

REFORM OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

From Bell's Messenger.

We touched shortly upon this subject in our last, but our attention has again been called to it by seeing Mr. O'Connell's motion which stands for the 6th of next month, and which he has the audacity to call "a bill to reform the House of Lords by extending the principle of legislation in the peerage, and altering the quality of the electors, and the mode of election."

Before we consider the bearing of this bill which would effectually change the constitution, and reduce it from a monarchy to a republic, we will venture to make some remarks on the eminent utility of the peerage in a balanced government like that of the British constitution.

The proper use and design of the House of Lords are the following:—First, to fortify the power and to secure the stability of a regal government, by an order of men ecclesiastical and civil, naturally allied to the interest of church and state, and to the permanent institutions of the country. Secondly, to enable the King, by his right of bestowing the peerage, to reward the most eminent servants of the public in a manner most grateful to them, and without expense to the nation; and thirdly, to answer a purpose, which is of still superior importance to the other two, and is mainly conducive to the harmony and quiet operation of a government like our own,—we mean, to stem the progress of popular fury, and to give time for due reflection and sobriety in any agitation of the public mind. Large bodies of men are subject to sudden phrensies; and a House of Commons is as liable to these humours as any other assemblies, particularly in a certain state of public opinion, and when pushed on by factious combinations. Opinions are sometimes circulated amongst a multitude without proof or examination, acquiring confidence and reputation merely by being repeated from one to another; and passions founded upon these opinions, diffusing themselves with a rapidity which can neither be accounted for nor resisted, may agitate a country with the most violent commotions. Now, the only way to stop fermentation is to divide the mass, that is, to erect different orders in the community, with separate prejudices and interests. And this may occasionally become the use of an hereditary nobility, invested with a share of legislation. Averse to those prejudices which actuate the minds of the vulgar,—accustomed to condemn the clamour of the populace,—disdaining to have laws and opinions forced upon them by their inferiors in rank, they will oppose resolutions which are founded in the folly and violence of the lower part of the community. Were the voice of the people always dictated by reflection, and the House of Commons the true representative of all the wants and interests of the people; did every man, or even one man in a hundred, think for himself, or actually consider the measure he was about to approve or censure; or even were the common people tolerably steady in the judgment which they formed, we should hold the interference of a superior order, such as the House of Lords, not only superfluous, but wrong; for when every thing is allowed to difference of rank and education which the actual state of these advantages deserves, that conclusion, after all, is most likely to be right and expedient, which appears to be so to the separate judgment and decision of a great majority of the nation; at least, that in general, is right for them, which is agreeable to their fixed opinions and desires. But when we observe what is urged as the public opinion, to be, in truth, the opinion only, or perhaps the feigned professions, of a few crafty leaders; that the numbers, who join in the cry, serve only to swell and multiply the sound, without any accession of judgment, or exercise of understanding; and that oftentimes the wisest counsels have been thus overborne by tumult and uproar;—we may conceive occasions to arise, in which the commonwealth may be saved by the reluctance of the nobility, to adopt the caprices, or to yield to the vehemence of the common people. We think this occasion has at present arisen in the case of the Irish Municipal Bill, and has repeatedly arisen since the passing of the Reform Act. The Lords, by the constitution, are just as much independent of the Commons as the Commons are of the Lords; they exist as a check to the Commons as much as the Crown exists as a check to both, and on their wisdom, and a due and resolute maintenance of their proper functions, the people look for the security of their liberties, their rights, and properties, equally as upon the other two branches of government. We are quite sure, therefore, that the heart of the public is too sound and uncorrupted to tolerate any measure which shall either limit, or in any degree materially extinguish, the independent privileges of the Lords: they are safe in the confidence and affection of an immense majority of the people.

The House of Lords has always been favourable to the liberties of the subject. We owe to the barons Magna Charta, and thereby the effectual reduction of the power of the crown long before the Commons existed as an influential part of the state. If they fell with the crown in the rebellion in the reign of Charles I. they were mainly the means of resuscitating it in the hands of his successor. In the reign of James II. when the Commons were at once malcontent and timid, the Lords invited over the Prince of Orange, crowded to the Protestant standard and finally established the glorious work of the revolution. In reading the late histories of James the Second, particularly that of Sir James Mackintosh, we find that the City of London would have entered into a compromise with James whilst the Prince of Orange was at Whitehall, had it not been for the firmness of the Lords. Again, by the vigour of Lord Somers, and the peers of those days, the Act of Settlement was passed with so many liberal concessions to

the Dissenters and the popular cause, and by their aid the throne of the realm was effectually secured to the House of Hanover.

With so many titles and claims upon popular affection, we should deem it the greatest national calamity to see any attempt made to impair the constitutional efficiency of this branch of the Legislature. But how is it that Mr. O'Connell proposes to deal out his measure? Are the peers to elect themselves, as the Irish and Scotch peers are at present elected out of the body of their own peerage? This would not answer the purpose of the agitators, as it would tend to expel all the Whig peers, and retain the Tories only; or, secondly, is the House of Peers to be remodelled after the example of the old republics. If so, the people would get no advantage by the change—for in the Roman republic the senate was not filled by popular election, but, with some exceptions as to persons holding offices, the senatorial rank was hereditary in families. Thirdly, or rather are we to follow the example of the French house of peers? If so, little would be gained—the only difference between the French and English peers being, that in England the peerage is hereditary, whilst in France the majority of peers are for life only. One other only mode remains, namely, to adopt the example of the United States of America, and to elect a senate by a popular nomination. This would be at once to establish a republic both in spirit and name, and to supplant our present constitution by a democracy; the king in such a case being a president only, bearing indeed a royal designation, but totally without any such intrinsic and independent power as would enable him to exercise the functions of monarchy, and to protect himself and his remaining prerogatives against turbulence and caprice.

Nothing indeed can be more manifest than that wherever the people chooses their governors altogether the state is then purely democratic—the people themselves have all the power in themselves, and nothing is wanting but some popular commotion to excite, and to enable the mob and its seditious leaders to destroy at once all the weak impediments which a mere nominal monarchy can oppose to them. One by one, every prerogative of the King would be taken from him, and the new nobility, those elected by the people, when they should come to understand that the people were in reality their masters, would assuredly not expose their lives and fortunes, and new dignities, in defence of a King without power, and against a people and their leaders who could send them at will to the gibbet and the scaffold.

The three main functions of royalty, in all the European monarchies, are, that the King is the commander-in-chief of all the national forces, that he has a right of declaring war and peace, and that he is the fountain of all honour and personal distinction. Now, supposing him to be deprived of the last prerogative, how long would he be enabled to retain the two former? That is to say, when deprived of all independent power and splendour, how long would his own single strength and resources enable him to retain the above prerogatives against the agitation and humours of the populace in times like the present?

We do not intend to say, that in some state of things, and for a people very differently situated and characterised from what are the circumstances and condition, character and feelings, of English society, a republican government, with monarchical forms, might not possibly be the best mode of rule; in other words, that the American system might not be possibly practicable. But we do mean to say, that we have no right even to entertain this question under the actual circumstance of our possessing another form of government and constitution, and there being no shadow of a complaint that this government and constitution, have passed into anything like a cruel and intolerable despotism. But it would be an unnecessary discussion of first principles to argue that no man has a right to attempt a needless change in such things as governments, and for no purpose whatever to incur such horrible evils as must always accompany the dissolution of settled forms. We have too often argued these principles to require us now to return to this part of the subject, and we therefore dismiss it with the words of the old barons in the time of King John, "*Nolumus leges Anglie mutari.*"

We have not, however, a moment's expectation that the proposition of Mr. O'Connell will be supported by any considerable portion of the house of Commons. However this body may be divided into parties, and some of them may be prepared to go great lengths, there is still such a feeling for the interest of property, and such a strong conviction in the minds of all men that it is absurd to put such interests to peril for the sake of merely party purposes, that we entertain very little apprehension of even fifty members being found to support a motion so extravagant as that of making an organic change in the constitution of the House of Lords. Every one, indeed, must see, that the immediate and necessary result of such a change would be that of submitting and subjecting everything to the House of Commons only; there would hereafter be only one power and one body in the state; the government would become a pure democracy; and, though the name and office of King might possibly be tolerated during the lifetime of his present Majesty, it can scarcely be expected that a Radical House of Commons would give a million or two a year, or even one half the money, for the establishment of a future Queen, when they could have a president for a twentieth part of that sum. We conclude, therefore, with this observation,—that if O'Connell's motion be carried, or any thing like it, his present Majesty will be the last of the House of Hanover who will ever reign in this country. Indeed, if one hundred members should be

found to vote for any thing so truly revolutionary, we trust the King would instantly dissolve parliament and appeal to the people.—We will venture to say that such renegades to the constitution would never again be able to force an entrance into the House of Commons.

PORTSMOUTH, June 4.—The Stakesby and Catharine Steward Forbes transports are ordered to bring home the Rifle Brigade from Halifax; and the Maitland, Lieut. Binstead, to carry the Royals from Cork to Quebec, and bring home the 79th Highlanders. In the case of both these regiments how advantageous it would be to the country to allow all such men as desired it to remain in those Colonies; a large portion are married and have families, and they themselves would form the nucleus of a most valuable militia force, continually increased by settlers from other regiments that may be ordered home also; there is no difficulty in finding recruits; in fact, it would be a very improved system of emigration.—*Hampshire Telegraph.*

WEALTH OF MANCHESTER, ENGLAND.—President Humphrey, in one of his letters from England, says:

"Manchester is, next to London, the largest town in England, and is rapidly increasing, both in wealth and population. A distinguished banker in Liverpool assured me, that the clear profits of business in Manchester could not be less than twelve millions sterling (about sixty millions of dollars) per annum. As the town is continually extending, it bids fair in a few years to swallow up all the manufacturing villages in the vicinity. Great fortunes have been made and are making there; and nowhere out of the metropolis is solid capital supposed to be so large, as in Manchester. She is wont to say of her rival sister upon the Mersey, that she is able to buy out the whole town of Liverpool, and keep it on hand."

ARCTIC EXPEDITION.—His Majesty's Ship *Terror*, fitting out at Chatham, will sail in a few days to convey Capt. Back to the Arctic regions, with the view of ascertaining correctly the geography of those parts of North Eastern America, over which the mist of obscurity still hangs so heavy, and to which his own late discoveries and the voyage of Sir J. Ross have given an additional interest. He takes as his first Lieutenant, Mr. Smyth who last autumn returned from the completion of a journey from Lima to Para, down the Amazon, and who accompanied Capt. Beechey, in the *Blossom*, a few years ago through Behring's Straits in the hope of meeting Capt. Sir J. Franklin. The Ship will make for Wager Bay, where she will be laid up, and parties will proceed westward across the neck of land which is supposed to separate that inlet from the Polar Sea, or Gulf of Boothat, as Sir J. Ross calls it; for the navigation and exploration of which, they will carry with them light Boats already built for that purpose. Capt. Back and his gallant companions are expected to return within two years.—*London Herald.*

PARIS, June 11.—A correspondent of the Messenger affirms, that on Saturday last, M. Dedel, the Dutch Ambassador at the court of St. James, made, on behalf of the eldest son of the Prince of Orange, a formal application for the hand of the Princess Victoria. Although the King and Queen were personally in favor of the young candidate, the Privy Council determined on leaving to the Princess the choice of her husband; and communicated the result of their deliberation to the Duchess of Kent. Her royal highness replied, that her daughter had already decided for the eldest son of the Duke of Saxe Coburg. As soon as the answer of the Duchess of Kent was received, couriers were despatched to different parts of the continent; and the formalities which precede the nuptials of royal Princesses are already in progress. The court of the Tuileries has, it is said, invited the Duke of Saxe Coburg to pass some time with the royal family at Fontainebleau.

It is positively announced that Lord Granville yesterday communicated to the President of the Council, the resolution taken by the English Cabinet, to occupy all the accessible points on the coast of Biscay. We also learn that the English fleet off Portsmouth is destined for the coast of Spain. On Thursday the King admitted to a private audience Capt. Cazy, of the Duguesne. It is affirmed at the Hotel of the Marine, that he is charged with a mission to the Bey of Tunis, whom government has at length resolved to protect against the intrigues of the Russians and Turks.—The presence of a superior French officer at Tunis, will afford moral assistance that will no doubt be understood by the Sublime Porte, and it is not likely that the Ottoman government will expose its fleet a second time to the chances of an unequal engagement with the French squadron. Capt. Cazy is on the point of setting sail.—*Messenger.*

The relations of France with Turkey are in danger of being disturbed by the conduct of the Porte towards the Pacha of Tripoli—now in close alliance with the French Government. The President of the Council has instructed Admiral Roussin to inform the Porte that France can and will defend her ally the Pacha, even though in so doing she should be driven to re-enact the scene of Navarino. This energetic language will be understood by the Sultan. A letter from Toulon says: "We are assured that the great armaments preparing here are not for the Levant, but for Spain. What gives credit to these reports is the order to Admiral Hugon not to quit these coasts. This squadron is to cruise between Toulon and the Gulf of Mataro, and troops will always be ready to be embarked on board our ships and be carried wherever they may be wanted."

DESTRUCTION OF CHARTRES CATHEDRAL.—We have received the following particulars relative to the destructive fire that has ravaged the beautiful cathedral of Chartres:—the fire which is attributed to the negligence of two plumbers, who mutually accuse each other, began at half past six on Saturday evening, in the timber walk at the junction of one of the arms of the cross, formed by the sides of the nave. The torsion was immediately sounded, and in an instant the whole population was on foot. An effort was made to bring the engines to bear, but it was useless, as the roof was covered with lead. The flames spread with such rapidity, that it was found necessary to renounce the occupation of the outer gallery on the top of the nave. M. Gabriel Delessart, Prefect of the Eure et Loir, exposed himself to great danger; he refused to quit the gallery till he was absolutely dragged from it, and the struggle between him and those who feared for his life, took place upon the burning roof, with the boiling lead pouring round. Soon after the entire timber work was on fire. The flames reached the magnificent steeple on the right, and notwithstanding the powerful play of the engines which were now brought to act, it was expected that the whole cathedral would fall a sacrifice. All the valuable property that was transportable was removed from the interior of the church, and measures were taken to preserve the houses which surround the edifice. The flames communicated to the side aisles. The interior of the choir and the nave were filled with burning timbers, which as well as molten lead, passed through holes in the vaulted ceiling. At length the flames which had spared the old steeple, reached it, and spread general alarm, as it was not believed to be solid. The hospital which adjoined the cathedral, was evacuated. It is wonderful how the town escaped from the shower of fire which was driven upon it by the wind. One building did catch, but was almost immediately extinguished. At three o'clock on Sunday morning, no part of the cathedral remained in flames but the wood work of the old steeple. It fell upon a ceiling below it, which gave way, but a lower ceiling stopped the burning timbers. The nave is preserved in all its grandeur, nor have the fine painted windows suffered.

UNITED STATES.

FIRES IN NEW YORK.—About half past nine o'clock on Wednesday night there was an alarm of fire, which was ascertained to proceed from the burning of some shavings, placed under benches in the basement story of the Methodist meeting house, in John-street. From the appearance of the premises it was obvious that fire had been communicated designedly. A fireman belonging to No. 1, caught an individual on the premises just after the alarm was given, who was on his knees upon one of the benches in the room saying his prayers.—Upon his examination at the watch house, he gave his name as John P. Kelley, and stated he was a Printer, just arrived from Philadelphia. A number of Catholic tracts were found upon him, also a mahogany crucifix. He gave no explanation relative to his being there at so unseasonable an hour.

In less than half an hour after the above occurrence, the five story brick building, No. 38 Gold street, occupied by George Dearborn publisher, Pell & Co., type foundry, Scatchard & Adams, printers, and the office of the American Monthly Magazine, was discovered to be on fire in the basement, and a brick workshop situated in the rear, was at the same moment on fire in several places. In a very short time the building with its contents were reduced to a heap of ruins. The Baptist Church on the opposite side, was on fire in different places from the great heat, but owing to the activity of the firemen, and

a judicious direction of the chief engineer, the building was saved from destruction. This is the second time this venerable structure has been threatened with and rescued from the ravages of fire, and the third time that Mr. Dearborn has been burned out. There is not the least doubt that the premises were set on fire.—Loss estimated at \$75,000—half insured.

At half-past 11 o'clock, and while the fire in Gold street was raging, the torsion of the Hall was again sounded for a fire in the first district. As many of the machines as could be spared, were immediately dispatched to the fresh scene of conflagration. This fire broke out in a Carpenter's shop at No. 92 Franklin-street, in the midst of a number of frame buildings, mostly occupied by poor families. The flames spread with rapidity, and before the engines had time to get to work upon them, 8 or 10 buildings, front and rear, were destroyed; it was finally arrested, after having destroyed or greatly injured the following: Nos. 88, 90, 92, 94 Franklin street, the grocery store of D. E. Ruckel, on the corner of Greenwich and Franklin, 367 and 369 Greenwich, the former occupied by John Beam, collector, and the latter by W. Newkirk as a shoe store; the last named but slightly injured in one of the gables. Also several buildings in the rear of the above.—*N. Y. Journal of Commerce.*

The Printing Establishment of the American Bible Society, in New York, was burnt yesterday morning it was occupied by Daniel Fanshaw, whose loss is estimated at from \$15,000 to \$20,000. \$5000 only insured.—The Bible Society owned the building, on which they had \$3000 insurance, and an equal amount on their property within it. In both cases the insurance will cover their loss.—Mr. Fanshaw lost 19 power presses, and a steam engine and apparatus for driving them.—*Boston Evening Transcript, Thursday, July 21.*

Steamboat Burnt and loss of Lives.—The steamboat Union Candienne, which runs between Montreal and Chamby Basin, was destroyed by fire on the 9th inst. at 11 o'clock at night, near the latter place, and several lives lost; a Mrs. Homes, of Sorrel, in the consternation of the moment threw herself from the cabin with her child in her arms, and both were drowned, and the steward was burnt to death in the vessel. The fire is supposed to have been produced from a candle, left burning in the ladies cabin.

The steamer British America, a few days previous, came near sharing the same fate, near the wharf at Sorrel, having taken fire near the boiler, and the flames had got such an ascendancy ere they could be extinguished, that her paddle boxes were nearly destroyed. She had upwards of 200 passengers on board; had the fire occurred at night, in the confusion of the moment, no doubt many lives would have been lost through fear or otherwise.—*New York Mercantile Advertiser, July 18.*

TWO OCEANS WITHIN FOURTEEN HOURS SAIL.—The Atlantic and the Pacific are likely to be united by Yankee enterprise. The Congress of New Grenada has granted to Mr. Charles Biddle and others, the exclusive privilege for 50 years under the name of Transportation Company of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, of navigating the river Chagres with steam. A further exclusive privilege for the same period is granted Mr. Biddle, for the transportation of goods and passengers, by railway, or Macadamized road from the head of navigation of the Chagres to the city of Panama, reserving to the public a transportation road for horses and mules.

Extensive concessions of land are made to Mr. Biddle in the same decree, in which colonies of natives and foreigners may be settled, and be exempted from certain contributions for twenty years.

One of the last provisions of the decree, ordains that if two steamboats at least are not kept in operation, and that the communications are not kept constantly in such a state (excepting accidents,) as to admit of the transportation between the Atlantic and Pacific being effected in fourteen hours, the exclusive privilege is to be forfeited.—*N. Y. Daily Advertiser.*

Commander Henry Dundas Trotter, of H. M. S. Curlew, who received the thanks of the President of the United States, for the protection uniformly extended by him to American commerce on the coast of Africa, has been, it is stated, in consequence thereof, promoted by the Board of Admiralty to the rank of Post Captain. Such interchanges of nation courtesy, slight as they appear, tend to strengthen yet further those ties of amity and good feeling between America and Great Britain, which it appears to be the anxious wish of both Governments to foster and preserve.—*Old Countryman.*

Death of Bishop White.—We have this morning the painful duty to announce to our readers, the death of the venerable William White, D. D. Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, and Senior of that Church in the United States, and at his death, believed to be the oldest Protestant Bishop in the world. Bishop White was born [we believe] in Maryland, on 4th of April, 1754, so that he is more than 88 years of age.—*N. Y. Paper.*

105 BARRELS Superfine, &c. Middlings and Rye Flour, and Indian Meal, low for Cash. M. MACKINTOSH. Queen Street, Fredericton, July 5, 1836.