

ENGLAND.

nied. He would contend that the system under which nomination boroughs existed was preferable to the new system, because he preferred a mixed monarchy with a House of Peers to such a system as that which could be established by any democratical influence.

with every physical enjoyment, was to be thrown into confusion, because there was a defective system of fines and recoveries.—[laughter].—These were the miserable defects for which the whole system of society was to be changed.—Some of them were defects and grievances which many of the people never heard of, and which could form no ground, in their opinion, at least, for change. The people knew how to make roads—how to improve agriculture, machinery, &c., but very few of them ever knew what fine and recovery meant; and if the question were put to them, the answer would probably be that fine meant penalty, and recovery meant compensation.—[a laugh.]

The two most prominent features in the noble Lord's Bill were disfranchisements of the small boroughs, and the new mode of making up the deficiency; and he certainly must be cautious in giving his assent to a measure which even the noble Lord himself was so despondent about. The clause, for instance, respecting £10 householders had undergone no less than four essential alterations since the bill was first introduced—(cheers.) It was not settled yet; and he thought Government had no right to ask his confidence to such a measure, when they were still so much in doubt about some of the most important points. What was the effect of the alteration in the Bill with regard to the right of voting as to Manchester only? Why that the right of voting was transferred from the householder, who was consequently a resident, to the warehouse-owner, who might not, or need not reside in the place. But it had been said that this part of the alteration had crept in through inadvertency—(hear, hear.) If such an inadvertency took place on the part of the government, who ought to have matured their plans before submitting them, and through which inadvertency the constituency of the country would be diminished by 100,000 persons, surely it was too much to ask the House of Commons to give its confidence to the Administration—(hear.) In the present state of the public mind it behoved Government how they tampered with such questions as these—(hear, hear.) He had taken the four alterations—material alterations—in the Bill, and made the remarks which he thought he was justified in doing. The first had relation to residence; the second to possessions, as to counting-houses; the third to quarterly payments of rent; the fourth to land. The last was a very important alteration. It had been said of one of the alterations that the word "once" had been inserted instead of the word "twice." In the seventh commandment, if the word "not" were left out, it would make a considerable difference—(a laugh.) The occupier of a house with land to a certain value, both under the same landlord, gave the elective franchise to the holder. Now this was a deviation from the original plan, and, as he had before said, an important one. It was of great consequence to the rural population of this country that their comforts should be attended to. These were times in which they ought not to be disregarded, nor should any thing be done which was likely to interfere with their comforts—(hear, hear.) He hoped that the plots and gardens which had been allotted them would not be encroached upon by having portions given to individuals for electioneering purposes. He did not say that such a course would be pursued; the only point he pointed it out as one which might take place. The hon. gentleman who had spoken last had taunted him of being a tardy reformer. The hon. gentleman seemed to think that he had a plan of reform to propose to the House in lieu of the one now under discussion. He was in error upon that subject. He was prepared to support a Bill of his Majesty's Ministers, provided it could, in his opinion, be safely passed. If he were asked why he did not bring forward a plan of reform, he would answer in the words of the hon. and learned gentleman (Sir J. Mackintosh) applied to another circumstance "that he did not wish to open a door, to shut which was beyond his power." He felt that Government would be responsible for all the consequences of such a measure. It had been repeatedly said that the people were resolved to have reform, and that they will have it—(hear, hear.) They were so resolved upon that point, it was insisted, that no government could carry on the affairs of the country without granting it. If such, indeed, were the determined and settled feeling of the country, he regretted it. In regretting it, he must say that, if it were so, he sincerely thought that was a delusion, and he really and sincerely believed that the people were asking for that which would ultimately prove prejudicial to their interests—(hear.) But he begged to ask whether it was so certain that the people desired reform? Was the House not taking for certain that which was not the fact? He called upon the Government to give the people time to reflect upon the Bill—(hear.)—and not force it upon the country in the way it was about to be done. If the people were under a fit of enthusiasm—if they were in error—and if the Bill should pass, and hereafter the people discovered that it was prejudicial to them, they would condemn the House of Commons for not deliberating, and preventing the sacrifices of those interests which it was the bounden duty of that House to see preserved. Doubting that the people were unanimous for reform—doubting still more that it would be conducive to the welfare of the country—doubting that, if it should pass, it would be a permanent measure, he gave his opposition to the Bill. He opposed it because it was not founded upon constitutional principles—he opposed it because it did not give security for the just prerogatives of the Crown—he opposed it because it did not guarantee the security of both Houses of Parliament—and he opposed it because it offered no security for the permanent happiness of the people, and the stability of the institutions which had subsisted for six centuries, and for which there was no parallel to be found in the world—(hear, hear.)

FOREIGN POLICY.

won for it in the field. [cheers.] The first topic to which he would call the attention of the lordsships was the negotiation relating to the affairs of Belgium. It was a chimera to apprehend that any of the states of Europe had meditated hostile proceedings against that country. No doubt the continued agreement of the powers in Congress afforded the best hopes of peace, or at least to removing one of the probable causes of war, so long as it lasted. His Majesty's ministers had explained their principles in reference to Belgium. They were the principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of that country, or a determination to adhere with respect to it to the general principles of public law. No state had entertained the project of interfering in the internal affairs of another without alleging the ground or the pretext of some danger to itself.—Powers desirous of interfering had always done so; that the Conference of London had done; they had constituted themselves the sole judges of the kind and degree of danger, to be apprehended and of the extent of interference which they might allow themselves without violating the law of nations. The truth was, that the principles of non-intervention was a very elastic principle. He would ask what country had become of this principle had Belgium constituted herself Republic? He would ask whether France, the power which more loudly than any other asserted the principle of non-intervention, had not prohibited the Belgium people from electing as their Sovereign a member of the Bonaparte? He would further ask whether, then they had in fact elected a Sovereign; they had not been called upon and compelled to reject him, upon the pretence that his acceptance of the throne was inimical to the interests of the present French Government? He did not allude to these transactions in order to cast blame on the government of France, but for the purpose of showing that the principle of non-intention was extremely elastic. The conference had first laid down articles of separation between Holland and Belgium, which were declared to be fixed and irrevocable, and were proposed to be parties for their unconditional acceptance. The King of the Netherlands, anxious to preserve the peace of Europe, and relying upon the good faith of the mediating powers, unconditionally accepted these articles; but the Belgium Congress, instead of accepting, had returned them to the mediating powers with every circumstance of contumely and insult. Now he would observe, that the King of the Netherlands, who was no party to the articles of the separation, had accepted them unconditionally, and that it then became the duty of the powers to protect him. One of these irrevocable articles had already been revoked, in consequence of the refusal of one of the parties to accede to it. A day was fixed upon which the ministers of the powers were directed to withdraw themselves from Brussels, if the terms imposed by the mediators were not acceded to. Then a letter was written containing threats which were thought likely to bring the negotiation to a satisfactory result. Now, it appeared to him that in all these transactions the interests of the King of the Netherlands were not, as they should have been, kept in view. If the throne of Belgium should be occupied by a Prince who must always be connected with England, the effect would probably be to increase the danger of our position with respect to Holland, and the hazard of war. This was a matter of very grave consideration. No power was more entitled to the sympathy of this country than Holland. We might there behold a people, a free people, coming forward to make willing sacrifices, and rallying round their monarch in a manner which deserved the sympathy and admiration of the Government and people of this country. The transactions in Portugal appear to him to be most unfair and disingenuous; it was said that a series of injuries and insults had been committed by the government of Portugal, and reparation had not been refused, but delayed. Vexatious delays had taken place no doubt.—No person was more ready to admit this than himself, but they arose not from the unwillingness of the Portuguese government to make reparation, but its inability. He was no apologist for the Prince who ruled over Portugal; he might deserve all that had been said about him; but it deserved more than all the exaggerations even of his enemies, this was nothing to the purpose. What the government of this country had to consider, was merely the probable stability of his throne, leaving all the rest to the Portuguese people themselves.

except by piracies, and they might expect a succession of these piratical enterprises. There were many other subjects connected with the foreign relations of the country which deserved attention. But he confined himself to the King's Speech, and would advert to the other subjects on a future occasion. He begged, in conclusion, to ask the Noble Earl the question, what steps had been taken to obtain justice for the outrages and insulting measures he had just described.

Earl Grey, though their lordships would have been much better employed on the first night of the session if, instead of discussing illustrations, and broken windows and toasts after dinner, and the like, they had been led by the noble Earl to the discussion of the foreign policy of the country with respect to which the noble Lord entertaining the opinions he now proffered might have been expected to move an amendment to the Address. He deprecated premature discussion at this period of excitement when the fate of foreign governments might depend upon their forbearance. Upon these grounds he claimed the confidence of the House and of an indulgent country, or if that confidence could not be granted, he called upon the noble Earl to move at once for an address to his Majesty to remove his present ministers from his councils. He had no objection to the compliment paid to the services of the noble Duke. But if the noble Earl meant to commend the settlement of Europe, in which the noble Duke and the noble Earl had a large share, he would appeal to the present state of Europe as the best commentary on the merits of that settlement. If the Belgians had established a republic, it would have been right to interfere, according to the noble Earl. To any interference on such grounds he could never have agreed. The right of the people of Belgium to elect their own sovereign was indisputable; but it was subject to the limitation, that it should be so exercised as not to endanger the peace and welfare of neighbouring nations. As to the election of an illustrious personage, when he recollected his moderation and wisdom, he thought it would conduce to his honor and the advantage of his subjects.—This event should it take place, would not have been brought about by British influence, and he believed it would be soon seen after his royal highness ascended the throne, that he was not British, not French, but solely and entirely Belgian.—With respect to the heavy charge relating to Portugal, he thought he recollected dispatches written by the noble Earl himself, in which the insults and injuries committed by the government of that country on British subjects were strongly complained of.—Then with respect to the re-establishment of the relations with Portugal. He came into office, it would be recollected, with a recent speech from the throne before him, in which it was said that his Majesty had not been able to renew his relation with Portugal. He understood that the question of amnesty was that which then caused the delay, and that cause had not been removed. He believed the noble Earl would not sanction the mode in which the ruler of Portugal had come to the throne. Then, instead of granting the amnesty which had been promised, he continued to practice excessive severities. The state of Liabon, was dreadful, the prisons were crowded with victims of every description, and there was such a system of police as he believed had never been seen in the world before. Then with respect to the quarrel between France and Portugal. He admitted the existence of treaties with the state of Portugal, which the cessation of our diplomatic relations with that country had not annulled. But as the noble Earl admitted we were not bound to protect Portugal against the effects of her own denial of justice, did the Portuguese government offer to the French consul any explanation or any palliation of its conduct? So far from this, it refused to communicate with the French consul.—Then what did France do? She proceeded to demand redress just as we demanded it. Was it then for us to say, we debar you of the rights which we have just exercised ourselves? As to the question of the noble Earl, whether Portugal and France were in a state of war?—It was a delicate question for him to attempt to answer. Every hostile armament did not necessarily produce war. What they had done in the way of mediation or advice, it was not at present consistent with his duty to explain. All he could say was, that his Majesty's Government had not been indifferent to the state of affairs between France and Portugal. He believed the only remaining hope to which the noble Earl had adverted was that of the conduct of the Terceira Government. As to the facts stated by the noble Earl, the piratical war, the pressing of British vessels, and the massacre, were news to him. He now heard of them for the first time. But since the noble lord alluded to the subject, he had sent to the Foreign office for information, and he found that complaint had been made by the owners of one vessel that many of the facts were denied by the agents of the Regency, and that the whole case was now undergoing an investigation. He believed, he had now replied to the various topics of the noble Earl's speech, and it would be unnecessary for him to trespass further upon the attention of their Lordships.—The British Government was sincerely anxious for the preservation of the peace of Europe and their efforts in pursuance of this object were shared with equal zeal and sincerity by the present government of France.

The Duke of Wellington said, the noble earl spoke of the difficulties under which the present ministers entered upon the government of the country. He was far from any wish to diminish these difficulties, but they were not attributable to him, or to the late servants of the crown. They grew out of events of July, August, and September last, in Paris, and from subsequent events in Brussels, which no human foresight could anticipate. Of the former government of his Majesty, it could not be said that they applauded these events. (Hear, hear.) They early foresaw the mischief that would arise from them. They then laid down and proceeded to act upon that plan which was since pursued by the present ministers. It was impossible to advert to present transactions without considering what had been previously the policy of this country. That policy had been to keep Belgium out of the hands of France. This was the principle acted upon for 150 years, and no one advocated it more strongly than the noble earl (Grey) himself. It was one great object of the treaties entered into, in 1814, and the result was that it had given peace to Europe up to the present time, a long period of tranquility than Europe had enjoyed for many years. Unfortunately after the occurrence of these events, and the government things could not be restored, and the government of this country, in conjunction with the allies, was called upon to set matters right again as regarded Belgium. An armistice was proposed between Holland and Belgium. That armistice was agreed upon, and was the affair stood when the late ministers left office. The difficulty to which the present ministers suc-