, who had gone to St. Petersburg to ask assistance from the Emperor, had met with a peremptory refusal. The Emperor, it was said, declared that he would not interfere at all. It, of course, turns out to be a mere invention of the German enemy, who hope that this may be the case. More authentic and far more probable news has since arrived from St. Petersburg, stating that a treaty offensive and defensive between Russia, Sweden, and Denmark is arranged, and will be positively ratified in the event of an entry of German troops into Schleswig, in which case Denmark will be supported by the whole force of the other two powers.

In Galicia, Moldavia, and Wallachia, the people are in a frightful state of insurrection. At Presburg, the cruelties practised against the Jews are truly shocking; 300 families have quitted the town by order of the magistrates, as the only means of appeasing the rioters. In Baden the Republicans have attempted to revenge their late defeat, and Hecker crossed the Rhine at the head of a thousand French and German troops.

The latest news from that quarter, with reference to foreign affairs, indicates but too plainly all the gravity of the case. General Oudinot has issued an address to the army of the Alps, the terms of which are of a very menacing character, and the success of Austria in recovering her sway in Italy, must we fear precipitate and European war, as France could not be restrained from interfering. The funds in Paris have declined upon this impression; which is made deeper by the report that the Austrians have bombarded Cracow. This, if true, will render a demonstration in favour of Poland, about to be made by the *ultras* in Paris, a formidable one, and only add to the complexity of the events now developing themselves. Charles Albert, has written, it is said, an autograph letter to the Provisional Government soliciting assistance.

Abd-el-Kader has arrived at Pau, with his suite, consisting of 59 persons, including three wives, three concubines, and half a dozen sons and daughters, legitimate and illegitimate. With a good horse he might dash into the Pyrenean hills in a few hours, and defy all pursuit, if he were so inclined to escape.

In Spain no movement has taken place except at Valencia, which was promptly suppressed. The Queen, considering the wants of the state, has renounced all claims to the arrears due to her household, amounting to nearly a million sterling. The cabinet of Madrid seems somewhat better disposed towards Great Britain.

Mehemet Ali is at the point of death with no hopes of recovery.

Since our last a scene has taken place in Ireland which cannot fail, with the other important events, occurring in Dublin and in the provinces, to have a great, and we hope a pacific influence eventually upon our excitable fellow subjects. We stated in our last that Mr. W. S. O'Brien had proceeded to the south for the purpose of promoting the agitation of the young Ireland party, and the hon. Gentleman, with Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Meagher, visited Limerick with that object. The population of that county had been greatly excited by inflammatory addresses circulated by the old Ireland party, representing Mr. Mitchell as the champion of O'Connell, and as the slenderer of the Catholic religion, and the effigy of Mitchell, with a rope round the neck, was borne through the streets of Limerick. In this state of feeling of the Old Irelanders, a voice was given by the Sanfield Club Young Irelanders to Messrs. O'Brien, Mitchell, and Meagher. A frightful riot was the consequence. The military and the police were called out; the members of the club fired and one man was killed. The house having been broken into by the O'Connellists, the windows and doors were demolished, and Mr. O'Brien only escaped after having received some violent contusions on the face. Mitchell and Meagher contrived to elude the populace by getting away in disguise. In fact, if it had not been for the efforts of the military under General Napier, who interfered between the parties, the consequences would have been much more serious.

In consequence of the late riotous proceedings at Limerick, the Lieutenant has proclaimed the county and the city of Limerick under the act for prevention of crime in Ireland; and further, has issued a proclamation warning the people against taking part in the proposed council of three hundred, or the formation of the contemplated association called the National Guard. His Lordship, in reply to the address of the magistrates of Dublin, intimates that it is not his present intention to proclaim the county and city of Dublin, but that an important change has taken place,

and that the few turbulent and desperate men who have occasioned so much alarm, having nowhere found the support upon which they relied, agitation has in a great measure subsided. His Lordship adds, that it is better that the movement should be put down by the good sense of the people than by measures of coercion; but if pike making and seditious speech making are persisted in, he will use powers with which the law invests him.

In parliament, Sir W. Somerville has introduced a measure which cannot be deemed otherwise than a step towards improving the electoral franchise of Ireland, it will be at least one "political grievance" abated. The new bill proposes to define the franchise, extend the constituencies, and improve the system of registration. To accomplish these objects, the bill abolishes all existing franchises, and substitutes a simple rating to the poor, of the net annual value of £3. per annum. Owners of fees simple to the value of £5, will be entitled to vote. These alterations will extend the constituencies of Ireland immensely. The registration clauses provide that the clerks of the Poor law Unions shall transmit to the clerks of the peace annually complete lists of the parties rated within the respective baronies; the clerk of the peace will add the names of owners, and the list upon publication will be the list of voters. In towns no change will take place in the qualification; but the complaints arising from non-payment of local rates will be removed by abolishing all such qualifications, except the non-payment of poor rates. It is expected that by the proposed changes the number of electors throughout Ireland will be quadrupled.

POSTSCRIPT.

We have received details of the proceedings at the opening of the French Chamber on the 4th inst., which were highly interesting and passed off satisfactorily. The members of the Provisional Government, distinguished by tri-coloured sashes, went in procession to the Chamber, from which all persons having arms were excluded. Loud applause greeted them on the way, and on their arrival in the Chamber.

Some business was gone through in the after sittings, but it was not expected that the President of the Republic would be declared till next day.

The proposed fundamental law for the constitution of the German empire was laid before the German Diet on the 26th ultimo by the committee of seventeen men of confidence.

Reports are current that the Army of the Alps had entered Savoy to aid in defence of Italian independence against Austria. The *Moniteur* of yesterday published a decree granting a credit of 32,000,000 francs for war purposes. The inference drawn from this circumstance is, that a movement on Lombardy is in contemplation, in the event of the Austrians defeating the Sardinian troops, with their auxiliaries, of which it is considered there is now a strong probability. The Constitutional, however denies that there is any truth in the report that France is about to declare war against Austria.

Later accounts from Italy state that King Charles Albert had resolved to attack the Austrians in their entrenched camp at Verona and was within a league and a half of its walls for the purpose on the 25th. The head quarters of the Sardinian army had been transferred from Volta to Vallegio, on the left bank of the Mincio. Near Villafraanca the Piedmontese surprised a body of the Austrian army. The officers fled with part of the soldiers. The others laid down their arms. Marshal Radetzky has sent to Innsbruck some families of Verona as hostages. The capture of Udine by the Austrians is confirmed; but it turns out they were almost immediately attacked again, and driven from the city. There is no further news relative to the advance of Nugent. From Vienna we learn that the Archduke Francis Joseph had gone to Verona, the head-quarters of Radetzky.

The English consul at Venice had retired to Trieste, as upon his declaration that the Venetian Republic would not be acknowledged by Great Britain the mob tore down the armaria insignia from his house, and he fled for safety. On the 24th Venice was blockaded by sea entirely, the city was in a state of anarchy, and the people in general in deep distress.

At Posen the guerilla war with the scythemen continues to be waged in a fearfully bloody manner.

The advices from the chief commercial cities on the continent of Europe and from India, we are glad to state, are of an improved character. There are but few failures to report. Stocks, Produce, and Manufactured Goods command higher rates; and, although Money is still difficult to obtain upon the best description of security, yet there is more freedom in the European Money market generally.

TIMBER TRADE.—From Donpacay, Frost and Co's. Circular, which we obtained by the mail, we extract the following remarks on the Timber Trade at Liverpool:

Pine.—There have been no arrivals of Pine Timber since our last. The demand is very moderate and the prices exceedingly low. A cargo of Miramichi Pine of last year's import, and of fair quality, brought 15d per foot by private sale, and a similar cargo by auction this week was sold, 150 logs of large wood at 14½d to 14¾d per foot, and the residue of smaller sized wood at 12d and 12½d.

Birch is scarce and in good demand: 16d, 15d, and 13d, per foot.

Railway Sleepers.—Are in fair demand, but prices continue to rule low.

Pine and Spruce Planks remain without any alteration in price.