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MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

THE detail of important events, of battles imperfectly known, and of a convention, without parallel, of dreadful preparation for the sanguinary scenes of war, of the convulsions of despotism, but little of the calm progress of human happiness, now requires our attention, and the patience of our readers. We again trouble them to bear in mind, that we write for public good, and will not shrink, in that sacred cause, from the fidelity and boldness befitting it. The situation of the English and French armies in Portugal, in the early part of last August, we noticed to be highly interesting. The reputation of the French Commander, and the ardour and discipline of his troops, promised enterprize and decision. The English army, commanded by an officer of high military name, and themselves eager to cope with the conquerors of the Continent, were determined to secure the first grand advantage on the Continent which opportunity presented to them. Junot marched from Lisbon to meet them, and, in the presumptuous confidence of victory, bade his men drive the English into the sea.

A trifling affair near Brilos, which ended by General Spencer, with his usual prudence, extricating the English riflemen, who had advanced too far, was the prelude to Sir Arthur Wel-

lesley's attack on the 17th of August. The enemy occupied a strong position, with about 6000 men. Great gallantry was shown on both sides, and the French appear to have manifested singular military skill in manœuvring, as well as impetuosity in attack. The British army, of which only a part was engaged, prevailed, but the French succeeded in effecting their retreat in good order. The want of cavalry is noticed by Sir Arthur Wellesley as the principal cause of the enemy having escaped so well. On the morning of the 21st, the French General attacked the English at Vimiera. His object was to anticipate the reinforcements from England, and by something very decisive, to enable himself to turn his arms towards Spain. The attack by the French army was made in two places, nearly at the same time. A desperate contest ensued. The Duke d'Abrantes commanded in person, and was somewhat superior in cavalry and artillery. The fate of Portugal, of Spain, hung upon the day. The British and French found themselves opposed, for the first time after a long interval, on the Continent. The former were finally successful, taking thirteen pieces of cannon, and much ammunition. A French General Officer was taken prisoner, and another was found dead on

the field of battle. "A great many officers and soldiers were killed, wounded, and taken." The total loss of the British in the two actions is stated at above 1200. Colonel Lake, Colonel Stuart, a Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor, and a considerable number of Officers were killed. The loss of the enemy, which must have been very great, has not been ascertained. On the 21st, Gen. Burrard landed, but did not take the command. On the 22d, Sir H. Dalrymple also landed, and assumed the command. The sequel proves, that Junot must have made a masterly retreat, and so secured himself, as to command, and even exact honourable and advantageous terms. The memorable Convention of Lisbon was signed and ratified on the 30th of August. The terms of it were, the evacuation of Portugal by the French, and their prompt transportation to France, without any restriction whatever, as to person or property: Indemnity to all persons in Portugal for their political conduct: Artillery and horses, belonging to the French, to be secured conveyance: Hostages to be given on both sides, and the Citadel of Lisbon, and some forts, to be held by the French until the period of their embarkation. By a separate agreement, the Russian ships were surrendered to the British Admiral: The ships to be held as a deposit till six months after peace between Russia and England: the officers and men to be sent to Russia without conditions. The Duke d'Abrantes seems to have yielded to superior force, but to have availed himself of his means of retreat, and defence, with a sagacity and skill, which has confounded the sanguine and often unthinking class of speculators, who, remote from scenes of warfare, decide upon uncertainties, and convert expectation into fact. Still, although the full fruits of victory have not been reaped on this occasion, it is unreasonable, and even ungenerous, to pass over the solid advantages resulting from the success of the British arms in Portugal. That country is relieved from French armies, her ports are opened, and the army now there may act in Spain.

A most remarkable check has been given to the French arms. The army of Junot, though not conquered, has

been defeated, and is removed from the Spanish peninsula. Europe will perceive, that Bonaparte's arms are not irresistible, and the reputation of British valour must rise very highly, upon the whole. It is observable, that the conduct of the Portuguese troops, which were joined to those of the English, is not at all noticed by the Commander in Chief.

PORTUGAL.

Portugal, by this extraordinary turn of affairs finds herself freed from French Dominion, and at the same time deserted by her old government. The two events have succeeded without a long interval; in either case the people can feel but a change of evils, unless the Portuguese Government, ameliorated by its trans-Atlantic voyage, and softened by adversity, whose "uses are sweet," adopts better principles, and nobler conduct than hitherto. It is difficult to restrain apprehension, when we revert to the Declaration of the same Government, issued from the Brazils. We there observe the expression, that the court of Lisbon "saw with regret" the commencement of the French Revolution. If that government retains regret at the recollection of a nation attempting to better its government, what can be expected from itself, when restored? It is to be feared, little improvement, little benevolence towards its subjects, and still less in its relations with the commonwealth of nations. There cannot therefore be much permanence in the re-establishment of the House of Braganza. That, in such times, can only be founded on the affections of subjects, the possession of which gives to governments a consciousness of internal strength, and ensures them external respect and security. Portugal has been, and probably will be to England an expensive, because a weak ally. Commercial advantages are often thought valuable, but were it known how much the support of a feeble power costs, even the trading part of the English nation, would think that the balance was unfavourable.

The restoration of the Prince Regent, in truth, presents nothing very consoling. At one time the obsequious ally of France, and joining with her in the

“Cause of the Continent;” again, a fugitive abandoning his country to her mercy, rather than die in its defence; transported by the English, without having communicated his plans till the moment he wanted to make use of them; disingenuous and timid, rendered effeminate by the habits of royalty, and formed indecisive by nature, his departure was viewed without sorrow, as his return will be contemplated without joy.

SPAIN.

The affairs of Spain, bear a progressive favourable aspect. Yet we are sorry to observe any thing of chicanery arising in the conduct of the Spanish Generals. The capitulation with General Dupont has been attempted to be evaded by Morla at Cadiz. “The terms were impossible, therefore we are to treat you accordingly,” is the point of his reply to the indignant appeal of the French Commander; but wherefore promise conditions which the Spaniards alone could know to be impracticable? The French having surrendered, were entitled to the equivalent stipulated, and the Spanish governor of Cadiz, instead of such unworthy evasion, should have insisted, at the risk of a general rupture, that the English should not molest but assist the vanquished army.

Joseph Bonaparte, far from quitting Spain, is with his army, and appears not disposed to relinquish his prize, without a vigorous attempt to hold it. He is stated to be at Miranda, forty-five miles distant from Burgos. In the mean time the Spanish Patriots are not accomplishing any thing grand, and the warfare carried on, savours too much of an ill-concerted rebellion, to give sanguine hope of ultimate and solid success. The Junta of Valentia, published in July an important paper, which, while it shows apprehension of want of union, and of the energy of one executive, breathes a rational and most honourable spirit of liberty. This excellent paper, equally free from declamation or coldness, plainly points to a republican form of government, *ad interim*. It adverts to the partial advantage, but future and lasting evil, of the several provinces acting on the separate authority of each. It proposes that a central Junta should

be established, and seems to hint, that the return of Ferdinand may be very distant.

The Supreme Junta of Seville has lately published a long, and sensible exposition of its opinion on the same subject. It speaks more directly of a republican form of government, *ad interim*, and suggests the appointment of a president for the supreme council of government, to be changed often. If England should be found therefore at last fighting to set up a republic, and France to put it down, the present might be well stiled an astonishing Era.

To those who analyse the qualities of man, and pronounce what are most effective in him, it would seem that republican energy can alone sustain Spain against the formidable power of the French Emperor. Without the greatest purity of intention, and the noblest motives, divisions will arise, little passions intermingle, weakness, and finally slavery will take place.

Solemn obsequies have been performed to the memory of those who were slain on the 2nd of May, at Madrid. On a superb Cenotaph were inscribed these words; “To the unfortunate Spaniards, assassinated on the 2nd of May, by French perfidy, their free and triumphant country consecrates this deserved memorial.”

This proceeding having similarity to the times of the French revolution, may shock those who abhor changes, though for the better; but the friends of humanity will sigh over the inscription, and pray that Spain thus described may rise from the midst of the dangers besetting her.

The state of Spain at present is very problematical. The provinces must yield their power into a few hands, and that very speedily; the fortified places be conquered; the French be appalled by some grand national effort, and a victory obtained, however dearly bought, or it is to be feared that the enthusiasm of the day may cool, and exertion flag. The assembling the Cortes would be very insufficient of itself, for the purpose of regenerating Spain. A vigorous, wise and honest executive, is what she most pressingly wants; with that, and a people ready to sacrifice every thing in the glorious cause of freeing

their country from an external, and unnatural yoke, she may defy the armies of a despot, or if she should fall, will drag her tyrant to the earth along with her.

TURKEY.

That government is insecure in proportion to its despotism, is an axiom that has been often illustrated by facts; and seldom more strikingly, than by recent changes at Constantinople. The Sultan Mustapha on the 27th of July, felt firm on his throne, perfectly unconscious of danger: the 28th saw him deposed, his predecessor murdered, and a young prince proclaimed. This tragic scene was occasioned by the revival of the plan to "introduce better discipline in the army, and with it to restore Selim, who had been precipitated from the throne on the 28th of May, 1807. Mustapha Bairactar, Pacha Rudschuck, with the design of following the enlightened views of the Sultan Selim, having gained several of the reigning Sultan's ministers, among whom was the Grand Vizier," came to Constantinople, with a corps of trusty troops, caused the Commandant of the Castles of the Dardanelles, the author of the former revolution, to be beheaded, the Mufti and all the new Ministers of the Sultan to be deposed, the Aga of the Janissaries to be strangled, and the most important posts of Constantinople to be occupied by his troops. The Grand Vizier, the new Mufti, and several other members of the Divan, declared themselves the partizans of Mustapha Bairactar. The Sultan had no suspicion of his project; on the contrary, he thought himself so secure, that, on the 8th instant, he repaired in the morning to Bisutach. But the Sultan Mother having got information of it on the 28th, Mustapha IV. returned with all expedition by sea to the Seraglio, whilst the Pacha of Rudschuck was entering it by land. The Pacha caused the new Mufti to inform him, that Selim only was lawful Emperor. Mustapha, far from following the example given on the 28th of May, by his uncle Selim, who voluntarily descended from the throne, ordered the inner gates of the Seraglio to be shut. The soldiers of the Pacha, however, speedily effected an entrance, but they found the unfortunate Selim dead, and

covered with blood. Seized with horror at this spectacle, Mustapha Bairactar, and the Grandees of the Porte, caused Prince Mahomet, the last branch of the reigning dynasty, to be immediately proclaimed Emperor. This Prince, who is about fifteen years of age, has, for the last fifteen months, been confined with the Sultan Selim, who, during that space, instructed him in the art of government.

On the 29th, the unfortunate Selim was buried at Your, by the side of his father. The Pacha of Rudschuck, the whole of his army, and all the respectable inhabitants of this capital, attended the funeral. During these melancholy occurrences, the public tranquillity was not in the slightest degree interrupted. The greater part of the assassins of Selim have been executed. We know not whether the deposed Sultan is still living. Some people assert, that he has been strangled. Mustapha Bairactar has taken possession of the Grand Seal. The Grand Vizier is a prisoner in his camp, for having revealed to the Sultan Mother, the plan of replacing Selim on the throne. There is no doubt that the Pacha of Rudschuck will soon be appointed Grand Vizier.

Eleven of the principal partizans of the Sultan Mustapha were this day strangled in the Seraglio. The Kaislar-Aga (chief of the eunuchs) who assisted in the murder of Selim, was executed on the 29th. Such are the shocking occurrences, which a bad system of government so often occasions.

Selim, the deposed Sultan, who has fallen a sacrifice to the design of restoring him, was an excellent and mild prince. His object had been to place his army in a state similar to that of other powers on the continent; by introducing European discipline and tactics. In the perilous situation of his country, threatened by England and Russia, on one side, and by the encroaching power of France on the other, neutrality, and time to put himself in a respectable state of defence, were his objects. But, in modern days, such conduct is not permitted. Selim was said to be a friend to literature, and of amiable manners. We must be allowed to

deplorable the melancholy end of this unfortunate prince, who died in the secluded chambers of the seraglio, a victim to the revengeful and envious rage of a tyrant.

The ultimate object of Mustapha Bairactar will probably be attained. Mustapha has been overthrown, and the young Sultan will be guided by the Pacha of Rudschuck. The change, on the whole, must be useful to Turkey, it is supposed to be favourable to France. Doubtless the wavering conduct of the Sultan Mustapha, his inclining to negotiate with England, and the intrigues of France, accelerated his fall; but his government, proceeding on the old system, could not long have stood. An enlightened ministry may, by prudent measures, avert the ruin of Turkey, which, by the final turn of the present revolution, now escapes the pressure of French vengeance.

RUSSIA.

Russia continues the same course of politics. The cause of Spain was not likely to excite warm feelings in the power, which, without remorse, had massacred and plundered in Poland, and had so severely oppressed the Turks. A partial action, between the Russian and Swedish and English fleets has taken place in the Baltic, and a Russian ship of war has been run aground and destroyed. The warfare against Sweden languishes, nor can it be supposed that Russia has her views very intently bent on that quarter.

POLAND.

Some tendency to insurrection has been discovered, it is said, in Poland, and the chief person concerned, Dombrowsky, has been ordered to be arrested, by the court of St. Petersburg. Had similar assistance been afforded to this ill-fated country, in its glorious struggle for independence, as Spain has received, many evils would have been prevented in Europe; a barrier in the north would have been preserved, and the true interests of nations would have been held in view. Russia was, in those times, nearly as formidable as France now is. Poland was, as Spain is now, threatened to be oppressed and despoiled; she was even more ungenerously beset, as not one, but three great pow-

ers, conspired against her independence and happiness. The Empress Catharine was a character as despotic, more bloody and more faulty in many respects than the French Emperor. Her seizure of the Chersonese, her conduct to Turkey, her massacres in Poland, and her internal government, and private life have proved this. Poland was, however, suffered to fall. Such deviation from principle in those powers, who by their supineness (and of these, most particularly England) were accessaries to her destruction, led to the fatal engendering and sanctioning a system of *partition*. Hence, it is needless to remark to intelligent men how much disorder has arisen. The futile attempt to dismember France; her gigantic efforts for safety, her transmutation into the Conqueror of Continental Europe, and the present position of things!

ITALY.

The Pope makes remonstrance, and struggles a little against the over-ruling influence which General Miollis exerts at Rome. His resistance can be but feeble, and appears rather unaccountable after the concession he had made, and the submission he had shown. In the posture of affairs in modern Europe, the papal power, as a temporality naturally became diminished. The spiritual sway of the court of Rome, has also suffered abridgment. There is nothing now alarming in its pretensions.

Nor can it be maintained, after the noble efforts of Spaniards, that the Catholic religion is adverse to liberty, or incapable of the most sublime patriotism. The British Commander tells the Portuguese, he is come among other things, to defend "their holy religion," and the contumely and insult exhibited by the French against Catholic places of worship, is held forth, as one of the principal causes for blaming Bonaparte's proceedings in Spain.

Naples remains tranquil, and it is probable that the vigilant and military Sovereign it has received, will not only preserve his throne, but shortly menace Sicily itself. It is unlikely that the restoration of the old government of Naples, is desired there; its vindictive hand stained by former vengeance, would now be still more feared, and consequently resisted. Nor is it an ad-

vantage to Sicily at this moment to possess such a court. Its residence, and interference prevent vigorous plans of defence: a declaration of Sicilian independence and aid of a British force, alone could promise the probability of safety; so many difficulties are in the way of this, however, that such a turn of affairs in Sicily cannot be expected. Another year may decide its fate.

AUSTRIA.

Austria has increased her military establishment, but her finances are too low for war, nor is it certain that she desires it: she has suffered dreadfully, and cannot feel much of sympathy to the Spanish cause. The court of Vienna does not manifest much regard for its own subjects. The Diet of Hungary is postponed and the salutary step of listening to, and redressing the grievances of the Hungarian nation, does not seem about to be taken hastily. General measures of precaution are all which Austria can wisely attempt to employ, and they are the most suitable to the character of her Emperor.

FRANCE.

"I am determined to carry on the war with Spain with the utmost activity, and destroy the armies which England has disembarked in that country. The future security of my subjects, the prosperity of commerce, and a maritime peace, must alike depend on these important operations.

"My alliance with the Emperor of Russia extinguishes every hope which England can entertain from her projects. I have no doubt respecting the peace of the Continent, but I neither will, nor ought to rely upon the false calculations and the errors of other Courts, and since my neighbours increase their armies, it is a duty incumbent on me to increase mine."

These words of the French Emperor, in his message to the Senate, show a determination, unaltered by the events in Spain, to pursue the war there, and they evince confidence that the rest of the Continent will remain at peace. The reports of the Minister for Foreign Affairs develop the plan of Napoleon. He appears to have long meditated the union of Spain and France, by placing one of his own family on the Spanish throne. He professes to follow the steps of Louis XIV. and justifies the measure,

on the ground of the secret hostility of Spain to France, of the danger to the latter from such a state of things, and on the certainty of the perpetual insincerity of the old dynasty. The specious reasons assigned for destroying the independence of Spain are those common to all such despotic acts; the bad administration, the internal distractions, the intrigues of a foreign enemy. "*What policy suggests, justice authorises,*" says this remarkable report. This pernicious position might be stated without abuse of terms more correctly. "What despotism wishes, is right." Thus the habits, prejudices, and honour, in a word, the happiness of a nation, are often destroyed and violated; and this is deemed policy, and odiously affecting benevolence, is called studying the welfare of a people, better than they are competent to themselves. New conscripts are called out. Two hundred thousand men, are destined for Spain, without diminishing the other widely extended armies of France. It is proposed, on the contrary, to add 80,000 men to them. The same report asks Napoleon. "What part will you take? Will you sacrifice the cause of Sovereigns and sanction an outrage committed against the Majesty of the Throne?" Thus making him the avenger of Royalty, and the Protector of Kings!

The second Report of the same Minister declares, "Peace and the liberty of the seas, can only be obtained by conquering Spain, and also the English upon Spanish ground. "It is no small advantage, says this report, the probability of at length meeting the English, of fighting them man to man, of making them also feel the evils of war." There is a secret satisfaction betrayed in those words, which a warlike genius would be very likely to feel, if he had wished to bring powerful means on an enemy, and had been debarred the opportunity of exercising them for a considerable time. Some distrust of Austria is manifested: much satisfaction at the conduct of America. The War Minister, in speaking of the armies in Poland, in Prussia, and in Silesia, in Denmark, in Dalmatia, in Albania, in Italy, Naples, and Spain, says, never were the armies of France "more numerous, better appointed, better kept

up, or better provisioned;" and speaks of a million of armed men ready to protect "the honour and security of France." The renunciation of Charles IV. and of the Prince of Asturias, is now published by Bonaparte, and one cannot but despise persons, who, under any circumstances, could agree to terms so ignominious.

Bonaparte is said to be commencing a journey to Germany. The Confederate Princes of the Rhine have had their complement of force called out, and there is every appearance of a campaign stupendous beyond example as to result, and which may again draw forth, and employ the military genius of France and its Emperor, in a manner which must create anxiety and deliberation in the minds of impartial reasoners: a campaign which, at all events, must cause a deluge of blood, and convey misery into the bosom of many a domestic circle, and, far from home, lay on the earth the hope, and the honour of many a family.

GREAT BRITAIN.

Great Britain is now involved in a Continental war, as a principal party on land, and has boldly committed her fortune with the Spanish war. Opinions in England have always been divided on the policy of her acting thus, but at present there seems an unanimous desire for the experiment of a grand effort on land.

The event is in the hands of an all wise Providence. Doubtless the previous decision on this question, required the most profound views, great knowledge of the Continent, and exact information as to the capabilities of Spain. There was even still, an intuitive feeling wanting, remote from arrogance or envy, undazzled by the blaze of the moment, and chastened by reviewing the combinations of the present, and the possible or probable ones of the future. Whether this existed, many may doubt, and posterity can better examine. The crisis cannot be distant, and the complicated state of Europe, will excite various emotions in our readers in its future development.

IRELAND.

In our first number we promised a fuller discussion of the affairs of Ireland; we trust it will not now be dis-

pleasing to our readers. Many may wish to avoid delicate political subjects but such wish is the symptom of unwise fear, and betrays something of desire to retain what is unjustly held, and cannot bear the honest examination of truth. Ireland though nominally diminished in consequence, has virtually risen in the scale of nations, from the circumstances of Europe. But her strength, though thus intrinsically and relatively increased, is left, comparatively speaking, inert. She is a healthy and vigorous child, whom all the restrictions of bad education have not been able to cramp or degrade, and in the transcendent power of nature, rears her head with a gracefulness and beauty that narrow minds do not understand, which the interested calumniate, but which the humane and wise behold with inward satisfaction. An amalgamating incorporation of two islands may now be considered a demonstrated fallacy. Mutual interest will prove a natural bond in case of proximity. A complete blending of nations so circumstanced, is ideal, as the dream of the alchemist. Ireland, stands neutralized by the impolicy of men, denominated statesmen, who losing the substance have embraced the shadow. A collateral question rising from the compact of union apparently, but antecedent in fact to the contemplation of the measure, has of late years agitated parties in both countries, and sensibly affected the feelings of the population in Ireland. That relief to the Catholics, from the irritating and impolitic restraints, which monopoly in its blindness had created is matter of right, borders on want of humanity to deny. To do evil with a remote probability of expected good, is impious in the extreme. In the vale of life it is cruel to plant adscititious thorns! enough shoot from man's errors. To plant them on system, is treason to social order.

Ireland retains her antient religion, her language, and a distinct character. The laws invented to destroy these, have perpetuated them. Misery has been their offspring, but neither degradation nor assimilation. In the present century, the claims of the Catholics have been put forth with unrivalled eloquence in the English se-

nate, but the coldness of a distant atmosphere has repeatedly blighted the hope of redress. In the last session of the English Parliament, a proposal was conveyed, half by insinuation, and half direct, by two distinguished Irish Members, that the nomination of Catholic Prelates should be vested in his Majesty. The sensation excited by this was very strong in the House of Commons, and in London. The triumph of party was great, and the victorious question, "What can now be objected to the Catholics? (that is, to us) burst from every lip! A little time has dissipated the delusion. The Catholics of Ireland had *not* authorised Mr. Grattan, or Mr. George Ponsonby, to concede the point in question. That certain overtures, without the sanction of the clergy at large, or the bulk of the laity, had been made, by a few individuals, to one or both of these gentlemen, and their party, is not doubted. But they were puny politicians, who caught at such a proposition, without weighing, and probing, and examining whether there was practicability, that is, sufficient authority on the side of it.

In truth the independence of the Catholic Church is a remnant, which Ireland holds as the last stripe of the banner of national honour, and in offering to yield it, to be hung as a tro-

phy in Westminster, it would be a completion of suicide. Besides, when just rights were demanded, the meanness of fresh concession, previous to obtaining them, was flagrant.

The point, as argued in England, was very insignificant; the influence of the Pope, and the authority of his name are very weak, and in that view there was no obstacle in the way of redress. But as the matter was felt in Ireland, it was quite otherwise, and therefore the concession was deemed impolitic, impracticable, and unpatriotic. The Pope was not contemplated as the dictator, but as the venerable arbiter in clerical affairs. The system of the Catholic Church, is, in fact, elective, and the reference to the Pope for approbation is rather deference to the antient head of the Catholic religion, in point of ceremony, than any thing of blind submission to his will. The late resolutions of the Catholic Prelates have probably set the thing to rest. They have decided that the wished concession ought not to be, and cannot be made, and they are entitled to the gratitude of their country. The obvious aim of the party was to make the Catholic question malleable enough to be worked up for narrow purposes. Ireland was forgotten, but she has vindicated herself.

PUBLIC OCCURRENCES.

ULSTER.

Antrim....A melancholy accident happened on the 8th of September last, to J. M'Intyre, an industrious man, of Drumavaddy, parish of Loughgill, in this county, who had gone to the mountain between Clough and Cushendall to take his horse from grass; but, unfortunately, the day being wet and foggy, and night coming on, he missed his way, and perished by the brink of a little rivulet, where he was found eight days after. He has left five children, fatherless.

Shocking relation.....John Wilson, commonly called Whiskey Jack, from his remarkable intemperance, having returned from the funeral of his father, on Fri-

day the 23d of September, was that night murdered in his own house. He and his unmarried brother and sister had rendered themselves notorious in the neighbourhood of Antrim, by their contentions and quarrels about a small farm, the property of their father, to the great affliction of their parent, and the annoyance of the neighbourhood. The deceased has left a wife and six helpless children to lament his unhappy fate.

Died.....Near Glenavy, Mr. Nicholas Oakman, aged 77 years....Mr. Robert Cinnamond of Magheragill....At Snugville near Belfast, Mrs. Catharine M'Clathry aged 85 years.

Married....Mr. W. Hawkins, to Miss