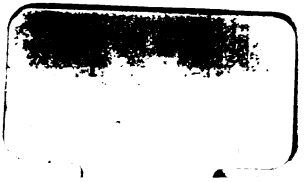

LETTERS ON ENGLAND.

LETTERS ON ENGLAND,

BY

LOUIS BLANC.

SECOND SERIES.

TRANSLATED BY

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SECOND SERIES.

LETTERS ON ENGLAND.

LETTER CLXXXVI.

WHAT PEOPLE THINK IN ENGLAND OF THE CONGRESS OF GERMAN SOVEREIGNS AT FRANKFORT.

August 24th, 1863.

THE Congress of German Sovereigns assembled at Frankfort does not at all go down with the English. And the reason is that the fruits are far, very far, from responding to the hopes that had been entertained.

When it was first of all known here that the work of German unification was at last about to be taken in hand in good earnest, great was the joy. The sentiment which moved the English to follow with their good wishes the unity of Germany was precisely the same as that which had endeared to them the unity of Italy. France held in on the east and towards the south by powerful neighbours! There is not a heart in England that is not quickened by such a prospect.

Is there any occasion for me to say why? Suppose that at the epoch when revolutionary France had all Europe on her arms, Italy on the one side and Germany on the other had been what it is now proposed to make them, would revolutionary France, with all the prodigies of her sublime wrath, have shivered the coalition to fragments and driven Pitt to despair?

It is fair to doubt it, and the English do doubt it.

The continental power of France being the subject of their eternal disquietude, whatever can serve as a counterpoise to her weight in peaceful times, or as a barrier against her in stormy days, cheers and fascinates them.

Besides, it is not alone the power of France that alarms them. They are less anxious about her actual power, than about her

restless genius, her military ambition, her adoration of the glory of arms, her tendency and her aptitude to enlarge her borders. They have as much fear of her great qualities as of her defects.

From Germany, on the contrary, what have they to apprehend? What matters to them the immense increase of strength which Germany would derive from her unity?

It is true that the German character is not so moderate in its pretensions as some persons imagine. Austria possessed herself of Hungary, she coveted, or at least accepted, her share of Poland, she holds Venice and holds it tightly, only yesterday Italy trembled with horror beneath her yoke. Prussia, too, not content with having Posen, now disputes Schleswig with Denmark.

But in all that there is nothing to alarm England, and accordingly she has not taken alarm. To get at her, Germany, has something more than a narrow arm of the sea to cross. Germany has no army—she is not at all in the way of the English. The two Powers which are really in her way are Russia and France; and it is precisely against Russia and France that the unity of Germany would serve as a guarantee to England.

Accordingly, from the very first she welcomed with lively satisfaction the news of the bold and startling initiative taken by the Emperor of Austria. That was the first impression. Afterwards came doubts and fears. Was there any chance of success for such an enterprise? Would the different princes who have been accustomed for so many years to take such huge bites out of the Confederation cake, consent to sacrifice their portion of sovereignty on the altar of their common Fatherland? If they meant still to keep that, what could be done? Then how was the rivalry of Austria and Prussia to be reconciled to the unity of the German Fatherland? Can a body with two heads enjoy a healthy existence? Is that which is impossible in natural history, possible in political history?

These apprehensions augmented twofold when it became known that the King of Prussia was missing at the great rendezvous at Frankfort.

Still, one hope remained for those who sighed for a happy issue. It was affirmed that, in passing through the kingdom of Wurtemburg, the Emperor of Austria had said to the authorities at Stuttgardt: "I am going to fulfil the wishes of *the German people.*"

Decisive words, if they had really the meaning they appeared

to have. The only means for Austria to paralyse the ill-will of the King of Prussia was, in fact, to propose a plan of reform, so liberal, so popular, that the King of Prussia could not refuse his adhesion without rendering himself thoroughly odious even to the Prussians. Unfortunately this is what the statesmen of Vienna have not perceived. In spite of her so much vaunted liberalism, Austria has shown herself, on this solemn occasion, solely preoccupied with her own interests in the first place—and in the next, with those of the princes and aristocracy. In the scheme of reform submitted by the Emperor of Austria for the approbation of his august companions, the rights of that *German people*, whose wishes he was going to fulfil, do not come into sight. So far the Emperor or Austria—blinded by selfishness—has played the game of the King of Prussia, by furnishing a natural pretext for his opposition, and by depriving himself, at the same time, of the enthusiastic support he would have received from the gratitude of Germany.

Were it only on that account, the cause of German unity is from this moment compromised, and lo! the English are vexed and disappointed.

Undoubtedly, if the unity of Germany consisted in the supremacy of Austria, brought out in bold relief, in an irritating defiance flung to Prussia, in a particular concentration of the powers which are dispersed in the hands of the kinglings and princelings of Germany, and, lastly, in the absolute subordination of the will of the people to that of the princes,—the plan of Federal reform presented by the Emperor of Austria would leave little to be desired,

In the Directory of Five, composed of Austria, Prussia, Bavaria, and two other members of the Confederation elected by the smaller Principalities, Austria, invariably backed up by Bavaria, would be mistress of every decision; that is to say, she would carry it with a high hand in the conduct of foreign affairs, in the choice of ambassadors, in the control of the Federal army, in the management of the Federal budget, and "with the consent of a council of twenty-one councillors composed after the likeness of the Directory," in questions referring either to the maintenance of peace or to the unchaining of war—for, it is to be observed, that the project of reform invested with extraordinarily large attributes that executive power which Austria took care to claim for herself as the lion's share.

According to the imperial scheme, there would be a Chamber of Delegates, a central assembly composed of three hundred members, who would be elected by all the Diets of Germany. Very good: but as only two-thirds of these membere are to be named by the Lower Chambers, and as one-third are to be chosen by the Upper Chambers, it may be imagined how great would be the influence of the aristocratic element even in the Central Assembly, more especially supposed to represent the people.

It would still be something if there were left to the assembly thus constituted, the right of really legislating on questions declared to fall within its competence—the liberty of the press, for example, the right of association, the inviolability of the domicile. But no: it would be empowered only to propose! And with whom would it rest to dispose? With an assembly placed above it, the Assembly of Princes, in whom would actually be vested the legislative power.

The project implies, moreover, the institution of a Federal tribunal entirely dominated by the aristocratic element. What the people would gain by this is not quite clear; what it would risk losing is clear enough.

In the existing state of things it is not contrary to law for a writer, or pamphleteer, or journalist, in any one particular State, to criticise the acts of the sovereign of another State. From what quarter of Germany—with the exception of Prussia—have we not heard cries of wrath, or shouts of laughter, freely raised with reference to M. de Bismarck? Should the plan of the Emperor of Austria be realised, farewell to this liberty of censuring, if not the Power immediately over oneself, at least that which bows down the head of a neighbour. The Federal tribunal would be tantamount to the unity of the sovereigns opposed to the severance of the people.

It is not in a country like this, broken in to the practice of constitutional liberties that any illusions can prevail as to the character and scope of a reform established upon such bases. Accordingly, the plan of the Emperor of Austria is here subjected to very keen criticisms. Nobody, of course, believes the problem of the unity to be solved. How is the resistance of Prussia to be overcome? And how is it possible to dispense with her concurrence?

If Prussia were seized with the fancy to withdraw from the Confederation, where should we have to look for Germany? Is

Catholic Austria the central point round which—while Protestant Prussia stands aloof—the States which were the cradle of Protestantism, can group themselves with confidence? Would Austria, whose territories consist, at least to the extent of one half, of possessions which are not German, make a good figure at the summit of Germany, in the absence of Prussia, whose territories extend right across the Confederation, and whose character is so essentially German?

I admit that traditions have a certain prestige, which, beyond all contradiction, is in favour of Austria. But the days of the Holy Roman Empire are already far removed from our times, and the new spirit has, likewise, its altars. The King of Prussia's stupidity consists in his not understanding the power that resides, in the present age, in the title of "man of the people," when that title is acted up to in deeds.

This is what I hear said on all sides of me, not without many an ironical comment upon the magnificence of the spectacle contrasted with the insignificance of the results obtained, or anticipated.

It is related that when about to enter Frankfort the Emperor of Austria had caused himself to be preceded by a fine state carriage drawn by eight horses, with the usual accompaniment of lackeys glittering with gold. The crowd stared a long time in a state of amazement, and had hardly recovered from its admiration when it suddenly learned that the German Cæsar had arrived in a hackney coach.

In this anecdote, true or false, the *Spectator* of yesterday sees, in miniature, the history of the grand congress of sovereigns, and in this respect the *Spectator* expresses an opinion which appears to be very generally entertained in England: the step taken by the Emperor of Austria is the state carriage—his project, the hackney coach.

LETTER CLXXXVII.

LORD RUSSELL ACCUSED OF NEPOTISM.

August 25th, 1863.

"Do you fancy a pigeon-pie? Don't ask the pigeons what they think of it."

In such terms as these does an English journal judge the idea entertained by the Emperor of Austria of asking the little kings and little princes of Germany to establish the unity of Germany. It would, in fact, have been necessary, in order to bring to a happy conclusion the work of unification, if seriously taken up, that the numerous sovereigns, of whom each possesses a fragment of Germany, should exhibit a disinterestedness of which few examples are afforded in the history of mortal gods.

And this was not the only difficulty. At the assembly at Frankfort the most powerful, the most indispensable of the personages invited, failed to appear. What is to be expected from an effort combated by Protestant Prussia, in that Germany which was the birth-place of Protestantism? What hope is there of seeing German unity realised without the co-operation of the most German of German States, without the co-operation of that Prussia, with whose power the Nationalverein had so long associated its hopes?

It may suffice to say that in England political men dreaded an abortion. But what they fondly strove not to foresee, is precisely that which has actually happened. Instead of making for Prussia a situation not to be endured, by proposing a plan calculated to win for Austria all the popular sympathies, the statesmen of Vienna have put forward a conception which gives everything to Austria, a good deal to the German sovereigns, but nothing at all to the people. In truth, had Austria sought to colour with a serious pretext the King of Prussia's refusal to concur, she could not have hit upon a better plan.

In some such manner as this are things looked at in this country, to the profound disappointment of the English who, without having any very fervent belief in the possibility of making Germany *one*, loved nevertheless to flatter themselves on this point with vague *hopes;* for they perfectly understand that,

so far as they are concerned, the unity of Germany could never be, in any way, a danger; and might be, in every way, a guarantee—on the one side against Russia, on the other side against France.

In reality, German unity has, in the eyes of the English, the same degree of importance as Italian unity, and it is well known what importance they attach to that. There need be no more convincing proof of this than the prolonged emotion produced in England by the retirement of Sir James Hudson, the British Minister at Turin. It is now some days since this affair took place, and the indignation it has caused, so far from being allayed, seems to grow every day more lively. This very day the *Times* correspondent turns the weapon in the wound.

Whence arises this quite unusual importance which England attaches to the fact of one functionary leaving his post and another one going to it?

Sir James Hudson is, without contradiction, a man of merit; but it is not his merit, but his rôle at Turin, which has endeared him to the English. They were pleased to be represented by him in Italy, because no one has there combated with a more successful persistence the influence of the French Government; because Cavour, whose intimate friend he was, had no more able adviser than Sir James in the great game of chess played and won against Napoleon; because it was Sir James Hudson who reduced the Treaty of Villafranca to the worth of a scrap of paper; because it was he who had discredited in the eyes of entire Europe the long stay of a French garrison at Rome—it was he who had acquired over Victor-Emmanuel an almost absolute ascendency—it was he who had succeeded in persuading the Italians that their true friends were not the victors of Magenta and Solferino, but the islanders whose sympathy for Italy had not cost them a man or a crown piece! What sort of service could have awakened deeper gratitude in a truly English heart? And what other services of the same kind was not England justified in expecting from a man who, in such difficult circumstances, had contrived to baffle, or rather to make sport of, the imperial policy, supplant its agents, take advantage of its faults in order to lure away the heart of a people emancipated by the imperial arms, and become for France at Turin what Lord Stratford de Redcliffe had been for the Russian autocrat at Constantinople?

You may, therefore, imagine the avalanche of attacks which, for some days past, has been rolling over this poor Earl Russell. And, frankly, there is something in his conduct which he will do well to explain, if he can. It seems that for the last two years he has left nothing undone to get Sir James Hudson away from Turin, offering him several other posts, some of great distinction, and notably the embassy to Constantinople. But Sir James Hudson, much liked in Italy, would not quit Turin. He therefore rejected, one after the other, the offers alluded to, until at last, forced to see clearly that his post was wanted, he took the resolution of retiring into private life.

Now, for what purpose was Earl Russell so anxious to have a vacancy at Turin, of which it would be in his power to dispose? It cannot be supposed that in his eyes it would be a reproach to Sir James Hudson to be thought too Italian. To work for the independence of Italy with zeal and success might have been wrong in the eyes of the Tories, who have always had a tenderness for Austria, without, however, owning it; but Earl Russell is a Whig of pure race, and would be a Whig, were there not another one in the world. Now, it has never entered into the policy of the Whigs to take the part of absolute against constitutional governments.

Has Lord Russell, on this occasion, simply put into practice the—*Ote-toi de là, que je m'y mette!** Alas! So it is feared. The man who replaces Sir James Hudson is Mr. Elliot, brother-in-law to Lord Russell, and a personage of honest mediocrity. These are two unlucky circumstances, we must admit. Ah! I had nearly forgotten. It was on the 27th July that Parliament rose, and it was on the 7th August, when the Minister was no longer exposed to the annoyance of having an account to render, that a successor to Sir James Hudson was appointed in the person of Mr. Elliot, by the natural protector of all the Elliots, past, present, and to come.

Lord Russell greatly deceived himself if he fancied the affair would pass unnoticed. Public opinion growls and will obtain satisfaction, unless the minister is in a position to prove by acceptable reasons that there are no grounds for making such a fuss. An explanation, therefore, is expected of him, England not happening to be a country in which ministerial majesty is allowed to envelop itself in clouds.

* "Get out of that, let me come in."

LETTER CLXXXVIII.

THE PRIZE-FIGHTERS.

September 4th, 1863.

THE news of a *rapprochement* between France, Russia, and Prussia, does not appear to have caused any great sensation here —at least, up to the present moment. In the first place, the conciliatory movement in question presents nothing of an aggressive character. Should it produce the effect of constitutionalising Russia, as is talked of, and of furnishing the Powers involved in the Polish question with an opening to escape from it, there is nothing in that to cause England any anxiety. Besides, what she dreads is, not a more or less friendly understanding between the French Government and that of Berlin—on the contrary, such a prospect would in her eyes be an encouraging one. What she would rather fear, would be a quarrel which should lead the French armies to the Rhine. And then, who knows how much truth there is in this reported veering round? The news as yet is only a rumour. Why be in such haste to get up an emotion? People say to one another, "Wait a little, *qui vivra, verra.*"

And more than all this, for some days past there has been other matter to occupy men's minds in London—an imposing and very bloody exchange of fisticuffs having taken place between two crack prize-fighters, Jem Mace and Joe Goss.

It is truly worth while, when Jem Mace and Joe Goss are going to smash each other's jawbones, to trouble oneself about the Franco-Russian alliance, the Congress at Frankfort, the chances of a war between France and the United States on account of Mexico, the hospitality offered at Brest to the sea-wolves of the *Florida*, the iron-plated ships which are being built for the Confederates in the English building-yards of Mr. Laird, &c., &c.! Secondary questions all those, compared with this noble and imposing question: Is Jem Mace or Joe Goss the better able, for a given sum, to disable his man?

Accordingly, it was a sight to see the mob that on Monday evening last, pressed and crowded to the railway station at Paddington. There a rendezvous had been appointed for all

the vices of the highest and of the lowest class—club loungers and brutes with human faces, jaded libertines and men of prey, the scum of orgies and the scum of taverns, not without a strong dose of "respectability," for the passion for prize-fights as a spectacle and as a subject for betting is, in England, a passion that has invaded all classes.

What was to be the destination of the train that was to convey the combatants and their seconds, their patrons, the mere spectators, and the mob in general, was known to nobody except to the high priests of the affair—seeing that prize-fights are forbidden by law and that the police have to see that the law is enforced as a matter of form.

The spot chosen for the encounter is, therefore, always a secret, a pot-house secret, guarded more religiously than a State secret. But what nobody was ignorant of, was the hour of departure, which was fixed at four in the morning. By midnight, however, the approaches to the railway station were literally inundated with travellers, which is equivalent to saying that at midnight commenced a scene of ruffianism of which no description could give an idea. Not a blackguard of those who grovel in the lowest haunts of London, not a rough, who was not there.

I leave you to guess if watches, purses, and handkerchiefs had fair play. Robbers brandishing huge bludgeons with a reckless air, terrible blows punched into the stomachs of some and upon the backs of others, a storm of oaths and filthy language—so much for the prologue. The police appeared just as the train was starting, when there was no longer anyone to protect or anything to steal. We must do this justice to the roughs—they don't steal the shirt off your back, and are content with tearing your coat to tatters.

Thereupon you are going to ask me what honest and sensible people have to do with such galley-slaves? That is exactly the question I myself asked yesterday of an English Colonel of my acquaintance, who told me the whole story, *de auditu, de visu*, and who was still suffering from a violent blow he had received on the chest at the moment he was being eased of the weight of his watch. He gravely replied: "Every one to his taste. For my part I don't care for the Opera." *Bell's Life*, which is the *Moniteur* of the Ring, goes still further, and declares, in its last number, that the taste for prize-fights is one of the chief springs

of the English character, and presents it as such "from the muscular Christian point of view." This is textual.

It is true that the entire press does not utter the same language. It is the *Globe*, I think, which defines this species of combat and the ignoble scenes that ensue, as "a carnival of brutality." The *Morning Star* also stigmatises them. But see what is the power of a general passion. The *Morning Star* found itself unable to give vent to its indignation in less than four whole columns—pretty certain, as envious tongues declare, that the sale of a number in which no detail was omitted, could not fail to be enormous.

In order that my prolixity on this occasion shall not expose myself to the reproach which, as I think, has been unfairly addressed to the organ of peace at any price, I will not follow its example, but will confine myself to telling you that, the train having at last started, the two boxers and the crowd were put down at Wootton-Bassett; that there was formed by means of ropes and stakes, the enclosure which is called "the ring;" that the combatants, having stripped off their clothes, were found to be "in good condition;" that they began the fight; that the police interfered; that it then became necessary to return to London; but this return was only an artful manœuvre; that they set out in search of another field of battle, Long Reach; that at Purfleet there was the river to cross, and that the impetuosity of the mob to throw themselves into the boats was such that not a few narrowly escaped drowning; in fine, that the river having been crossed, the fight took place, while on the opposite shore the police of the county of Essex were reduced to let them do as they pleased, having reached the extreme limits of their jurisdiction.

I spare you the incidents that marked this memorable encounter. Be content to know that after a long resistance Goss fell almost without life, his head doubled down upon his chest, mutilated, disfigured, covered with blood. Mace, it seems, was not in a much better condition; but, at least, he was victor. Frantic cheers resounded, and the Mace-ites throwing themselves upon the Hercules to whom they were indebted for having won their bets, rewarded him for his "muscular Christian" virtues by tenderly embracing him.

The prize for the victor was one thousand pounds. Mace—who knows?—will be able to keep a public-house! And Goss?

If he does not die—which is probable, as the profession of these gentlemen requires them to have great tenacity of life—he will console himself with the proceeds of the silk handkerchiefs sold. For—and this is a detail for which I am indebted to my gallant Colonel, well versed in such matters—when two pugilists have agreed to measure themselves against one another, the "colours" of each are worn by his patrons, exactly as in tournaments the champions wore the colours of their ladies. Remark that this chivalrous practice gives rise on the part of our modern *preux* to a sale of silk handkerchiefs, which they purchase for half-a-crown, and sell for a guinea.

For the rest, the Iliad of which I am speaking does not come near to that of which Tom Sayers was the Achilles. What a day, I will not say for the editors of *Bell's Life*, but for ninety-nine English out of a hundred, was that on which Tom Sayers, the Englishman, defended against Heenan, the American, that "belt" which is the sign of royalty among pugilists, and for the conquest of which Heenan had crossed the seas! One might really have said that the honour of two great nations depended upon the result of a pugilistic encounter between those two men. Rome and Alba had committed the care of their destinies to the Horatii and Curiatii. Happily, neither of those two nations had, on that occasion, to yield to the other. Heenan having had his eyes blackened and Tom Sayers an arm paralysed, without either of them having succeeded in leaving his adversary for dead upon the field, the victory remained undecided between Rome and Alba. No matter! The pride and joy on both sides the Atlantic did not the less attain gigantic proportions. Tom Sayers, after having had the honour of developing the vigour of his muscles in presence of eminent personages, of members of the House of Commons, even of ministers of the Gospel, patriotically lost in the crowd of tavern-haunters and thieves,—the indomitable Tom Sayers was raised, or very nearly so, by public gratitude, to the rank of liberators of nations. He was acclaimed, Heaven help us! after the manner of ancient triumphers. It is affirmed that when he visited Liverpool, his native town, the authorities went forth to meet him, preceded by a band of music. Flowers were scattered on his path.

Not that professional and paid pugilism is altogether in the same position in England at the present day that it was at the time when George IV. made Tom Spring, the prize-fighter, get

into his royal carriage, and conducted him to the spot chosen for the encounter, in flesh-coloured silk stockings and in yellow casimir trousers. No, in this as in many other things, progress has asserted its rights, as is proved by the protests uttered by such papers as the *Spectator* and the *Morning Star*. But for all that it cannot be denied that the worship of the prize-ring still preserves much of its ancient fervour. It is not long ago that the *Saturday Review* declared it was "very hard" to reduce the "patrons of this diversion" to sit up all night when the battle was to come off on the morrow, and, when morning dawned, to glide along at an early hour like so many malefactors, through the fog to some out-of-the-way place where, to cap their sufferings, they risked having the police upon their heels. And yet the *Saturday Review* is not a vulgar, low-life journal. It represents elegant and literary circles; it speaks with a lofty air, with a tone of affectation; it associates through its intellectuality with the aristocracy; it is one of the mouth-pieces of Oxford. Thus, it is men of the world, fashionable writers, fashionable men of letters, who watch over the maintenance of wholesome traditions in the art of knocking people on the head.

What is curious is, that nowhere are people more humane than in England, as is witnessed by the laws relating to the protection of animals. But this is decidedly the land of contradictions and contrasts. The longer a foreigner resides in it, the less will he succeed in understanding it. Possibly, indeed, the English may be entitled to say the same of France. Is there a nation which is logical throughout? I fear not, *Homo duplex!* This epithet is as applicable to peoples as to individuals.

LETTER CLXXXIX.

THE FOREIGN ENLISTMENT ACT.

September 6th, 1863.

One of the questions which, during the week that has just concluded, have most occupied public attention, is that which relates to the manner in which the law, known here as the Foreign Enlistment Act, ought to be understood and applied.

According to this law it is forbidden to every private contractor,

and ship-builder, to build a war-vessel for the use of any foreign belligerent Power. On the production of sufficient proof of such destination, the Government is authorised to seize upon the ship of war in question.

Well, at this moment Mr. Laird is engaged in building, at Birkenhead, two ships of war, which everyone believes intended to complete the sinister chapter of piracies committed at sea by the Confederate privateers, the *Alabama* and the *Florida*. The builders, it is needless to remark, carefully conceal their destination. Apparently, the two ships are being built by the orders of a Frenchman; but it is suspected, and there is good reason for the suspicion, that the hand of Mr. Slidell is in this affair.

It is a serious matter. The blows inflicted on American trade by the *Alabama* and the *Florida* have deeply exasperated against England, from whose ports those two ill-omened vessels issued forth, both the Government and the people of the United States. The apparition upon the ocean of another *Alabama* would raise to a practically prohibitory figure the premium of assurance upon American merchant ships. The Federals would therein behold the filling up of the cup of their grievances; they would be justified in regarding the neutrality with which official England covers herself as a hypocritical mask, and the Foreign Enlistment Act as a delusion. Who knows what might thence ensue? And if war broke out between the two countries, who can tell what it would cost the English in men and money? It would really be too much of a good thing were it in the power of a private individual like Mr. Laird to drag his country into hostilities, which the English Government has, up to this time, taken so much pains to avoid.

Mr. Laird's tenderness for the slave-owners now in arms is doubtless very great, and the material interest he has in providing them with powerful means for piracy is manifest; but, to speak candidly, these are merits which would be estimated too high if they sufficed to invest him, in any sort, with the right to make peace or war.

So think, so reason, all men of sense. Some days ago an excellent letter on this subject appeared in the *Times*, and it is worth remarking that that journal, which has been going on another tack since the last success of the Federal cause, also insists upon the necessity of watching over the observance of the law.

A memorial which places this necessity in relief in still more peremptory language, has been presented to Lord Russell by the Emancipation Society. But what is to be done? "We must have proofs," Lord Russell replies; "the Foreign Enlistment Act requires proofs, and very clear proofs; otherwise a seizure is impossible." Very good, rejoin the Liberal papers; but what then is the use of a law which is so easily evaded? Either let it be abolished, if it is useless, or let another be passed. To prevent private individuals from carrying war in the folds of their cloak, a very simple means presents itself. It only needs to prohibit the construction and equipment of ships of war in private building yards without the express sanction of the State.

Thus stands the question and, assuredly of all the evils which may escape from this box of Pandora, the most hurtful, perhaps, would not be those from which America would have to suffer.

LETTER CXC.

GERMAN UNITY IN THE EYES OF THE ENGLISH.

September 9th, 1863.

"The silence of peoples," it has been said, "is the lesson of kings." Possibly; but a still plainer lesson for kings than the silence of peoples is their opinion, freely expressed. If the Emperor of Austria possesses the liberal dispositions and the enlightenment which everybody agrees to perceive in him, the judgment passed upon his handiwork by the English cannot be a matter of indifference to him, and to make it known to him without idle circumlocution is, of all the ways of being useful to him, the most efficacious and also the most self-respecting.

The part he has personally taken, then, has been much admired here, but not his project.

That part, in fact, has a character of greatness impossible to misunderstand.

Germany has for a long time been longing for the realisation of her unity, and, although the Zollverein was only a commercial union, the advantages derived from that union were certainly of a nature to stimulate that great craving of the Germans to become at last *one* nation. In such circumstances, to take the initiative

of a reform which aimed at the organisation of a common country, was to undertake the most imposing part which could tempt the ambition of a German Cæsar.

And England had special reasons of her own for applauding this part. The unity of Germany once fairly established, farewell to the apprehensions of the English people touching the continental power of France, her ever anticipated outbursts, the possibility of her conquest of the banks of the Rhine! "In default of a collective empire," wrote the *Times* a few days ago, "it may be hoped that a Confederation of the Rhine, under a French protectorate, is henceforth impossible." These words say all. And then, would not this German unity, a barrier against France, be at the same time a barrier against Russia?

Again, it was not displeasing to England, though Protestant, that the initiative in this question should have been taken by Austria, a Catholic Power; for it is one of M. de Bismarck's exploits to have contrived to sever the natural connection which existed between Prussia and England. Without doubt, England is Protestant, but she is also constitutional. Her people love liberty, dread the propagandism of despotic doctrines, detest the triumphs of brute force, and distrust tyrants, great and small. The day when M. de Bismarck's fatal ascendency over the mind of the Prussian monarch was satisfactorily proved, the English turned away from Prussia, and began to look with as much sympathy as hope towards Austria—Austria making her peace with liberty. Add to this, that there is no country where the personal qualities of the Emperor Francis-Joseph are better appreciated than on this side of the Channel. You will be able to judge of this by the following lines taken from the first English journal that comes into my hand. After launching forth into eulogies upon the tact and ability with which the Emperor of Austria has conducted the deliberations of the Congress, upon the art with which he has succeeded in dealing with individual susceptibilities, and upon the good humour displayed by him on all occasions, the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* adds:—

"I have studied the attitude of the population towards the princes as they pass along, and I have come to this conclusion, that the most popular of them all is the Emperor. . . . It is possible that that is a good deal owing to the title of *Kaiser*, so dear to the hearts of the Germans in general, and particularly so to the inhabitants of Frankfort; but much also of the popularity

enjoyed by the Emperor of Austria is explained by his personal qualities, and cannot be explained otherwise. The fact is, that in this assemblage of sovereigns Francis-Joseph is the figure upon which all eyes most love to rest. Whether he is seen seated in his carriage and chatting familiarly with his neighbour, or riding on horseback with a cigar in his mouth, there is about him something so affable, so good, that it is impossible not to feel oneself drawn towards him."

I quote this passage, from among a thousand others of the same kind, to convince you that, if the Austrian scheme has here encountered numerous and severe censors, the fault is in the scheme itself. I say again that since Austria has entered upon the broad path of liberty, the sympathies of England accompany her march.

But does it thence follow that the project submitted to the deliberations of the Congress has been approved of here? Not at all. It was the unity of the different German States which appeared to be so desirable, and not the unity of the princely houses. From the first, indeed, it has been manifest that the latter alone had any chance of being carried out, since, instead of proceeding by way of national representation, recourse was had to a congress of sovereigns.

No one here doubts for a moment that the edifice of German unity, of genuine German unity, can only rise upon the ruins of the small individual sovereignties into which Germany is divided. The difficulties which are opposed to the work of unification on the other side of the Rhine are of themselves quite serious enough, even putting aside the question of governments, without being complicated by the conflict of selfish interests and rival pretensions. Out of thirty-five millions of inhabitants Austria hardly counts seven millions who are of German origin. Mistress of Hungary and Venice, she is constantly in danger of being drawn into quarrels in which German interests are not concerned; and she is Catholic. Prussia carries Posen among her baggage—she has an affair to settle with Denmark—she is Lutheran. It is Catholicism that flourishes in Bavaria and in the greater part of the Duchy of Baden. In Hanover and Wirtemberg Protestantism prevails. In Saxony a Catholic prince governs Protestant subjects. Mecklenburg is feudal. The Grand Duchy of Baden is constitutional. Saxony exists under the sway of liberal institutions. Austria has entered upon this system.

Prussia is issuing from it. If any one at the present hour wishes to find despotism in politics with religious liberty and with the principle of commercial liberty, it is to Prussia one must go. If any one wishes to find constitutionalism combined with the doctrines of protection and monopoly in what regards commerce, it is to Austria one must travel. What political, religious, economic diversities! What opposite elements to be brought together! What discordant principles to be made to harmonise, or to be fused together!

And yet there is a people in Germany, ay, a great people—a people whose unity, attested by its language and its literature, is evinced, perhaps, in a still more striking manner by the unanimous ardour of its aspirations for unity.

But the unity to which it aspires is rooted within itself, and not without. The Congress of Frankfort is to the work of German unity what the surface of a stream is to its depths.

It is from this point of view that the question is regarded by the really liberal party in England. Nothing, absolutely nothing, is expected from the initiative of Austria resting upon the union of the princes; but much would be expected from the initiative of Austria resting upon the broad basis of popular suffrage. In other words, Austria must resolutely place herself at the head of a movement similar to that from which issued, in 1848, the Parliament of Frankfort.

And it is manifestly to Austria's interest to do so.

It is vain for her to dissemble with herself. Her position in Germany is far from presenting the same advantages as that of Prussia. It is true, the prestige of traditions is in her favour, and she is, as it were, borne along by the majesty of history; but, considered with regard to the union of the elements of which she is at present composed, she is not German in the same degree as Prussia. As the *Economist* lately observed, Austria, properly so called, is of less extent than Hanover, of less than Bavaria, and of very little greater than the kingdom of Wirtemberg or the Grand Duchy of Baden. Germany, strictly speaking, has nothing to do with one-tenth part of the territory of Austria, or with one-sixth of the population subject to her laws. If Austria, then, has history for her, she has the map and statistics against her. It was not, therefore, in the direction of Vienna, but in that of Berlin, that the tendencies of the Nationalverein inclined, previous to M. de Bismarck's follies;

neither was the action of Austria connected with the establishment of the Zollverein, that first step, thoroughly practical and modern, towards unity. So true is this that, even now, were the project realised that is attributed to M. de Bismarck, that is to say, if he opposed to the plan of Austria a more popular plan, it is not at all certain that this strategy, though seen through beforehand, would not be a trump card in Prussia's hand.

Let Austria reflect upon this. She has already done much to gain the sympathies of liberal Europe, and I know nothing more striking than the change of opinion which has been produced in her favour in the country where I am now writing. But it is of moment that she should not suffer herself to lose by an abortion the initiative which, so suddenly and boldly assumed by the Emperor Francis-Joseph, had awakened so many hopes. Austria has only one means of establishing and legitimising her supremacy in Germany, and that is by conducting her to a genuine unity, by founding it upon the support of the people.

It is only in this way that German unity could be a benefit for Germany without being a menace to neighbouring nations. For nothing is more to be dreaded than unity in despotism; whereas there is nothing more likely to remove fear, nothing more conservative and at the same time progressive, than unity in liberty.

LETTER CXCI.

DEBATE UPON THE MEANING OF THE FOREIGN ENLISTMENT ACT.

September 10*th*, 1863.

WHO, then, is this mysterious French speculator who threatens, they say, to place England between the hammer and the anvil? Who is this provident French man of business who, as it is asserted, is desirous to purchase, on account of the Confederates, but in his own name, the two formidable iron-clad ships of war constructed in the building-yard of Mr. Laird at Birkenhead? If this man really exists, what is his motive? Or is his object simply to gain a prize in the lottery of commerce? Is it a tender sympathy for the owners of slaves that urges him on? Does he act *proprio motu*, or is he merely a man of straw put forward to assist Mr. Laird in eluding the law known by the

name of the Foreign Enlistment Act, and of which the seventh clause runs as follows: "It is forbidden to every Englishman to equip and arm either transports or ships of war, with the intention of committing hostilities against a power in peace with England, or of employing these vessels in a hostile manner in the service of a foreign potentate"?

It would be very interesting to clear up these doubts. Might not Mr. Slidell be able to help us in this matter?

No doubt these words, "a Frenchman," mingling rightly or wrongly in the noise of the conflict which for some days past has been raging round the name of Mr. Laird, strangely complicate the question, or appear to do so.

In fact, there are some who exclaim: "Let us take care! If, in violation of the law we suffer another *Alabama*, issuing from the ports of England, to go forth over the ocean seeking to chase, plunder, and burn the merchant ships of the United States, or if we suffer ships of war, bearing the English mark, to furnish to the Confederates additional means of prolonging the horrible struggle, what becomes, in the eyes of the Northerners, of the neutrality of England? And what then will become of the maintenance of peace?"

To these, however, others reply: "The English Government has no right to interfere between an English vendor and a French purchaser. If a Frenchman takes it into his head to buy of Mr. Laird, with the intention of selling them again to whomsoever he pleases, two ships, ironclad or not—that is his affair. To presume to prevent him, would be going from bad to worse." The *Economist* says in so many words: "We cannot, however, involve ourselves in a quarrel with France to please America."

Consequently, if we listen to the one party, we must prepare for a rupture with America if the two suspected ships are not seized; and if they are, a rupture with France, according to the other party, may not be impossible. Plague take it! What an importance is given to this Mr. Laird and his mysterious partner on the other side of the Channel! For the moment they are, as it were, invested with the right of declaring peace or war. They hold the fate of the world in their powerful hands. For simple individuals, of whom one is simply Mr. Laird, and the other still a myth, it is a great honour.

In the meantime the question divides and agitates men's

minds. The Minister of the United States in England demands loudly and strongly that the Government should intervene as it did in the case of the *Alexandra*, offering to prove that the ships constructed at Birkenhead are destined for the Southern States, and invoking the strict execution of the Foreign Enlistment Act. This is the sense of the petitions from the Emancipation Society, and from the Society for the Abolition of Slavery. The partisans of the North leave Lord Russell no rest, but drive the spur into his side. The *Morning Star*, the journal of Messrs. Cobden and Bright, was one of the first to sound the alarm, and every day it strives to demonstrate that a war with the United States will be the natural consequence of speculations similar to those of Mr. Laird, if they be any longer tolerated. The *caveant consules* is also extremely well developed in two letters recently addressed by Mr. Nassau Senior to the *Times*, and to which the *Times*—a circumstance remarked, as it deserves to be —accords its approval.

On the other hand, the Tory party insists upon no interference. The *Morning Post* having announced the day before yesterday that the Government had at last decided to prevent the offence, the *Morning Herald* gives the reins to its indignation. It bitterly reminds Lord Russell that it is but a few days since he objected to the memorialists, by whom he was besieged, the necessity of acting only on very conclusive proofs. It is astonished at such a sudden change of policy. A little more and it would accuse Lord Palmerston's colleague of being rather a Minister of the United States than of England. What! this great English people yield and bend before the ill-humour of a Mr. Adams! Shame on it!

And this is applauded by those who, without troubling themselves much about the policy of the affair, look at it from a commercial point of view. For it must not be lost sight of that the more the Laird handicraft thrives, the higher will rise the premium of assurance to be paid by the mercantile marine of the United States, which tends greatly to pass over from America to England the carrying trade.

It is, therefore, wonderful to observe to what a degree this question has been covered with complications.

In the first place, some persons will have it that it ought to be with the equipment of vessels destined for either, or both, of the belligerents, as with the sale and exportation of munitions of war,

which do not constitute a violation of neutrality, and have no other result than that of exposing such merchandise as is defined contraband of war to be seized at sea by the party concerned. Why, say they, should not I, a simple individual, be empowered to sell to the Confederates, at my own risk and peril, a ship armed as a privateer or as a man-of war, if, at my own risk and peril, I am allowed to sell them swords, muskets, and gunpowder? Why in the former more than in the latter case should prejudice be done to the principle of neutrality adopted by England?

Why? Because, in the former case, there is something that strikes the eyes, and it is not so in the latter. It is not enough that a neutral should be neutral—he must also appear neutral; and how can he appear to be so when he is arming monstrous vessels, whose original point of departure is so keenly recalled by each of their aggressions? A man who hears a gun fired does not ask where the powder was manufactured; but every time that the *Alabama* has pounced, like a bird of prey, upon a Federal vessel, those who were on board were in a position to say, "It was from an English port this monster issued forth." Besides, when a Government permits private individuals to sell and export arms, this permission is supposed to be available to both belligerents. But, as Mr. Vernon Lushington justly remarks in a letter published in to-day's *Times*, the fact of exporting vessels as concerns the struggle that is at present tearing America asunder betrays a flagrant partiality. The Federals are able to build ships for themselves, while the Confederates cannot do so. The Federals have a mercantile marine to harass, plunder, and burn, while the Confederates have no marine.

For the rest, what is the use of this discussion? There is the Foreign Enlistment Act.

It is true that there are not wanting individuals disposed to criticise the precise meaning of that Act, and its real legal significance. Who knows? Perchance it is only applicable to the hypothesis of Englishmen fitting out vessels for the purpose of serving *in person* the cause of a belligerent. If that were so, Mr. Laird would be as white as snow—it being no part of his ambition, so far as I know, to seek the adventures of a sea-wolf.

Unfortunately, Lord Russell, who in this matter is the only oracle to be consulted, does not understand the thing in this way. For him the rendering of the Foreign Enlistment Act is sufficiently clear; and if it were satisfactorily established that, not-

withstanding their Egyptian names and Mr. Laird's connection with *a Frenchman*, the two iron-clad ships, so much talked about, are intended for the Confederates, his lordship, I fancy, would not hesitate to call out to the said ships, "You do not pass this way!"

The difficulty, then, is to get *proofs*.

And how is that to be managed? A law of this kind is so easily eluded.

To bring the matter to an end, the best plan would be to extend the law, while rendering it more precise, and to declare illegal, without any circumlocution, every sale of a ship of war not authorised by the State. That would cut short all subterfuges and disputes whence may arise, in certain circumstances, great and irreparable disasters. It is really too absurd that an individual, whether he calls himself Laird or Paul, should have power to drag his country into a terrible war because it has pleased him to favour the cause of the Confederates, or simply to enrich himself at the expense of the Federal cause.

LETTER CXCII.

THE GHOST CLUB.

September 11*th*, 1863.

One day Daniel O'Connell shut up the mouth of a fishwife who was abusing him by calling her "an old hypothenuse!" This mysterious, incomprehensible word was a thunderclap. Much in the same way, the other day, a Miss Harriett Trimmer paralysed a Mrs. Augusta Leigh by hurling at her head the epithet "capricorn."

The circumstances which supplied the wrath of Miss Harriett Trimmer with this obscure and terrible means of bursting forth are connected with a genuine touch of manners, and consequently deserve a small space in a diurnal chronicle.

Listen to my tale.

An old maid, named Miss Trimmer, having read in some journal or another an advertisement thus worded: "A comfortable home, consisting of a bed-room and sitting-room, for six shillings a week, attendance included," repaired to the place indicated and hired the apartments. But hardly had she installed herself than

some strange goings on awakened in her a sentiment of virtuous solicitude. She fancied herself in a house of ill fame, packed up her things in all haste, and prepared to take her departure without paying her rent. Stopped in the passage, she frankly disclosed her suspicions; whereupon the landlady, a person of slightly Amazonian temperament, gave battle, from which the poor "Miss" came forth considerably maltreated. Thence, an action for assault, as the English phrase goes. Before the judge, the heroine who with such a prompt hand had avenged the honour of her lodging-house based her defence upon two points—to wit, that her house was the only one in all that neighbourhood which was not "gay;" and secondly, that the complainant had called her, not "an old hypothenuse," but, what is almost as bad, a "capricorn." Capricorn! The epithet not being one of those which usually come under the cognisance of the court, the judge was desirous to know its exact meaning, which led to the following explanation:—

In Bath Street, City Road, there dwells a great necromancer, a Cagliostro, at one penny per head. Miss Trimmer, being troubled with a pain in the region of the heart, had recourse to this physician of souls. She paid her penny, and received the assurance that fate still had happy days in reserve for her; that she would succeed in certain enterprises, but that she would have to undergo certain trials; that she would never be very rich, but neither would she ever be "pricked by the needle of want." Having said this much, our soothsayer held out to Miss Trimmer a printed paper, at the head of which conspicuously appeared these words: "Answer to Saturn and to Capricorn." The oracle, who, it seems, unites the qualities of a man of business with the wisdom of an adept of the cabala, had taken care to write, by way of note to his "Answer to Capricorn," "Secret mirrors, showing ladies their present or future husbands, and husbands their present or future wives. Price of admission, one penny."

To enter for one penny into the Temple of Delphi, is doing it for nothing. People consequently crowd to the door, and the epithet "Capricorn," applied by Miss Trimmer to Mrs. Augusta Leigh, was nothing more than the result of the profound impression made upon the minds of believers by the employment of sacred names.

This is another instance of the influence of superstition in England.

And with how many more examples I could furnish you! I have already told you about "Zadkiel" and his popularity. Would you believe that there exists in London a number of dark dens, situated, of course, in some lonely district, at the bottom of some particularly gloomy street, on the most wretched floor of some dilapidated house, to which duchesses, countesses, women of the world, daughters of Eve who are acquainted even with Latin, go in a mysterious manner to have their fortunes told by Pythonesses in rags, and that with hearts palpitating with desire, hope, and terror?

As for the men and women whom nothing in the world would tempt to embark on a Friday; who would march ankle-deep in mud for a whole league rather than pass under a ladder; who would rather die upon the spot than expose themselves to dying at a later period by sitting down at a table round which twelve guests are already seated, and at the sight of a salt-cellar upset turn pale with that pallor spoken of by Racine *fils*—their number surpasses all decent limits. Witches are no longer burnt—that is the whole secret.

It is not a week ago since I read in the *Daily Telegraph* the following extraordinary advertisement:—"House haunted by ghosts.—The Ghost Club, with a view to investigation, desire to obtain a house haunted by ghosts, in town or in country, for a limited period. Address, with all requisite particulars, to the Secretary of the Ghost Club, to the care of Joseph Clayton, advertising agent, 265, Strand, London."

A club formed for the purpose of hunting down phantoms! What think you of that? There is not a syllable of this marvellous advertisement that is not worthy of attention. In the first place, what can be more philosophic than the leading idea to which this club owes its origin? Those who belong to it are, you see, wise men, who hover at an equally elevated height above the weaknesses of credulity and the wretchedness of scepticism. They do not positively affirm that spirits return from the other world, but neither do they altogether deny it. They have formed an association, have hired a vast apartment, have engaged a secretary, have appointed a committee with president and vice-president. They keep registers, have banquets on certain days, using skulls, I suppose, instead of glasses; in short, they constitute a club "with a view to investigations." It is pure love of science that inspires them. Accordingly they wish to obtain a

house haunted by ghosts—real *bonâ fide* ghosts—who don't come out of Mr. Home's manufactory, and are not sham spectres. Remark, I beg of you, the condition so eminently philosophical—"All the requisite particulars." So that what the secretary wants to know, through the channel of Joseph Clayton, advertising agent, 265, Strand, is whether the ghost who is to be placed at the disposal of the club appears at midnight or at a later hour; whether it announces its approach by a rattling of chains or by the simultaneous ringing of all the bells in the house; whether it traverses the graveyard or comes down the chimney; whether it assumes the form of an old knight clad in armour or that of a damsel showing her bosom pierced with a poniard; whether it is moved by the desire to find a hidden treasure or to conceal a murder;—in short, "all the requisite particulars." Whether it be "in town or in the country" is of no consequence—science does not pause before such distinctions. The house is wanted only "for a limited period," either not to lose too much time in penetrating a mystery which will be recognised as impenetrable, or from fear that an "investigation" indefinitely postponed might demand superhuman courage. Be that as it may, whoever has, within the prescribed conditions, a good ghost to dispose of, has only to apply to the Ghost Club, and he will be sure to make a bargain. Wanted—not a man-servant or a maid-of-all-work—but a ghost!

What renders this ardour for investigation still more meritorious is, that every evening in Regent Street, at the Polytechnic Institution, spectres are exhibited, invented for the express purpose of proving that, in this age of manufactures, ghosts are turned out like any other thing. But these gentlemen of the Ghost Club are not persons to surrender in this manner. They are for free inquiry at all hazards.

Does not all this strike you as a page to be added to the history of human oddities and English eccentricities?

LETTER CXCIII.

WANT OF CORDIALITY BETWEEN DOWNING STREET AND THE TUILERIES.

September 12th, 1863.

RECOGNITION of the Poles in the quality of belligerents is what the Liberal party demands and hopes for at the present moment.

To obtain this, Prince Czartoryski has addressed himself to the Foreign Ministers of France, England, and Austria; and this measure is welcomed by the *Daily News* with a slightly simple but certainly honest satisfaction.

Nothing is more easily accounted for by any one who takes into consideration the contradictory sentiments that agitate the hearts of that section of Englishmen whose organ is the *Daily News*.

They abhor oppression, but they have a still greater dread of war.

They take a warm interest in the Poles, but they distrust imperial France.

They would like to see Poland free, but the blood rushes up to their forehead when they think of the Rhine being menaced.

They would wish for Poland a victory of Solferino, but they fear for her a peace of Villafranca.

They groan from the very bottom of their souls over the humiliation inflicted upon their country by an impotent intervention, and by negotiations pitiably conducted; but they would not have approved of a firm and haughty policy which would have exposed them to the danger of having in Alexander an enemy to be combated, and in Napoleon an ally to be watched.

Their minds being thus disposed, it is very natural that they should force themselves to find satisfaction in a solution which, if it is far from responding to their sympathies, has at least the merit of putting an end to their uneasiness.

And what is the significance of the solution which the *Daily News* so hopefully salutes, and of which Lord Russell's speech at Blairgowrie has given a glimpse?

So far as Poland is concerned, her admission to the rank of belligerent power is, at the point to which matters have arrived, ridiculous. A great advantage, truly, it would be for the Poles to be massacred under the name of belligerents, instead of being so under the name of insurgents!

When such haste was shown in according the Southern Planters, in revolt against the Union, the title of belligerents, a very significant and even a very important move was made in their favour. They had, in fact, need of that title to arm as privateers vessels which would otherwise have been regarded as pirates, and treated as such; and it is well known what blows were inflicted upon the North by their skimmers of the waves. But in the case of the Poles there is no similarity. Will the title of belligerent supply them with one additional musket, or permit them to incur the slightest diminution of danger? If it be true—and alas! it is only too true—that by protracting beyond measure the diplomatic and literary tourney in which the self-esteem of the French, English, and Austrian Foreign Offices has indulged itself, Russia has been allowed time to concentrate her forces, complete her resources, and organise her means of extermination; if it be true that winter is at hand, and will drive the insurgents out of their retreats in the forests and starve them to death—how, I ask, will the title of belligerent accorded to these heroic soldiers of the Right save them from the consequences of a murderous delay?

It was at the moment of their uprising, on the very morrow of the day on which Russian tyranny changed conscription into proscription, that the Czar ought to have been told: "In the eyes of official Europe, you had only one title to the possession of Poland, only one. And that one you have lost by violating the conditions upon which it was given. The Powers that signed the Treaty of Vienna solemnly retract their sanction to a partition which they ought never to have sanctioned. Things have been brought back by yourself to the point where they were in 1772. In Russia fighting against Poland, we see only two peoples, of whom one seeks unjustly to subjugate the other. We refuse to render ourselves accomplices of this iniquity, and you must remain answerable for the consequences." If, without declaring war against Russia, but without relieving her from all fear on that head, as Lord Russell had the childish candour to do, such language as this had been held to Russia at the time when Europe

trembled with indignation, and sympathy for Poland was, as it were, a whirlwind which swept away *pêle-mêle* governments and peoples, there can be no doubt that such a fact would have had considerable weight, at least from the moral point of view.

But it is too late now. A declaration which, at the commencement of the quarrel, would probably have disquieted the Cabinet of St. Petersburg and aided Poland, has lost, through negotiations as protracted as they were barren of result, its character of menace as regards the former, and its character of encouragement as regards the latter.

The strength that these negotiations have added to the strength of Russia, the audacity they have added to her audacity, is incalculable. The Crimean war might have made the Czar fear the possibility of a combined action between England and France: he is now quite at ease on that head. What it most concerned him to know for a certainty, these untoward negotiations have taught him. They have surrendered to him the secret of the sullen irritation left in the hearts of the English by the abrupt termination given by Napoleon to the Crimean war. They have enabled him to see clearly to the bottom of the distrust of which the Mexican expedition, undertaken in common but not pursued in common, has been the source. He knows now beyond the possibility of a doubt,—

That the policy of the Tuileries, and that of Downing Street, have neither the same point of departure, nor the same goal;

That the one rests upon the destruction of the treaties of 1815, while the other aims at their maintenance;

That the one is interested in desiring the independence of Poland, while the other is only interested in the freedom of Poland;

That, for the one, the Polish question extends beyond the limits of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, while, for the other, it stops there;

That the one fancies it cannot do without the alliance with England, while the other fears the alliance of France almost as much as her enmity.

It would not have been so bad had the negotiations, while relieving St. Petersburg of all apprehension of a combined action, left it in apprehension of isolated action. But no. While England never ceased to repeat, "We will not go to war in conjunction with France," the French Government, speaking through

its accredited organs, always seemed to be saying, "We will not go to war without England." Russia thus played against adversaries who, each in his turn, suffered her to see their cards. How could she help winning the game?

The tone of her diplomacy accordingly passed from cold politeness to veiled irony, from irony to arrogance, from arrogance to a sort of imperious language. The "there must be an end to this"—for that is the sense and substance of Prince Gortschakoff's last despatch—furnishes the measure of a haughtiness to which the intervening Powers have emulously offered whatever could help to foster it.

And it is not only by raising her voice that Russia, in proportion as the negotiations were spun out, has given proof of her growing self-confidence. On the 25th September the *Times* wrote: "Russia pretends that she held Poland in 1815 by right of conquest. If we listen to her, the simple declaration of the benevolent intentions of the Emperor Alexander, in the Treaty of Vienna, does not confer upon Europe the right to concern herself with the internal affairs of Russia, that is to say, to demand anything whatever in favour of Poland. This pretension renders superfluous all further discussion on the Treaty of 1815. There no longer remains to the Western Powers any other alternative than tame submission or a European war."

The *Times* has since proved that, for its part, rather than a European war it would prefer tame submission; but that of itself proclaims quite loud enough the triumph of Russia.

Talk to us after that of withdrawing your sanction to the Treaty of 1815, and of recognising Poland as a belligerent power! What matters to Russia your sanction, when she can with impunity dispense with it? To possess Poland by right of conquest is, in that case, not less conformable to her interests, while it is very much more so to her pride. She is, besides, not ignorant that in invoking the Treaties of 1815, it is only a phantom that is invoked, and M. Emile Girardin is right a hundred times over when he asks what remains of those treaties after the establishment of the Belgian nationality in 1831, after the incorporation of Cracow with Austria in 1846, after the restoration of the empire in 1852, after the annexation of Lombardy to Piedmont in 1859?

As for the dignity of the intervening Powers, if it has been compromised, it is certainly not this tardy and useless expedient

that will save it. Their duty was to conquer, and they have hardly succeeded in covering their retreat.

LETTER CXCIV.

THE RESTORATION OF THE AMERICAN UNION JUDGED IMPOSSIBLE IN ENGLAND.

September 20th, 1863.

THE letter written by Mr. Abraham Lincoln to the Unionist League which sits in the capital of Illinois has produced a very lively sensation in this country. Some applaud, others cry it down, or affect to do so, but it is manifest that a profound impression has been made upon all. It is a hit.

The enemies of the North, and in England these are numerous, make much of some "vulgarisms" which disfigure the eloquence, which in truth is not very ornate, of this republican elected by republicans; they quote such a phrase in which you would look in vain for any traces of a refined mind; they pick out from this letter, the subject of their fastidious criticism, this or that joke of a very plebeian flavour, and which the literature of chanceries would repudiate; they reproach the energetic adversary of Jefferson Davis, that hero of their predilections, of talking "Yankee" rather than English. But the vigorous good sense which marks with such a peculiar seal this government manifesto, the perfume of honesty which exhales from it, the iron conviction it evinces, the unshrinkable determination of which it is the pledge, and the serenity, in the midst of a gigantic crisis, attested by the popular sallies which enliven a rude style of reasoning—all that does not fail to find admirers.

The party of whom the Secessionists are the spoiled children affect to pity the fanaticism of a man who, say they, has only one cry, "Preservation of the Union." I should like much to know what other cry England would utter if to-morrow Ireland were to detach herself from her with violence—that Ireland, who is Catholic, who has not a drop of Saxon blood in her veins, and who, under the laws of wealthy England, is dying of hunger.

"Preservation of the Union" are, however, words that may well sound disagreeably on this side of the Atlantic, for it is to

the Union that America is indebted for witnessing the rise, within a few years, of a power whose prodigious development had at last become the astonishment of Great Britain, and wellnigh her terror.

Why conceal, how attempt to deny the fact? It is from hatred of the strength which America derived from the "preservation of the Union," and which she will again find in its re-establishment, that the same English who abolished slavery have declared themselves, in such large numbers, for slave-owners, asserting the liberty of oppression, the right to suppress right.

But Mr. Lincoln is surely very excusable though he should desire what is against the wishes of a country the rival of his own; and if he desires it ardently, passionately, it is because he knows that for the North the Union is not only a question of power and of greatness, but a question of necessity. The North and the South, as independent States, can no more exist side by side than free labour can exist by the side of slave labour. They are two forces which, like the two principles that actuate them, cannot come into contact without coming into collision, and violently struggling to destroy one another. The war, if lulled to rest to-day, would break out afresh to-morrow.

This is perfectly understood by every one in the United States, and it is this which renders the attitude of the people so indomitable, and inspires it with such fiery vigour. For the North, it is not, as many will have it, a question of subjugating the South, but simply of securing to itself the means of living in peace. It attacks, in order to avoid being driven to the necessity of defending itself. What makes it desire so passionately a union with the South is the immense danger of its neighbourhood. And Mr. Lincoln is blamed for sharing this desire! But, in truth, he might with quite as much justice be blamed for being President of the United States; for he only governs the nation, whose Elect he is, on the condition of representing it, and in America a President is only the first Minister of the Sovereign—the People.

It remains to be seen whether it is reasonable to believe that the abyss hollowed out between the North and the South by the Civil War can ever be filled up. The general opinion here is, or seems to be, that all hope of that kind is a dream; that the hatreds whence issued this frightful struggle, and which it has so greatly envenomed, are of the kind which gnaw the heart until it has ceased to beat. "They will never subdue the planters," say

many persons in England, "except by exterminating them. If the Cabinet of Washington desires to conquer a desert, to rule over corpses—very good. The assimilation, separated by a sea of blood, has become absolutely impossible. To pretend to reunite what has been severed in this horrible manner is a chimera that verges upon madness. Supposing even that the vanquished secessionists consented to survive their defeat, the day when the North shall have broken the sword in their hands it will be compelled to give them chains of which they will make use sooner or later to strike it on the head. Between the Federals and the Confederates, barring the independence of the latter, there are no other relations possible than those of the oppressor and the oppressed."

They who speak in this fashion—and it is not long since Mr. Gladstone held the same language—forget what success is capable of achieving, if it be maintained for ever so short a while. At first, the vanquished tremble with rage, and swear to themselves that they will never bend. People like to believe their resentments immortal. Then comes lassitude. They grow weary of hating without being able to hurt. If the power to which they are determined never to yield is both firm and conciliatory, they soon begin, perhaps unconsciously, to regard it with a less hostile eye. If it opens its arms to you, very likely you may not throw yourself into them all at once, but you timidly take a step forward to meet it. The leaders of the conquered party have disappeared, slain or proscribed. The virile minds no longer being there, weak minds know not on what to lean. Little by little the flame becomes extinguished, from want of being fed. In proportion as the image of an irritating past grows weakened and more remote, old wounds close of themselves. A few exceptional natures still stand proudly aloof; but the mass adapt themselves to their destiny, resign themselves to gliding insensibly down the slope under the seduction of personal interest, sacrifice to circumstances, and finish by making peace with success.

Is not that, I ask, the history of all permanent triumphs? Why, then, should it not be the history of the triumph of the Federals, if only it be aided ever so little by being lasting? Such a result is the more easily foreseen because the Union has adherents in the South, adherents who hitherto have hardly given a sign of life, but whose existence is beginning to be revealed by symptoms more and more numerous and significant. That the

Southern Unionists are not in a majority is possible, is even probable; but is it absolutely certain? Who is ignorant of the ascendency which may be acquired, in a crisis when passions are powerfully excited, by a minority thoroughly united, daring, led by intelligent and resolute men?

But however that may be, it is childish to cry out about fanaticism and blindness because in the United States Mr. Lincoln, and the whole people with him, look upon the submission of the South as a thing to be accomplished, and entertain a profound faith in the restoration of the Union.

Given the possibility of attaining this end, what is more natural than that efforts should be made to attain it?

LETTER CXCV.

ABORTIVE ISSUE OF DIPLOMACY.

September 21st, 1863.

Earl Russell has said his last word: Prince Gortschakoff has said his. This is the final decision. England leaves to Russia the responsibility of all the consequences, among which war, however, is not included, and this responsibility is accepted by Russia. Let us admit that Poland is in luck!

All the time that was wanted by the Russians was given to them by Europe, and taken by themselves. Winter is now at hand. The frost will drive out the insurgents from the depths of their forests. Famine, too, is there, and will do justice upon those whom the sword has not overtaken. General Berg has little more to do than to let things take their course. The work is advancing. Supposing even that by a change impossible to be foreseen, diplomacy, the Providence of the Poles, decided upon taking action instead of protocolising, the hour for active intervention has long passed away. It will assuredly be Mouravieff's own fault if, by next May, his task is not completed, and if, among the Poles who are worth the trouble of being massacred, there remains one to be succoured or slain.

But, to make up for this, Poland has had the distinguished honour of having furnished Messieurs the Diplomatists with a most excellent theme for the display of their talents. The inge-

nuity and logic they have expended is something marvellous. Never were the bitternesses of polemics between well-bred people produced with so much grace. On one side and the other what refined eloquence! What courteous wrath! What subtle reasoning!

Earl Russell's last despatch is particularly worthy of being meditated upon by young gentlemen who are desirous to complete their studies. Prince Gortschakoff's arguments are therein refuted with a master's hand. It is quite clear that the English Minister has enjoyed the advantages of a classical education. The metaphysical disputes of the Middle Ages were not more idly learned, nor testified to a mind more idly acute. His lordship has an answer for everthing. In vain does Prince Gortschakoff invoke in support of the theory of murder on a grand scale the respect due to authority. Lord Russell, with profound good sense, replies that clemency and conciliation are more efficacious than material force, when it is wished to assure the respect properly due to authority. In vain does Prince Gortschakoff reproach the intervening Powers for the moral encouragement given to the insurrection by Foreign-offices and peoples. Lord Russell very pertinently replies that "if the general feeling in Poland had not been hostile to Russia in an absolute manner, neither moral nor material assistance from abroad would have been of much aid to the insurrection." "But," observes Prince Gortschakoff, "if it be neither an amnesty nor a representative system, more or less complete, that is demanded by the insurgents?" Let us see, now, how Lord Russell will extricate himself from this slough, after having declared that he did not understand what was meant by the independence of Poland, seeing that, in his eyes, Poland has neither a beginning nor an end. It is here that official scholasticism triumphs. Far from appearing embarrassed, Lord Russell puts himself forward as the champion of that "floating mass" who, in Poland as elsewhere, "are contented with security for persons and properties." What is to be said against that? Russia may expatriate or shoot the troublesome citizens who die that their country may live—it is not for them diplomacy gives herself any uneasiness. All that diplomacy asks is that those should be satisfied who compose the "floating mass," and whose digestion was never interfered with either by a noble aspiration or an heroic emotion. Excellent, my lord; that is speaking like a statesman!

But during this interchange of notes the forces of Poland are becoming exhausted; her blood flows, here in a torrent,—there drop by drop. While her friends are discussing, with imposing calmness, the means of saving her, she is at her last gasp. Yet a few months, and in all likelihood her heart will have ceased to beat. Could Mr. Urquhart have been right when he asserted that Russia prayed with all her might for a Polish insurrection, that she laboured earnestly to bring it about, that she burned to finish off, once for all, whatever valiant patriots yet remained among the Polish people, or rather the whole Polish people, and that, fatigued with having to guard her prey, she had provided the opportunity for devouring it? There can be no doubt that, if she really did conceive this horrible project, she could not have adopted better means for securing its accomplishment; without taking into account that the Poles themselves, by the extent and sombre magnanimity of their despair, have acted as accomplices to their oppressors. About that there is no doubt. Between yielding and perishing, their choice was made on the day they seized the scythe. The question at issue is whether a people shall, or shall not, be annihilated.

Let not this apprehension be regarded as chimerical. Let us not be pompously told of the final impotence of brute force, of the immortal essence of right, and other fine things of that sort! That brute force is not endowed with power to kill an idea, even when it has on its side the frightful logic of its brutality, I willingly concede; that heresy in Spain has not been hopelessly stifled in the flames kindled by the Inquisition; that Protestantism was not strangled in Belgium by the Duke of Alva's executioners; and that the daggers of the St. Bartholomew did not pierce Calvinism through the heart, not absolutely through the heart—all that I am glad to believe; but a nationality is not an ineradicable idea. Has it never been seen that a people has disappeared from off the earth? It makes one shudder to think what might happen to Poland if Russia, shrinking from nothing, were to succeed in driving the oppressed who do not think, to rise against the oppressed who do think, by promising the former the spoils of their dead country!

To suffer such an infamy would be a disgrace from which Europe would never cleanse herself. Heaven grant, for the sake of her safety not less than of her honour, that the famous exclamation erroneously attributed to the vanquished Kosciusko may

not be realised! for in that *Finis Poloniæ* there lies an immense European danger. Talleyrand and Castlereagh were fully sensible of this when, at the Congress of Vienna, they strove with such vivacity to save the independence of Poland from the rapacity of the Czar. Unfortunately, the Czar had two hundred thousand men in the grand duchy of Warsaw, and he had only to say, "Where I am, I remain." Instead, therefore, of an independent Poland, the world saw a Poland placed under the yoke. But even in that condition, palpitating, trampled under foot, she was an obstacle in Russia's path. What, then, will happen when, in order to penetrate to the heart of Europe, to pass beyond Berlin, and to knock at the gates of Vienna, Russia will have only to push aside with her foot a body stretched in death before her?

To set aside this danger for ever was such an easy task after the encroachment committed at Warsaw. To do in 1863 what Talleyrand, Castlereagh, and Metternich were unable to do in 1815, there could not have been a more admirable opportunity. Russia vanquished at Sebastopol, disgraced, humiliated, wearing the stigma of a defeat which wrested from her the East, or at least seemed likely to do so, condemned besides to struggle with the internal difficulties created by the emancipation of the serfs, Russia had just dishonoured her power by an act of violence which shocked entire Europe.

An epic despair seized upon Poland. She shook with horror, under arms. There was not a point on the globe whence there arose not against St. Petersburg the cry of the outraged conscience of humanity. In France a passionate love of Poland and an ardent desire to restore her to life drew all parties together, ready to march at the first roll of the drum. In England, though in general war was repudiated, the emotion was so great that it would not have been impossible to transform it into warlike wrath by an impulsion given from above. Austria, lately converted to liberalism, and long alarmed at the progress of the Russian power, applauded the idea of a crusade, and regarded it as a point of honour that reliance should be placed in it. The Czar had only one ally, one alone, the King of Prussia, and this poor monarch, compromised by a poor minister, seemed on the eve of having a revolution on his arms.

It will no longer be said, I hope, that the Crimean war has definitively diminished the power of Russia. If such was for an instant the result of the victories of the Alma and Inkerman,

diplomacy has displayed a grace quite touching in furnishing the vanquished with a means of taking their revenge. Summoned to loosen her hold, lectured, and scolded, Russia laughed at those who, like that excellent Earl Russell, threatened while encouraging her, and yielded nothing—absolutely nothing. Even that concession, after the fashion of a Bill for Constitutional Reform, about which certain journals told us such marvels, was repudiated by her, in her official organ, with a hauteur evidently systematic. This repudiation means: "We do not court the approbation of Europe; her counsels and her examples are nothing to us. If it is our pleasure never to have anything to do with liberalism, that is not your affair, but ours."

Russia is, thus, more arrogant than ever, because she feels herself stronger than ever. Up to the present moment, there is no disguising the fact that she takes the wall-side of the road. The moral, or rather the immoral, authority gained by her through the abortive failure of diplomacy, which proposed to bring her to her senses, is incalculable. It is precisely because she has opposed to her in this affair, reason, justice, humanity, the manifest sympathies of Europe, the sentiment of the peoples, this time in unison with the policy of Government's — it is precisely on that account that her definitive triumph would be disastrous. Up to this time she has been victorious where victory appeared as impossible as it would be deplorable. Of what avail is the universal protest that has been uttered, if it be not followed with brilliant deeds? It will only make the defeat of justice more overwhelming. Poland, assassinated in the nineteenth century in the face of Europe idly indignant, would be a spectacle more heart-breaking, a scandal more horrible, than the rending Poland in pieces in the eighteenth century, in the presence of Europe indifferent and heedless.

LETTER CXCVI.

AN AGRICULTURAL MEETING.

September 25th, 1863.

YESTERDAY there came off in Hertfordshire—where I happen to be at this moment—one of the annual agricultural fêtes. Had our excellent colleage, M. Joigneaux, been there, how gladly would I have given up to him the task of description. The particular kind of exhibition which has just given the little town of Hitchin a few hours of animation, would have found in him a competent and peculiarly qualified historian. He would have been not only a narrator, but a judge. He would have explained in virtue of what general or local causes the spectacle was more remarkable for the quality than the number of performers,—to wit, the bulls, cows, horses, pigs, and sheep, that composed the *troupe*. But I, what can I speak about, unless it be the banquet that followed, and the speeches which were then delivered?

It was round the splendid table laid out in the Corn Exchange by Mr. Hill, the landlord of the Swan Inn, that the meeting exhibited itself in all its pomp and grandeur. Those who arrived too late to pass in review the cattle of the county, took care to arrive in time for the banquet.

Among the latter I was about to denounce the Marquis of Salisbury, when I suddenly remembered that the Marquis of Salisbury is no longer a young man. What do I say? He is probably of the age which Fontenelle had attained when, to a very old lady who congratulated herself in his presence upon the favour which Death had shown in forgetting them, he replied, with his finger on his lips, "Hush!" At that period of life one may really be pardoned for missing an appointment with live stock, especially when one is kept at home by a heavy shower, as the Marquis himself explained with infinite grace and humour, amid the applause and approving laughter of the banqueters.

But I am too dilatory in acknowledging that the great attraction was not the dinner, but the very natural desire to hear the good, noble, and eloquent words that were certain to be pronounced there.

Who, do you suppose, took the chair at this agricultural banquet, at which the principal toast must necessarily refer to agriculture? A large landed proprietor in the county? Doubtless, yes; but a landowner who is also an eminent poet, a celebrated novelist, an able administrator, a philosopher, an orator, a statesman and a delightful companion—in short, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

His speech was the event of the evening. Nothing could be more practical and, at the same time, of a higher tone. While admitting that, as regards numbers, the Hertfordshire cattle did not make a great effect, Sir Edward expressed a patriotic satisfaction with the fact that there was, at least, nothing to be said against their quality; and from that point he started to take a bird's eye view of English agriculture in general.

As concerns the grain crops, there was, first of all, a fact to be stated,—namely, that the harvest this year had been admirable; a circumstance as fortunate, in the long run, for the manufacturer, the tradesman, and the artisan, as for the agriculturist himself; for, as Sir Bulwer Lytton justly remarked, a people, whatever be the diversity of interests and occupations on which its activity is employed, is never, with reference to other peoples, anything more than an individual consumer. The less it has to expend in the purchase of grain, whenever Nature, with a more bounteous hand than usual, places at its disposal the treasures of the earth, the larger becomes the national capital which, applied to every branch of industry, bestows upon all life and fruitfulness.

But the abundance of the harvest this year is not simply the result of a favourable season, as is proved by the fact that, when compared with the harvest of preceding years in which the weather had been equally genial, it exhibits an excess whose source can be no other than man's labour enlightened by his intelligence. From among the causes to which this increased fertility may be fairly attributed, Sir Bulwer Lytton especially singled out a more liberal use of artificial manures, a more enterprising recourse to the intervention of machinery, a more careful selection of seed, a better system of drainage; lastly, through the suppression of useless enclosures, to the opening of the fields to those two fertilising powers, the air and the sun. As an indication of what may reasonably be expected from progress resolutely pursued, the orator quoted a recent pamphlet by Liebig, who foresees the time when the Three Kingdoms, in the

matter of grain, will have no occasion to look to foreign countries. I need not tell you that everybody answered, *Amen!*

As for that other branch of agriculture, the rearing of live stock, it is of especial importance to England that considerable progress should be made under that head. The climate and soil of England are, in fact, much better adapted for cattle-breeding than for seed cultivation; without taking into account that her territorial constitution harmonises perfectly with the system recommended by the nature of her soil and climate, landed property not being here, as in France, subject to that law of indefinite division, which tends to bring about a ruinous divorce between capital and agriculture, to retard the development of the animal kingdom, and to substitute fields for wide meadows. Nevertheless, meat is dear in England, and though the condition of the peasant is better here than in France, the dream of meat every day is far from being realised for all. Why is that?

The fact, undoubtedly, admits of more than one explanation; but several circumstances appear to indicate that it may partly be attributed to a want of care, and even of practical knowledge, among the rural population. I was much struck, for instance, by a passage in Sir Bulwer Lytton's speech, in which the practice of mixing salt with the food of animals was strongly recommended, and recommended as a thing neglected by some and unknown to others. In France the reproach would be inapplicable and the advice superfluous.

Were it necessary to prove by figures to what extent England is interested in omitting nothing that pertains to the rearing of live stock, those figures might be found in Sir Bulwer Lytton's speech. During the six years terminating in 1860, the total value of the live stock destroyed by disease in the three united kingdoms of England, Ireland and Scotland, amounted to £24,000,000, while the value of the stock imported during that period was only £4,500,000; that is to say, in six years England received from abroad less than the fifth part of what she lost at home.

From what I have now said, I fancy you will come to the conclusion that a man may be at the same time a great poet and yet eminently practical. For my part, if ever I doubted the fact, I should never again doubt it after this speech of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton. It is true, if all must be told, that the illustrious author of *The Caxton Family, The Last Days of*

Pompeii, *Eugene Aram*, *Rienzi*, and of so many poetic works less known than his novels, though perhaps of a still higher order of merit, found himself at last out of his element in the midst of cows, and so escaped from the cowhouse before he reached his peroration. In the first part of his speech it was the lord of the manor who spoke — in the latter part, the ex-minister. Among other considerations of a lofty character, I have particularly remarked that the mixture of slowness and certainty which in England characterises the march of progress, is a good deal owing to the fact that nowhere is the activity of towns,—where the collision of minds strikes forth sparks of fire, —overbalanced by the prudence and apathy of the country.

Sir Bulwer Lytton, you see, is far from defining agriculturists after the manner of that sparkling Abbé Galiani, who in his "Dialogue upon the Corn Trade," writing, as it were, with an ear of wheat, the theory of the science of wealth and its history, represented agricultural nations as so many nations of gamblers who, subjected to the caprices of sun and rain, are incessantly employed in throwing rouleaus of gold upon a Pharo-table, which is the earth.

But are these two opinions, though seemingly contradictory, really irreconcilable? No doubt agriculture is, in its relations to the barometer, somewhat of a game of hazard, and consequently implies in those who engage in it a certain degree of venturesomeness; but that very circumstance renders prudence the more necessary to it, when it comes to face the vicissitudes of political life. The agriculturist wishes to play out, undisturbed, his match against the skies. Were he to allow himself to give way to the political petulance of towns, he would have too many risks to run at the same time.

LETTER CXCVII.

LORD RUSSELL'S POLICY EXPLAINED BY HIMSELF.

September 30th, 1863.

"FINALITY JACK," such is the surname which in a fit of humour John Bull bestowed upon Earl Russell. Did he mean to express thereby that the noble lord was as little disposed to finish things as he was eager to begin them?

On observing his fearfulness to involve himself either with the North against the South, or with the South against the North, one is tempted to think that it is not any great anxiety to come to a conclusion which troubles him the most; but when one recalls to mind that after having gaily embarked in the Mexican adventure, he only perceived his imprudence at the last moment, and that after having laid down, in his haughty despatches on the subject of the Polish question, the premisses of the war, he turned pale in presence of the conclusion, he must certainly be allowed to exclaim, like Petit-Jean:—

Ce que je sais le mieux, c'est mon commencement.

In the speech which he lately delivered at Blairgowrie, he declared:—

That he is not in favour of a foreign nation imposing such or such a form of government upon a people, upon the Mexicans, for instance, but if it will do so, the best plan is to let it take its own way;

That the Emperor of Russia is very wrong in not consenting to hold his title of King of Poland from the munificence of the treaties of Vienna, but that such being the case, there is no occasion to urge the quarrel any further;

That the Federals are strange people to speak of the rebellion of the South in the style of the Czar of All the Russias, or of the Sultan of Constantinople, or of Louis XIV., seeing that they are themselves the product of three successive rebellions; the rebellion against Charles I., the rebellion against James II., and the rebellion against George III., but, things being as they are, there is no help for it, they must please themselves;

That the Confederates are a Power which reposes upon the

most horrible of the crimes of humanity, but, nevertheless, there is no occasion to interfere with them.

Thus, in the matter of theories for the use of chanceries which respect themselves, Lord Russell's consists in censuring what is permitted and in permitting what is censured. The question with him is to think deliberately, to speak afterwards, and not to act at all. He does not object to the policy of a Secretary for Foreign Affairs being powerless, provided that it is so honestly, and that it atones for its inaction by its frankness.

It remains to be seen how far this strange compromise will suffice for the glory of a great minister, the representative of a great people. For my part, I have my doubts about it. Not more in politics than in religion do I like faith without works, and it seems to me doubly deplorable that such a man as Earl Russell should constitute himself the organ of a policy whose wisdom bears such a close resemblance to impotence, and whose moderation is so nearly akin to selfishness.

That Lord Palmerston should have expressed himself after this fashion, would have been natural enough. Lord Palmerston has always regarded human affairs in an easy-going way, and principles are an impediment with which he has never seriously embarrassed himself. He is, besides, an Englishman in the most English sense of the word, and can see no reason for going forward when it appears to him to be to the immediate advantage of England to remain where he is. But Lord Russell? It is, indeed, difficult for those who love to admire his courageous rectitude and who remember his past services, to read without a sort of painful emotion such a speech as that at Blairgowrie.

The more so that there it was the man, not the minister, who spoke.

It might have been supposed that, in his despatches, he had not been permitted to be altogether himself. But at Blairgowrie, in the presence of the tenants of an estate where he was residing for a short time, it was not the collective views of the Cabinet which he was called upon to express, but his own individually: for it is the practice in England that, during parliamentary vacations, ministers enjoying their holiday shall recover a portion of the liberty of which they are deprived by the exigencies of official life, when Parliament is sitting. They then cease to be answerable for their words to their colleagues, to

become, in a more complete and direct manner, responsible to public opinion. Light has, thus, often been thrown upon differences which existed in the bosom of the Cabinet. The public thus learned, for instance, so as to have no possible doubt about the matter, that Mr. Gladstone's sympathies in the American question were for the South, while those of his colleague, Mr. Milner Gibson, were for the North.

That the advantages of such a practice outweigh its disadvantages may appear questionable in the eyes of those diplomatists of the old school who, holding humanity in small esteem, demand that governments shall be inscrutable; but, certainly, there is no better illustration of the manners of a free people.

Be that as it may, what we find in Earl Russell's last vacation speech are his own innermost thoughts, and, I repeat, there is nothing to congratulate him upon.

Indeed, the only passage in this speech that commends itself to the friends of justice is this: "The conditions on which Russia had obtained the kingdom of Poland not having been fulfilled, the title of King of Poland is forfeited." That is truly a declaration full of meaning. It seems to announce on the part of the English minister a definitive resolution to recognise the Poles as a belligerent Power.

That would be something; but the position England occupies in the world imposes upon her much graver duties. The principle of non-intervention which she proclaims in theory, though the very nature of things has always compelled her to violate more or less in practice a principle not less illusive than selfish—is neither worthy of her power, nor agreeable to her pride, nor conformable to her interests.

I am aware that with all the great qualities of the insular genius she combines all its defects. I am aware that human *solidarité*—a word for which there is no exact equivalent in the English language—is an idea to which many Englishmen find it hard to raise themselves. It is not here that a Revolution would have written at the head of its programme those words which are the eternal honour of the French Revolution: "Declaration of the rights of man." It is not here that that admirable clause would have been inserted in the social compact: "Whoever oppresses a people declares himself the enemy of all." But let England hearken at least to the voice of her interests. Steam and electricity have in our days made the world too small; in

drawing mankind closer together, they have too closely commingled existences for any one nation to be able with impunity to shut itself up in its selfishness. The saying *chacun pour soi* —"the least French of all the cries which have ever escaped from the lips of a Frenchman"—is not only vile but foolish. Why, at this very hour, are there so many famished human beings in Lancashire? Because far away, very far away, beyond the Atlantic, it had been suffered that men should be made slaves. The lesson is as clear as it is severe. Woe to the peoples who cannot receive it!

LETTER CXCVIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

October 3rd, 1863.

THE severity with which the French papers have criticised the speech delivered by Earl Russell at Blairgowrie seems to have astonished the English, who, for the most part, have pronounced it to be very wise, very firm, inspired by honourable feelings, and stamped with the mark of a statesman.

How well this difference of appreciation measures the distance which separates the genius of our country from the genius of England!

Whatever our shortcomings may be—and they are, undoubtedly, great and numerous—we cannot at least be charged with thinking too much of our own interest. As soldiers, we are crusaders. With us the thinker is combined with the missionary. Even when we exclaim—"Conquest! Never!"—we are always ready to add—"Propagandism for ever!" It is we who make revolutions for the triumph of "the rights of man." It is we who send our nobles to encounter death on the other side of the Atlantic, in the service of a republic. It is we who wear mourning for a nation of friends, dead far away. It is we who console ourselves for the loss of our own liberty by fighting for the liberty of others. Therein lies our force. The world, in whose welfare we take such a passionate interest, cannot help, in return, taking an interest in us. Whether it will or no, its eyes cannot detach themselves from the contemplation of our inner life. Its destinies

revolve almost inevitably within the whirlwind of our own. When we slumber, Europe sleeps; when we rouse ourselves, she is filled with agitation. Our power, strange to say, consists in being as little as possible *ourselves*, and it is when we are the least French that, from the collective point of view, we are the most French.

As for the English, who, however, possess all the virtues which we want, the contrary is the case. They absorb, but do not irradiate.

This is the reason why Lord Russell's speech, so little relished in France, has been so much relished in England.

In fact, if this speech be read attentively, a continual effort will be remarked throughout to ennoble, in the eyes of the English, the selfishness of the English policy, in all that relates to the great questions of the day.

Lord Russell declares aloud that it is not the interest of England to wage war for Poland, but he stigmatises the original partition of that country, and protests against the right of conquest.

In the affairs of Mexico he cries up the prudent policy of abstention; but, with constrained emotion, affirms that every people ought to belong to itself.

His eye fixed upon the war that tears asunder the New World, he congratulates himself upon having abstained from spending English money; and, a truly Casimir Périer, he says, as it were, "The blood of Englishmen belongs only to England;" but he takes care to denounce the institution of slavery, which he defines, without any circumlocution, as "one of the most horrible crimes which have ever degraded humanity."

In a word, he labours to relieve, by the high tone of his language, the obliteration of his policy. He speaks much, to obtain absolution for not acting at all; he is the more wroth with what he permits, because he deems himself obliged to permit it; he desires to give his country, in the eyes of the world, the attitude of a soldier standing at ease; he is evidently pursued by an apprehension lest the inaction of England should be attributed to a cold indifference, a culpable desertion of just causes. The true sense, the inner meaning, and, as they say here, the gist of Lord Russell's speech, are in this phrase: "We feel for the welfare of humanity as energetic sentiments as any other people in the world." It is the cry of a man who is in haste to repel a reproach foreseen.

Had England shown herself dissatisfied with such a speech, she would have been like an accused person who, in presence of the judge, should think of nothing but making complaints against his counsel.

The truth is that, unless my observations deceive me, the English, like Lord Russell, fear war to the highest degree, and that, also like his Lordship, they feel a certain inward shame of being so much afraid of it. They deem it too much opposed to their interests to encounter its perils, and too conformable to their dignity not to be sensible of the necessity of making words supply the place of deeds. With this mental situation Lord Russell's speech fitly harmonises.

Those who, on the other side of the Channel, have fancied they must seek in it for either new ideas or precise indications, do not appear to me to have understood either its character or its significance. In the position which she has taken up, and from which she has no intention of issuing, what England required her Foreign Secretary to present to the listening world was not a programme, but a speech for the defence. Under that head the speech delivered at Blairgowrie was what it ought to be, and could not be other than what it was.

Passing over in silence, in order to avoid repetitions, the questions of Mexico and Poland, I arrive at a bound at that part of this harangue which refers to the United States, and which is considered as a reply to Mr. Sumner's attacks.

If, in reproaching the English for not having allied themselves with the right, as represented by the Federals, the American pamphleteer had rested only upon the condemnation incurred by the rebels, Lord Russell's answer would be conclusive. There are, in fact, revolts of a quite legitimate character; and to condemn rebellion simply as such, is ill becoming in a people whose destiny has been made by three great revolts—that against Charles I., that against James II., and that against George III. But when Mr. Sumner accuses England of having accorded the title of belligerents to slaveowners—that England who, after abolishing slavery in her own colonies, has combated it in every treaty and chased it over every sea—it is a poor defence to urge the solitary argument: "Spain and Brazil have slaves. We have allowed it. Slavery is, therefore, under the guarantee of international law." What! by Lord Russell's own showing slavery is a horrible crime—a crime that dishonours humanity;

and humanity, as represented in the great nations by which its power is manifested, must not place among its rights—nay, among its duties—the necessity of making an end of a crime that dishonours it! That a society should be rent asunder by a revolt sprung from diverging ideas, or opposite interests, is an event of a local character which oftentimes cannot be thoroughly appreciated off the scene where it has broken out, and which, therefore, cannot imperatively call for the intervention of other peoples. But how can that which interests the human conscience be indifferent to any one who has a conscience?

In presence of a crime which, to use Lord Russell's own expression, "degrades humanity," there are no longer Englishmen, Frenchmen, or Americans—there are only *men!* That, in such a case, a nation should tolerate what she feels herself powerless to prevent, may be excusable; but let not tolerance of wrong be erected as a principle—let it not be turned into a rule of international law.

Whoso thus seeks to justify himself pronounces his own condemnation.

LETTER CXCIX.

BETHNAL GREEN.

October 4th, 1863.

On Sunday last Guildford was the theatre of strange and disgraceful scenes. The fair which is held there annually was announced for the 4th of October, and, in honour of that event, I suppose, the tavern-keepers were authorised to sell beer on the Lord's Day at any hour. What was the consequence? Some four hundred rustic boors having gathered together about a mile from Guildford, found it a very amusing pastime to attack passers-by with kicks and cuffs and volleys of stones. Several ladies were seriously wounded, one of whom, it is said, had even an eye knocked out. Numbers of gentlemen were cruelly beaten, and to punish one of them for having fancied that it was not the part of the beaten to pay for the violence they had endured, a bonfire was made of the palings which surrounded his grounds.

The curious part of the thing is that the assailants bore no malice against any one. On their part it was a pure frolic, downright fun, in conformity to an ancient local tradition, which the very authorities seem to think they are bound to respect. In every country, I fear, a deep layer of barbarism underlies the lowest stratum of civilization; but such is especially the case in England, where the dregs of dregs are to be met with.

There is nothing surprising in this. If poverty is an unfathomable abyss anywhere, it is here; and every one knows of what vices it is the source. I have before me a description of Bethnal Green, written in English, which is enough to make the hair stand on one's head. Bethnal Green is not a spot situated at the extremity of the world. No; Bethnal Green is part of a town peopled with Crœsuses; it is an immense district, extending from the extreme east to the extreme north-east of London; it is one of those numerous and monstrous villages which, placed one after another, form the capital of England; it is a city containing 79,000 inhabitants. Well, this city is the haunt of just so many miserable wretches. Humanity there grovels in a multitude of pestilential hovels, in the neighbourhood of which you would not venture to show yourself for fear of being robbed. If you happen to ask the wan inmate of one of those dens—the approaches to which are guarded by filth and stench—why he does not lodge a complaint, why he does not apply to the inspector of public health, why he does not cry for help to the guardians of society,—he will tell you that he dreads progress worse than the plague; that the rent of his horrible dwelling-place would be raised on the day that it ceased to be so horrible, and that it is far better to lie down in a stable than in the street. No other representative of civilization is to be seen there than the policeman—no other representative of Christianity than the official distributor of alms. It is the favourite lodging-place of pigs, and as these animals are badly fed and ill-looked after, as they wallow all day in filth, as they swill from gutters filled with all sorts of abominations, and as the children of the quarter are compelled to live higgledy-piggledy with these hideous companions in a pestilential atmosphere, the result that has ensued is a new variety of contagious disease, for which there has hitherto been no name in England. This disease, which has just announced its arrival by its victims, is called "Pig Scab." Of all the facts set before the eyes of the public in the course

of this week, this, alas! is not the least important. All comment is, of course, superfluous.

Here are some figures, however, which are not inappropriate to this sad theme.

In England and Wales the number of indigent poor at the charge of the parish was, at the commencement of this year, 1,142,624—that is to say, one in seventeen. This number may be thus analysed: able-bodied men, 598,346; men in feeble health or infirm, 503,809; lunatics, 37,018; vagabonds, 4,234—the rest not classified. Consequently, on the first day of the year 1863, there were reckoned very nearly 600,000 men in England and Wales capable and desirous of working, but absolutely without work. And what is really appalling is, that their number in the month of January, 1863, was more than double what it was in the corresponding month of the preceding year; whence it may fairly be inferred that the plague of pauperism has terribly increased in a few months.

During this time, the world's favourites were enjoying themselves. The splendid banquet lately offered to the Princess of Wales in the Guildhall called forth, on the part of Mr. Deputy Elliott, certain remonstrances which are worthy of an echo. At the last meeting of the Common Council this unaccommodating individual, who is somewhat of a "Danubian peasant," presented the following list of costly vanities with which the stewards of the banquet thought proper to swell the charges: 7 ivory hair brushes, £12 10*s.*; 10 magnificent tortoise-shell combs, £4 17*s.*; 60 flasks of eau-de-cologne, £6 14*s.*; 18 boxes of pearl powder and 10 scented sachets, £5 6*s.*; 117 cakes of fancy soaps, £4 12*s.* 6*d.*; 4 ivory clothes' brushes, £6; etc., etc. On arriving at the item of eau-de cologne, the speaker interrupted himself to remark that this profusion of disinfectants would have been more suitable to the occasion had the intention been to receive the King of Dahomey and his swarthy suite of ladies of honour. With not less energy did he protest against the purchase of two Sèvres vases and a beautiful porcelain tea-service, the whole for the sum of £42 16*s.* "If these objects," said he, "had been destined for the Kensington Museum, or for the Mansion House, to be preserved as curious specimens of the ceramic art in the nineteenth century, I would have held my peace. But no; they have since disappeared, or, as a chemist would express it, they have been sublimated." People are awaiting, with a smile on their lips, for the Committee's reply.

LETTER CC.

ENGLISH WORSHIP OF THE CONCRETE.

October 10*th*, 1863.

THE last number of the periodical called the *Saturday Review* contains an article on the use of abstract terms—especially on the word *principle*—by French writers, an article whose importance springs from the very fact that it is not serious—or, to speak more plainly, that it is childish.

The less sense indeed this article shows, the more remarkable is the fact of its appearance in a journal which, if perhaps too boldly stamped with literary self-conceit, is, after all, got up with talent, and wields an influence which it must be afraid of compromising.

I could understand that, in a small journal of no pretension and no weight, we might be asked, "Principles! What are principles? Assuredly one must be a Frenchman to fall into this unmeaning jargon." But the *Saturday Review* is a paper which prides itself on having a thinking public; and we ask ourselves what in the world its columns have to do with a critic who evidently wants two more books in his library, namely, the *Dictionary of the French Academy*, to teach him the meaning of certain words in our language, and Johnson's *English Dictionary*, to teach him the meaning of certain words in his own?

For we must remark, to begin with, that the article in question is headed "*principes*." As if the word *principles* was not English! As if this word, according to Johnson's explanation, was not wholly and assuredly orthodox in point of grammar, having many significations, each most precise, and each answering with wonderful accuracy to one of those contained in our French word *principe!* As if, in short, that thorough Englishman, Mr. John Stuart Mill, had never named one of his finest works, "Principles of Political Economy"!

But why dwell on this? Your readers would be amazed at any one wasting time in explaining that a principle is the original idea whence flow all the ideas that make up this or that system, and also the original fact to which are related all the particular

facts that constitute this or that rule of conduct. When we say, for instance, that at a particular period the principle of freedom triumphed, does it not mean, for the first schoolboy we meet as clearly as for an Oxford or Cambridge professor, that at the period referred to men rejoiced in individual freedom, in freedom of conscience, in freedom of the press; in a word, in all that constitutes a government based on that original idea, that *principle*—Freedom?

Taken by itself, therefore, the article which supplied me with the subject of this letter is not worth a minute's notice. I only point it out because its publication in the present state of things is characteristic. At a moment when France and England are divided on the Polish question, this negation of the word *principle* by an English journal of great influence is a very noteworthy and important fact. Can the word seem unpleasant, because the idea expressed by it is found unpleasant? Is it desired to banish from the grammar what is found desirable to banish from diplomacy? Certain it is that, in the Polish question, where we recognise the duty of going to assert a principle, the English seem only to recognise the danger of compromising an interest!

No doubt the word "principle" may be well or ill applied; but has it therefore no essential meaning? No doubt the expression, "principle of authority," would have been defined by Bossuet or Louis XIV. otherwise than it would be in our days by a journalist of the school of Voltaire or of Rousseau; but does it follow that such an expression should be forever outlawed from the vocabulary? And ought we, making up our minds to the proscription of *principles*, to admit *opinions* alone as worthy of a place in human language?

The *Saturday Review* would not gainsay this; and in this matter it reflects, I fear, but too plainly a very decided tendency in the classes which here go by the name of "the governing classes."

The truth is, that between a *principle* and an *opinion* there is the same difference as between the general and the particular, the necessary and the contingent, the absolute and the relative. Now in England the prevalent worship is that of the particular, the contingent, the relative.

Strange fact! No country in the world has produced men in whom the generalising power has been more gloriously manifested. It is enough to quote Bacon in philosophy, Newton in

astronomy, Shakspeare in literature; and yet it is certain that this country, viewed as a whole, fails in the spirit of generalisation. To lay down a principle, to disengage from a series of particular facts the idea that rules and embraces them, to discover what is permanent in accidental phenomena, all this is as contrary to its habits, as accordant with our own. Let us not grieve thereat: it is just because with us the word *principle* is not devoid of meaning, that we are at this moment so ardently espousing the cause of the oppressed Poles. In the world of thought, as on the globe, we inhabit a continent, while the English dwell in an island.

Their conduct is quite in keeping with their cast of mind. Even as they think only for the passing day, so do they live only for the passing day; preferring to all others the rule of interest, which is the most changeful but the most convenient; and feeling less strong on the firm ground of *principles* than on the shifting ground of *opinions*.

We in France always look at things from the standpoint of things as they should be: here they look at them from the standpoint of things as they are. Hence the readiness of Englishmen to take in good part that shiftiness in their statesmen, which among ourselves would cause a scandal. Never was Sir Robert Peel more popular than when he became the promoter of measures which he had formerly attacked without mercy. People admired him, not for being converted to a principle, but for surrendering to a fact.

And this genius for things relative is so thoroughly English, that you find it everywhere, even in their way of conceiving art. Formed to excel in the painting of anecdotes and familiar scenes, in drawing the likeness of individuals, in the realism of landscapes, they have never reached the higher department of art, style painting. And why? Because style in painting is also a principle, since, according to the fine definitions given by one of our most competent critics, style is the generalisation of forms, the truth of accident brought back to the truth of type, the individual raised to the dignity of the species. But even when an English artist happens to comprehend and teaches style, he dares not, or has not the power to apply his own conceptions. Sir Joshua Reynolds, contradicting by the intensely relative and English character of his works the grand ideas of a nobler and more typical beauty, as set forth by himself so persistently in his lec-

tures, and allowing the painter in his case to belie the professor, —Reynolds bears a striking resemblance to Lord Russell abandoning, after he had asserted, the rights of Poland, and revering the slavery he had erewhile cursed.

Shall I go on to defend French writers against the *Saturday Review*, which charges them with using abstract terms? This reproach, you see, is but another reading of the one which I have already answered. No doubt the abuse of abstract terms is wrong. But the use of them? I should like to know what would become of philosophy without abstract terms. Is there a general idea, a noble thought, a generous feeling, which does not call imperatively for the use of an abstract term? And might that perchance be the reason why abstract terms are so troubled to find favour with the *Saturday Review?* For, to speak plainly, it is mockery to assert that our language is thereby made obscure, and that the repute in which the world holds the French tongue for its precision, its clearness, is a repute unfairly won. For my part, I fear much that this grand scorn of abstract terms on the part of the English journal hides something more than a criticism purely philological. I seem to detect in it a systematic enmity to those high aspirations which in our French language, so clear, let those gentlemen say what they will, we class under the name of ideal! And assuredly, in opposing that enmity, we mean neither to sink into vagueness nor to indulge in chimeras. Principles are at bottom the quintessence of facts, and the ideal is the quintessence of the real.

LETTER CCI.

LOVE OF ENGLISHMEN FOR PUBLICITY IN THE NEWSPAPERS.

October 10th, 1863.

THE great event,—I am wrong, the great accident of the week, has been an earthquake, which, though it killed nobody, upset nothing, and had no sadder result than the giving a rude shake to a good many sleepers, was felt in many parts of England, especially in the neighbourhood of Liverpool, Hereford, Worcester, and Derby. When anything extraordinary happens in this country it is wonderful with what superstitious eagerness

a host of people address themselves to the *Times*, either to impart to it their hopes and fears, or to acquaint it with their ideas, or to let it into the secret of their emotions.

Be not surprised, therefore, if the earthquake in question has yielded us as many as fifty-three letters in the *Times*, filling therein no fewer than seven columns. The writers deemed it essential to inform the public, some of them how they had merely hastened to put their heads under the bedclothes, others how they had hesitated to jump out of bed, or had even jumped without hesitating. The number of those who, waking with a start, betook themselves to crying out "thieves!" is imposing, and reveals in the householders a ruling pre-occupation. Some of these epistolary effusions allow the light of publicity to fall on bedroom details of more or less equivocal interest, and would furnish us at need with a chronicle worthy of the *Diable Boiteux*. One of the writers, for instance, tells us that his wife as she lay beside him could not help experiencing a violent palpitation of the heart, although he declares her to be a woman of masculine courage; while he for his part felt his blood circle more freely; and he lets the public know, through the medium of the *Times*, that an agreeable warmth diffused through all his being is the only sensation he has to record. Here, if I mistake not, is a trait of manners. The English, who in certain respects have so great a dread of publicity, seek it in certain others with infantine ardour. They will guard their doors with rails and ditches against the passer-by; they will surround themselves if they can with walls; they never deem themselves enough at home. But let the moment come for introducing the whole world through the medium of the press into their bed-chamber, and they will not find it the least inconvenient. This is another of those numberless contradictions which apparently make up the moral history of this remarkable and singular people.

LETTER CCII.

DEATH OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

October 10*th*, 1863.

THE heads of the Church are in mourning. Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin, died last Thursday. Economist and theologian, he never displayed much depth either as theologian or as economist. His "Introduction to the Study of Political Economy" adds not one decisive argument to those on which Adam Smith, MacCulloch, and the writers of their school, founded the doctrine of "Let alone;" and his "Evidences of Christianity," for the use of children, float on the surface of the subject. But none the less was his a penetrating mind, ingenious, endowed at once with strength and subtlety, and quite capable of breaking the unworthy yoke of commonplaces, or even of essaying adventures in the way of thought. I remember that an English poet named Horne, now in Australia, read me one day a drama he had composed, in which Judas Iscariot was drawn as a man sincerely devoted to Christ, whom he had only betrayed for the purpose of forcing him to employ his divine Omnipotence, viewed from the standpoint of material strength, against his foes. "I presume," said I, laughingly, to Mr. Horne, "that you have not composed this drama for the stage? What a pretty scandal it would cause!" "Well," answered he; "do you know whence I took the idea of my piece? From a sermon by the Archbishop of Dublin. I am therefore quite in keeping with orthodoxy." It was also the "Most Rev. Richard Whately," to whom I have heard ascribed the very curious evolution of the paradox that Napoleon I. never existed. It is a capital bit of raillery, and tolerably conclusive, though unluckily not sufficiently so. Never was Dupuis' method of turning each great historic, or mythologic reality into a myth, shown up in a wittier fashion. The list of Richard Whately's works would be a long one if none were to be omitted. He has written on "Irish Tithes," on "Transportation," on "Difficulties which occur in the writings of St. Paul," on the "Currency," on "English Synonyms," on "The Origin of Civilisation," in short *de omni re*. His mind rode forth in a

thousand different directions, leaving some memento of its course in each. Moreover he was liberal-minded, and took more interest than men of his station are wont to do in the march of education. In politics his rule of conduct was "Measures, not men," a maxim equally suitable, according as it is applied, for the boldest hearts and the most cautious natures. Within a year after the University had elected him Professor of Political Economy, he was raised in 1831 to the rank of Archbishop: the only example of a churchman who became Archbishop without having passed through any ecclesiastical dignity. It will not be easy to replace him; but Lord Palmerston has a lucky hand. The Very Reverend Richard Whately was born in 1787: consequently he died in his seventy-seventh year. Can it be that mental activity is a patent for long life? Instances tending to prove it present themselves in crowds. What men ever employed their intellectual powers more continuously, more zealously, with more lavish indifference, than Lord Palmerston and Lord Brougham, both of them so old and yet so young?

I was about to quote Lord Lyndhurst, whom people had almost accustomed themselves to deem immortal. But this wonderful old man turns out to be ill, nay, very ill; a little more, and even he too will be thought liable to death.

LETTER CCIII.

A WISE DECISION OF LORD RUSSELL.

October 12th, 1863.

The English Government has at last ordered the seizure at Liverpool of the ships built by Messrs. Laird. This decision attests the sincerity and the wisdom of Lord Russell. It shows that he regards the duties of neutrality in a serious light, and we can but congratulate him thereupon. Need I say that the partisans of the South here are like to scold? Already, if they dare not assail the lawfulness of the seizure, which evidently was not commanded until it had been thoroughly matured and was supported by conclusive proofs, they hint that it is one of the measures taken to aggravate the very evil they are concerned to cure. The Confederates, they assure us, will be furious; and as for the

Federals, they will see in such an act nothing but the suggestions of a timid policy. The former will have been provoked to anger, while the pride of the latter will have been swelled beyond measure. So speak the champions of the slaveholders. Need I point out the idleness of their complaints or the vice of their reasoning? If the Confederates have a mind to wax furious because England will not please them by agreeing to a scandalous breach of the neutrality she solemnly proclaimed before the world, that is a misfortune for which England will do well to find comfort; and with regard to the Federals, it is a wanton calumny to assert that in their eyes people are cowards whenever they are just. Whatever amount of arrogance the foes of the North are pleased to ascribe to the Yankee, it is absurd to imagine that the people of New York, with a dreadful war on their hands, deem themselves strong enough to deal as they like with the English, and regard a righteous concession on their part as a mark of cowardice and an avowal of weakness. At the outside might we presume them capable of such an excess of foolish pride, if the English Government had first refused what it now accords; if it had acted only under the weight of a threat and with the headlong haste of fear. But no; the order to seize the vessels built by Messrs. Laird has just been given by virtue of the same principle, under the manifest sway of the same feeling, that had already induced it to seize the *Alexandra*. Far from breathing menace, the comments offered by the Washington Cabinet have always been expressed in the language of an appeal to the sentiments of loyalty and justice. In short, the decision has come forth only after a delay whose duration proves the perfect freedom of spirit which, in this case, controlled the inquiries of the English Government.

LETTER CCIV.

DEATH OF LORD LYNDHURST.

October 17th, 1863.

It is but five days since Lord Lyndhurst gave up the ghost, and already have the mouthpieces of public opinion exhausted over his death-bed the whole vocabulary of praise. Hardly have

two or three liberal journals dared to mingle a few discordant notes amidst this concert of eulogies and regrets. Nevertheless, something, I fancy, might be said against this apotheosis of the defunct. But you know what Victor Hugo puts into the mouth of an old gentleman talking to the king:

> "Nous portons tous les deux au front une couronne:
> Vous de fleurs de lys d'or, et moi de cheveux blancs." *

Old age has a majesty from which no one can defend himself; and Lord Lyndhurst died in his ninety-second year.

What an old age moreover his has been! Who does not see him even now as he came on the 5th July, 1859, at eighty-eight years of age to take his accustomed place in the House of Lords, where, with his body slightly bent, his hand resting on a rail put up beforehand for his use, but with an eye full of life, and in a firm voice he commended to his country the policy of watchfulness and vigour? It was an imposing scene, and recalled that memorable sitting in which the great Chatham fainted away. Only in Lord Lyndhurst's case the strong soul found itself better aided by strength of body.

The energy with which the old man sounded the alarm with regard to the threatening ideas imputed to the Imperial Government; the youthful emotion wherewith he called forth the ghost of invasion; his assaults on the peaceful spirit of the Manchester School; the way in which he besought England to beware of overtrustfulness, to grudge no outlay on her defence, and to watch with shouldered arms; and lastly, the cry which ended his powerful speech, that fearful cry of *Væ Victis*, which all the echoes in Great Britain repeated on the morrow;—all this was present to the mind and heart of every Englishman when the news reverberated, "Lord Lyndhurst is dead!"

In the eyes of a self-adoring nation what is there which such an effort of patriotism, made by a man of eighty-eight, will not hide from view?

Besides, death has the privilege of scaring criticism. It seems as if there were cowardice in blaming one whose lips death has just closed for ever; and people are ready to regard the incense burnt at the tomb as a part of the religion of funerals.

In this vulgar homage paid to the dead is there not a perilous

* "We both alike a crown upon our foreheads bear:
You one of golden lilies, I of hoary hair."

weakness, a weakness little worthy of the manners of a free people, and one which betrays anything but a virile soul? Whence does death after all derive the right to enter into rivalry with truth? And what is the majesty of that which lasted long and lasts no longer, if the reverence due to it is made up of good-natured lies or cowardly reticences? It is allowable and may seem fitting to keep silence before an open grave; it is allowable and may seem fitting to put off speaking till the ashes are cold; but if one does speak, ought he to forget that the eve as well as the morrow belongs to truth, and that the dead, above all the famous dead, are a lesson to the living?

That John Singleton Copley, the son of a portrait painter at Boston, must needs have had some conspicuous merit to tread out his way into the first ranks of the English aristocracy; that he was at least a distinguished, if not first-rate, lawyer; a clever politician, a partisan at once supple and vigorous; that he marked his place among orators; in a word, that he had in him the stuff of which fame is made, it would be difficult to deny. But the striking feature of his career, when you look into it, is that for nothing great are we indebted to his talents, with no one great idea can his name be unreservedly associated, nor is there one cause which he served with undoubted and unvarying conviction.

It was in 1817, during the ministry of Lord Liverpool, at a trial opened against Surgeon Watson and Thistlewood, for demagogic intrigues and seditious meetings, that the son of Copley gave his measure as an advocate. But while Wetherell, charged conjointly with himself with the defence of the accused, employed for their deliverance all the bursting eloquence of a man who forgets himself in the pursuit of his aim, the other, with his deliberate calmness, his argumentative coolness, found means of fastening on himself the favourable, almost grateful attention of Lord Liverpool; to such purpose that the services of the counsel for Watson and Thistlewood were again retained by the minister against another fomenter of insurrection, Jeremiah Brandreth. The confessions made to Copley by his clients in the former trial enabled him to procure the condemnation of the accused in the second.

Through this gate it was that he entered on the road to power. Lord Liverpool had divined him at once. What more was wanting? Parliamentary Reform in the matter of elections had not yet swept the stables of Augeas. It was contrived somehow that John Copley should be furnished with a seat in Parliament. So

early as 1819 he was Solicitor-General, and as such he had to follow Gifford in maintaining the shameful charge of adultery brought by George IV. against Queen Caroline. Appointed Attorney-General in 1823, and Master of the Rolls in 1826, it needed only a favourable opportunity for him to become Lord Chancellor. This he became by the elevation of Canning to the dignity of Premier in 1827. The day before he was merely Sir John Copley: on the morrow he was Lord Lyndhurst, having taken his title from the place where he first saw her who after wards became his wife.

And now the character of the man is about to shape itself.

The vital question of that hour was the emancipation of the Catholics. In the former ministry there was one man who wanted it, namely Canning; and one who opposed it, the head of the Cabinet, Lord Liverpool himself. While the latter was at the head of affairs, Sir John Copley, not content with opposing Catholic Emancipation, delivered some vehement speeches against that measure. But no sooner had the reins of State passed from the hands of Lord Liverpool into those of Canning, than Sir John Copley was seen suddenly to change his attitude and his language towards the Catholics.

When the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, opposed them, he too declared against them: when the Prime Minister, Canning, deemed himself bound to support them, he too declared on their side. Could it be that between to-day and to-morrow the light had revealed itself to his mind? One circumstance, alas! there is which belies that charitable supposition. Canning was in in want of a Lord Chancellor to support the Emancipation of the Catholics; and as Lord Eldon preferred renouncing the wool-sack to failing in due regard for the convictions of his whole life-time, Sir John Copley, in order to replace him and become Lord Lyndhurst, agreed to burn what he had worshipped, and to worship what he had burned. Nor is this all: when Canning died the very year of his accession, that is in 1827, and the Duke of Wellington succeeded him, and the course of events, the march of ideas, had made Catholic Emancipation a reform thenceforth impossible to shirk, that reform found one of its most fiery champions in Lord Lyndhurst, who remained Lord Chancellor. He spoke as zealously for it in 1829 as he had spoken against it in 1826. You may guess whether this was done with impunity.

Lord Eldon had presented from the Company of Tailors at

Glasgow a petition against Catholic Emancipation. Lord Lyndhurst asking what the tailors had to say to it, "Their interference is plain enough," answered Lord Eldon, with a bitter voice and a play on the word *turncoat*, which in English means at once a man who turns his coat and a renegade,—"tailors are not fond of turncoats." Great was the rage among the Protestant peers against a Lord Chancellor so suddenly converted to tolerance, and loudly did they applaud an illustration adduced by Lord Winchelsea: "One day it happened that a woman in Kent was brought to bed of twins, one white, the other black. Well, there is nothing in this freak of Nature so extraordinary as the two speeches of which the noble lord has been delivered on the question of Catholic Emancipation."

If now we pass on from the ministry of the Duke of Wellington to that of Lord Grey, and from the emancipation of the Catholics in 1829 to Parliamentary Reform in 1832, whom do we find heading the opposition to this last reform, the greatest achievement of the spirit of freedom in England? Whom but Lord Lyndhurst? Needless to observe that he had then ceased to enjoy his share of power. He would regain it by the rejection of the proposed measure. So he led the assault with the courage of panting ambition. On the second reading of the Bill of 1831, the heat of the strife inspired him with an eloquence which at one stroke won him a foremost place among orators militant and orators of the first rank. Others stooped, wavered, fell back. He was immoveable. For a moment he made victory doubtful, by adjourning the discussion of the clause known under the name of the Disfranchisement Clause. It was then that William IV. proposed to him to form a new administration, to make the attempt at least; and though at that time a Tory Ministry would have stood on a volcano, perhaps the experiment would not have miscarried, if to govern as a subordinate had suited Sir Robert Peel.

Be that as it may, parliamentary reform triumphed over the passionate endeavours of Lord Lyndhurst, and there was a moment when the exasperation against him was extreme. For the Liberal party it was so provoking a spectacle, this of a plebeian playing so zealously the game of the aristocracy, and devoting all the resources of his mind to bar out the people, in whose ranks he was born, from the road to public life! He liked pleasure, costly furniture, luxury, entertainments, and his wife was one of

those who plumed themselves on setting the fashion, which is always costly: some spoke of his venality in whispers; others, bolder or less scrupulous, published it in libels full of venom.

Lord Lyndhurst prosecuted the libellers, confuted them, silenced them, and set his face to the storm with a fearlessness which his enemies sought to cry down by saying that he had a forehead of brass. Certainly, at this season of his life, he needed more than middling firmness of character to confront the rage which deemed itself justified in despising him.

Had he chanced to die then, who knows what figure he would make in history? But he was permitted to live long enough to erase these baleful impressions from the minds of his contemporaries; to place, if one may so speak, between those impressions and posterity the reminiscences of an old age tranquil, stately, grown more and more strange to the littlenesses no less than to the rage of party spirit, but open nevertheless to the promptings of a patriotism incapable of lassitude.

He owned, moreover, some precious qualities. In him the private virtues were always tending to atone for the faults of his public life. The bitterness of political debate begot no personl rancour in his heart. The generosity missing from his conceptions and ideas was present in his bearing, as an individual towards individuals. But, once again I say, his long career offers no one point of essential profit to the succeeding generation. We saw why and how he allied himself to Catholic Emancipation, which he had begun by opposing. So, too, at a later day, when he had once more mounted the woolsack in consequence of Sir R. Peel's return to power, he, a protectionist, avowed himself in favour of free trade, merely because he deemed it his duty to face about with his colleagues in a ministry already facing about.

One measure, the honour of which may rightly be ascribed to him, was that which admitted the Jews to municipal offices; but even in this case the public man was half concealed by the private, for the interest he displayed in the Jews dates from his marriage with his second wife, who was of Jewish descent, and from the new relations which arose out of this union.

Shall we pass in review the more memorable of his speeches? In one he thunders against Catholic Emancipation; in another against Parliamentary Reform; in a third, against the Irish, "strangers in blood, in language and religion;" in a fourth,

against the administration of Lord Melbourne, whom he pulls to pieces, not without drawing on himself this cruel retort from the irritated minister: "May I be allowed to recall what the Earl of Strafford said of the Earl of Bristol, with whom the learned lord deserves perhaps to be compared: 'The malignity of his proceedings was enhanced by the great talents of which God had granted him the use, and the Devil the application.'"

Thus we have always the assailant, the man of strife, as shown in the fine oration to which I have already referred on the dangers of England, and her need to watch under arms; but never the man taken up with the future of mankind, never the man possessed with a mighty love of the human race.

Do not be surprised, then, if Lord Lyndhurst was not eloquent with the eloquence which goes to the heart and triumphs through the heart. A quick comprehension of his subject, a sober and powerful style, remarkable clearness of exposition, closeness of reasoning, formidable skill in handling sarcasm,—such were the characteristic features of his oratorical power; they were in keeping with his part, and sufficient for his purpose.

The lawyer at any rate leaves behind him the marks we look for in vain on the road travelled by the politician? No, if the judgments delivered by him while he was head of the Court of Exchequer bear pleasing witness to his mental subtlety and shrewdness, they are not regarded in the judicial world as destined to form precedents.

For all his length of days, then, Lord Lyndhurst failed to mark his course upon earth by any deeds or ideas of a nature to survive himself; for in life the main point is not its length, but its radiation. Show me a man whose life, albeit prematurely cut down, has nevertheless sunk deep into that of his fellows; of that man I will say he has lived long. It is possible to die young, yet full of days.

LETTER CCV.

MRS. BEECHER STOWE'S BROTHER AT EXETER HALL.

October 22nd, 1863.

WHAT an extraordinary scene was that which I witnessed the evening before last in Exeter Hall! After that, let the friends

of freedom take courage, and those foreigners who are friends of England cease fearing for her honour! The cause of slavery is not yet won in the land which gave birth to Wilberforce and proclaimed so nobly the abolition of slavery in the English colonies.

The person announced as engaged to speak on behalf of the North before the vast audience containable in Exeter Hall, was the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, brother of that celebrated Mrs. Stowe who some years back thrilled Europe by revealing to her every mystery of slave life, every foul blot in a trade where a man is the merchant, a man the customer, and another man the commodity sold.

To carry out by spoken words the work which his glorious sister had so well furthered with the pen, Mr. Beecher crossed the ocean. Alas! who would ever have suspected a few years ago that a child of America would have needed to come over sea in order to preach in England the gospel of the emancipation of slaves?

Yet more grieved am I at having to aver that this missionary of an idea which one should deem so essentially English has not attained to success without undergoing more than one reverse. What was the history of his mission before the triumph of the day before yesterday? He had been coldly greeted in Edinburgh; he had miscarried in Glasgow, a thing, in some respects, yet more surprising; and at Liverpool, city of builders of privateers for the use of the Confederates, he would have died, if one could die of such things, under a shower of groans and hisses. At Manchester, and at Manchester alone, had he found hearts hungering for his words and hands ready to applaud him; because there the people were present, because there his audience was composed of workmen who feel that slavery is labour dishonoured.

But at last, thank Heaven! Mr. Beecher's voyage will not have been unfruitful. In London, even more than in Manchester, was his victory one of those which leave long traces. This time the blow will tell.

Not that his speech was faultless. But does not that very circumstance add to the significance of the event? No doubt he displayed no great eloquence; but it would be sad if his success were attributable to his eloquence: that success is due to the cause he pleaded.

It was this cause—and never was there a greater—which had

inspired so burning an impatience to hear the speaker among people who knew him only by name; this it was which, the day before yesterday, had caused the influxing towards Exeter Hall at six in the evening,—the meeting was not to begin till seven,—of a multitude already thrilling with enthusiasm. A torrent which has burst its banks does not dash forward with greater violence than did the crowd as soon as the doors yielded them an entrance. I speak from experience, for I was nearly stifled. Though only paid tickets at a shilling or half-a-crown were admitted, the vast hall was crammed with people, and the police had to interfere in order to stop the inundation. Thousands of persons were thrust back into the Strand, and thence into the neighbouring streets, where, for want of something better, they held a meeting in the open air.

Entering among the first with my excellent friend Karl Blind, I endured for about half-an-hour the irksomeness of waiting, aggravated as it was by the almost intolerable heat, until the hand pointed seven o'clock. Mr. Beecher had not yet made his appearance. "Time, time!" was shouted aloud. At the same time some partisans of the South, scattered here and there, were circulating placards attacking President Lincoln and representing Mr. Beecher himself as having said, with regard to the *Trent* affair, "War, rather than yield to the pretensions of England!" On these placards the words, "deluge of blood," ascribed to Mr. Beecher, were printed in huge letters. These bills passed from hand to hand. People glanced at them, and smiled contemptuously.

Still the orator came not, and impatience, mingled with anxiety, was betrayed in the cry, more and more sharply uttered, of "Time, time!" I learned afterwards the reason of the delay. The throng outside was so dense that Mr. Beecher had found it impossible to get through. Some policemen were fain to carry him on their shoulders. At length he came in. Never have I witnessed such transports of enthusiasm. The whole hall stood up; the national "hurrah" resounded like thunder; men waved their hats, women their handkerchiefs. And indeed, I repeat, it was the cause at that moment represented by Mr. Beecher which they cheered. The proof of it is that, in the course of the evening, this demonstration was renewed with augmented vehemence when the name of Mr. Lincoln rose from the speaker's heart up to his lips.

It is a fact truly touching, that on this memorable evening the hall never once cheered but its cheers were prolonged and heightened by those of the street. Between those within and those outside there was so close, so deep a communion of ideas, that the latter applauded, without hearing, every word which the former had applauded because they heard. Often, too, the meeting outside, being addressed by impromptu speakers, uttered shouts of enthusiasm which, as they reached ourselves, produced on the meeting inside an impression of a kind unutterably solemn and affecting. Souls spoke and replied to each other through the thickness of the walls.

Do not, however, exaggerate the import of this narrative. The welcome given to Mr. Beecher by the people of London does not, unhappily, efface the remembrance of that which he received at Glasgow and at Liverpool. Even here the great meeting I have described, which was held under the auspices of the Emancipation Society, illustrated, after all, only the feelings of the popular classes and of that portion of the middle class in whom the intellectual surpasses the mercantile element. Among the numerous personages who figured on the platform I could hardly cite one well-known representative, whether of the political, the fashionable, or the commercial world. The chair, which people hoped to see taken by Mr. Bright, was taken by a modest City magistrate, the City Chamberlain. Professors, clergymen, men of science, and students, these were the men who formed what I would gladly call the pith of the meeting inside, while the outer meeting belonged almost wholly to the popular element. It is true that London in the month of October is not the London of June.

The London of political celebrities,—of rich men, of men of fashion, of all who have the power, the pretension, or the longing to follow conventional routine,—that London is in the country, at the sea-side, on its travels, and it is right to allow for that circumstance. But I do not think myself at fault in affirming that if Mr. Beecher had come here in June instead of coming in October, the meeting formed to receive and hear him would not have presented a physiognomy essentially different from that presented by it the evening before last.

It is possible, as Lord Russell ventured to say in his speech at Blairgowrie, that the partisans of the North are in the majority; but less in England than anywhere else is influence a question of

numbers. What does it matter, England's being numerically on one side, if the "governing classes" are on the other? Now to me it seems certain, that in favour of the South are the very classes whose influence acts decisively on the direction of affairs. That is the evil.

For this evil there is a remedy. Let the armies of the North succeed in winning victory to their side, and the South will have very soon lost in the drawing-rooms, the clubs, even in the dock-yards of Liverpool, the sympathies they have now acquired,—sympathies far from sentimental in their nature, and which would not hold out a month against the might of accomplished facts. It becomes only "small folk," men of the people, and those who profess the worship of ideas, to fire up for truth, to reverence justice for her own sake, and to ask from success, before bowing down to it, a report of the morality of its measures.

I have not space to enter into an analysis of Mr. Beecher's speech, which also contains nothing entirely new. The important point is the manifestation it provoked. When the speaker alluded to the seizure of the iron-plated vessels of Mr. Laird by order of Lord Russell, a thrill of joy passed as it were through the audience. When the speaker alluded to the fashion in which the *Times* treats American affairs, a thrill of anger pervaded the audience. "Three groans for the *Times*," cried a voice, and the three groans were given. It is not, generally speaking, the majority who guide the destinies of England; so I have said, and I cannot unsay it; but in questions where the feelings of that majority burst forth so as to leave no doubt of their intensity, the governing classes are fairly obliged to look behind them, to see if the whole nation is following them, and how far it is inclined to follow them.

LETTER CCVI.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

October 26th, 1863.

Last Saturday the Rev. H. W. Beecher was entertained at Manchester, in the Albion Hotel, by a number of friends. It was a political breakfast-party; the Mayor of Rochdale in the chair. After breakfast the company, in the name of a cause dear

to all men of feeling, offered solemn thanks to the hero of the gathering, and bade him farewell; for he is on the point, I believe, of departing from England.

Need I tell you who this Rev. H. W. Beecher is, who has been thus feasted in the capital of King Cotton's kingdom? The report of his voyage to England must have reached you. The hot strife provoked or renewed by his harangues has been waged about his name in a manner noisy enough for you to hear of it. Brother of the famous Mrs. Beecher Stowe, to whom mankind is indebted for one of the finest books ever inspired by love for man, Mr. Beecher came over from America to remind Englishmen of what many among them were beginning, alas! to forget, after all the emotion with which they had read of it in the story of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Strange indeed are the revolutions which a nation's tendencies and ideas sometimes undergo! What a thrill came over England on the day when Mrs. Beecher Stowe's great novel laid the horrors of slavery bare before her! At that time not one dissentient voice would have dared to raise itself. Then, if ever, were tears triumphant among the women. Who cannot remember that touching letter in which English ladies of all ranks conjured their American sisters to employ their mild, their mighty influence on behalf of mothers from whom the institution of slavery allows their children to be torn for sale; on behalf of children in whom, under the terms of an ungodly code, their own fathers have the right of trafficking? When that letter was written, which can never thenceforth be blotted out of English history, the North and South were not at variance; cotton had not ceased to follow its accustomed road; the sight of the Washington republic divided, torn in pieces, bathed in blood, had not yet inspired Englishmen with the hope of being delivered from an importunate rivalry. All that happened afterwards; and then—the heart closes over the idea—it was necessary that Mrs. Beecher Stowe in her turn should address to the ladies of England, to the gentle subscribers of the letter of which I was just speaking, an appeal that remained unanswered, if not unechoed!

No; in all history I am aware of no sadder phenomenon than the change which has manifested itself in England on the question of slavery since the revolt of the American planters. We have seen the most influential portion of a people who, at an enormous sacrifice, had abolished slavery in their own colonies,

applaud the efforts and the successes of an army composed of slave-dealers. We have seen privateers for the use of negro-proprietors set out from the ports of a country which had hunted down the traffic in negroes over every sea. We have heard the institution of slavery declared to be sacred, agreeable to the teaching of the Bible, agreeable to the law of God; and that too in the land where Wilberforce was born!

Nay, more: it is but a few days since a member of the House of Commons, Mr. Beresford-Hope, won in Liverpool enthusiastic cheers from a numerous audience, when he claimed for England the glory of sympathising with the South,—denied that the majority in this country were, according to Lord Russell's statement, partisans of the North,—laughed at the Attorney-General, Sir Roundell Palmer, for his scruples touching the observance of a strict neutrality,—and, to crown all, seemed to wish that English peasants were in the state of those happy negroes yonder, who are so well fed, so well clad, sent so regularly to church.

Now, while Mr. Beresford-Hope was thus dwelling on the vast, the highly enviable blessings of slavery, another member of the House of Commons, Mr. Lindsay, was priding himself before an agricultural meeting on having at that moment two illustrious guests in his house, Mr. Mason and Colonel Lamar. Of the former I have nothing to tell you which you don't already know; but, that your readers may be enabled to appreciate Mr. Lindsay's boasted feeling for the hospitable virtues, it might perhaps be necessary to acquaint them with the feats that render Colonel Lamar an illustrious guest.

Unluckily, here is the only one with which, to the best of my remembrance, his name has ever been associated. He reminds us of a drama in which there figured a yacht, called the *Wanderer*. The owner of this yacht having turned it into a slaver, four hundred wretched Africans were brought over in it and disembarked in Georgia. What happened? The Federal authorities ordered the seizure of the vessel, condemned it, put it up to auction. With his head in the air, his eye blazing, his fist clenched, Lamar, for such was the owner's name, appeared at the place of sale; thrashed—forgive the use of a word which is wanting to the vocabulary of chivalry—the first man who dared come forward as a bidder, and amidst the cheers of his fellows bought back the yacht for a third of its value. But the New York Yacht Club, of which he was a member, took up the matter

seriously, and deemed it no longer becoming to have among its members a man who had so strong a bias for turning yachts into slave-ships. The *Morning Star*, after tracking out the most salient circumstances of this adventure, asks if the Lamar therein commended to the respect of civilised nations, and the sympathy of Christian souls, can be the same man whose friendship has made the heart of Mr. Lindsay swell with joy and pride. While hoping that Mr. Lindsay may deign to dispel our doubts on this point, I owe it to justice to acknowledge that anyhow there is one act, of which none may dispute the glory with Colonel Lamar. He for the nonce it was, even this friend and guest of Mr. Lindsay, who lately called on the farming-men of Surrey to join him in blessing the institution of slavery, as the divine decree of a Providence careful to save Africa and to civilise America.

Yes, these are the things which men say, hear, and applaud, in the birthland of Wilberforce, in the year 1863 of the Christian era.

After that will you be astonished at my telling you of the cruel trials which Mr. Beecher has had to go through in his apostolic journey through England, how he was all but spurned at Edinburgh, all but cursed at Glasgow, and scouted at Liverpool?

But would I be just to England if I stopped there? No, thank Heaven, no! Justice, civilisation, Christianity, humanity, have their soldiers also in this land, and raise recruits here without ceasing. Neither are captains wanting to this army of the right. The South, fighting for the maintenance of slavery, has against it the most powerful of England's orators, Mr. Bright, and the first of her thinkers, Mr. John Stuart Mill. If the drawing-rooms of London and the dock-yards of Liverpool resound with prayers for the South, the North is warmly supported in the workshops of London and Lancashire. If the stream of ideas at the top flows in one direction, below it flows in a direction diametrically opposite. If the triumph of the South is keenly desired by the aristocracy, the triumph of the North is not less keenly desired by the people. On one side is the influence of politics and society, on the other that of morality and numbers; and between these two powers stands a government which, by maintaining neutrality, seeks to irritate neither the one nor the other to excess.

I have mentioned the ill-success of Mr. Beecher at Liverpool, at a meeting where the builders of *Alabamas* and their agents predominated: I must not forget to report his success at Manchester, at a meeting where the men of the people were in

greatest force. But especially does it behove me to point out to your notice what I saw and heard in London the other evening in Exeter Hall. Such scenes are a recompense for many sorrows, and this one will never be effaced from my remembrance.

The crowd was immense. Immense too was the enthusiasm displayed, both when the speaker entered the hall, and when Mr. Lincoln's name was uttered, and whenever the abolition of slavery was announced as the inevitable issue of the stupendous struggle which is rending the New World.

True it is that this meeting, if very imposing in point of numbers, was less so through the position, social and political, of those who composed it. No personage of any mark took the chair. On the platform you could not point out with the finger one of those men whose names, when they appear in public, rise up on every lip. What the meeting did represent was the most respectable and the most enlightened section of the middle classes, in conjunction with the people.

At Liverpool, feeling that he had to deal with tradesmen, Mr. Beecher was careful to consider the question of slavery only, so to say, in its commercial aspect. Not only, in fact, from the stand-point of the production and distribution of wealth is slave-labour harmful; it is so likewise from the stand-point of consumption. The producer, in order that his efforts may not be smitten with barrenness, must have consumers, and consumers who pay. Now slavery consumes little and buys nothing. In the South of America, out of a population of twelve millions, there are eight million whites and four million blacks. If the South were to overcome the North, what would happen? While it is condemned to stay where it has been, slavery devours itself very quickly. It can only live on condition of its spreading. The planters know this, and therefore it was that before the war they showed themselves so eager to inoculate the annexed territories with the poison of slavery. They had no other object in wresting Texas from Mexico. Assuredly, as conquerors, they would try, and succeed in trying, to enlarge in formidable fashion the domain of that fatal principle for which they have taken up arms. The question then for our decision is, whether the industrial cities of this country, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Paisley, Sheffield, &c., have any interest in seeing a class of consumers impoverished by slavery, substituted in the American market for a class of labourers enriched through liberty.

Such were the considerations which Mr. Beecher had felt bound to unfold at Liverpool; in presence of his London audience he has appealed to a loftier sentiment, and examined, in the first place, on which side justice lay in this great quarrel.

In England it has been often said and often repeated that slavery had naught to do with the disruption of the United States; that, if the Southern people had broken their agreement with the Northern, it was solely because the former felt themselves hurt by that agreement, because their interests as an agricultural people suffered cruelly from too close an alliance with a manufacturing people; because, in a word, the Union was for them a strait-waistcoat in which they were choked. Ay, this is what the partisans of the South here have expressed in all manner of tones and phrases. The argument was so convenient! It was so well conceived with a view to deliver the partisans of the South from the withering reproach of sympathising with slavery! Nay, more: it allowed them so nicely to fall into position as defenders of the right, as champions of the independence of a nationality declared! Poor planters! Was not theirs the cause of Italy quivering under the Austrian yoke, the cause of Poland bearing up her chains? To this woeful sophistry Mr. Beecher has replied by reading out an overwhelming document.

Mr. Stephens is now vice-president of the Southern Confederacy, and in that capacity devoted, body and soul, to the cause of separation. But there was a time when none saw more clearly than himself the whole unrighteousness of that cause, the full amount of misery thereby entailed, of bloodshed therein contained. Moreover, what was his attitude, what his language, when in January 1861 the question of separation was stirred in the convention of Georgia State? Nothing could have been more impressive, more conclusive, more pathetic even, than the speech he delivered on that occasion to stop his own party short on the brink of the bloody gulf. What did they intend to do? How could they ever justify themselves in the world's eye for having thus provoked a frightful civil war? What grievances had they? Was there a single right of theirs which the North had assailed, one interest of theirs which the North had disregarded? When the South had asked for a three-fifths representation for its slaves in Congress, had not its request been granted? When the South had demanded that every fugitive slave seeking shelter in a free State should be seized and handed

back to his master, did not that exaction become part of the Constitution, and receive in 1850 a special consecration from the "Fugitive Slave Law"? When the South had coveted new territories where it might extend the institution of slavery, had not Louisiana, Florida, Texas, been yielded up to it? So far from being oppressed by the North, had not the South, during nearly the whole continuance of the Union, gotten the lion's share in the management of the Federal affairs, in the direction of Congress and the Senate, in the government of the land and sea forces, in the choosing of public functionaries? Here the figures given by Mr. Stephen are so eloquent, that they must be allowed to speak for themselves. "We have had," he said, "sixty years of Southern presidents to their twenty-four, thus controlling the executive department. So, of the judges of the Supreme Court we have had eighteen from the South, and but eleven from the North. . . . In choosing the presiding presidents (*pro tem.*) of the Senate, we have had twenty-four to their eleven. Speakers of the House, we have had twenty-three, and they twelve. . . . . Attorneys-general, we have had fourteen, while the North have had but five. Foreign Ministers we have had eighty-six, and they but fifty-four."

And now, if we consider that the North, in spite of this unfair division, was outweighing the South through its population, through the extent of its commercial relations, through the relative importance of the contingent furnished by it alike to the army and the navy; and if on the other hand we reflect that it is the vice-president himself of the Confederacy who has been drawing up the statistical table which Mr. Beecher laid the other evening before the audience in Exeter Hall, what amazement will possess us when we remember the noise which some people dared to make about what they called the oppression of the South?

The truth is, on the contrary, as the speaker has shown, that before the secession it was the men of the South who had the upper hand in affairs, who filled the courts with their trusty followers, who dispensed offices, who supplied officers for the soldiers and sailors recruited in the North, who, in one word, governed. And assuredly they could not reproach the North with striking slavery to the heart, since, even after the war broke out, the Federals wrote no other device on their banners than this, "The restoration of the Union;" so fearful were they

even then of violating, by any threat to slavery, the federal compact which made the existence of that horrible institution dependent on the principle of State-Sovereignty!

The truth is, that the Constitution obliged the Federal Government to respect slavery, considered as a local institution; but it did not oblige it to permit the extension of slavery to the annexed territories. That extension the South deemed necessary to its interests, while by the North, on which its compact laid no such obligation, it was opposed. Out of that question came the crisis. On the day when Mr. Lincoln's election transferred the federal authority into other hands than those of the South, and took away, as it were, from the South all hope of using the federal authority for the purpose of turning a principle on sufferance into a principle triumphant, the planters took up arms. On the day when the South was no longer master, it declared itself oppressed.

But as soon as slavery left the Union, was it not the duty of the federal government to treat it, without more delay, as a public foe? Mr. Beecher has set himself with much pains to show how blameless the federal government was in this regard. This, we must acknowledge, was the weakest part of his speech. If, in the terrible circumstances in which it was placed by the revolt of the South, the North had had the happy daring to enlist in its cause that of all humanity, what strength would it not have drawn from the sympathies of the world, and with what invincible authority would it not have silenced the antipathies of the least generous, but alas! the most influential portion of the people of England! But was it not needful to disarm the ill-will of the Democrats in the very bosom of the United States, to lay before them the only flag, that of the Union, around which they could be led to battle? Was it not needful to cover over the ditch that parted them from the Republicans? I understand: in other words, it was needful to treat the conjuncture artfully, to sacrifice morality to a policy of expediency, to let the smaller kind of wisdom precede the greater? It was a sorry calculation.

LETTER CCVII.

A THING TO TALK ABOUT IN WHISPERS.

October 24th, 1863.

May I repeat to you in confidence what, in the upper regions, persons accustomed to get news at first hand are uttering softly into each other's ears?

It is a strange secret which I purpose confiding to you; a secret which perhaps every English journal, from the first to the last, from the most indiscreet organ of the Whigs to the most rancorous organ of the Tories, will hold itself patriotically bound to keep, whenever it comes to know it. For myself, not being an Englishman, I naturally feel no such scruples. And yet—in short, if I am wrong in fulfilling to the last my part as a faithful chronicler, may Heaven come to my help! This is what well-informed persons are whispering together in their select little world. *Relata refero:* nothing more.

If rumour may be credited, a political personage in this country—the highest indeed to my thinking and that of many others—took it into his head, after leaving the age of love-making fifty years behind him, to love a fair daughter of Eve, an Irish-woman. Cupid wears a bandage over his eyes; every one knows that; and it is not certain that even a diplomatist, though he may have grown grey in the science of avoiding dangers, can see very clearly when he conceives a fancy for being in love.

People also speak of letters intercepted, of proofs obtained, or thought to have been obtained, in writing. The affair, in short, is come, we are assured, before the stern court established for the settlement of divorce-causes; and as in this *practical* country the theory of damages is appointed to vouch for the security of husbands, and to watch over their honour, it would seem that the husband in question estimates at no less than 20,000 pounds sterling the possibility of regaining his repose and carrying his head upright thenceforward.

Montaigne says somewhere: "I know some who have purposely derived both profit and advancement from a matter,"—Montaigne, who calls a spade a spade, uses a word less indefinite—"the very

name whereof frightens so many folk." Such would be the case now, if the plaintiff obtained that modest sum of half a million francs to which he lays claim.

Will he get it? I have my doubts.*

To conclude; who knows whether at the bottom of all this there be not some intrigue, the laying of some snare, a chapter added to the history of the various methods of growing rich? The statements, be it understood, bear only on the fact of an action brought against an important personage for adultery. But is the accusation well founded? Nobody can say that it is, and it is most unlikely that it should be.

Not that the alleged hero of the adventure has no reputation, long since acquired, for grace and amiability on the one hand, and for sensibility on the other: but in short his age is on this occasion his best defender. I admit that love knows no rule, as Saint Jerome wrote to Chromatius—*Amor ordinem nescit;* but that he is averse from staying his flight upon dry old oaks, as Horace remarks—*Importunus enim transvolat aridas quercus*, I am sufficiently persuaded. Examples are quoted of superannuated gallantry; but why? Precisely because they are scarce, I presume. We are told how Fontenelle, when almost a centenarian, lost his balance and fell one day in trying to pick up a young and pretty woman's fan. As she helped him to rise, "Ah!" he exclaimed, "if I were still but eighty!" The expression is charming; but what enormous bragging, even on the part of a Fontenelle!

LETTER CCVIII.

RELATING TO THE BUILDING OF THE ALABAMA.

October 28th, 1863.

THE English press is a good deal taken up with a speech just delivered in the Music-Hall of Birkenhead by Mr. John Laird, the famous ship-builder, to whom the American Confederates have been indebted for their power to attack, plunder, and burn so many merchant vessels belonging to their enemies. And this

* The trial subsequently came off, and the appellant lost his cause.

honour Mr. Laird's speech deserves, not indeed for its clearness, but for its obscurity; not for the explanations he gives, but for those he shirks; not for the frankness of his avowals, but for the purport of his reticences.

When Mr. Laird, in addressing the public, began talking of dockyards, vessels, navigation, it was quite plain that people looked to hear the word *Alabama* come out of his mouth; and this piece of justice is due to him, that the public expectation in this respect was not deceived. Not only did he let out the word; he also boasted of the thing. The *Alabama!* What a noble ship! Where and when was seen its equal? Let the Americans strut about now if they please, because some of their ships do twenty miles an hour! The *Alabama* does but thirteen, it is true; but has that prevented the bold privateer from keeping the whole Federal navy in check, from defying the power of four hundred vessels? This it is that rejoices Mr. Laird, this it is that makes him drunk with pride; the more so because, if he is asked the builder's name, he can answer, "The builders are my sons."

Very good! But there is another question which one would have liked to see Mr. Laird answer: with what aim, for what service, for whose profit, in the name of what principle, did your sons build the *Alabama*, and the iron-plated vessels which were being got ready, we are assured, to continue her exploits, when Lord Russell commanded their seizure?

That was an extremely interesting point to clear up.

If it is false that, in breach of the Foreign Enlistment Act, and in scorn of the neutrality proclaimed by England, these vessels were destined to serve the South against the North, Mr. Laird should have told us so.

If on the contrary it is true, but in Mr. Laird's opinion perfectly lawful, that is a fact of which he ought to have apprised us.

Not so, however: on the one point as on the other his speech was silent. Such silence speaks for itself.

Moreover, for any one accustomed to interpret apologues, would there be no confession in that passage of the address where he alluded to fox-hunting? "When the hounds," said Mr. Laird, "approach the hole, the fox scents them; when the huntsman comes up, the fox is gone." And the speaker himself compared the *Alabama* to the fox, in order to absolve both. What are we to conclude from that, except that the *Alabama* had got scent of

justice, and knew to a marvel what to depend upon in the chase which the men of law would give her? The remark comes from the *Times*.

Another notable passage. "This is not the first time," was Mr. Laird's artless assertion, "that I have had a hand in secret expeditions. Some years ago the Government of this country thought fit to send out vessels secretly to China and the different ports of India. A war with China was foreseen; people were afraid of seeing the Russians on the Indus and the Euphrates; there was need of a trusty person: the Government had recourse to me." And the speaker related how on that occasion he showed himself worthy of the trust manifested towards him, in the mystery wherewith he covered the execution of the orders he had received. To speak frankly, he might have dispensed with that statement. That the building of the *Alabama* was connected with the scheme of a *secret*, therefore a hardly allowable expedition, who, in Heaven's name, was ignorant? But a secret like that is the secret of comedy.

If after such a speech people still doubt the absolute necessity of the seizure recently ordered by Lord Russell, let us allow them to exercise their own free-will on that point.

But will this seizure be judicially sanctioned, or will there turn up, as in the case of the *Alexandra*, some other Chief Baron Pollock, ready to annul the confiscation, under the plea of there being no difference between selling arms to a belligerent and selling him ships?

If this scandal must be renewed; if the Foreign Enlistment Act must henceforth be considered either as an idle scrap of paper, or as a law made only to be eluded; if it became lawful for the first comer, at the call of his special sympathies, of his mercantile interests, his whims, to turn the policy of neutrality so resolutely adopted by his country into an illusion or a seeming hypocrisy; if every filibuster, who conceived a fancy for allying himself to some belligerent power were acknowledged free, albeit belonging to a neutral nation, to build a fleet in one of that nation's harbours, to arm vessels with iron plating, to send them some three miles off to sea, to despatch their equipment after them, and then, without any further ceremony, to hunt down, to sink, to burn the vessels of the hostile power,—England would find she had admitted a principle, sanctioned a practice, as hurtful to her naval power, as it would be destructive of the bases

on which, in her case as everywhere else, the national sovereignty reposes.

To understand the truly monstrous absurdity of the toleration whose benefits Mr. Laird and his fellows dare to claim, it is enough to observe that it has exposed England to the danger of a frightful war with the United States. Thus the people of England would in vain have declared through the mouth-piece of their Government, their firm resolution to remain neutral, if through the act of some ship-builder, an interested or disinterested partisan of the South, they might see themselves accused of bad faith, and involved in the most ominous complications. In vain would they have wished for peace when it rested with any private individual to drag them into a war. The will of a single man would have weighed heavier than the will of all in the balance of the destinies of all.

Fatal as they would be from a general point of view, the consequences would be doubly so from an English point of view. England—the possessor of Australia, Canada, and the Indies, who has plenty of coal and iron, who prepares the best woods for building, and whom the sea, her waving girdle, allows to form sailors many, skilful, and bold—England is at present justified in regarding a war by sea as a game which she is almost sure of winning. But what would become of her special advantages on the day when, in fighting Spain for instance, she would have to reckon with the carpenters of Pennsylvania; when the maritime resources of the power she would have to fight could be doubled, tripled, quadrupled, quintupled, by vessels built in neutral ports and launched by this or that wealthy ship-builder, a foe to her greatness or greedy of her spoils?

Some time ago the *Spectator*, in support of these grave considerations, supposed England, who is so powerful by sea, to be at war with Germany, who is so weak there; and, as a result of the principle in question, it showed us vessels of war building for the use of Germany in every American port, covering the ocean, falling on the trade of Great Britain, ravaging the shores of India, raising the price of freight and insurance to a ruinous figure, necessitating for merchant-vessels the ceaseless protection of men-of-war, and finally rendering a war with America unavoidable. Is this picture exaggerated? Only let England, if her heart so bids her, adopt the doctrine recommended by the partisans of the South, and she will see!

LETTER CCIX.

THE PRACTICE OF TRANSFERS.

October 30th, 1863.

Do your readers know the origin of the famous word "Exchequer"? If we may believe certain sifters of etymology, the word would come from the *checkered* cloth which covered the table around which, in the days of the Norman kings, the monarch and the Barons of the Exchequer assembled at set periods, to discuss in solemn sitting questions concerning the State and relating to the revenue. There it was that twice a year were received the reports and the oath of the sheriffs, who, under the government of the Conquest, were at once military commanders in time of war, administrators of the royal domains, and revenue-officers.

I know not indeed why it has been so often said and repeated, that money is the sinews of war: methinks one might with equal reason call it the sinews of peace. That it is the sinews of government, no one in England, where the voting of subsidies forms the Alpha and Omega of politics, will be tempted to deny. The rank also of Treasurer has naturally become here the most important in the kingdom. At this moment, if you ask which of the public servants it is whose mission is to be the soul and brain of the Government,—with whom rests the formation of the Cabinet,—who does the distributing of the sixty places comprised in the various departments of the second degree,—who nominates the judges commissioned to preside in Westminster,—who controls the selection of high functionaries such as ambassadors,—with whom rests the nomination of archbishops and bishops,—at whose recommendation the Queen appoints new peers,—who finally has the pompous title of Premier, people will answer that it is the chief of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury; that it is the First Lord of the Treasury.

Not that he is of necessity bound, in that capacity, to fulfil the functions of a finance-minister, the functions of Chancellor of the Exchequer: sometimes he has been one, notably in 1841; but that is by no means indispensable.

As a general rule, then, it is the Second Lord Commissioner of

the Treasury who, under the name of Chancellor of the Exchequer, has the special management of the finances; it is he who brings forward the Budget; and, as it is the House of Commons that votes it, the Chancellor must be a Commoner. Among his privileges, and they are not to be despised, figures the disposing of seven hundred livings, which is a good deal, if we consider that the Crown itself has not more than nine hundred and fifty at its disposal. But a financial dictator he certainly is not.

In the first place the House of Commons, as every one knows, holds the purse-strings and holds them tight.

In the second place the most noteworthy portion of the revenue, whether inland or from abroad, is lodged on account of the Exchequer in the Bank of England, whence the orders of the Treasury cannot bring out a farthing, unless those orders have been sanctioned by the Comptroller of the Exchequer, whose business it is to take care that they are in perfect conformity with parliamentary rules; the Comptroller-General playing in a manner, as the *Daily Telegraph* observes, the part of the dragon that guarded the golden apples in the Garden of the Hesperides.

So far nothing could be better. But here is where the abuse begins.

For the payments to take effect, matters proceed as follows:—

The Treasury addresses the Comptroller-General in order that he may authorise the Bank to place to the credit of the Paymaster-General a certain sum appropriated to a certain service. Thereupon the Comptroller-General ascertains what has been disbursed for that service, and inquires whether the sum asked for does not exceed that which Parliament voted. Once reassured on this point, he gives the requisite authority. But that done, his right of control ceases. His supervision does not extend to the manner in which the payments are effected,—to the office of the Paymaster-General. He knows that the other ought to receive so much for such a service, but he has no means of preventing the money destined for that service from being applied to some other; the money destined for the army, for example, from being applied to the navy.

It results from this that the practice of "transfers" tends to become more and more established. The money voted by Parliament does not go where Parliament by its votes has decided that it should go; it is not distributed among the several branches of the public service in accordance with the rules of parliamentary

sovereignty; in a word, the Appropriation Clause, on which Parliament deems itself bound to insist every year, is as though it were not.

This appropriation clause goes back, it appears, to the reign of Charles II., and was introduced in a Subsidy Bill, not only at the express demand of that monarch, but in spite of the formal remonstrances of his ministers.

Charles II. wishing at any price, in respect of public expenses, to extend the limits of parliamentary control! The fact, to be sure, is too strange not to deserve explaining. Lord Clarendon gives the explanation thus: Charles II. had had money lent him by sundry bankers, and if he attached so much importance to the adoption of the appropriation clause, it was in order that he might not have to employ in the repayment of what he had borrowed the subsidies granted him by the Bill. Such is the liberalism of despots!

Be that as it may, since the clause has been maintained, it is necessary either to depart from it in principle, or conform to it in practice. Conformity may not be very easy, now that the services are concentrated in the hands of the Paymaster-General; and when we reflect that, on the first day of every quarter, thousands of persons pass through that functionary's office, we understand that it may not be very easy to liquidate the branches, so different as they are, of public expenditure, without for one instant losing sight of the strict principle of appropriation. But is the difficulty insurmountable? Some thirty years ago, the need of preventing the funds voted by Parliament from being diverted from their right destination led to the creation of an Audit Board, commissioned to verify the employment of the funds in all that concerned the navy. Later still, in 1846, this system was extended to the accounts of the army. Is there no possibility then of extending it to the civil services? The question is worth our while to pause over. It touches the honour of those parliamentary institutions, of which Englishmen boast to have furnished the world with the best model.

LETTER CCX.

ENGLAND'S OBJECTIONS TO THE PLAN OF A EUROPEAN CONGRESS.

November 8th, 1863.

AMONG the politicians of this country there is one whose opinion on daily passing events has for me the value and the usefulness of a thermometer. Endowed with a singular talent of observation, with a wisdom far from common, with a very refined wit, he has to my mind the one especial merit of judging from the Englishman's stand-point every question as it comes forward. He too it is to whom I address myself with the greatest readiness when, after having run through the whole gamut of diplomatic valuations and nicely balanced commentaries which the English press can furnish, I want to have a clear idea of the impression which this or the other fact or speech is likely to produce in England.

Yesterday I paid him a visit, and on my return home I hastened to put down on paper the results of my conversation with him. Allow me to admit your readers to a share of the gain.

MYSELF.—Well, my dear friend, what think you, and what do you imagine your countrymen would think of the speech with which Napoleon III. has just opened the legislative session in France?

HE.—What do you think? That is very easy to say. But the answer is not so easy as the question.

MYSELF.—Perchance you had some hesitation about being gratified? If I mistake not, England's great worry, her chief anxiety, was a peace that is no peace, a rest that is no rest. You were always looking uneasily towards France. You always kept in mind Chateaubriand's saying, that she is a "nest of warriors." Whatever sympathy you felt for Poland, as often as men spoke of freeing the Vistula, you fancied you saw the eagle taking his flight towards the Rhine. The manly pride with which the attitude of your volunteers inspired you was not unmingled with bitterness. You charged with imprudence, even with madness, the over-peaceful doctrines of the Manchester

school; but at heart you would have been very glad if the troubled condition of Europe gave you no cause to differ from Messrs. Cobden and Bright. You praised Lord Palmerston for throwing money out of window, in his eagerness to build floating fortresses, to erect immovable ones, to fill your arsenals, to put your coasts into a state of defence, to keep up, in a word, a peace as costly as war; but when Mr. Cobden brought all that against him as a crime, it was with a groan that you decided against Mr. Cobden; and it seemed hard that the burthen of your taxes, heavy as it was already, should be made heavier still, because France chose to keep half a million soldiers afoot.

HE.—Nothing could be truer. And what do you conclude from that?

MYSELF.—What do I conclude? You haven't read the speech then, about which I am talking? I fancied that in it I heard the hour of a general disarming strike. In it national jealousies are denounced as baneful and foolish; the display of strength is held up as a cause of exhaustion; a new era of calm and order is, if not predicted, at least desired. What language more peaceful are we allowed to expect from a man at the head of so many brave legions?

HE.—Yes, I grant that the speech may be thus interpreted, and I see that in the *Presse* it is thus interpreted by an eminent French publicist, not much disposed to content himself with words, but accustomed to reach the heart of things—M. Emile de Girardin. But what would you have? On this side the Channel we are distrustful; and you will own that the speech would have gained in clearness by the omission of this sentence: "*Two ways are open: one leads to progress through conciliation and peace; the other sooner or later leads inevitably to war, through stubbornness in upholding a past that is crumbling to pieces.*" If you have heard the hour strike for a general disarming, it cannot anyhow have done so in that sentence. What I for my part hear, is the distant roaring of the cannon.

MYSELF.—M. Emile de Girardin, whom you just now quoted, answers that in excellent style, when he exclaims:—"*Is peace then forbidden to be manly?*"

HE.—Peace has no need to be manly, when the hand she holds out meets only with hands prepared to clasp it: it is when the contrary happens, that peace feels the need of manliness; and in that case she comes in contact with war. When an offer

is wrapt up in a threat, all depends, first, on the degree of fear which the threat will cause; secondly, on what chance there is of the offer being accepted. The *Times* also, having begun by welcoming a hope of peace in the opening address, ends by perceiving behind the sentence in question "an army in order of battle."

MYSELF.—In the first place, what you call a threat is none. To affirm in a general way that stubbornness in not doing what would make peace a certainty, must sooner or later lead inevitably to war, is but recalling a truth which too many people overlook; that is not a threat, but a warning.

HE.—You would be quite right if the question here was about a truth enunciated in a collection of maxims by a philosopher inimical to war, writing by his chimney-corner. But when such words are uttered aloud from the French rostrum by a sovereign, at whose mere signal five or six hundred thousand men can be set in motion, and who professes to speak in the name of the first military nation in the world, it gives one cause for thinking. We have not forgotten how the war in Italy sprang from some words addressed under cover of a warning to an ambassador.

MYSELF.—There you are with your logic of distrusts. So, two or three expressions, in which war is presented as the consequence, not certain but possible, of an unreasonable obstinacy in upholding what can no longer exist, are enough to hide from your eyes the meaning of a speech whose every line breathes of peace? For is it not the case, that Mr. Cobden himself could have said nothing more sensible, stronger, or more conclusive, about the madness of overgrown armaments, the disastrous effects of an armed peace, the interest that sovereigns as well as peoples have in getting done with the absurd old policy of mutual jealousies, of an exclusive ambition, and of ill-will? What kind of language then should be employed to convince, to reassure you?

HE.—Excuse me; I fear you have misunderstood me. The sincerity of the Emperor of the French is not now in question. He desires peace, may be; he holds out a means of obtaining and perpetuating it, no doubt. But how far extends the efficacy of the means he proposes? You can easily see that he himself has doubts on that score; the sentence we are discussing proves it.

MYSELF.—And what other means of avoiding war have you to

point out, I may ask, that would be preferable to the convening of a peaceful congress of governments? To substitute the weight of reason for the stroke of the sword, to invite different interests to seek out in good faith what they have in common between them, instead of recurring to the blind and brutal arbitrament of cannons,—is not this a large and healthy idea, entirely consonant with the genius of modern civilisation, and which, coming from the chief of an eminently warlike people, is a glorious homage offered to the superiority of mind over brute force?

He.—Granted. Every application, however limited and accidental, of the fine system of the Abbé de Saint Pierre would be a blessing for the world. If you wish, therefore, to know what I think of the philosophic and moral value of the idea put forth, I will tell you that, far from gainsaying it, I would have it yet larger, more complete, such in short as it budded in the benevolent brain of the author of the *Project of Perpetual Peace*. What a day would that be when all the stupid quarrels which now drench the earth with blood, and are often as hurtful to the victors as to the vanquished, were prevented by the interference of a "supreme tribunal of the peoples," an organ permanent, revered, obeyed, of international law! Unluckily the question lies elsewhere. Cardinal Dubois called the theories of the Abbé de Saint Pierre the *dreams of an honest man;* and just in the same style is the notion of a European Congress in present circumstances estimated by the *Spectator*, which says in appropriate terms, and not without a sigh: "*That is but a dream.*"

Myself.—I assure you that such an objection scarcely touches me. The human mind is so made, that it is always prone to deem unrealisable what has never yet been realised. You smile? As you please. I am a bit of a Utopian; I don't disguise the fact, or rather I am proud of it.

He.—And I am very English, therefore endowed with some practical sense, and I thank God for it. Now, from my twofold stand-point as an Englishman and a practical man, I have so many considerations to set against your *desideratum*—in the present state of things, understand—that I know not where to begin.

Myself.—Try.

He.—In the first place, the theory of congresses like the one desired presupposes a certain education of minds, which seems to me, alas! very far from being attained. In order that the rival-

ries of nation with nation may pass away, it is not enough to declare them absurd; in order that national hatreds may be extinguished, it is not enough to scold them. Wait! I who am now talking to you—and I plume myself on sometimes taking liberties with routine, prejudices, &c.—I have so much trouble to put off the old man in the matter of national susceptibilities, that the praises of the Emperor Alexander II. on the lips of Napoleon III. have moved me exceedingly. Well enough, if beside this eulogy that of England had found place! But no: all the kind speeches are intended for a sovereign who would grant nothing that France and England together asked of him.

MYSELF.—You forget that, if they have obtained nothing, it is precisely the fault of England, who united herself in fact with France by the parchment of protocols, but only after she had proclaimed aloud her fixed resolve not to join her, if the case went forward, on the field of action.

HE.—I cannot hide from you that the abrupt conclusion given, against our desire, to the Crimean War, and the turn given, also against our desire, to the Mexican expedition, have inspired us with a great repugnance to active alliances. We like to know where we are going, and we are afraid of being checked too soon or led too far. Possibly our prudence may seem to you excessive, not well grounded. Still, if you would reflect that public opinion in France is for us a half-closed book; that we cannot forecast the views and designs of France, under the Imperial rule, by any of the tokens which the publicity of a free press supplies; that you are neighbours whose movements depend on a will which we are neither allowed to examine, nor able to penetrate whenever it chooses to keep itself veiled, of a will whose decisions are in general suddenly announced in a way that takes the world by surprise; consequently that to engage ourselves to France is to endanger ourselves on the open sea without a compass,—you will admit that we are excusable in urging prudence to the extent of timidity. On the day when France has institutions analogous to ours, our alliance with her will be unreserved. Until then, it is in the very nature of things that our part should rather be one of observation than of trust. Meanwhile, to revert to that passage of the Emperor's speech with which the Emperor of Russia has so much cause for contentment, observe that Russia is especially commended there, because of the sincere and hearty support she lent the Emperor of the French in the matter of annexing Savoy

and the county of Nice. The compliment, I own, is one the paying of which we for our part have not deserved; but none the less true is it that, being paid to Russia, it gives a meaning far from complimentary to the silence observed in respect of England. There is, I think, an Eastern proverb which says, *speech is silver, silence is golden.* Silence is not always golden to those concerning whom it is maintained. Read the comments of the *Times*, and you will find this to be its opinion. It is certainly mine.

MYSELF.—You had good reason to acknowledge that you have not put off the old man. The national jealousy in your remarks may be scented miles off.

HE.—Just so, and to that point I wanted to come. This suspicious touchiness which you condemn in me, and which you would most likely experience in my place, this it is which forms my first objection with regard to the scheme of solving by a congress of European governments the problems which divide them.

MYSELF.—And the second, if you please?

HE.—My second objection points at the necessary composition of a congress. Every parliament—and congress would mean nothing else than a diplomatic parliament—implies principals on the one hand and representatives on the other. Now, by whom would the peoples be represented in your congress? By the governments? That would no doubt be all one if, everywhere as in England, the men in authority were only public servants. Does the case stand thus? Do you believe that Prussia, for instance, will account herself well represented by the agents of Herr Von Bismarck, or by Herr Von Bismarck himself? But why mention Prussia? Look at Russia here figuring in the congress on behalf of Poland, and Austria speaking in the name of Venice! Charming representatives these; think you not so?

MYSELF.—You do not consider that, in congress, Poland would be represented by Russia, and Venice by Austria, only in a kind of nominal manner, and from the existing point of view: from the stand-point of the change that is now especially in question, the true delegates of Poland, Hungary, Venice, would be those European Powers which connect the triumph of the right with the interests of European order and the consolidation of universal peace.

HE.—That is to say, you would have an assembly in which

the supposed principals had no more formidable opponents than their official delegates! A singular combination: but no matter. The aim of congress, in the usual rendering of the word "aim," would be, if I have rightly comprehended the speech of the French Emperor, to think about a remodelling of the map by mutual agreement, or, in plain language, to make a clean sheet of the treaties of 1815.

MYSELF.—Not so. It would be a question of substituting something for nothing: I am wrong,—it would be a question of setting up a stable edifice instead of an edifice crumbling to pieces, which can no longer be stubbornly maintained without dooming Europe to a disastrous alternation of violent revolutions and oppressive counter-revolutions.

HE.—Very good. But, to begin with, are you sure that none of the Powers to be convened will find the discomforts of such an experiment more considerable than its advantages? Russia, whose sovereignty in respect of Poland will be placed in question . . . .

MYSELF.—I must interrupt you, to call your attention to this passage in the Emperor's speech: "Russia has already asserted, that conferences in which all the other questions now stirring Europe were debated, would in no point be hurtful to her dignity."

HE.—I beg you, in my turn, to remember that, with regard to Poland, Prince Gortschakoff has recognised only the three conjointly sharing Powers—Russia, Prussia, Austria—as entitled to confer upon her destiny. Besides, Russia is not the only power whose intentions we have to study. You reckon England, I imagine, as good for something?

MYSELF.—No doubt; but I don't see why England should not join in this peaceful crusade.

HE.—Crusade! And against what? Against the treaties of 1815, to which she herself was so large a contributor? You credit us with a grand piece of self-denial; you deem us capable of a repentance quite heroic!

MYSELF.—Not at all; I merely deem you capable of yielding to proofs. Can the treaties of 1815 be still regarded as having in Europe the force of law? Have they not been broken many and many a time?—broken for Russia's advantage by the Battle of Navarino; broken for the advantage of Belgium by the dismembering of Holland; broken for the advantage of Austria by

the occupation of Cracow; broken by the conquest of Lombardy for the advantage of Piedmont; broken in fine, if you choose, for our advantage by the annexation of Nice and Savoy? The Emperor's saying is true: "The treaties of 1815 have ceased to be."

HE.—In part, yes; but the remainder is certainly considerable enough to be examined. In reckoning up the nations which have derived benefit from breaches made in the treaties of 1815, you have not mentioned England. As the world has not attained to the blissful millennium, and the nations are not quite ready, Sir Utopian, to end their differences by a *baiser Lamourette*, allow my English egotism, until national egotism shall have passed out of the world, to make a reflection natural enough. In order that we may remain good friends, I will grant that France hates the treaties of 1815 with a hatred quite cosmopolitan; but own you that, this once, at the bottom of her cosmopolitanism there happens to be a strong dose of national interest. With reference to the treaties of 1815 there is this essential difference between England and France, that those treaties have mainly been willed and made by the former, while they have been endured by the second; that the former sought in them a pledge of European equipoise, while the latter saw in them at once an insult to her honour and an attack upon her power. When, therefore, you propose that England should join you in uprooting the treaties of 1815, you give her nothing, and you ask from her a great deal!

MYSELF.—Whence you conclude, I suppose, that England's concurrence is hardly probable?

HE.—Exactly.

MYSELF.—England's isolation in such a question would be a pretty sight!

HE.—And who told you that she would have to isolate herself? Do you honestly believe in Austria's inclination to submit her claims on Venice to the judgment of Russia, who has so many grievances against her; to that of France who deprived her of Lombardy; to that of England who welcomed the union of Italy with a cry of joy? And Prussia too; think you that she will go light-hearted to meet a discussion in which the possession of the Rhenish provinces would perhaps—who knows?—be in the number of questions debated?

MYSELF.—I allow that every nation has special interests

which it may dread to imperil, or be loth to let others discuss; but the question is whether they have not all a common interest —and that of a higher order—in putting an end to that uncertain, provisional, troublous condition, which involves all kinds of dangers, forces Europe to treat with the unforeseen, and permits no one to fall asleep at night without dread of hearing the noise of guns on the morrow. You talk of England. Is it possible that she has no interest in seeing the general peace seated at last on fixed and solid bases; she, the pre-eminently industrial and commercial nation?

He.—In truth, to listen to you, it seems as if governments have only to meet in congress, in order that the germ of every quarrel may be for ever rooted out. But I would beg you to consider that the questions to be solved are vast questions; that pretending to solve them all at once in a theoretic way, beforehand, by virtue of a supposed agreement between governments, each of which has a solution of its own, which to its own eyes seems the right one, is to plunge into a sea of complications. The King of Denmark, who the other day declared his resolution to proclaim a republic in Denmark rather than give way on the Schleswig question, and who is certain of England's support—would he show himself more accommodating than Germany, or would Germany show herself more accommodating than he? Where will you get the compensations to offer Austria for the cession of Venice and the independence of Hungary? If the left bank of the Rhine were declared to be French, is there any imaginable indemnity that Prussia would agree to accept, if there were any that one had to offer her? The occupation of Rome,—which the Imperial Government has doubtless had its reasons for prolonging indefinitely, to the great despair of the Court of Turin, and the great discontent of our statesmen in Downing Street,—will that occupation suddenly cease to have a motive because there will be a gathering round a green table-cloth? And all that is nothing beside the Polish and Eastern Questions. Of the immense difficulty of reconciling the reverence due to justice with the circumspection due to force, we have a sufficiently striking proof in the sad result of the negotiations you know of. What likelihood is there, I ask you, of Russia's granting to a congress what she has so peremptorily refused to the joint solicitations, one might almost say the concerted summons of three such powers as France, England, and Austria? Suppose she

refuses; the state of things afterwards would be the same as it was before. Suppose, on the contrary, that Russia is ready to give proof of her good will, her good will may be put to one or other of these two proofs: either they will ask for the Poles a national representation, a government sincerely paternal, with certain guarantees; or else they will demand her independence. In the first case the Poles, who know by experience the worth of guarantees, will deem themselves sacrificed, and the fire will keep on smouldering under the embers. In the second case, it is certain that the Russian Government will not make the required concession for nothing. It will need some compensation; but what? Will Constantinople be offered it in exchange for Warsaw? Before subscribing to such an exchange, England would expend for its prevention her last man and her last crown. The Polish question and that of the East have alarming affinities. Don't you feel that?

Myself.—If you are bent on convincing me that the task will be no easy one, you are taking needless trouble: I am convinced already. But must we try for that only which can be achieved without effort? Is a congress so extraordinary a matter then? Was it not a congress that regulated the state of Europe in 1815?

He.—The example is ill chosen as a proof of the efficacy of congresses, since that of 1815, as you say, established nothing durable, nothing either fit or possible to keep up. And what a difference also between the two epochs! In 1815 we were coming out of a general conflagration; the revolutionary spirit had given forth all the shocks and disturbances confined within it; war had given out its utmost fury; sovereigns had been dispossessed, territories dismembered, nations divided; the soil of Europe, at least in the opinion of several cabinets, had been strewn with ruins which it was needful to clear away at any cost; the weariness was universal, immense the need for repose; Napoleon had frightened all the governments; and the fear inspired by the danger of falling under the dominion of a single man, the need of taking securities against the return of such a danger, produced a common interest among all the great European powers, save France; assigned them a common aim; drove them irresistibly into making common cause. For that end they had only to keep up a good understanding among themselves. Their joint action during the war led them by natural steps to the joint action that was about to close it. The Congress of 1815

was but the coalition passing from the battle-field to the council-chamber. The arranging of what had been violently disarranged —such was the plan that Europe proposed to herself in 1815; the proposal now made to her is to disarrange what has been arranged for better or worse.

MYSELF.—You are pleased to say so. Very well! So the unnatural union of Poland with Russia, of Venice with Austria, is an arrangement which we should be afraid of disturbing.

HE.—Observe that, on this point, neither your estimate nor mine is in question; a matter with which congress will not have to busy itself. Assuredly we are at liberty to feel dislike for a union which you call unnatural. But it is doubtful whether Russia or Austria will be of our mind. And that is the difficulty: "there's the rub," as Shakespeare said. I can fancy Turin welcoming with rapture the idea of a congress; but if it were received at Vienna without a frown, I should be exceedingly surprised.

MYSELF.—Can it be that England reckons on Austria's refusal?

HE.—What is the meaning of that question?

MYSELF.—I ask it, because I am struck with the equivocal language of some of your leading journals, the *Times* for instance, and the *Morning Post*. It is plain that they are supremely displeased with the proposal of a congress; nevertheless, in that respect they affect a kind of philosophic resignation that is truly exemplary. After having clearly given us to understand that such an experiment has no chance of succeeding, they declare that, the congress once formed, they have no objection to England's taking her place therein. If, as I suspect, there is some manœuvre in that, it is a clever one. While giving herself full credit for her good will, England might resolve on sheltering her own refusal behind the foreseen refusal of Austria. Have I guessed rightly?

HE.—Possibly. And what if that should be so?

MYSELF.—In that case England would have no right to complain if haply, for want of power to untie the Gordian knot, they were to cut it by a stroke of the sword.

HE.—If the stroke is to be dealt, my impression is that a congress would not turn it aside. Moreover, in a congress, as alas! in other places, it is not reason, but force, that makes the law. The weight of each vote is there proportioned to the

number of guns at the disposal of each voter. At the Congress of Vienna, when M. de Talleyrand would have dissuaded the Emperor Alexander from keeping hold of his prey, Poland, Alexander replied that he had 200,000 men in the Duchy of Warsaw. The argument seemed irrefutable.

MYSELF.—So you think that congress means war?

HE.—I don't say that.

MYSELF.—What do you say then?

HE.—That it does not necessarily mean peace.

LETTER CCXI.

THE OPTIMISTS OF THE LIBERAL PARTY.

November 14th, 1863.

THE Liberal party in England has its optimists, like the Conservative party.

This is proved by the excessive kindliness of the remarks occasioned, on the part of certain acknowledged organs of the Liberal press, by the address which the King of Prussia has lately delivered to the new Prussian Parliament. It is wonderful to see how prettily things are pictured in the imagination of such optimists.

To hear them, if the Crown Prince has been recalled in haste from England, it was owing to the King's desire to have him at his right hand when he was haranguing his faithful Commons, and to show therein his own desire to reconcile his policy with the more acceptable views of his son.

Furthermore, say they, does not the King's speech itself proclaim a tendency to reconciliation? To declare one's ardent longing for an end to unpleasant discussions, has nothing in it, strictly speaking, equivalent to the holding out of an olive-branch. The wish is commonplace enough to prevent one's finding it significant, or to make one doubtful of its sincerity. And yet, if you consider that these words were prompted by a minister who is arrogant to excess, that they fell from the lips of a monarch deeply infected with his right divine, and that the theory of passive obedience is naturally the only one to the taste of a sovereign whose family reckons a hundred and sixty-three

years of princely greatness, you will allow that on this point there is at least a distant hope of a compromise. In what way, moreover, does the speech express itself on the points in dispute? That M. Bismarck and his colleagues will not go the length of acknowledging the right of the Chamber to refuse the subsidies, is quite intelligible: in fact the right is not clearly written in the Constitution; Prussian taxes are of a permanent character; they are not voted yearly; the Parliament can withhold its sanction from additional imposts, but not abolish those which have been voted already; and, whatever judgment one may form on the worth of such a practice, it can always take its stand on a quite allowable interpretation of the covenant granted to Prussia. This being so, is it nothing for M. Bismarck and his master to admit the right of the nation's representatives to wield over the movement of the State funds a control, if not absolute, at any rate partial and defined? And the ordinance concerning the press, is it nothing that they have come to present it as a temporary measure, a measure to be modified? There remains the question of the army, on which the King seems resolute not to yield. But to speak frankly, is this the moment for Prussia to diminish her means of defence? On this point the Liberal party were possibly right during the two former sessions; but would they of a certainty be right now, when Prussia has behind her the Congress of Frankfort, and before her the Congress of Paris?

Thus think our "médecins tant mieux." Strange illusions theirs!

Who, to begin with, can assure them that, if the Crown Prince has been summoned back to Berlin, it was not that he might appear as an abettor of the policy he has apparently condemned; or because, in condemning it, he has but played the game of all heirs presumptive to the Crown, past, present, and future? It is not for English Liberals, I suppose, to forget that their George IV., before he became George IV., was the patron, the friend, the political ally of Fox and Sheridan.

With reference to the Budget, where can one see that the speech of the King of Prussia makes, I won't say a concession, but the shadow of a concession? M. Bismarck invites the Chamber to join with him in acknowledging his interpretation of the financial clauses of the Constitution to be the right one. What an effort of humility! What a step towards the "Let us embrace and have done with it!"

The ordinance on the press may be modified, no doubt; but in what sense? That is the whole question. I have before me the draft act furnished to us, this very day, by a German paper, and the first lines of it tell me that if a journal, after being once condemned for an offence, becomes guilty, five years later, of a second offence, that journal through that one circumstance ceases to exist. If this is what M. Bismarck means by peace, what in Heaven's name does he understand by war?

As to the question of the army, recent events would doubtless have given it a new aspect, if Prussia's real strength consisted in the importance of her standing army and of a military organisation modelled on what elsewhere constitutes the pernicious power of the spirit of conquest. But Prussia does not, that I know of, dream of conquering; her desire is to be respected. She does not covet her neighbours' frontiers; what she does want is that none of them should invade hers. Now in a powerful landwehr lie the means whose nature is best suited to that of the end. Whatever may be taken from the landwehr for the benefit of the standing army, would be taken in the first place from liberty to be bestowed on despotism; and in the next, from the defence of Prussia through patriotic enthusiasm, to aid the defence of Prussia by large battalions, effective only on condition of not having to deal with battalions larger still. Have people forgotten what it was that overthrew Napoleon in Germany? It was the dashing energy of populations in arms.

The Prussian Chamber will do well therefore to be firm, if it means to fulfil its mission and is worthy of it. By confronting M. Bismarck with a majority fully reckoned of 260 votes, it has proclaimed its will with sufficient loudness, and shown clearly to which side sooner or later the balance must lean.

It is curious to compare the feeble estimates of certain English journals with the following paper, which expresses vividly the sentiments of a man of lofty intelligence and large heart, who honours his country by the way in which he defends and represents it to foreigners; I speak of Karl Blind. The things to do, he said, were reduced to these four points:—

1st. To forbear from praising the King, and to listen silently to the Government message;

2nd. To affirm without delay that the decree about the press is an attack on the Constitution; that administering without a budget is tantamount to breaking into the Treasury; and that

they who became guilty of such acts should be charged with breaking the constitutional covenant and with treason;

3rd. To decide that in this case it is the right and duty of every good citizen to refuse payment of taxes, and that the members of the Chamber shall pledge themselves in each other's presence to set the example of so doing;

4th. To adjourn of their own accord, to the cry of "The rights of the people!"

I have made known to you the opinions of the "médecins tant mieux" of the Liberal party; but don't go and fancy that that party contains no *médecin tant pis*. Many Englishmen of my acquaintance, persons moreover with very little taste for revolutionary measures, are nevertheless of opinion that great ills demand great remedies; that we cannot always avoid a blow by flying from it; that energy, far from inviting danger, routs it; that revolutions must after all be set to the account, not of those who make them, but of those who make them necessary; and that the more one looks like fearing M. Bismarck, the more will he be tempted to send his master word: "*Le roi ne rendra pas son epée*"

LETTER CCXII.

DEATH OF FREDERICK VII.: DENMARK AND GERMANY FACING EACH OTHER.

November 17th, 1863.

THE death of Frederick VII., King of Denmark, has caused a lively sensation in England.

With regard to the person of the deceased monarch the English press has been unanimous in the expression of its regretful sympathy. Liberal journals and Conservative journals have agreed in praising the defunct as having a mind open to generous ideas, a steadfast soul, a determined character, and an unshakable desire to defend at any price against Germany what Denmark considers to be her own domain.

It was difficult, in speaking of Frederick VII., to pass over in perfect silence the adventures of his private life, the scandal of his amours; his quarrels with his first wife, youngest daughter of King Frederick VI.; his imprisonment by royal command in the

fortress of Fredericia; his divorce; his second marriage, shattered by a second divorce; and lastly, his connection with that Louisa Christina Rasmussen, whom he brought out of a milliner's shop to make her, under the name of the Countess Danner, his queen. But it is agreed that certain weaknesses shall count of right among the privileges of the highest ranks. If our great sins, great to us simple mortals, were not accounted as peccadilloes among the gods, would Olympus be worth inhabiting?

Let us note moreover that the weaknesses of Frederick VII., far from unfitting him for the performance of the part assigned him by the dangers of Denmark, engendered the need of his playing that part well and boldly, without hesitation, without any concealment. The unpopularity they were likely to draw upon him, of which the burning of one of his palaces was but the most dramatic symptom, made it his bounden duty so to identify himself with the cause of Denmark, that a blow aimed at the latter must reach her only through himself.

A Dane in spirit, he was twice a Dane by reason of the need he had for special forgiveness. The year when his brow was encircled with the crown—1848—was the year in which Louisa Rasmussen became his avowed favourite; the year also in which, being summoned to fight an insurrection of the people of Sleswick and Holstein which was supported by the arms of Prussia, Frederick VII. had occasion to personify in himself that mighty passion of the Danes threatened by Germany: to wit, their hatred of the Germans.

Just for that reason do Englishmen like him. They mourn him as a truly Danish prince, that is to say, anti-German to the backbone.

And why? How comes England in this question of Sleswick-Holstein to take sides so passionately with Denmark against Germany? From a platonic love for justice? Yet the question regarded from the stand-point of justice does not, I own, appear to me so easy of solution as many here imagine.

We must not forget that Holstein is German, not only as belonging to the German Confederation, but because all about her is German; her history, her institutions, her language, her social usages, her political aspirations.

As for Sleswick, it does not indeed, like Holstein, form part of the Germanic Confederation, and it cannot be denied that the Danish element prevails in the northern districts; but even in Sleswick the German language is that spoken by the majority of

the inhabitants; German thought reigns in the towns and in all the great centres; the German spirit has for ages past breathed in the laws and usages of the land; to the German party belong the majority of the deputies in the provincial Diet of Sleswick, and in German are their votes delivered.

Of the activity of the movement that is separating Sleswick and Holstein from Denmark there exists one irrefragable witness, the popular rising of 1848. In vain did Frederick VII., when hardly seated on his throne, try to win over the Duchies by the proffer of a new constitution which seemed to place them on an equal footing with Denmark; that very thing frightened them, so much did they cleave to what remained of their independence. And when in 1848 the Liberal party in Copenhagen mixed up with their revolutionary votes, born of the moral counter-stroke to the revolution of February, their demand that Sleswick should be transformed into a *Danish province*, what occurred? The Duchies took fire; a war came out of a rebellion; a provisional government was set up, and deputies from Sleswick were seen sitting in a German Parliament. We know how implacable was the strife to which I refer; it lasted nearly three years, from 1848 to 1851.

In truth the courage of the Danes was put to a severe proof, for the revolution which broke out in March at Berlin having rendered the stay of the garrison there undesired and undesirable, Prussia had sent off the troops who remained unemployed to the help of the insurgents. But it is generally forgotten that if the inhabitants of the Duchies had Prussian soldiers on their side, the King of Denmark—the fact is almost incredible, albeit certain—had on his side—whom? Even the King of Prussia, who sent word secretly to the Government of Copenhagen, through M. Wildenbruch, that "Denmark had nothing to fear, and that the Prussian troops had been sent by him into the Duchies merely to counteract the influence of the republican party, and preserve them for their lawful monarch." The war on Prussia's side was conducted accordingly. The persons entrusted with the King's secret purpose put every needful hindrance in the way of an undesired success; they recalled the Prussian troops at the very moment when they were exposed to the misfortune of being victorious; and it was owing to the good offices of the Courts of Vienna and Berlin that Denmark resumed the sway so rudely contested over Sleswick and Holstein.

The fact is, that the Duchies of Sleswick-Holstein have their Magna Charta, to which they are quite as excusable for clinging as though they had Saxon blood in their veins. To this Magna Charta it was that Christian I. swore in 1460, when the Duchies accepted him as their king, not in his capacity of Danish monarch, but as the head of Sleswick-Holstein.

The Convention of 1460 provided:—

That Sleswick and Holstein should never form two separate countries;

That the inhabitants should not be bound to military service beyond the limits of their own territory;

That no war should be undertaken without the assent and advice of the States of Sleswick and Holstein;

That no tax should be levied without their consent;

That the money used in the country should be that which was current at the time in Lübeck and Hamburg;

That foreigners in the country should not be admitted either to dispense justice or to direct the administration there.

Thus was conceived the fundamental agreement of 1460. It declared, you see, the union, the inseparable union of Sleswick and Holstein; it determined the extent of their local sovereignty; it recognised their separate existence; it established between these countries and Denmark an order of relations like enough to that which subsisted before 1837 between England and Hanover: two countries ruled by the same monarch, but with different titles, and under different conditions.

This state of things underwent successive modifications, which have made possible, if not easy, the spirit of encroachment on the one hand, on the other the corrupting agency of selfishness and fear. But the feelings that inspired the Convention of 1460 still lived in the heart of the German population which overspreads Holstein and a considerable part of Sleswick.

On the 16th of February, 1860, in forwarding to Lord John Russell from Copenhagen the list of Sleswick's grievances, as drawn up by the majority of the Diet in that country in a petition to the King, Mr. Paget wrote, "Your lordship will observe that the main objects indicated are, the compulsory teaching of the Danish language; the use of Danish in the churches in districts where it is not understood; the suppression of several scientific societies; the restrictions laid on the liberty of the press; the

prohibition of all meetings, and the wish felt by Sleswick for political union with Holstein."*

Such in effect, in a very softened form, is the sum of the complaints which arouse in Germany so many formidable echoes. Still the summary is not complete. It says nothing of the vast network of espionage that has been thrown over the Duchies; of the troops which they furnish being condemned to serve under Danish officers out of their native land, in a kind of banishment; the colours of the Duchies being proscribed; of the words, "Sleswick-Holstein," being treated as seditious; of no regard being paid in the raising of the taxes to the right of control claimed by the states; of the fact that no petition may bear more than one signature; and finally, of the fact that all expression of public feeling is persecuted even to the brink of the graves opened to receive the dead.

If it be objected that these measures are absolutely necessary, does not that very necessity show at what a cost Denmark is reduced to buy the submission of the Duchies? And how, on the other hand, is one to see in such practices a faithful observance of the engagements made in 1852, and called to mind by Lord Russell in a despatch of recent date, namely:—

The self-government of the Federal Duchy of Holstein;

Non-incorporation of Sleswick with Denmark;

Equality in matters political between Sleswick and other parts of the kingdom;

Equal rights for the German and the Danish nationalities?

It is natural enough, we must allow, that, as those who are suffering, resisting, protesting in the Duchies are Germans, Germany should espouse their quarrel, and try to come to their help, if she has the means of so doing. Now those means she not only possesses, but, with regard to Holstein, is in a position legally to employ. For it must not be overlooked that Holstein forms part of the Germanic Confederation, and that the Germanic Diet, as supreme judge in cases of violation of the Federal Covenant, happens to be endowed with the right of punishing breaches of this kind, by sending troops into the territory of the defaulting member of the Confederation. The process called Federal execution can, of course, be set at work with more or less justice; but after all it is legal. One may, according to circumstances, find fault with the

* "Correspondence respecting the Affairs of the Duchies of Sleswig and Holstein." No. 1.

application; but Denmark itself in all that concerns Holstein cannot contest the principle.

So stands the question from the German point of view. Is it the only one that may justly detain us? Is there nought to say on behalf of Denmark? Are the Germans moved in this matter by a pure love of justice only? Have the English no valid reason to offer in justification of the almost unanimous sympathy out of which they are making a shield for Denmark? And must we be surprised at the emotion with which several of their journals greet, in the accession of Christian IX., the hope of a friendly arrangement between the Germanic Diet and the Cabinet of Copenhagen? These are points which the further development of facts will give me occasion to examine.

LETTER CCXIII.

COMPLICATIONS OF THE DANISH QUESTION.

November 22nd, 1863.

QUESTIONS that have been darkened are like dark clouds in stormy weather: they are laden with thunder.

The Sleswick-Holstein question is one of those, and one may see what a dose of electricity it is charged withal, by what has issued from it since the dispatch of my last letter.

The accession of Christian IX. to the Danish throne is setting the Duchies on fire. The Sleswick-Holsteiners call to mind their *war of independence* in 1848; they are recapitulating their grievances; they are demanding back their self-government with loud cries; to their minds the bell which tolled the funeral of Frederick VII., tolled the hour of their complete enfranchisement. "What foundation will there be henceforth," they say, "for Denmark's claim to keep us under her yoke? Frederick VII. having left no male heir, the Danish throne has fallen to the female branch, and our law of succession is the Salic law. Now, as the union of the Duchies with Denmark was never more than a *dynastic* union, like that of Hanover with England before the accession of Queen Victoria, and all that tended to alter its character had no other origin than the encroachments of force, the legal tie that bound us to Denmark is broken. The death

of Frederick VII. makes us independent and free. Of what concern to us that Treaty of London by which the great European Powers, foreseeing the occasion which has just come to pass and wishing to prevent its consequences, designated Prince Christian of Glucksburg in 1852 as the future King of Denmark, and our future Duke? By virtue of what right did those Powers substitute their own good pleasure for the law that governed us, reverse the order of succession established in our country, and dispose of our fate without our help, in our despite, to our hurt? Are we cattle? Let the Danes, if it suit them, accept a monarch consecrated by diplomacy: that monarch cannot be our Duke."

Thereupon comes forward Prince Frederick of Augustenburg, in the attitude of lawful Duke of Sleswick-Holstein; and such he certainly is, if the order of recognised succession in those countries has not been done away, in the name and in consequence of the Treaty of London of 1852. Is that candidature serious, having on its side the weight of law and perhaps the larger part of the population in the Duchies, while against it are the protocols? Ah! if all Germany was not there to support it! This is the tragical side of the business.

The Duke of Saxe-Gotha has declared himself already. He is said to be ambitious, greedy of popularity; and assuredly the initiative he has just taken proves how clever he is in playing on the sensitive chords. There is no question in fact that rouses German feeling more than the absolute self-rule of Holstein which belongs to the Germanic Confederation, and of Sleswick which aspires to join it. There is also a mighty ferment throughout the German States. More bitterly than ever is Prince Christian there designated under the scornful appellation of *Prince Protocol*. More bitterly than ever is it urged that he, being a German, has in the case of the Duchies abandoned the cause which Germany regards as specially hers; that to this desertion alone he owes his fortune; that he is the creature of England. They talk of the Treaty of 1852 as a sheet of paper good to throw into the fire. To those who point out that this treaty bears after all the signatures of Austria and Prussia, they answer that neither Prussia nor Austria signed as members of the Germanic Confederation; that if they had meddled with the manner of Holstein's existence without reserving the assent of the Diet, they would have trampled the Federal covenant under foot; that their adhesion has consequently been and must be conditional,

that is to say, subject to the further ratification of the Diet; a ratification which has not yet been given.

This is not all. As if the problem were not entangled enough, note how the van of the democratic party in Germany rejects at one stroke both Christian of Glucksburg and Frederick of Augustenburg: the former because he is a king, and king of Denmark; the second because he appeals to titles more or less borrowed from the theory of divine right, and because he is son of a man who, after letting Denmark buy from him the personal abandonment of his hereditary claims, has served despotism in Prussia against liberty. This party, if few, as I believe, in numbers, is on the other hand very active, bestirs itself much, writes a good deal, has émissaries in Holstein, sends manifestoes thither, spreads abroad the idea that the best thing the Duchies could do would be to pass by claimants of every hue, to form themselves into a republic, to become the Switzerland of the north.

And while this agitation runs on yonder, are we quiet here? Certainly not. The movement in Germany disturbs and irritates the English. They seem to discover in it much less of a sympathetic impulse towards the German people of the Duchies, than a morbid passion for growing great. They have no doubt but that Germany's aim is to reduce Sleswick to the condition of a German province. They suppose her to be seized with a violent desire to have a large harbour in the Baltic. They reckon the chiefest port in those regions to be Kiel; and that to profit by the possession of Kiel, which is in Holstein, Germany needs to establish herself on the northern shore, which forms part of Sleswick. They know how large is the merchant navy of the Germans, a fact not sufficiently known elsewhere; and how great a maritime power Germany could become on the day when she gets the war-vessels now wanting, and holds possession of Sleswick and Holstein, two nurseries of able and hardy sailors. One thing also moves them, the dread of seeing the disappearance of the Danish nationality, which, without Sleswick and Holstein, would be very near dying out, from inability to defend itself any longer: they take an interest in this people, small in number but great in courage, whom freedom at this hour reckons among her own.

In this frame of mind the English are throwing as much vehemence into their support of Denmark as the Germans into their support of the Duchies. Would England step forward if Germany did? Strange in that case would be the complications;

great the embarrassment of the royal family of England! Could the Queen's eldest daughter, wife of the Crown Prince of Prussia, help offering up her prayers for Germany? Is it likely that the Queen's eldest son, husband to the new King of Denmark's daughter, would not be inspired with feelings altogether opposite? And even now is it not singular that the first to pronounce against the Princess of Wales's father is the Prince of Wales's uncle?

Be that as it may, the mine is dug. It needs but a spark to spring it.

If the matter lay only between Denmark on the one hand and the Duchies on the other, the question would be simple enough in spite of the prodigious efforts made to embroil it. The three points on which it turns were summed up by the King of Prussia in these terms, in the letter he wrote on March 21, 1848, to the Duke of Augustenburg:—

1. The Duchies are independent states;
2. They are closely bound to each other;
3. The male branch rules in the Duchies.

Each of these assertions has of course given occasion to endless controversies between Danish and German writers. The archives of Copenhagen have been ransacked; old parchments half worm-eaten have been consulted and deciphered; floods of ink have been expended; there has been criticising, equivocating over all manner of Latin texts; they have been fighting themselves out of breath over such a question, for instance, as the amount of weight that may be attached to a letter found in the Danish archives, dated the 5th June, 1448, containing a paragraph in Latin "derived," according to the letter, "from a document of the date of 1326, signed by King Waldemar," in which the non-incorporation of Sleswick with Denmark had been laid down in solemn terms, both for the time present and the time to come. The rights devolving on Sleswick and Holstein from the covenant of 1460 have been combated with the facts established by the *coup d'état* of 1721 and the theory of prescription; people have tried with the commentator's lens in their hands to find out what the kings of Denmark meant to say or not to say, when on their accession they promised to respect the "privileges" of the Duchies; one party have earnestly maintained and the other as earnestly denied the worth of the letters patent by which King Christian VIII. strove to extend to the Duchies the order of

succession accepted in Denmark and regulated by the *Lex Regia*. In short there has been no measure taken by the Danes to combat the Sleswick-Holstein movement which has not furnished matter for the most opposite statements, for the most irreconcilable estimates. Would they not have spared themselves a great outlay of erudition, saved much time, avoided many sharp disputes, by reducing the discussion to these two points:—Are nations their own masters or not? Do the inhabitants of Sleswick and Holstein wish or not wish to be Danes?

Even now, would not this solution be the shortest, the simplest, the best?

Unluckily the question is entangled with European elements from which it cannot be easily disengaged, and from which it has certainly not been disengaged by the Treaty of 1852, although on that occasion France, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, and Austria acted according to the theory of congresses—which proves that beneath a congress there may be a train of powder!

LETTER CCXIV.

ENGLISH INTERESTS OPPOSED TO GERMAN INTERESTS.

November 24th, 1863.

It is not quite without reason that an English journal points out to-day the immense disproportion between the importance of the Duchies, whether in numbers or territory, and the alarming grandeur of the quarrel which seems on the point of beginning on their account.

You remember the story of Piron eating an *omelette au lard* on a fast-day? It began to thunder; and he, impious that he was, to cry out, "Eh! all this noise about an omelette!" Certainly, at first sight, it seems absurd that the thunder of the guns of all Europe should rumble about that omelette, Sleswick, a country with no more than 500,000 inhabitants, and containing no more than 167 square miles.

Unluckily in the Sleswick question, and in that of Holstein, which forms but one with the first, that which interests Europe least is the very point that directly concerns these two countries. Ay, if only their interests, rights, aspirations, were at stake; if all

was confined to the learning how far Denmark is right in imposing the study of Danish on German children—or of what weight are the conditions of the covenant of 1460, which stipulates for the purely *dynastic* union of the Duchies with Denmark, their self-government, their inseparable existence—or of what worth are the successive *coups d'état* by which the Government of Copenhagen strove, through different resumptions, to set those conditions at nought—or by what right, when the male line came to be extinguished in Denmark, they claimed to perpetuate her union with Sleswick-Holstein, which is ruled by the Salic law,—if that were all, I say, no doubt the enkindling of all Europe would be a means out of proportion to the end. In that case the play would certainly be too grand for the stage; and we should have before us the spectacle of an enormous locomotive employed in moving one of those machines in which children are enclosed that they may learn to walk. But I say again that, in the opinion of European Governments, the question at issue is quite a different thing from the desires of the Sleswick-Holsteiners and the rightfulness of those desires.

In fact the two chief interests present in this matter are the German interest and the English interest. That is sufficiently proclaimed by the excitement shown in Germany and in England. The *Germanisation*, if I may so call it, of the Baltic, and the gradual transforming of Germany into a maritime power, this is what the Germans passionately desire and the English dread.

The protocol of London, moreover, which these latter succeeded in getting signed in London, in 1852, by France, Russia, Sweden, even by Prussia and Austria, was specially intended to ensure the integrity of the Danish monarchy by means of an arrangement which would retain Denmark and the Duchies under the same sceptre. What has just happened was then foreseen, namely, that Frederick VII. would die childless, that the kingdom of Denmark would devolve on the female branch. Now, as the Danish monarchs became Dukes of Sleswick and Holstein only by virtue of election, on condition that the succession to the two Duchies should not go out of the male line, it was evident that on the death of Frederick VII. the union of the Duchies with the Danish crown ought to cease. But what would happen then? Would not Sleswick, which is half German, and Holstein, which is wholly so, throw themselves into the arms of Germany unreservedly and without delay? Would not the accession of Sleswick

to the Germanic Confederacy secure for Germany peaceful possession of the harbour of Kiel, possession at this moment more or less unsettled by the neighbourhood of the Danes? In a word, whatever these last, at whom England has no cause to take offence, might in a manner come to lose, would not powerful Germany prove the gainer? It was in order to prevent all this that England formed the idea of designating beforehand as successor to Frederick VII., in his twofold capacity of King of Denmark and Duke of the States of Sleswick and Holstein, the prince who has just been crowned at Copenhagen, and who ever since 1852 has been called the "Prince Protocol."

But, as concerning the Duchies, Christian was not the rightful successor; and the fact that European diplomacy thought proper to stand his godmother was not enough to annul at one blow the indisputable and undisputed claims of the Duke of Augustenburg to the succession of Sleswick-Holstein.

Things being so, you will ask perhaps why the choice of diplomacy fell not on the second rather than the first? The reason is plain. In the disputes between Denmark and the Duchies, who had sided with Denmark? Christian. Who had sided with the Duchies? The Duke of Augustenburg. It entered, therefore, into the views of our protocol-makers to choose the first and reject the second. There was a renunciation to get: it was gotten by purchase; and the Duke of Augustenburg promised "to undertake nothing likely to disturb tranquillity in the States of his Danish Majesty, and to offer no hindrance to the measures he might take, whether with regard to the succession in the countries reunited under his sceptre, or with reference to the ultimate organisation of the Danish monarchy."

Speaking of this renunciation by his father, the Prince of Augustenberg, he who now comes forward as claimant, with Germany to support him, has certainly been ill advised in declaring that in 1852 his father renounced *in his favour;* but this he can reasonably affirm, that in 1852 his father was in no way empowered to bargain for his descendants; consequently that he, Prince Frederick, having renounced nothing, remains the lawful heir.

Nothing less, therefore, is now at issue than the validity of the Treaty of London. If it is null, Christian IX. has no sort of right to the possession of the Duchies; the Sleswick-Holsteiners are free; Germany wins; England's policy has been foiled.

Now you may guess her embarrassment!

On the one hand she is bound in honour, or, to speak more correctly, she considers herself bound in honour to uphold her work; to forbid the turning into waste paper of a treaty signed by all the great Powers, beginning with herself; to stand by the cause of that Christian whom she greets as father to the Princess of Wales. And that which her pride counsels, her interest counsels too.

On the other hand she cannot but ask herself whether it is quite becoming in her to force a nation to submit to a prince whom it does not want; whether it is becoming in her to hinder by violence in the Duchies that right of self-government which she would find it odious for others to assail in her own case, and the application of which she has so often recommended in that of others? It is very true that she helps the Turk in retaining the Montenegrins and Servians under his dominion; but that is done in self-defence, under the pressure of exceptional circumstances, in sight of extraordinary dangers, to save the East from becoming a prey for anarchy and Russian ambition to fight over.

Another thought, not less grave and still more disquieting, agitates reflecting minds in this country. They are struck by the fierceness of the movement that bears Germany along; they are but slightly reassured by the signatures which Austria and Prussia in 1852 appended to the Treaty of London; they know that Holstein, forming part of the Germanic Confederacy, Austria and Prussia needed the assent of the Diet in order to meddle with that country; they do not hide from themselves that the ratification of the Diet, not yet obtained, and which there are so few chances of obtaining, supplies the two great German monarchies with a natural pretext for retracing their steps; they can hardly believe that these latter, in their jealousy of each other, will not seek to catch the votes of Germany in their attempt to wrest the Duchies from Denmark; they deem it, above all, unlikely that M. Bismarck would fail to seize this opportunity, if not of making peace with the Prussian people, at any rate of charming away the hatred he has stirred up. And if, so far as may be foreseen, matters were to take this turn, would France, who signed the Treaty of London, stay with her arms folded? Would not Napoleon for his part be delighted to have an excuse for drawing the sword against Prussia and trying to establish himself upon the Rhine?

Of the various considerations to which the Sleswick-Holstein question has given birth here, that which I have just been indicating is not the least stirring. Hence, perhaps, the idea put forth by the *Saturday Review*, of a congress which should aim at solving peacefully the problem laid before Europe by the death of Frederick VII., and further, at examining those points of variance which might be attacked with least inconvenience. This congress —to be held in London, since it would begin with a discussion of the Treaty of London—would replace the Œcumenical Council which Napoleon proposed to assemble at Paris.

The plan, you see, is not ill conceived for throwing into the shade the initiative emanating from the Tuileries, and forcing the French Emperor back on the second plan.

LETTER CCXV.

WHY ENGLAND HAS REJECTED THE IDEA OF A CONGRESS.

November 28th, 1863.

THE despatch containing England's refusal to accede to a congress bears date, as the *Daily News* well observes, on Wednesday; and yesterday evening the English Government published in the *London Gazette* all the correspondence which has taken place on this grave subject between the Cabinet of the Tuileries and that of St. James's.

Thus the minister has not lost a moment. Earl Russell wanted without delay to invite the people of England to learn the decision of England's public servants, and to judge of the motives on which that decision is founded.

It is creditable to the institutions of this country, which is inhabited by a superior race, that such communications should be needful on the part of authority. The nation here has a right to know everything, and to know it without being forced to wait. It would feel surprised if any one claimed to make a secret of its own affairs; if it were left, even for a few days, in ignorance of what should only be the effect of its own will.

There is nothing strange then in the readiness with which Earl Russell has informed England of the manner in which he had

interpreted her thought, expressed her feelings, followed her commands. And that is the more natural in the case under discussion, because there can be no doubt as to the perfect harmony between the nation and the governing power.

I don't pride myself indeed on being a prophet, and yet you must remember how confidently from the first moment I foretold a refusal. Compare the correspondence of Earl Russell with the letters I have written to you on this question of a congress; between the arguments of the Foreign Secretary and those of my English friend, and you will discover a striking analogy, in substance and almost in form. Nothing more simple! From the first there has been but one voice here, not against the abstract idea of a congress, for to that, on the contrary, every one gladly paid homage; but against its realisation from the twofold standpoint of its practical value and its present pertinence.

Moreover, the decision of the ministry and the reasons given in support of it, have been welcomed with general approbation, and almost without a question.

The *Times* expresses its satisfaction in grave and slightly scoffing terms.

The *Daily News* thanks the ministry in the name not only of the English nation, but of posterity.

The *Morning Advertiser* is radiant.

The *Daily Telegraph* rejoices in the impassive watchfulness of England, and compares it to the attitude of the lion at rest.

The *Morning Star*, which, as the journal of peace at any price, likes and ought to like congresses, declares it was natural that ministers should be afraid of launching their country into a hazardous enterprise, of which itself had desired, without hoping, the fortunate consummation.

The *Morning Herald* which, as mouthpiece of the Tories, is bound to seek a quarrel at any cost with Earl Russell, dares not however attack him to the utmost in its appreciation of the answer of the Cabinet of St. James's, and is reduced to fall back on the form of it, which it deems not courteous enough.

Lastly, the *Morning Post* keeps silent, and this reserve is perhaps still more significant than the language of the other journals.

For, if I am rightly informed, Lord Palmerston, whose organ is the *Morning Post*, was not of the same opinion in council as Lord Russell about the necessity of declining a congress; and

the resignation of the latter, offered at first and afterwards withdrawn, would have been the result of this disagreement. Hence it follows that in the upshot Lord Palmerston must have been driven to sacrifice his own opinion to *public opinion*. In that case, one can imagine why the *Morning Post* should have been in no hurry to speak.

Be that as it may, you can discern in the despatches of the foreign minister for this country the faithful expression of all that England feels, thinks, desires, and deprecates, with regard to the proposal of a congress.

Now then, it matters much for the good understanding of the two countries, and perhaps for the peace of the world, that in France there should be no mistake either about the character of the refusal, or about the nature of the considerations which have dictated it. They who should regard it as an act of low jealousy, as a proof of blind hostility, as the promptings of a selfish desire to clog the movements of France, or to strip her of a bold initiative, would be falling into an error whose consequences might chance to be disastrous. Let them be circumspect, if freedom be dear to them!

The notion of offending France, to begin with, were it never so safe to offend her, is a notion to which all parties here are equally strange. England desires, I was going to say yearns, to keep on living on friendly terms with ourselves; and if she is somewhat over-fearful, it is about whatever might tend to disturb that good understanding. So true is this, that, on the first tidings of the decision taken by the Ministry, there were displayed in the most opposite camps apprehensions that bore sufficient witness to the price at which our alliance is rated here. How would that decision be regarded on the other side of the Channel? Would it not be interpreted in the sense of a breach made in our friendship? Would it not lead to a loosening of the bond that unites and ought to unite the two nations? Those Frenchmen who have stored up and cultivated the bitter heritage of historical prejudices and military hatreds, would they not raise the usual outcry against "*perfide Albion?*" Yes, such were the apprehensions that made themselves known from the first; and to see in them nothing but a result of the fear inspired in England by our greatness, would be on the one hand strangely to misconceive that of England, and to yield on the other to a feeling of boastfulness unworthy of a great nation; those nations being

truly great who respect themselves in their rivals, and even in their enemies.

The truth is — I have told it very often, but cannot grow tired of repeating it—that with her deep and earnest desire to sail in company with France, England cannot help mingling a feeling of distrust. Whether that feeling be well or ill-grounded, it does anyhow exist.

In France, Englishmen are on the watch for a machine to indicate beforehand the direction of the wind; and as they can discover nothing of the sort,—in other words, as public opinion in France cannot, in answer to their questioning, teach them what itself for the most part fails to know, or is forbidden to tell when it does know,—they keep on their guard, and naturally feel amazed at the offence taken on account of a reserve which, in their opinion, is but a needful act of prudence.

In what specially concerns the question of a congress, England —to look at it from another point of view than ours—had a reason perhaps still more conclusive than those imparted to you in my former letters; and that reason is derived from the very genius of the English people. Read to-day's *Times:* in urging what it calls the ideal character of the despatches of M. Drouyn de Lhuys, and the practical character of Lord Russell's despatches, it gives the best possible explanation, the true explanation of England's conduct in this matter. To her thinking indeed, pure philosophy, especially when it borders on sentimentality, is not within the province of statesmen. To her thinking, politics are made up of facts, not principles. In her eyes the wisdom that does for nations, no less than the wisdom that does for individuals, will take life as it is and as it comes; will not let men aspire to foresee and regulate everything; would have them look out for accidents, which they should be free to battle against if unfavourable, or in the contrary event to turn to their advantage.

You remember the famous axiom, "Nature abhors a vacuum." Well, one might say of the English mind that it "abhors generalisations." Some time ago I wrote you a letter in which, referring to an article in the *Saturday Review*, I brought out that thesis. I am not afraid to assert that, if you want some means of estimating England's policy with profit and with fairness, you could not adopt a surer criterion.

For example, the *Economist*, a very thoughtful and well-written

journal, justifies England's refusal to take part in the congress by this consideration, that only the presence of evil brings out our power of determining the remedy. "How often," it says, "in our household life do we not happen to find that we are spending too much! If our fears on this score are but partially grounded, we trouble our brains to no purpose; nothing occurs to us which we could really spare. But let the need come, an absolute need for reducing ourselves to the proper quantity, and we shall be surprised at the number of things which we may easily go without."

Does not this reasoning seem to you characteristic?

There is no need, therefore, to go far afield in searching for the causes of England's refusal; they are all at hand; they form an integral part of her genius. It was almost impossible that a country like this should not deem it an exceedingly romantic project, that of a congress designed to atone for the past, to make sure of the present, to regulate the future; and all this through the concurrence of Powers ready to offer upon the altars of everlasting peace their prejudices, their spite, the possessions they had unjustly acquired, and the possessions of others which they had unjustly coveted.

It must also be allowed, for I mean to hide nothing, that England was not sorry on this occasion to assert herself as a nation of the first order, with a policy of her own, a will of her own, accepting the lead of a foreign sovereign only when it seemed to her practicable and expedient. But to speak frankly, is this feeling of pride one which France in England's place would be incapable of experiencing?

As for imagining that England was glad to place herself before the world in the attitude indicated by those words of the *Saturday Review*, "France proposes, but England disposes," trust me, the people of England have too much sense to act fustian when the repose of Europe and their own repose are in question.

LETTER CCXVI.

A GERMAN MEETING AT THE LONDON TAVERN.

November 29th, 1863.

ENGLAND will not figure in congress: that is quite settled. Why? The publication in the *London Gazette* of the despatches exchanged between the Cabinet of the Tuileries and the Cabinet of St. James's, leaves not a cloud upon the motives of the English Government. For England the congress would be the bottle of ink, if I may use such an expression, or rather it would be the box of Pandora. Instead of peace, it might perchance give rise to war; instead of entering on the age of gold, we should be liable to sink yet deeper into the age of iron. Such is the thought of Earl Russell; in this manner has he spoken, with the firm tone that becomes a free man, speaking in the name of a free people; and this is what England unanimously thinks and says in company with Earl Russell. I will not dwell on that. My comments have been offered to your readers in advance. Besides, at this moment, the comments offer themselves.

I would rather talk to you of another question which stirs public opinion here not less briskly than the congress, and threatens to set Europe on fire.

Last Monday a hundred Germans met to concert a large meeting. The question, as you may guess, was about Sleswick-Holstein. The lawfulness of the Duke of Augustenberg's title having been brought forward, Karl Blind, with an eloquence of heart peculiar to himself, said:—

That the cause whose victory had to be striven for was not that of this or the other pretender, but the cause of a nationality unfairly confiscated, of freedom suffering assault;

That it would not be conformable either to the principles of democracy, or even to the maxims of statecraft, to enter into a simple war of succession;

That the struggle was not between one prince and another, but between a nation which appeals to the right of self-possession, and another nation by which that indefeasible right is violently assailed;

But that care must be taken not to abandon the solution of this highest question to the German Courts and the Diet;

That already, during the war of independence in 1848-1851, the cause of Sleswick-Holstein, which is that of Germany, had been betrayed by the German governments;

That the King of Prussia in those days had secretly connived with Denmark, who by this act of treachery became assured of success;

That the Sleswick-Holsteiners would have to rely on their own bravery, supported by the arms of German volunteers; that is to say, on the revolutionary movement;

That as for himself, it was his [Karl Blind's] desire to see Sleswick-Holstein become the Switzerland of the North, and figure thenceforward in history, not as the rear-guard of princely legitimacy, but as the advanced-guard of German freedom.

This exposition of views which the speaker had previously developed in a glowing manifesto sent by him to the people of Sleswick-Holstein, was rapturously cheered. Some persons tried to dispute them, but their opposition was overcome; and the preliminary meeting named a commission for drawing up a programme of the *resolutions* to be upheld before the conclusive meeting. The members of the commission were designated in the following order:—Karl Blind, Freyligrath, Dr. Heintzmann, Berndes, Dr. Basch, Bergmann, Kinkel, Jebens, Jacoby, &c.: twenty-five members in all.

On Wednesday the commissioners met. Karl Blind proposed some resolutions, all of which were adopted after lively debates, and most of them unanimously; the opponents themselves ending by voting for them.

Here are the Resolutions:—

1. The meeting declares that from this moment all connection between Sleswick-Holstein and Denmark is dissolved, in accordance with the rights of ancient charters, as it has long since been dissolved according to the natural rights of freedom; the constitution proclaimed by the new king being but a flagrant breach of the rights of the Sleswick-Holsteiners and the German nation.

2. The meeting declares that the *Protocol of London*, never having been ratified either by the people of Sleswick-Holstein or by the German nation, is null and void. (This resolution, which renewed the first, was added on the motion of M. Born.)

3. The meeting declares that it is the duty of the people of

Germany to re-establish the independence of Sleswick-Holstein, which was annihilated by a piece of unexampled treachery.

4. The meeting declares that, in sight of the behaviour hitherto observed by the German governments, and the need of attaining to a *union of forces*, they must take for their word of command the *Independence of the Country*, must form a provisional government, appeal to all German patriots for their aid, proceed at once to form volunteer corps; but leave the country, once it has conquered its independence, the right to pronounce on its future constitution through an assembly freely elected.

5. The meeting names a commission of twelve members charged to collect subscriptions, and procure all kinds of help for the cause of the Sleswick-Holsteiners.

These resolutions voted, it was settled that the decisive meeting should be presided over by Dr. Heintzmann, whose brother fell in the last war between Sleswick-Holstein and Denmark; and Freyligrath, Karl Blind, Kinkel, and some others, were designated vice-presidents, or members of departments.

Yesterday, Saturday, was the day appointed for the holding of the great meeting; and in fact it was yesterday evening that it came off in the *London Tavern*. The gathering was considerable, and one could easily see from the animated countenances there, with what emotion men's hearts were filled. The ladies occupied the gallery at the back. They, too, revealed in their attitudes the passionate interest they took in the question about to be set forth.

The speakers were Messrs. Heintzmann, Kinkel, Beigel, Born, Thudichum, Karl Blind, Rubel (Holstein), Zarffi, Weber, and Schirges. Need I tell in what sense they spoke? The considerations on which rests the right of Sleswick-Holstein to be her own master are too well-known in Germany to need being developed here; enough for me to declare that they were presented by the speakers yesterday with much force, and a singularly striking unanimity of conviction. But it is of importance to mark the spirit displayed in the assembly with regard to the candidature of the Duke of Augustenberg. Dr. Kinkel uttered the words "rotten legitimacy." As for Karl Blind, his conclusion was: No princely legitimacy! No pretenders! He showed how an intervention of that sort was fitted only to keep Germany involved yet longer in wars, which, in the event of her failure, would resuscitate the policy of the Rhenish League.

The enthusiastic and prolonged cheers called forth from the

meeting by the speeches of Messrs. Kinkel and Karl Blind, forbid all doubt as to the faithfulness with which they reproduced its thoughts and expressed its feelings. And the proofs of this were completed by the prompt voting on each of the resolutions, the text of which I have already placed before your eyes.

To sum up: The sovereignty of the people instead of the lapsed right of pretenders; a war of independence instead of a war of succession; the spontaneousness of a revolution instead of the intervention of governments; these were the demands avowed by yesterday's meeting of Germans.

These are manifestly the only views which democracy can avow if the collision has become inevitable, if the intentions of Denmark on the one hand and of Germany on the other make every other issue impossible. But, in that case, the move indicated would have the further advantage of setting free the diplomatic responsibility of certain governments, of baffling the under-meanings which the interference of some among them might conceal, of disarming the hostility of England, of preventing the King of Prussia from turning a great popular movement to the account of his own despotism, of preventing the strife, in short, from swelling to the fearful proportions of a vast European conflagration.

LETTER CCXVII.

THE CONGRESS.

December 3rd, 1863.

"MAY I have the honour of dancing with you, Miss ——?" "No, thank you. I don't know the figures."

Such is the dialogue which a comic London paper puts into the mouth of the Emperor of the French, transformed into a beau, and of England, represented as a beauty just a little diffident and timid. This caricature contains in a few pencil-strokes the history of the congress proposed by Napoleon, in all that concerns the Cabinets of the Tuileries and St. James's. England would not dance without knowing the figures. Her refusal has no other meaning.

To cry out as at an insult, to thunder against the selfishness and

the jealousy of "*perfide Albion*," to dream of avenging Waterloo, and utter one's dream aloud, may suit the scribblers and swaggerers who haunt the ante-rooms of the Empire; but there is nothing serious in all this.

In truth I am surprised at any one expecting for one moment to see so grave, so practical a people as the English rushing, with heads down, on the great undertaking of European reconstruction. And doing so at what moment? Just as the issue of the negociations entered on between Russia on one hand, and France, England, Austria, on the other, have shown in a manner so mournfully glaring the impotence of diplomacy, and the irreconcileable nature of the claims that had to be reconciled!

If England had refused plainly, without asking for preliminary explanations, something might have been said. But it was not so. In India, when an army on the march has to pass a bridge, the elephants are sent forward first. If the bridge yields, the heavy beasts fall into the river; but they find a way after all of gaining the bank, and the army, warned betimes of the danger, stops short. Well, in the matter of the congress, England deemed herself bound to make sure of the bridge's steadiness before venturing upon it: is that so great a crime? "What is your programme?" asked she; and it is no fault of hers if we could not or would not tell her.

Do you remember the story of Judge Bridoye in Rabelais? In order to end the quarrels of his suitors without offending any of them, that wise magistrate resolved to fall back on fate for the care of deciding between the parties, and made the winning or losing of each suit dependant on a throw of the dice. The thing succeeded wonderfully, and our judge won the reputation of a Solomon. Thereupon a beardless lawyer, having discovered his method, imagined that he had only to use it himself, in order to earn a name for infallibility. But alas! it was quite the reverse. Not only did he satisfy no one; he even drew down universal execration on himself. How was it that the same process pro duced two such different results? The reason was that, of the two judges, the former took care not to interfere until the dispute to be settled had lasted long enough to tire out both parties, to exhaust all their strength, and make them prefer any kind of settlement to the continuance of the struggle; while the latter took things at the outset, without waiting for the patience of the disputants to come to an end. From all this the *Morning Post*,

after telling the story, concludes that the proposed congress would end in nothing, because the questions to solve are not ripe enough, and England would therefore have done foolishly not to decline.

This, if I mistake not, is pleading a good cause on very bad grounds. So, the Polish question, for instance, is not ripe enough; and after the violent suppression of so many violent revolts, after so many cruel battles, so much bloodshed, the plunging of so many families into mourning, it has not yet brought into sufficient clearness the savage stubbornness of the oppressors and the constancy of the oppressed! So, too, not yet ripe enough is the question of Sleswick-Holstein, which for so many years has been harassing Denmark, angering Germany, disquieting Europe! And Venice? Were her groans first heard yesterday? And the Ottoman Empire? Is this the first moment that Russia has taken to coveting the succession to "the sick man of Constantinople?" Ah yes! The questions to solve are but too ripe; and were the remedy as certain as the disease is advanced, Napoleon would be right and England wrong. The *Morning Post's* justification of England's refusal is, in plain language, utterly absurd; so absurd, that I suspect the *Morning Post*, as Lord Palmerston's journal, is defending on this point the policy of Lord Russell after the manner of those pleaders who are paid to lose the cause they have taken in hand. The true justification of the policy of Lord Russell—who is not, like Lord Palmerston, a crony of the French Emperor—lies in his habit of looking at the practical side of things, and also in the impossibility in which he is placed of regulating his conduct by an exact acquaintance with the inclinations and the feelings of a nation reduced either to talk in riddles or to keep silence.

Twice already has the English Government ventured aboard the same bark as the Imperial Government; and what has it gained?

The abandonment of the right of search for the behoof of Russia,—such were England's net proceeds from the war in the Crimea, a war in which she spent so largely in men and money, in which she imperilled her influence, and which she was forced to conclude at the very moment when she had a chance of reaping profit therefrom.

The conquest of Mexico by the Zouaves—such was the result to England of an expedition undertaken in common, on the faith of an engagement which excluded all idea of territorial aggrandisement, and even of political interference.

Such experiences authorise England henceforth to make no engagements with her eyes closed.

Assuredly she seeks to live on good terms with France; she does not care to offend her willingly, but she deems herself bound to take her own precautions.

LETTER CCXVIII.

ENGLAND UNFAIRLY ASSAILED.

December 7th, 1863.

ARE Englishmen always wrong when they exclaim, "See how fickle these Frenchmen are!" Indeed, I am half inclined to doubt it. Why, only yesterday, people in France talked of nothing, dreamed of nothing, but flying to the help of Poland; Poland's name was in every mouth; her image, mangled and bleeding, rose up before every eye; the hours of her convulsive agony were reckoned up with anguish; they burned to hasten its close, and for that end no obstacle seemed too great, no distance too considerable, no sacrifice too heavy; their hearts wept; their hands sought for their swords. And to-day, though Poland is still alive and fighting, yet to a great many Frenchmen she is as one dead, wrapt up in her shroud, and buried out of sight! Hardly does any one feel bound in decency to think of her from time to time; and very soon, God forgive me! will those be accused of vain iteration, who shall still be minded to invoke law, justice, humanity, on her behalf. At this moment the fashion has gone elsewhere.

And what a change may be seen with regard to Russia! How gentle we have suddenly become towards her! How quickly we have forgotten the ironical tone of Prince Gortschakoff's despatches and the hateful character of Mouravieff's exploits!

There is no mistaking the fact, that the cause of a change almost inconceivable lies in the awakening of that military pride, which is provoked in France by any opposition, or even semblance of opposition, on the part of Englishmen. So, because England one fine day took the great liberty of differing from the Cabinet of the Tuileries on the probable effects of a congress, because she had the insolence to have her own opinion, farewell to our sym-

pathy with Poland! farewell to the wrath aroused by butchery past telling! farewell to the freedom recommended by the example of a free people! Make haste, journalists on the banks of the Seine; empty your quivers; you have England to aim at!

Every head on the other side of the Channel must surely have been turned, when the *Journal des Debats* itself, a grave and sensible newspaper, begins to mingle its groans with the outcry of the *Opinion Nationale*, and of all for whom history begins with Crécy and ends at Waterloo!

Come now! what do these gentlemen contend for? That an invitation, perhaps, when it comes from the Tuileries, is a command? Has a Government, to which another Government makes propositions, no right to ask for explanations, to examine, to weigh, and to decide according to its own lights?

Or is it impossible, absolutely impossible, to have two different opinions as to the efficacy of a congress; so that doubt on that score can only be explained by an excess of bad faith, by the promptings of jealousy, the partisanship of hate? Let optimists hold for a certainty that Austria will yield up Venice to Italy; that Russia will restore Poland to herself; that Spain will not claim, or else will obtain Gibraltar; that Prussia will sell the Duchy of Posen cheap; that Denmark will be only too happy to deserve the respect of the Duchies by parting with them, while Germany will be too happy to prove her disinterestedness by meddling with the Duchies no longer; that the Sultan will be very glad to see his states dismembered, if need be; and that the Pope will give Victor Emmanuel his blessing, leaving him a part of the domains of the Church, and even Rome, if that be expedient; in short, that these matters will be accomplished by the mere fact of so many princes going, with or without the consent of the peoples, to discuss the affairs of Europe round a green cloth. I don't take it ill that there should be people disposed to attribute such effects beforehand to such a cause, and I mean in no way whatever to dispute their right to proclaim aloud that *by faith we are saved*. But let those, in return, who have no faith, be allowed to give their reasons. Before asserting that England's refusal to take part in the congress is a mark of low jealousy, an act of base selfishness, an insult to France, &c., &c., there is one thing to prove,—whether this assertion, "The peace of the world would spring out of a congress," is an axiom as incontestible as this other, "A right line is the shortest way from one point to

another point." Until that can be proved, England will be justified in asking by what principle of justice and liberty people insist that, on a question essentially open to dispute, she should have no other opinion than that of the Imperial Government.

And let no objection be made to the form of her refusal. The style of Lord Russell's despatches may be stiff, but it is neither brutal, nor discourteous, nor dry. Every point is discussed with a care and closeness which betoken a previous scrutiny, as sincere as attentive, into the question. At most it might be said that one remarks in it the absence of those fine-spun, and foolishly honeyed phrases in which diplomatic hypocrisy is wont to array itself. But on the one hand the employment of this style, at once dignified without arrogance, and becoming without insipidity, is characteristic of Earl Russell's manner, who never writes otherwise; and on the other, if there arose a question of form, would not the English Government be justified in rebutting complaint by complaint?

For myself, I am certainly very far from finding fault with the proud, straightforward character of the appeal made by Napoleon III. to the public opinion of Europe. God forbid that I should protest against this rendering of homage to the right of nations to intervene intellectually! The broad daylight of the market-place is worth more than the darkness of the council-room. But, in the very frankness of his own language, has Napoleon III. given an excellent example, which Lord Russell has done very well to imitate. Those people should be cheered instead of irritated by it, who are high-hearted enough to see in language something else than the means which God gave man for hiding his thoughts.

There is no use in trying to contrast England's behaviour with that of other governments. If England on this occasion spoke without periphrases, she did so simply because her dignity had no indispensable sacrifice to offer to the promptings of her prudence. Did not the acceptances in which the official and the officious press of France exult so greatly come forth, for the most part, wrapt round in reservations, leaving one to guess at the *ifs* and *buts?*

Is it not literally true, as the *Times* observed a few days ago, that the powers whose adhesion there has been no difficulty about obtaining are precisely those to whom the congress presented a chance of gain? Italy holds out her arms to Venice and calls

to Rome. Spain has not given up all hope of Gibraltar. Sweden looks towards Finland. Denmark asks, once for all, to be assured the possession of Sleswick. Switzerland is anxious for the neutralization of the territory that marches with her frontiers. The Pope is desirous to enforce respect for rights violated (in his own person, that means) and promises his moral support to the congress, with the intention of "asserting, especially in Catholic countries, the pre-eminent position which belongs of right to the Catholic religion, the only true religion." So that this congress, whence peace was expected to issue as the consequence of an eager competition in mutual concessions, turns out to be a game of cards in which no one cares to take a hand except with the hope of winning the game. Is it then at all extraordinary that, after a calm examination of the probable results of thus bringing together face to face so many opposite interests, such irreconcileable pretensions, the Cabinet of St. James's should deem the remedy worse than the disease? It must, in any case, be admitted that if anything were of a nature to allure towards the policy of optimism, it was not the final stage of the negociations opened with Russia touching the Polish question.

I have just quoted the Pope's reply. Can it be supposed that Protestant England would take part in a congress in order to listen to the assertion of the pre-eminence of the Catholic religion, "which is the only true religion"? The congress transformed into an Œcumenical council, and the bitterness of theological disputes mingling with the vehemence of discussions excited by a remodelling of the map of Europe! This touch alone was wanting.

From all this what are we to conclude except that the outburst of a portion of the French press against England, with reference to the congress, is absurd to the point of resembling a fit of madness? I certainly do not pretend to constitute myself the champion of England, whether right or wrong. A Frenchman, and a thorough Frenchman, I am less disposed than most persons to blind myself to the defects of a people whose influence has been more than once injurious to my own country. But this people possesses sound and solid qualities which it would be unjust to deny and dangerous to misinterpret. And it possesses that great, very great quality of representing in the world the principle of liberty.

This is why I consider that they ought to be ranked either

among the enemies of liberty or among its blind lovers who are striving, in France, to stir up against England, in the actual state of Europe, the flame of national rivalries and military hatreds.

That the English should be reproached with pushing too far the worship of selfish interests, of looking more to facts than principles, of seeing things too often from their little point of view, of loving themselves too much as a nation—is all fair enough. But let us remember that that is only one form of egotism. The passion for surpassing all others in war is not less selfish than the passion for surpassing all others in commerce, and it is more disastrous. This is what ought to be told aloud to France by such of her children as prefer the honour and proud satisfaction of rendering her service to such profit as may come from flattering her.

To trust to national vanity and spite for exciting against a free people, a people whose principal business should be to become free, is, whether it is done wittingly or in ignorance, to compromise the cause of liberty.

LETTER CCXIX.

THE PARIS ELECTIONS AND THE ENGLISH.

THE silence which has reigned in France for so many years and the apparent stagnation of the most restless people on the surface of the earth, had made the English believe that France had lost her aspirations of former days; that her instinct for opposition had forsaken her; that her political pulse, whose beating was no longer felt, had in fact ceased to beat; that there no longer existed in her any other passion than a passion for making money. They fancied the lamp was extinguished, because it had remained for a long time under a bushel. They did not suspect the agitation of the water under the ice.

To tell the truth, this result did not afflict them very deeply. It was not without an ill-disguised sort of satisfaction that they contemplated a spectacle which, in the eyes of the world, seemed to attest the superiority of the Saxon race over a rival one, so far as aptitude for liberty is concerned. With what a disdainful

affectation of pity were they wont to say, "France is not made for political life, and she has come to understand this!" How eagerly they set about rejoicing that the secret had at last been discovered of governing a people reputed ungovernable! The English alone as a nation had attained their majority; the French needed a master, because they were but children—children more vigorous, more formidable, sometimes than men, but, after all, only children.

After this fashion France was appreciated in England. And when the English who had gone to visit Paris came back astonished at its external splendour; when they spoke, in swelling tones, of dirty and narrow streets replaced by magnificent boulevards, of hovels taken away to make room for palaces, of sumptuous gardens laid out in full perfection as by a fairy's wand; when they compared the Paris of to-day with the Rome of ancient times which Augustus found built of brick and left built of marble—it was with a view to draw the conclusion that France desired nothing more. Gladly would they have compared her to a prisoner whose fetters are of iron, and who loves them because of their splendour. The *Daily Telegraph* went so far as to take us to task nearly in these words: "A skeleton may be clad in purple; a corpse is as much a corpse in a tomb of marble as in a tomb of stucco." London, added our censors, has no gay boulevards, no Ninevite monuments; it has neither completed the Louvre, nor metamorphosed the Bois de Boulogne —but England is free.

And what led the English to imagine that the only France that survived was the France of business and pleasure was the extraordinary development of industrial pursuits, the growing passion for stockbroking, the progress of wealth, a display of luxury becoming daily more and more extraordinary, the rage for spectacles and fêtes!

How then shall we pourtray their surprise at the news of the result of the Paris elections? The resurrection of Lazarus could not have more astonished those who were the witnesses of it.

But nobody will ever admit that he has been deceived. The *Times*, therefore, affects to be surprised in the opposite sense. It cannot understand, it says, how any could be so mistaken as to the character and tendencies of the French people as to suppose that it was enough to give them *panem et circenses*, to

cajole them into being for ever kept in leading-strings. Forgetting how often it had been asserted in its own columns that it was necessary to ride France on the curb if you did not wish to see one fine morning the cavalier run away with by his steed, the *Times* is for the moment inexhaustible on what, in its eyes, are the really remarkable points of the result of the Paris elections. It imagines to itself a beautiful church all empty. The nave, it goes on to say, is of an imposing width, the pillars of an imposing height; there is a profusion of exquisite paintings; the sculpture leaves nothing to be desired; the altar is decorated; the wax lights are burning; the chairs destined to receive the believers are ready. But, alas! one thing is wanting when the hour has arrived to commence the divine service—the believers themselves! In vain the bell summons them; they are elsewhere. Their incense and their prayers rise towards other gods.

There is truly nothing to equal the *Times* in giving such contradictions to itself.

It is needless to remark that the English do not attach any importance to the victory gained by the Government in the Provinces. What strikes them is the judgment pronounced by that city of Paris, which is, as they well know, the heart and brain of France; by that city of Paris, for whose sake so much money has been expended; to which so many foreigners have been allured, and where the working men have so much to do.

Let us admit that there is in all that enough to make an impression upon the mind in a country where, as here, material interests are the standard by which, in a general way, principles are measured.

LETTER CCXX.

A RETROSPECTIVE GLANCE.

I WAS in England at the time of the great insurrection in India. I was therefore in a position to study upon the spot the impression it produced upon the English. Allow me now to record my recollections.

Naturally enough, the English shuddered at the first appearance of the dense black cloud which, at the distance of three [*sic*]

thousand miles from their isle, had just burst over their Indian Empire. But Rome, after the battle of Cannae, returned thanks to Varro for not having despaired of the safety of their native land. The English are too haughty to allow the secret of their terror to reach the eyes of foreigners, and, of all the organs of the public press, the *Times* was the one by which that secret was most haughtily guarded.

What a high ground it took in speaking of the mutiny of the Bengal army! What a to-do it made of that superiority of race which placed at the feet of a few Europeans with Anglo-Saxon blood in their veins, two hundred millions of Hindoos, and with what proud confidence in the future it exclaimed: "By the means of forty thousand Europeans, the average amount of the populations of our second-rate towns, we hold in check more than one seventh part of the entire human race." What mattered to the *Times* this childish wrath of the Sepoys? Had England not arms which could reach the extremities of the earth, across oceans and their subdued depths? What would become of that feeble flock of frightened Hindoos when once she had touched them with her brazen crook? As for you, rival peoples, who may be tempted with the vain desire to dispute with England her conquered prey, come forth—she defies you! She is so naturally, so invincibly mistress of India that if, by any impossible chance, she suffered that empire to be wrested from her, it would not take her ten years to bring it once more under her sway. Nations jealous of such greatness must even accustom themselves to the vexation of knowing that she is immortal! Before the end of the month 14,000 soldiers of the Anglo-Saxon race will have sailed from the shores of Great Britain. Besides, the Commander-in-chief in India is already marching upon the focus of the rebellion, concentrating his forces upon that point. No one talks of victory. The very code of humanity which the authors of the Delhi massacres have outraged will furnish against them the employment of reprisals which, for ages to come, will make the East turn pale. With such disdainful indifference, with such Roman ability to deny or conceal reverses, did the *Times* speak out.

And yet it was with soldiers drawn from her own bosom and encamped in the midst of the conquered peoples, that Rome maintained her conquests. But India, fallen under the dominion of merchants transformed into sovereigns by a fabulous concourse

of circumstances—India could not be preserved under similar conditions; nor is it one of the smallest miracles of her subjection that she herself should have been brought to supply her vanquishers with the military force which serves as the foundation of their empire. The fact is, that the Anglo-Indian army was composed of three kinds of troops: European troops belonging to the royal army, European troops belonging to the Company's army, and Native troops commanded by European officers. But that the army recruited from among the natives was much the most numerous and even constituted the main strength of the British forces in India, may be easily seen from the following figures. In 1830—I quote from M'Culloch—the English army proper in India amounted to 26,582 men; that of natives to 157,753; that of auxiliary natives to 111,500. Subsequently to that date, the figures became swollen out to such a point as to render the disproportion still more striking; and in 1857 it was reckoned that not fewer than 300,000 men represented the total of Indian soldiers, or sepoys, spread over the three great Presidencies of the English empire—to wit, the Presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay.

Thus England in India, a perilous novelty, was protected by the bayonets of a people whom she had vanquished and still oppressed! Is it necessary to observe, after that, that the obedience of the Sepoys—an absolute obedience, too—was for the British Empire in India a question of life or death? In his book on the Government of India Sir John Malcolm wrote:—"Confiding in the hitherto unshaken courage and fidelity of our native army, we may proceed boldly with every reform; but should that support fail us, the entire edifice of our power will crumble away." At the time of the mutiny at Vellore, there would have been an end of the English rule in India had not a regiment of native cavalry, through personal attachment to Colonel Gillespie, made up its mind to charge the rebels.* What sort of empire is that whose destiny depends upon the

* This is an error on the part of M. Blanc. Colonel Gillespie galloped to Vellore at the head of a squadron of his own regiment, the 19th British Dragoons. How the men of H.M.'s 69th line regiment let down a rope, by means of which he was drawn up, unhurt, to the crest of the ramparts, how he took command of the survivors of the massacre, and how he crushed out the mutiny, is told at p. 231 of the 1st vol. of Mr. Kaye's History of the Sepoy War, and told in a style that makes the heart beat and the blood leap in the veins.—J. H.

conduct of a single regiment, and the conduct of that regiment regulated by the sympathy with which an individual had happened to inspire it!

And what happened in 1857? In the most important of the three Presidencies—that of Bengal—the sepoys break out into the wildest excesses of revolt—massacre their officers, murder women and children, renew the scenes of frenzy which terrified St. Domingo and made it flow with blood. There is no longer room for doubt. That spirit of disaffection, about which men had for long past conversed in whispers, and while striving not to believe in it, bursts forth in terrible acts of violence. It is not only the Hindoos who rise—the Mussulmans also are up, those descendants of the followers of the Prophet who preceded the English in the conquest of India. Nor is this all. Is it true that in the districts comprised within the conflagration, the population has made common cause with the soldiers; that business is at an end; that payment of the taxes is refused; that in Calcutta a correspondence has been seized in the hands of a native officer of the 3rd Regiment of foot, which proves the existence of a conspiracy having for its aim the revolt of the whole army? It is idle to seek for encouragement in the offers of co-operation received at this critical moment from certain Indian princes, such as the Maharajah of Gwalior, the Rajah of Jheend, &c. A few may be friendly, but how about the others? And, besides, how is one to be sure that these princes are not waiting until the rebellion extends itself so that they can throw themselves into it, like the nobles in La Vendée during the French Revolution? Is it to be supposed that they can cherish in their hearts sentiments of very sincere affection for the proud foreigners who have toppled over in India so many thrones, humbled or dispossessed so many small potentates, and made those who still remain erect pay so dearly for the benefit of their tyrannical protection? What grievances hitherto mute, what resentments hitherto smothered, are in danger of exploding on the day that it becomes clear that the hounds have turned upon the hunters?

And was that fatal coincidence between the Indian disturbances and the war declared against China, nothing? Was not the necessity of fighting the Chinese calculated to weaken the resources required for the necessity of suppressing the revolt of the Sepoys? There was one point which it would not do to lose

sight of, and that was that India and China are separated by the distance of only a week's voyage at the outside, and that the news from Calcutta would arrive at Canton in one-fourth of the time it would take to reach England. What would be the effect produced in China by the recital of the murderous scenes at Delhi?

But England is endowed with that genius which adds so much strength to strength—constancy: she is entitled to assume that fine motto of one of her regiments, "We die hard." She was therefore not over-alarmed by the Bengal tragedies; she felt that she should issue triumphant out of this trial. But it was not so much as a fact but as a symptom, that the sepoy revolt was a source of uneasiness. The conflagration extinguished, what was to prevent the fire from smouldering beneath the ashes? And if it were true that the very constitution of the Anglo-Indian empire carried in itself the germs of death, would not the development of those germs be powerfully aided by the rupture of the moral tie which had hitherto bound the native army to its European officers?

Here lay the real question, and it was so perfectly understood in England that men of thought directed their serious attention to the investigation of the general causes in which these sad events had originated.

To affect that they were the ephemeral result of a purely accidental circumstance, that is to say, of an idea widely circulated among the sepoys that their cartridges had been rubbed with a sacrilegious fat, by touching which they would incur the irreparable misfortune of losing their caste—was all very well as a mask to hide the gravity of the situation, but nothing more.

No doubt such an idea, had the sepoys really entertained it, would have been likely to have roused them to mutiny, for caste is the quintessence of the Indian social system. There is nothing to be compared to the indomitable fanaticism which attaches the Hindoo to the customs and prejudices of the caste to which he belongs. Rather than violate them in the smallest point—death is preferable. Woe to him who loses his place in his caste! He loses his place in life. No door will ever open again to admit him; his friends will dread his approach as tha of one stricken with the plague; his brothers and sisters will flee his embrace; his very mother will fear to love him. No doubt, men disposed to tremble at such consequences, so similar to the

effects of excommunication in the middle ages, are capable of everything in order to escape them.

But it must be observed that in the present instance the sepoys could not seriously have entertained the apprehension imputed to them. Had they not received from their officers the most formal, the most solemn assurances on that point? But if it be absolutely insisted that the refusal to believe these assurances sufficed of itself to engender the revolt, how is the part the Mahomedan soldiers took in it to be explained? Moreover, the spirit of insubordination which exhibited itself at Meerut in such a violent manner had for some time previously pervaded the army; its progress had been denounced in several reports; the central Government was warned, and the radical nature of the reforms proposed in 1857 by the very persons who were most anxious to lessen the significance of the movement, proved that the evil rose out of other causes, both widely spread and profound.

It must, in fact, be admitted that the English, in taking and keeping possession of India, had at first no other object in view than to extract from it a large revenue. There was nothing to do then with mixture of civilisations, or mixture of races, or antagonism of religious beliefs: the Hindoo, under the burden of a crushing land-tax, was in the hands of the East India Company what the sugar-cane is in the mill.

On the 1st of July, 1857, the *Bombay Times* published a list of the regiments that had mutinied or been disarmed; the very look of this list creates emotion. Never did figures speak a more tragic language. Troops mutinied: 37 regiments of native infantry, 3 regiments of irregular infantry, 5 regiments of light cavalry, 3 regiments of irregular cavalry, 5 companies of artillery, the entire corps of sappers and miners at Roorkee, one-half of the corps of sappers and miners at Meerut, the Malwa contingent (artillery and cavalry), the Body Guards, the Gwalior contingent (artillery, cavalry, and infantry). Troops disarmed: 16 regiments of native infantry, 3 regiments of light cavalry, 1 regiment of irregular cavalry. Troops disbanded: 1 regiment of native infantry. The number of regiments which had ceased to figure in the Bengal Army List was 70, without counting the various corps mentioned above as sappers, miners, artillery, and Body Guards.

What was the obvious conclusion with which the *Bombay Times* followed up this mournful catalogue? "The Bengal Native Army has ceased to exist!" And these words, wafted over the

seas, vibrated in every English heart like the stroke of a death knell.

Let us meditate on the following lines written on the very theatre of these events: "We have got to the end of this terrible list, and feel that any attempt to heighten its significance by comment would be misplaced. The empire is passing through a most terrible crisis in its history, and we are looking with much anxiety for reinforcements of European troops."

Had only the military element been engaged it would have been serious. And even when this military element was subdued, the problem was far from being solved; for it was impossible to lose sight of the fact that the mutiny of the sepoys, whatever was the issue, entirely subverted the conditions of the maintenance of the Anglo-Indian Empire; that a very dangerous temptation had been offered to Russian ambition; that the English, castaway and as it were drowned three [*sic*] thousand miles from their country, in the midst of an immense population, must not henceforth flatter themselves with the hope of holding India in submission by means of a considerable mass of European troops; that these troops, subject to the action of a devouring climate, would need to be incessantly renewed; that such transports to such distances could not take place without incurring enormous expenses, and that if the India Company were already burdened with debt, a gulf of fearful depth threatened to open out at their feet.

But was it possible to see only a simple mutiny of troops in an insurrection which, in a few days, broke out at so many different points, exposed so many thousands of men to voluntary death, and exhibited them animated by an implacable rage? The more it was borne in mind that the sepoys were well paid, and that their material condition was superior to that of the other Indians, the more necessary it became to seek a profound explanation for acts of madness unprecedented in history, except where they had actually been engendered, either through impatience to break a yoke morally detestable, or through an impulse of fanaticism. Now in either case it was difficult to conceive that the sentiment which had let loose the sepoys was entirely foreign to a population in the midst of whom they had grown up, and to whom they were attached by all the bonds of blood, education, prejudices, manners, religion, and nationality.

That the bulk of the population did not immediately rise, is easily understood on the part of a peasantry without arms, with-

out organisation, without a rallying point, without initiative, without leaders, dispersed in little groups over a vast extent of territory, long fashioned to obedience, and still subject to the influence of that sovereign prestige which for two centuries* has surrounded in the East the name and power of the English. And at the same time what alarming signs there were, even if the question be looked at from this point of view alone! If the insurrection were in no way national, why had it been found necessary to impose silence upon the entire Indian press? How was it that the revolt of the native soldiers at once extended itself to the whole of the camp-followers and bazaar people? Why did the very servants of the officers straightway turn against them? Why did a large number of *peons* and Ganges boatmen make common cause with the insurrection? Why, in short, had the English troops already set fire to several villages? There was, in fact, no deception either as to the nature of the insurrection, or its tendency.

I shall never forget the effect produced in England by the news that General Havelock, the hero of the day, the modest and intrepid warrior upon whom the Queen had just conferred the star and ribbon of Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, had been compelled to retreat a second time towards Cawnpore. In fact, what could be imagined more alarming? For there, at the gates of Lucknow, at the head of 25,000 Mahrattas, joined to the Oude insurgents, was that Nana Sahib, who had not, as was reported, drowned himself with all his family, and whom the English had been in somewhat too great haste to send to the infernal regions. What would become, or, rather, what had become of the unfortunate garrison at Lucknow? When, on the 2nd of July, Sir Henry Lawrence wrote the last despatch he was destined to write, he informed Lord Canning that he could not hold out beyond twenty-four days. The miracles which are wrought by necessity and the love of life, had enabled the Lucknow garrison to exceed the fatal period, by fifteen days; but would not General Havelock's second halt be their sentence of death? And in that case—the spectres of the victims of Cawnpore rose up before the awe stricken imagination!

Another subject for regret: the 8th regiment of Madras Cavalry had refused outright to march towards Bengal, and had

* Exactly one century had elapsed since the battle of Plassy. The whole of this letter is very fanciful.—J. H.

consequently been disarmed. Gloomy news this, which proved that the mine was now driven under all three Presidencies.

Again, tidings came that on the 20th of July, at Lahore, which is, as you are aware, the chief city of the Punjab, the 28th regiment of Native Infantry had mutinied and massacred the commanding officer, Major Spencer.

Add to all this, that the despatches in question were almost as alarming through what they did not say, as through what they did say. The death of the Maharajah Golab Sing, which was mentioned in them, had been known three weeks before, while on the other hand not a word was said about Arrah and Dinapore, about Agra and Benares, about the movements of Major Eyre or those of George Neill.*

The only ray of light that pierced these dark clouds was the presence of General Nicholson at Delhi with reinforcements. On the 12th of August he was only one day's march from the beleaguered city, and if his arrival did not put the English into a position immediately to attempt the assault, it at least saved them from the continual sorties to which they had until then been exposed.†

In the meantime, supplications were offered to Heaven. A royal proclamation commanded that the seventh day of October should be set apart by the nation as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, with an injunction to the archbishops and bishops of England to compose a formula of prayer to be recited in all churches, chapels, and consecrated places subject to the jurisdiction of the State. Thus the royal decree did not apply to the millions of dissenters and catholics whom England comprises within her limits. But this was its least defect. The seventh of October was a week day, a working day. Why had not a Sunday been appointed? For nobles, the fortunate ones of the world, the rich advisers of the Queen, a day of devout leisure is a very endurable burden. It is in their power to fast sumptuously, and fare meagrely on delicacies; it is in their power to pass long hours in prayer, if they please, without their little

* The 28th N. I. mutinied at Shahjehanpore on the 31st May. At the time of General Havelock's second retreat, Lieut.-Col. *James* Neill was in command at Cawnpore, and Benares was known to be perfectly safe.—J. H.

† General Nicholson rode into the British lines on the 8th of August, six days a-head of his column. Major Vincent Eyre had won his victory of Beebeegunj on the 2nd of August.—J. H.

ones being the worse for it. But the working-man wants his wage on the 7th October as on any other day, and those who drew up the royal decree would have done well to remember that for the poor the prayer above all others is, alas! "Give us our daily bread."

At the same time with the Protestant decree of the Queen appeared the Catholic manifesto of Cardinal Wiseman. This pastoral letter exhaled a certain sharp polemical odour, in spite of its rounded periods, and unctuous metaphors, and contained passages wherein the Cardinal dwelt, as if impressing a hot iron, upon the cruelties committed by the sepoys.

All this gives, as it were, the colour of the situation, resulting naturally enough from the grief in which so many families were plunged, the calamities already known, those foreseen or dreaded, and above all from the conviction that immense faults were at the bottom of this immense disaster. Thence arose a sullen discontent which lost no time in pouring forth its bitterness. The attacks upon Lord Canning grew more and more frequent. People went about asking—which was of the more consequence, his recall or the capture of Nana Sahib? Judge from that. As for the East India Company, you may well suppose that it was not spared, although, strictly speaking, it would have been more just to have thrown the blame upon the Board of Control than upon the Court of Directors, the responsibility of the latter of these two authorities being only a pale reflection of that of the former. It is true that an incident occurred which supplied the opponents of the Company with legitimate arms. A meeting of proprietors of India stock had been convoked, and though to form a Court the presence of twenty members would have sufficed, a quorum could not be obtained. This extraordinary mark of indifference on the part of men specially interested in a question which caused so many hearts to ache, had appeared scandalous. The more so that the result of the meeting was contemptible. What mitigation of the public sorrow could be afforded by the intimation that the Directors had not yet "arrived at any solution." And what sort of brilliancy was cast upon the generosity of the Company by the pompous assurance that Lord Canning had received from them instructions not to leave without food or shelter any who might come to him "houseless and naked from the upper country." To be just, let us not forget to mention that the Company, which had been in the habit of giving itself

every year a banquet in which a considerable sum of money was engulfed, had been considerate enough to promise that this year there should be no dinner.

There was room therefore for biting criticism, which was not long in making itself felt. A single incident will give you an idea of the substratum of ill-humour that was combined with the public sorrow. Bitter reproaches were passed upon the Queen for visiting Scotland, upon Prince Albert for giving himself up too passionately to shooting; upon the Duke of Cambridge for having yielded to the attraction of military evolutions at Châlons; upon the Secretary for War for taking a holiday. To such a point was this carried that a well conducted journal, faithful and sonorous echo of the rumours which were circulating among the liberal party, did not hesitate on this occasion to remind its readers of—what? Of Nero singing by the light of the flames of Rome. All this was exaggeration, without doubt; and the *Globe* was justified in remarking that if ministers allowed themselves a little repose, it was after providing for every contingency, and further, that in a constitutional country like England the machinery of government could work quite well without the Queen being continually in London. At the same time, these susceptibilities took their rise in a worthy and natural sentiment. To assume an air of hilarity in presence of an individual in tears will always be thought a want of delicacy; and when a great nation is in affliction it is surely entitled to expect from those who conduct its government that they should renounce their ordinary amusements and adjourn their festivities until all peril was over.

The peril did pass away. The rebellion was subdued, and the English asserted their superiority over the conquered people not only by an heroic courage, but by the display of those powerful qualities which characterise the dominant races. Fortunate would it have been had they not avenged, by barbarities unworthy of a civilised people, the execrable massacre of Cawnpore and the blood treacherously shed by Sepoy savages.

This is what the *Times* wrote by way of conclusion to an article in which, after demonstrating that there was nothing of a national character in the Indian insurrection, it shouted the war-whoop against the rebels: "Let it be perfectly understood that England will support officers in the work of repression and punishment, however terrible the measures they may judge proper to take."

Was it then absolutely necessary to warn the English who were fighting in India against the inspirations of a maudlin humanity? Here are examples to guide the judgment. In one of the last letters sent from India, it was written: "Sir Henry Lawrence is grimly busy hanging the mutineers at Lucknow." Another letter: "Sir Henry Lawrence is hanging the fellows at Lucknow as fast as he can." From Peshawur a letter came, dated the 14th June—and observe that at Peshawur there had been no rising, but only a simple attempt at desertion.* "Justice has been done upon forty rebels at the cannon's mouth in presence of the whole armed force. The three sides of a square had been formed: ten guns were brought up. The sentence having been read aloud, a prisoner was bound to the muzzle of each gun. Then the signal was given. What a scene! I hope never again to be called upon to witness the like. Trunks, heads, arms, legs, hurled hither and thither in all directions. These men met their fate with firmness, with the exception of two who would not let themselves be bound. To save time, they were thrown on the ground and their brains blown out." A little before, a letter was written from Ferozepore: "This morning the rebels were brought (to the number of four-and-twenty, I believe) upon the place of execution. One of them who had had an arm amputated in consequence of a wound, was carried in a litter. Lieutenant Hoggan read aloud to the troops and the assembled spectators the sentences passed by the Court Martial. He then informed the rebels that if any of them had any declarations to make, they would be reprieved. Twelve, if I mistake not, accepted the offer and were marched to the back of the artillery. Of the twelve who remained, two, one of whom was the man whose arm had been amputated, were consigned to the gallows. Both of them mounted the ladder with a steady step, and without exhibiting the slightest sign of

* The contemplated outbreak at Peshawur was prevented by the prompt and energetic measures taken by Brigadier Cotton, but the Sepoys, to whose horrible execution M. Blanc alludes, were men of the 55th N.I., who had broken out into open revolt at Murdan. As for Sir Henry Lawrence, a more humane and pure-hearted man never breathed. He died, besides, in the early days of the mutiny, at a time when a certain degree of severity was the truest leniency. It is well known, however, that the savage letters which for some time disgraced the English newspapers were written by non-commissioned officers, and by beardless, brainless boys, who little dreamed that their vapouring effusions would ever be read beyond their own family circles.—J. H.

fear. On reaching the scaffold, they adjusted the running knot with their own hands; their eyes were blindfolded, their arms bound behind them, and they were launched into eternity. The ten others were marched up to the guns. As some of them began crying out: 'Don't sacrifice the innocent for the guilty!' two of them said to the others: 'Come! come! no blubbing! Die like men, and not like cowards. You were defending your religion—why then should you beg for life? Our masters! These are not our masters—these are dogs.' They were bound to the muzzles of the guns, which had been loaded with blank cartridges. Ready, fire! And the play was played out. There was something overpowering in this scene of carnage and in the stench which exhaled from it. I felt quite upset. The natives, who were present in great numbers, were panic-stricken; they shook like aspen leaves, and their faces presented strange hues. The lesson, I hope, will not be lost upon them. Sufficient precaution had not been taken to remove from the immediate vicinity of the pieces the men who had to serve them. The consequence was that they were covered with blood, and one of them was struck a terrible blow by an arm torn from the socket."

Do you remember what happened in the city of Lyons during the French Revolution? At the moment that a wide conflagration was kindled in La Vendée, when the forces of the Coalition enveloped our country, when France seemed at the last gasp, a portion of the population of Lyons broke out into insurrection, hurled as a defiance at the sovereign Assembly Chalier's head, which the executioner had severed only at the third stroke; and, placing in a state of defence the town, of which they had taken possession, sustained against the representatives of the people a long and murderous siege. It was something worse than an attempt at desertion, or even a revolt directed against a foreign yoke. And yet how shrill was the protest which, issuing from the depths of the human conscience, was raised against the wholesale executions of Collot-d' Herbois and Fouché.

Heaven preserve me from wishing in any degree to veil or attenuate what has been related of the horrors perpetrated by Nana Sahib's murderous followers. My heart is paralysed by them. But is it fair to forget that if on the part of the Indian insurgents there were deeds of lust and barbarity that were absolutely horrible, there were also some touching examples of protection and humanity. "Don't sacrifice the innocent for

the guilty!" That was a cry which concerned England's honour to respect with religious veneration, and to call upon her to do so in the name of civilisation, in the name of Europe, in the name of Christ, would certainly have been better than to urge her on to the bloody paths of summary justice and wholesale executions. Was it not enough to read of those human fragments vomited from the mouths of cannons, of those sprinklings with blood, of the terror of the native spectators, shaking like aspen leaves, and of the effect produced upon the author of the narrative himself, who, while expressing the hope that the lesson would not be lost, could not help saying: "I was myself terribly upset"? Where hatred has once laid its hand, the rage of the victors has no need of being goaded on.

It is right to add that among the English there were many, and some of them very distinguished men, upon whom the brutal exhortations I have stigmatised made a very painful impression, and it is with real pleasure that I shall conclude by quoting the following passage from an address to his electors by Mr. Bright: "It is for the interest of India that order should be restored there. But, this result once obtained, our country will be strangely culpable if it hereafter neglects the well-being of so many millions of men. I hope that the acts of the government will not be affected by that vindictive and sanguinary spirit breathed by certain letters published in the newspapers. I hope that when the crisis is over, all that England contains of political science will be employed to extract from so great an evil the greatest possible amount of good." Noble words, worthy of a lofty soul and of a genuine Statesman!

LETTER CCXXI.

THE MEXICAN QUESTION.

I SHALL very soon have to acquaint you with what the English think of the meeting of the German Princes—public opinion not yet appearing to me as quite decided upon that point. When it has spoken out more clearly, I will communicate to you my impressions. But what I feel myself even now justified in telling

you is that the judgment passed here upon the policy of the French Government in the affairs of Mexico is not very flattering.

And, first of all, as to the moral character of the expedition there could be, and has been, only one opinion.

When England and Spain allied themselves to France against Juarez, what was the point at issue? Debts to be discharged, engagements to be executed—nothing more. Among the foreigners residing in Mexico there were Englishmen, Spaniards, and Frenchmen. Many of these claimed to be creditors of the Mexican Government, and complained bitterly of not being able to get anything from it. To some of them indemnities were due for losses sustained, or robberies suffered, during the troubles that had desolated the country. To force the Mexican Government to do justice to claims that it admitted to be just, was the original object of the expedition undertaken in common.

Were I disposed to say all, how much could be said against this expedition, even with these limitations and definitions. The history of the creditor Jecker, told one day by M. Jules Favre, from the French tribune, and in such a terrible manner in Sir Charles Wyke's despatches to Lord Russell;—what a sad light it throws upon the origin and rightfulness of certain claims!

Besides, what were the acts to which the various complaints referred? There had been assassinations, there had been robberies. By whom had they been perpetrated? Was it by the Government of Juarez, from whom reparation was now demanded? No. The real criminals were the blood-stained heroes of the reactionary party—the saints of the priestly party. This was the party really responsible in the eyes of Europe and of posterity, for the robbery of the British Legation, the frightful massacre of Tabacuya, the murder of Dr. Duval, the unparalleled acts of violence endured by Messrs. Pitman, Davis, Whitehead, Joots, George Selly, and so many others. Upon this point there can be no possible doubt. The exploits of this party are written in letters of fire in the Blue Book, published by the English Government itself under the title of *Correspondence respecting the affairs of Mexico*—modern tables of brass upon which the present generation too frequently casts but a careless glance, but which will furnish the judgments of posterity with formidable motives and preambles.

Yes, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the grievances for which reparation was exacted from the Government

of Juarez were precisely the work of the Government he overthrew amid the acclamations of Mexico; they were the work of the party to which he was personally opposed.

No matter; as the depositary of power, the consequences of the misconduct of his predecessors weighed upon him, and he never denied the liability. Only, as the cancer formed in the bosom of Mexico through so many years of anarchy was not yet extirpated; as civil war had exhausted the resources of that magnificent and unhappy country; as the treasury, to everybody's knowledge, was well-nigh empty—he asked for time; he besought those immediately interested, for their own sake, not to take him by the throat; he trembled at the idea of sacrificing to the desire of at once satisfying their claims the means of maintaining the troops employed in extinguishing anarchy in its last focus and in disarming the followers of the man whom Mr. Mathew, the British Chargé d'Affaires, described in one of his despatches to Lord Russell in the beginning of 1861, as "the infamous Marquez;" in other words, he said to those who were pressing him with implacable importunity, "Although the foreign debt which weighs upon Mexico was imposed upon her not by myself but, on the contrary, by my enemies, I recognise it—I intend to pay it, and will pay it. But, for Heaven's sake, do not take from me the means of doing so. You wish that I should repress the anarchy which threatens both your persons and your properties, which ruins and alarms you; but how can I do so if, when my distress is extreme, indisputable and undisputed, I now employ for the payment of the foreign debt the very inadequate funds at my disposal, instead of applying them to the task of, first of all, re-establishing order, pacifying the country, and restoring the finances? When, in consequence of misfortunes beyond his control, a merchant finds himself compelled to suspend payment, what happens if his creditors have confidence in his good faith and intelligence? It frequently happens that, instead of completing his ruin by showing themselves inexorable, they hold out their hand to him, help him to rise to the surface, and so far place him in a position to pay them. To reproach me for my want of power to maintain order, and then to make that weakness fatal, is too much by one-half."

This language is no invention of mine. It is the language that, in the month of July, 1861, was held by Senor Manuel de Zamacona, at that time Minister for Foreign Affairs in Mexico,

in a despatch addressed to Sir Charles Wyke, the British Envoy.* That despatch is now lying before me. Nothing could be more conclusive, or, I may freely add, more touching. In reality, setting aside diplomatic etiquette, it is Antonio from whose breast Shylock is impatient to cut the pound of flesh agreed upon.

I repeat, then, that even reduced to its original purpose, the Mexican expedition undertaken by the three Powers would furnish only too much ground for criticism. But let us pass over that. One thing is certain, in any case; and that is, that the concert of England, Spain, and France, had no other object than this—to force the Government of Juarez to satisfy the claims and redress the grievances of the foreign residents. What could be more explicit, what more formal, than Art. II. of the famous Convention of the 31st of October: "The high contracting parties engage not to seek for themselves, in the employment of the coercive measures contemplated by the present Convention, any acquisition of territory, nor any special advantage, and not to exercise in the internal affairs of Mexico any influence of a nature to prejudice the right of the Mexican nation to choose and to constitute freely the form of its Government."†

On the 12th of October, 1861, Earl Russell wrote to Earl Cowley: "I have to state to your Excellency that her Majesty's Government consider an engagement not to interfere by force in the internal affairs of Mexico, to be an essential part of the Convention."—*Ibid.* p. 98.

And what is still more curious is that, in a previous despatch from Lord Cowley to Lord Russell, we read: "M. Thouvenel said that he agreed entirely in the principles which your lordship had laid down as those which should guide the action of the Allied Powers. M. Thouvenel disclaimed, as he had done on a former occasion, any desire to impose any particular form of government in Mexico."—*Ibid.* p. 98.

Again: on the 5th of February, 1862, with reference to the project now being realised and which was mooted at that period, Lord Russell wrote to Lord Bloomfield: "As regards the offer of the Crown of Mexico to the Archduke Maximilian of Austria, you are to inform Count Rechberg that it is her Majesty's intention to hold strictly to the terms of the Convention of the 31st of

* See "Letters on England." By Louis Blanc. Vol. II., Letter LXXVI.

† "Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Mexico," Part I., p. 125.

October, concluded between Great Britain, France, and Spain, relative to an intervention in Mexico." *

Is all that sufficiently clear?

What followed is well known. But this letter being already quite long enough, I must pause here, intending, however, to follow the route of the expedition on another occasion.

It is now, if ever, the time to judge of its progress and effects, connecting this appreciation with the feelings which its known results have awakened in England. For the moment I shall confine myself to quoting the following passage from an article published on the 27th of May, 1862, by the *Times*, the best accredited of all the organs of public opinion in this country: "We know now the origin of the whole affair. The monarchy, with the Austrian Archduke for King, was the idea of certain Mexican refugees, members of the reactionary or ecclesiastical party in Mexico, partisans of Marquez, and other ruffians, whose misdeeds were among the principal causes of our intervention. If Ferdinand-Maximilian goes to Mexico, he will find his most active friends among the men who shot, tortured, and robbed, until Europe lost patience."

LETTER CCXXIII.†

ATTITUDE OF ENGLAND WITH REGARD TO A EUROPEAN CONGRESS.

Most indubitably, the proposition of a congress meets with no success here. Some denounce it as the inspiration of a policy driven to its last resources; others see in it only an impracticable project, a dream borrowed from the hallucinations of Mr. Cobden, a premature plagiary of the theories of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, an attempt to throw into shade the bold initiative lately taken by Francis-Joseph; others again believe that it is, on the part of the Emperor of the French, a means of covering his embarrassment with regard to Russia, of escaping from the alternative defined by himself as Silence or War, and of diverting the attention of

* "Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Mexico," Part II., p. 3.

† Letter CCXXII., being simply a literal translation of General Doblado's Manifesto of the 28th July, 1863, is omitted as scarcely entitled to a *locus standi* among "Letters on England."

Europe; there are even some who fancy that they can discover in this sudden movement the love of notoriety, the fear of not being enough before the eyes of the world; all ask one another what the world in general and Europe in particular are likely to gain from the conflict of so many problems sure to be started, from so many interests taking afright, from so many matters being brought into question, from so many irreconcilable pretentions being placed face to face.

It may also be stated that the English are distrustful of the sovereign who, on the morrow of the Crimean war, was coquetting with Russia, and who dragged them into his expedition to Mexico.

They obstinately refuse to believe in the disinterestedness of the prince who, say they, wound up with the annexation of Nice and Savoy that war in Italy which was undertaken "for an idea."

They remember how the famous phrase *l'Empire c'est la paix* was the prelude to war.

It seems to them improbable that one who owes his sceptre to force should resolve to repudiate force.

An Abbé de Saint-Pierre upon a throne, a Mr. Cobden at the head of 600,000 soldiers, appear to them phenomena demanding explanation.

In a word, it is with a shake of the head they have greeted the proposition of a congress.

Assuredly, if anything could efface these previous impressions, it would not be the letter which the Emperor of the French has recently addressed to the sovereigns of Europe. The general opinion here is that there was a certain air of dignity about that letter; that there was a clever pride in contrasting with the splendour of his present position the memory of an obscure or troubled past. That "proud humility" alluded to by Burke certainly breathes through the letter to the Most High and Most Illustrious Sovereign Princes and free cities composing the most serene Germanic Confederation; and from this point of view the English are not the people to find fault with the vanquished of Strasburg and Boulogne. But what strikes them unpleasantly in the Imperial epistle is the bold avowal of personal pretensions which it makes. The indication of Paris as the point of meeting for the conclave, and the necessity of conceding in that case, the presidency to the sovereign whose hospitality the other potentates

would be receiving, is more than enough in their eyes, to place in a clear light the intentions and aim of the author of the project. What he is striving for is that, in the eyes of the world, his preponderance in the councils of Europe should be clearly established. Now, if it be natural that this pretension should seem acceptable to France, it is equally natural that it should not be at all to the taste of England.

Hence the ironical language of the *Times*, which reminds its readers of the idea one day enunciated by the Emperor Paul, of a tourney in which the different monarchs of Europe should take part, followed by their Prime Ministers transformed into squires.

There can be no doubt that the proposed congress would be altogether to the advantage of the Emperor of the French. If, although it is hardly possible, any desirable solutions were arrived at, he alone would carry off the honour to whom the idea was due. If, on the other hand, as is most probable, the shock of adverse interests, the impossibility of reconciling intractable rivalries, the bitterness engendered by fruitless discussions, and the very enormity of the questions to be solved previous to the modification of the map,—led to utter powerlessness or to chaos, it would always be easy to throw the responsibility of the result upon the ill feeling or blindness of those who would not consent to be despoiled; and the Emperor of the French would come out of all that with the appearance of a sage who for an instant had blundered into the company of fools.

For it is worthy of note that, since the object assigned to the congress by Napoleon himself is the consecration and complementing of the infringements effected in the Treaties of Vienna, France, in such a congress, would have much to ask and nothing to defend. No one, certainly, would propose that she should be dismembered, or her frontiers pared, or a doubt cast upon the rightfulness of her title to Savoy and Nice. Before this, in order that it might be well known that the annexation of Nice and Savoy ran no risk of being successfully disputed, Napoleon has taken care to inform the world that on this point the Emperor of Russia and himself were perfectly agreed. At the utmost a desire might be expressed that Rome should be at last evacuated. But the occupation of Rome is an embarrassment for the empire, which it places between the anvil of the Italians and the hammer of the priests.

The truth is that, of all the Powers to be convoked, there are only two to whom the congress offers any advantage at once appreciable—France and Italy. To the others it presents itself as a menace. It menaces England, who would have to render an account touching Malta and Gibraltar; it menaces Austria, who unfairly possesses Galicia and Venice; it menaces Prussia, who has no title founded in justice to the Duchy of Posen, and whose possessions on the left bank of the Rhine recall memories irritating to France; it menaces the Sultan, whose domains are in danger of being considered as furnishing materials for the compensations which may be deemed indispensable; and it would menace the Russian Empire, if the sacrifice of unhappy Poland were not already, as may be reasonably feared, the price at which the French Government has assured itself the concurrence of that powerful monarch to dominate the deliberations of the congress.

This may suffice to show that, if it ever takes place, it will not be without having encountered a strong opposition. It is certain that in England it is ardently wished that Austria will refuse, and so give the English Government a fair pretext for also refusing in its turn.

In the Cabinet, however, if I am correctly informed, there is one man in favour of the congress; and that man, Lord Palmerston, the same who was the first and, for a little time, the only inhabitant of this free land by whom the *coup d'état* of December was approved. But in many things Lord Palmerston has in Lord Russell a colleague of an unaccommodating liberalism. I am assured that the latter has firmly protested against acceptance, and this would explain the decision almost authoritatively announced to-day by the *Times* and the *Morning Post*, a decision which very much resembles the result of a compromise between two opposite opinions. England is in no haste either to accept or to refuse. She has declared herself unable to pronounce without knowing how the case stands, that is, until she has received a precise communication of the points to be discussed, and been placed in a position to judge if beneficial results may be fairly expected from such a discussion.

The English Government, you perceive, has no idea of going in search of adventures.

LETTER CCXXIV.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

THE more people in England reflect on the probable motives, the nature, the logical consequences of the scheme presented to Europe by the Emperor, the less do they believe in its realisation.

That such a project had no chance of being favourably viewed by the statesmen of the various European cabinets, was easy to foresee; it testified an optimism too candid if supposed to be sincere, and an egotism too thorough if a selfish calculation were seen in it; it broke too violently with the inveterate habits and ancient traditions of diplomacy; it disturbed too many things at once, threatened to create too many complications, and hurried the world towards a situation too untried; lastly, it had too romantic a turn to excite in the hearts of Foreign Office Nestors other sentiments than those of astonishment and distrust.

But what seemed natural was that the peoples, at least, should feel a sort of electric thrill. For they love all that pertains to greatness, even to its semblances, and the semblance of greatness was certainly not wanting in such an idea, sent forth by such a man, from the height of the loftiest throne in the world.

To invite all Governments to meditate together upon their well-understood interests, in association with the welfare of mankind; to summons force to appear before reason, and hand over to reason alone the right of redressing the wrongs of the past, of giving confidence to the present, of regulating the future, of rendering, in a word, peace durable by basing it upon justice, which is immortal—what could be better calculated to call forth popular acclamations? But, no! the peoples have remained silent, or have murmured—they, too—words of distrust. In vain, forsaking the course of diplomatic routine, did Napoleon address himself first of all to them, in order the more strongly to influence governments; they have remained cold.

What I am now saying is, I am aware, strongly opposed to what the official and semi-official press of France has taken

pains to impress upon its good-natured public. Convinced that enthusiasm is contagious, it began by stunning the public ways with its flourishes of trumpets; it recounted to its readers, who pricked up their ears, how the language of the Emperor of the French, so grand, so frank, so worthy, and so modest, had thrown the world, England included, into a daze of admiration, and *La France* newspaper has declared, without any sort of reservation, that this admiration was unanimous. Well, as regards England, whose air I breathe, and whose impressions envelope me, I declare, also without reservation, that the official and semi-official press has belied the truth.

This is the way it went to work. It gave from certain English journals mutilated extracts, taking care, of course, to suppress passages which expressed disapproval, and effected to ignore all the commentaries which would have exposed the error which it sought to accredit. Thus, for instance, the *Daily News*, one of the most sincere, most earnest, most respected organs of public opinion in this country, has been treated like contraband goods. Mark the good faith which presides over the "handling" of the public mind in France! The official journals pass over in silence every word of censure, and then boast that not a word of censure has been heard! They suppress all the discordant notes, and then applaud themselves for the harmony of the concert! Then if it happens, as happily it *has* happened, that the truth succeeds in piercing through, such papers as *La France* are heard to accuse England of changing an opinion which she never held, they exclaim: "England repents her of the unanimous cry of admiration which the proposition of a congress had extorted from her."

No; the English have never clapped their hands at the idea of a congress, and, if they had done so, the Government, subject, as it is, to the imperious law of public feeling, would not, by way of reply, have requested Napoleon to explain himself—a request which, with regard to the actual situation of Europe, is equivalent to a plea of exceptions, and is even not unlike a trap.

Let us suppose, in fact, that the Emperor of the French declines to reveal his programme beforehand, England stands aloof without anyone being entitled to accuse her of ill feeling; for how can she be reproached for not plunging blindfold into such a hazardous enterprise as the redistribution of the map of Europe? And if, on the other hand, Napoleon submits to

indicate, with a certain degree of precision, the questions to be put and answered, farewell to the substantial advantages he may have promised himself from the realisation of his plan. He will be compelled to play with his cards upon the table. He will be forced to show to the peoples, whose eyes are upon him, if his disinterestedness as a crowned philosopher goes so far as to place, or allow to be placed, among the points for controversy, the restitution of Nice and Savoy, the immediate evacuation of Rome, a formal, absolute, irrevocable disavowal of all pretentions to give the Rhine as a frontier to France. If so, his popularity in France in the warlike and ultra-national section will be impaired; if not, his reputation as a humanitarian utopian will be in danger of losing what his reputation as a crafty politician will gain.

LETTER CCXXV.

A PRIZE-FIGHT.

December 11th, 1863.

THIS is the morrow of "the battle of the giants."

Not that the great shock between the armies of Mead and Lee has taken place. No, the forces engaged this time are those of England contending with America. The battle has been a formidable one, a real "battle of giants," as it is called, and at the present moment England is free, if she think proper, to deliver herself up to transports of joy, for it is she who has been favoured by the potent god of battles.

This news will perhaps astonish you, so true it is that even in the reign of electricity and steam, the most notable events occur without men who live far away being previously warned of their advent.

It is not, however, the fault of the haunters of taverns if the world has not been kept on the tiptoe of expectation. For a long time past Fame has been making the tour of the London public-houses, blowing all her trumpets between a bottle of ale and a bottle of gin. For a long time past *Bell's Life* has been working its readers up to a fever by announcing the forthcoming titanic rencounter of England, personified by the prize-fighter, Tom King, celebrated under the name of the "Sailor Lad," and America personified by Heenan, the "Benecia Boy."

I have always admired, as a cheap method of settling heroic quarrels, the system by virtue of which Alba and Rome confided their destinies to the three Curiatii and the three Horatii—a system the excellence of which has been more recently proclaimed when Charles Quint defied Francis I. From this point of view the Sailor Lad and the Benecia Boy are entitled to my most philosophical respect. Why, I ask you, are five or six thousand poor wretches to be slaughtered for the honour of two nations when, thanks to a previous agreement, the matter can be decided at the cost of a broken rib, or an eye rendered useless?

It is this wise method which prevailed on the occasion to which I am referring.

Heenan is the same individual who, on the 17th April, 1860, measured himself against Tom Sayers. Victory—who has forgotten it?—then remained doubtful. England had her right arm broken, or very nearly so; but, on the other hand, America received such blows on the eyes that towards the end of the conflict she had lost her sight. For all that she had the good fortune to seize England round the throat and would have strangled her outright, if the police and the spectators had not rushed into the ring—according to the rules, say some; contrary to them, say others.

To whom the honour? England and America had a dispute upon the point which has lasted ever since. Heenan, on returning to his country, received a triumph such as was never accorded to Washington. As for Tom Sayers, *Bell's Life*, that *Moniteur* of the Ring, reminds us to-day, with a just pride, that on the occasion of her hero's triumphal entry into London, the enthusiasm of the crowd was as great as could have been excited by "the proclamation of a new king."

Thus, certain members of the House of Commons having thought proper to call Ministers to account for their tolerance with regard to a kind of sport forbidden by the law, no one knows why, Lord Palmerston, after laying down, like a great statesman as he is, that the question of knowing whether prize-fighting is a good or bad thing, must be regarded purely as "a matter of taste,"—Lord Palmerston, I say, declared the spectacle of two men pummelling one another "quite as moral as that of a balloon ascent." This is literally true. The House of Commons found this comparison admirable, and manifested its admiration by an approving laugh worthy to be for ever recorded in its

annals; and in England Lord Palmerston thus added the key-stone to his popularity among those whose soul is attuned to glory.

Three years glided past; and as in the contest between Heenan and Sayers no one had thrown up the sponge, which is the acknowledgment of defeat, it was not easy to come to a decision as to the comparative merits of the two great sections of the Anglo-Saxon race. Frankly, could such an uncertainty be endured? To whom belonged, to Heenan or to Sayers, the right to wear that belt which is the revered symbol of royalty in the pugilistic world? For want of being able to come to an understanding for the solution of this problem, not less obscure than that which divided the realists and nominals, it was resolved to get rid of the question by presenting to each of the combatants a fac-simile of the belt; and the presentation of these two trophies—the style is that of *Bell's Life*—took place on the 20th of May in the Alhambra. The question thus remained still open.

However, Tom Sayers, enriched by popular admiration, had, so to speak, retired from public life, when Heenan returned to seek his fortune in England; but a new star had appeared in the firmament of *Bell's Life*. This star was Tom King, the redoubtable Tom King, vanquisher of Mace, and Champion of England. Heenan, it seems, asked for nothing better than to keep his hand in. Tom King, on the contrary, satisfied with his portion of immortality, cherished vague projects of retirement, and showed himself disposed to resign the belt, instead of proudly defending it—instead of saying, like Charlemagne, when he girt his temples with the iron crown, "Woe to him who touches it!" Happily, sporting men were there. Heenan's backers spoke of £1000 stakes! There are men quite willing to take the chance of being killed for a half-penny a day. The temptation was strong for the Champion of England. The prospect of the £1000 brought water into his mouth. In short, the affair was arranged. The editors of *Bell's Life* undertook the preliminaries, selected a spot, designated the referee, fixed upon the point of departure, came to a proper understanding with a railway company, marked the day—all this with great mystery, less, I suspect to baffle the police, than to assist them in not enforcing the law.

Need I add that for a whole week public-houses kept by prize-fighters of renown, and the office of *Bell's Life*, were incessantly besieged by an excited rabble hungering after details, but above all impatient to know what station had been honoured by the pre-

ference of the conclave? The word of command had been given to keep the secret, in the hope of keeping aloof the bad following. Vain recommendation! On Thursday, at half-past four in the morning, the hour fixed for the departure of the train, the London Bridge Station had attracted, as the magnet attracts the steel, a very considerable number, upon my word, of worthless fellows, pickpockets, rogues and ruffians, gathered together from pot-houses of the worst repute, from stews and nighthouses; the froth of froth, the dregs of dregs.

They had reckoned without their host, these fine fellows. Impossible, in the first place, for them to join the holiday-makers—the price of tickets having been raised to three guineas; secondly, the police were present; and lastly, the foresight of the legislators of the Ring had gone so far as to place at the service of every gentleman excursionist—*a nurse*. Nurses! This tender expression touches my heart when I reflect that the said nurses were huge Hercules with square heads, projecting cheek-bones, broad shoulders, hollow eyes, and brandishing formidable bludgeons.

As for the policemen on duty, they were there simply to protect every excursionist possessed of a watch and a purse. As each vehicle drove up, a guardian of order ran to the door and gave the passenger the sage advice, not to turn back from a spectacle forbidden by law, but to take care of his pockets. It is very fortunate that public opinion in this country is in harmony with the law as regards housebreaking; otherwise, I fancy that if a robber were to meet a policeman in the dusk he would merely say to him, "My good fellow, I want to break in this door; but it is dark—lend me your lantern." However, thanks to the tutelary intervention of the authorities, things passed off much better than usual. It is true that a policeman had his head split with a blow from a stick, and that several of his comrades narrowly escaped serious maltreatment from the disappointment, changed into fury, of certain bandits impressed, as they ought to have been, with the knowledge of what they lost in losing the benefit of the moral instruction which results from a prize-fight. But that is a trifle compared with what is usually seen in such cases. The progress is manifest.

Wadhurst was the scene where John Carmel Heenan and Tom King displayed the vigour of their muscles before an assembly breathless with emotion. The betting was in favour of the American athlete, become, through some strangely chi-

valrous oblivion of every principle of patriotism, the favourite of the English betting aristocrats. The struggle, which lasted for upwards of half-an-hour, was terrible. At one time it was Heenan, of the race of Antæus, who, closing with Tom King, seizing and squeezing him in an irresistible embrace, hurled him to the earth as if to break every bone. At another time it was Tom King who, supported on the knees of his seconds—washed, sponged, refreshed, cheered up, and placed on his legs—gave to his iron arm the impulsive force of a cannon ball, and, striking his antagonist on the eyes, temples, jaw, covered him with blood, disfigured him, rendered him hideous to look at. More than once Tom King, less vigorous than his gigantic adversary, though himself a giant, was seen to reel to and fro like a drunken man and fall to the ground like an ox that is slaughtered. At one time it was thought that he would not come up to time, which would probably have happened had not his second, in order to bring him to his senses, bitten the cartilage of his ear.

The combat, which for the first ten rounds seemed likely to be fatal to Tom King, turned in his favour during the last seven. More of a wrestler than a boxer, Heenan at last gave in. Had he been killed outright, King would have been imprisoned for life; but as he is apparently only half-killed, King will be comfortably provided for. So much for the logic of the thing!

Judge of the effect produced upon the spectators by the varied acts of this bloody drama. Each time that either of the combatants received a blow that might be mortal, nothing was heard around them but the howlings of savages.

And there are people here who attach a moralizing character to such spectacles! According to them, they teach power to endure, they give the example of courage. Thus the constancy of a lofty soul is degraded to the point of being confounded with bestial brutality; and it is in the sink of pot-houses that we are invited to look for teachers of courage! But what is courage apart from the rightfulness, the nobleness of its aim? Appreciated after such a fashion, it is only the virtue of a wild beast. To those who have the heart to kill a man, a comrade—perhaps a friend—for no other motive than to gain enough to purchase a tavern withal, I should, for my part, be tempted to use an expression of M. Sardou in the *Pattes de Mouche*, "I have known tigers who were worth more than you." Contempt for human life, the besotted worship of ill-employed strength—that

is what prize-fights teach. It is very difficult for a foreigner, even after he has lived a long time in England, to understand not only why they are tolerated, in despite of the law, in a country where respect for the law is in general so profound, but how they should be esteemed a *national* pastime by a people essentially humane, and who are so solicitous about the lives of animals. These are painful inconsistencies for any one who, without being himself an Englishman, lives in England, the classic land of personal dignity and freedom.

For the rest, I must not delay to acknowledge that the number, after all, is great, and every day increasing, of those who on this side of the Channel hold in horror this species of diversion and denounce its immorality. The English press has long ceased to be unanimous upon this subject. Conversions have been made, and very remarkable ones.

I have lying before me an article of the *Times* written in the month of April, 1860. How different it is from the article published in the same journal to-day! In 1860 the *Times* was inexhaustible in its raillery against moralists so ingenuous as to refuse their approval to prize-fights. To-day it declares these contests more revolting than bull-fights, and less excusable than duels. That is a good deal of progress to make in three years. And how shall we not hope for the disappearance of this degrading abuse, when we think of the distance which separates the England of our days from that which, without much astonishment, beheld George IV. walking in Bond-street arm-in-arm with Jackson the prize-fighter! Let *Bell's Life* then make the most of it. There is not much chance, after all, that a theatre for boxing will ever be reestablished in this country. This is the *Times*' opinion also—Heaven be praised!

LETTER CCXXVI.

HEENAN AND TOM KING.

December 17th, 1863.

THE question was to ascertain which of the two—the American pugilist, Heenan, or the English pugilist, Tom King—was the more capable of mauling a man. The betting was in favour of

the American, who, in his famous battle with Tom Sayers, had displayed an Herculean strength of which the readers of *Bell's Life* never thought without a thrill of admiration.

It is very true that Tom King also had approved himself a man of might. He had almost killed, one fine day, Mace, the most scientific of pugilists; an exploit which had won him the title, so ardently coveted in the boxing world, of Champion of England. He was known, besides, to have muscles of bronze, arms of iron, and though a little less gigantic than Heenan, he was, after all, of the race of the giants. But Heenan! Was there a living creature who dared affront Heenan, had he even the *æs triplex* round his chest?

At the period when Heenan measured himself against Tom Sayers, all sympathies, all vows, in England, were in favour of the latter—because it was decided to regard his contest with the American as an affair of honour to be settled between the two great sections of the Anglo-Saxon race. But Heenan having narrowly missed strangling his adversary after being himself reduced to the condition of Polyphemus, this fine trait had so keenly touched the generous soul of the young fashionable patrons of the turf, that from that moment Heenan, the trans-atlantic Heenan, had become their favourite. In the aristocratic circles where the life of a man is played for, there was a scramble to bet upon him. Indeed, King himself showed that he had no particular desire to enter the lists, even should his prudence cost him the belt—that belt which is to a prize-fighter what his crown is to a king. On the other hand, Heenan manifested a ferocious confidence in his own muscles, altogether worthy of his noble profession. He wrote to *Bell's Life*, "If I do not settle Tom King's affair in a very few minutes, I consent to pass for the greatest impostor who has ever figured in the ring."

Pride becomes heroes. It is essentially a pugilist's virtue and, in their case, is always found united to eloquence. How many examples of this I could furnish had I time to go back to the beginning of the eighteenth century, at which period the fashion of prize-fights was introduced into England, thanks to the success of Figg's lessons, who was immortalized by Hogarth. But there is one cartel which I cannot resist the pleasure of copying, by way of retrospective digression: "I, William Willis, surnamed the Bellicose Quaker, declare that it is solely in consequence of

an accidental fall of me, Willis, that Mr. Swallwood, now twelve-months ago, defeated me; but since the said Smallwood, puffed up by the favours of blind Fortune, esteems himself invincible, I, William Willis, to prove to him the contrary, challenge him, for one hundred pounds sterling, and I undertake to justify my words by blows well-planted, feints, sparring, and the rest." History teaches us that the epic hauteur of this challenge, which reminds us of those of Homer's heroes, did not prevent William Willis from being thrashed a second time, which is not surprising if we consider that "blind Fortune" is not the goddess of eloquence.

To return to the events of the day. Victory, in the event of a battle, seemed so certain to pronounce in favour of Heenan that, in spite of his and his partizans' reiterated appeals, it was feared for some days that no fight would come off. Cruel moments of perplexity! Consternation reigned in the fashionable circles of the youthful aristocracy on the one part, and on the other part among the interesting "rabble rout" of pothouse frequenters and pickpockets; for the expectation of a prize-fight has the privilege of establishing a close community of desires and emotions between the Upper and the Lower; a prize-fight is the bond which draws together different grades, places the virtues of the public-house in contact with the virtues of the club; it is a sort of connecting link between the West End and St. Martin's Lane. Happily the idea struck some bold thinker on the *Bell's Life* that there was never a pugilist whose irresolutions could not be overcome by introducing oneself to him in the form which Jupiter took to seduce Danae. Suppose £1000 were staked as the prize of victory! Tom King would never resist ten temptations of £100 each. The lot was cast.

This is how it came to pass that the other day the connoisseurs in the noble science of self-defence had the supreme happiness of seeing Heenan and Tom King display against one another at Wadhurst, a village of an entirely bucolic aspect, the qualities of two tigers in fury.

They certainly could not fail to work miracles upon one another. According to custom, they had been trained for the business some days before. They had been purged, according to rule, had been made to perspire in due proportions, had been sent early to bed, had been obliged every morning to take a certain amount of prescribed exercise, had had their wine measured

out to them with experienced forethought, had been forbidden every kind of excess. There was consequently a unanimous cry of admiration when they were stripped in the ring, and it could be seen in each of them to what a degree the animal was superior to the man. The judges of the camp having proclaimed them "in good condition," they straightway set to work.

You know in what the work consists on these occasions. At the very commencement Heenan,—towards whom Tom Sayers, be it parenthetically remarked, acted as second—rushed at Tom King and, grasping him in his arms, flung him on the grass like a sack of barley, as *Bell's Life* elegantly expresses it. And, during the earlier rounds, each time that Tom King, after being well sponged and revived by his seconds, came up to the scratch, Heenan, seizing him afresh, forced him, by an irresistible effort of strength, to measure his length on the ground. Terrible, awful falls, one of which was such that for a moment it was thought to have been fatal, but in the intervals Heenan had received on the head blows like those given by a mace. Who would win the day, the wrestler or the pugilist? Although Heenan was frightfully bruised about the face, though his skin peeled off in strips, though the blood flowed in torrents from his nostrils, his superhuman strength and the horrible facility with which he dashed his antagonist to the ground, made the spectators believe for some time that the other had not a chance. Six and seven to four were offered in his favour, but not taken. They tell of an Irishman, named Gamble, who, in 1800, in a similar sort of contest, held his ground through seven consecutive rounds after having his shoulder-bone broken. Tom King displayed the same bull-dog tenacity, to which he is probably indebted for one of the most unexpected victories which have ever astonished the Ring. He was tremendously applauded. Let us hope that no death will ensue—which is as yet open to doubt.

The impression produced has been immense, and this must be my excuse for having drawn your attention at such length to these hideous details. Have they not, indeed, the importance of a picture of manners? Do they not form a chapter worthy to take its place in the history of the folly of mankind, which is, of all histories, assuredly the most painful, but, at the same time, the most instructive? For the rest, the affair passed off this time more decorously than usual. The foul rabble of thieves and ruffians, whom "a festival" of this sort never fails to collect, were

not only disabled from exercising their honest industry, but were prevented from proceeding to the spot pitched upon for the fight, so that the spectacle was given to a picked assembly of spectators, to persons of a certain position, to individuals not in need of gaining a watch but quite capable of losing one. Are you aware to what this progress was attributable? The fact that the railway tickets were three guineas each scarcely furnishes a sufficient explanation, the wonder being that the men of prey, who swarmed around the station, were unable to take from the pockets of their neighbours the three guineas which they could not find in their own. A better guarantee than this must evidently have been provided for the privileged spectators, and this guarantee was actually the presence of a considerable number of the guardians of the peace, brought there to protect those who were about to break it; for prize-fights give occasion among other scandals to this one, that on their account the law is violated by the very authorities whose duty it is to make it respected. The police, perfectly acquainted with everything, affects to know nothing, and takes very good care never to arrive on the field of battle to part the fray, until there is nothing to part.

It remains to be seen if in England, serious and free England, public manners will long put up with these disgraceful and barbarous exhibitions; or if, on the contrary, we are to fear being brought back to the time when the defeat of the prize-fighter Broughton would have caused almost as much chagrin to the Duke of Cumberland as his victory at Culloden had caused him joy. I am happy to be able to state that on this point the language of a notable portion of the English press is of a nature to justify our hopes rather than our fears.

LETTER CCXXVII.

A QUARREL BETWEEN MR. COBDEN AND THE "TIMES."

December 14th, 1863.

ANOTHER terrible rencounter. But this time it is not a question of a Heenan or a Tom King, but of Mr. Cobden and the *Times*. All the other journals, one after the other, have rushed into the mêlée. The English press has certainly caught fire,

and it is Mr. Cobden who happens to have kindled the conflagration.

If the quarrel between him and the *Times* were an ordinary dispute, it would suffice to mention it. But the quarrel to which I am alluding impinges upon a point which deserves to be cleared up for the honour of journalism and in the interest of the public, both inseparable from respect for justice and the rights of freedom properly understood.

First of all for the facts :—

Some time ago Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright delivered speeches at Rochdale, with reference to which they were accused by the *Times* of aiming at the partition among the poor of the property of the rich. The accusation was murderous. It was not, however, called into question. Mr. Cobden has since explained that neither he, nor his friend Mr. Bright, is in the habit of honouring the *Times* with a perusal. The *Times* concluded, or affected to conclude, from their silence that they accepted the anathema, and a few days later returned to the charge against Mr. Bright, imputing to him the doctrine of a distribution of lands. And this was said carelessly, incidentally, as if in alluding to a fact clearly established, incontestable, known to all.

This article having accidentally come under the notice of Mr. Cobden, made him entirely lose his temper. The friend of Mr. Bright, the companion of his labours, the confidant of his thoughts, he knew better than anyone how false was the assertion, and he perfectly understood its venomous character. Inspired by friendship, blinded by passion, he wrote to the *Times* a violent letter in which, not content with indignantly protesting against what he called an abominable calumny, he reproached the editor of the *Times* with wearing a mask, and of wearing it only for the public, in order the better to gather the fruits of the anonymous system, without losing aught, as an individual, of the advantages likely to accrue from his complaisance. The word "corruption" was used, and it was given clearly to understand that it was the duty of those who know what is passing behind the scenes to enlighten the uninitiated.

The first act of the editor of the *Times*, on receiving Mr. Cobden's letter, was to promise to insert it on the following day, whether it was he had not read it, or whether he did not see any objection to its publication. But on the morrow he changed his

mind, and addressed Mr. Cobden a private letter, written in the third person and without any signature, in which he stated his reasons for declining to insert it. Mr. Cobden immediately sent to the other journals the letter refused by the *Times*, without any allusion to the private note he had received, and confining himself to the fact of the *Times*' refusal. Neither the *Morning Post*, nor the *Morning Advertiser*, nor the *Daily Telegraph*, thought proper to accord the hospitality of their columns to Mr. Cobden's attack upon the *Times*. The *Daily News* understood its duty in a different manner. As for the *Morning Star*, which is in some sort the *Moniteur* of the Manchester school, the thing went of itself.

It is very rare in England for a man who loses his self-possession to have the laughers on his side. His letter was pronounced too personal, excessively violent and insulting. Besides, why did he take part with Bright? If the *Times* had represented in a false light Mr. Bright's ideas or calumniated his doctrines, to whom belonged the right to protest, except to Mr. Bright himself? Certainly there was no occasion for a man, who had neither his vigour nor his muscles, to undertake to do battle for him, essentially a man of combativeness and incomparable in a tourney. Besides, I am not quite sure that in attempting to disgrace the *Times*, Mr. Cobden did not wound in a good many English minds something very closely resembling a national sentiment. I am acquainted with individuals who, in the humiliation of the *Times*, would see something almost akin to the humiliation of England. This may appear strange to you—but it is so.

There were, therefore, all sorts of reasons why Mr. Cobden's outbreak should be ill-received by the public, whatever right he may have had to repel an imputation as prejudicial as it was unjust.

The English press, on its part, was manifestly interested in ranging itself, on this occasion, under the banner of the *Times*. Mr. Cobden had been guilty of the generous indiscretion of calling in question the morality of anonymous attacks. Was more needed? Widely differing in that respect from the French press, the English press would deem itself lost on the day when the advantage of the anonymous system should be taken from it. The law of signatures fills it with horror. Fight without a vizor! Never! One might as well fight without a sword.

Such is its theory. There is no editor of whom it might justly be said :—

> " Il aurait volontiers écrit sur son chapeau :
> C'est moi qui suis Guillot, berger de ce troupeau."

Thus, in calling upon the *Times* to lower its vizor, Mr. Cobden could not fail to provide his adversary with ardent allies. In fact, the *Morning Post*, the *Morning Advertiser*, the *Globe*, the *Economist*, the *Saturday Review*, &c., &c., declared against Mr. Cobden in this affair, with a unanimity which bears sufficient witness to the *esprit de corps*.

Had they confined themselves to blaming him for the violence of his language, nothing could have been better; but they went further, and all sorts of monstrous theories have been enunciated on the monopoly of publicity by the journals; upon the personal irresponsibility of their editors, upon the right of stifling the voice of defence after sounding the trumpet of attack, upon the rightfulness of the system which consists in transforming into a well-established fact the result of the most arbitrary deductions, and lastly upon the pretended danger of causing the social importance of the press to pass from the hands of the proprietors to those of the editors of journals, by connecting the success of a paper with the popularity of the names which appear at the foot of the respective articles.

One circumstance will, I fancy, have struck you in the course of the preceding narrative. It will doubtless have appeared to you a strange thing that the *Times* should think itself entitled, and should legally be entitled, to refuse the insertion of a reply provoked by its accusations, a reply certainly violent, but in reality, perhaps, less envenomed than the attack. And what will have appeared to you still more strange is, that such a man as Mr. Cobden, after having rendered such distinguished services to his country in the course of such an illustrious career, should not have been able to obtain from more than two journals the opportunity of making the public the judge between the *Times* and himself. But I am certain you will never understand why the *Daily News* should have been so severely taken to task by some of its contemporaries for having legally and impartially placed before its readers both sides of the question, without any exaggeration, any attenuation, any concealment, while leaving the task of pronouncing judgment to the tribunal to which the press also is subject,—public opinion.

For my own part, I do not hesitate to say that the *Daily News* —I set aside the *Morning Star* as being the journal of Messrs. Cobden and Bright—is of all the organs of the English press the only one which has understood how far the duties of journalism extend, and where its rights terminate. To dispose of publicity and confiscate it for one's own advantage, is to convert into an instrument of tyranny what is worthless save as an instrument of liberty. Monopolise the press! But how could any sort of monopoly be imagined, I ask, more dangerous, more iniquitous, more stifling? A journalist is a public functionary. Publicity does not belong to him as a thing of his own; he must render an account of it to all, more particularly to those against whom he has to employ it. He cannot use it and abuse it without failing in respect to the people and failing in respect to himself. If ever there was a just, a moral law, or one more truly favourable to liberty it is that which, in France, imposes upon every journal that attacks an individual the obligation of publishing his reply. The want of a similar law in England is an evil which may be fathomed by those who have felt upon their heads the heavy weight of calumny without it being possible for them to shake it off.

Measure, if you can, the tyrannical extent of a power in virtue of which an unknown, irresponsible writer, your personal enemy perhaps, shall be in a position to persuade the entire earth from a lofty and sonorous platform! Such a one is worthy of hatred and contempt! One shudders in thinking of the possible abuse of such a power. Do not talk, after that, of individual liberty. A man whom the law does not protect against such an abuse by opening to him the columns of the same journal in which he has been attacked—such a man, as soon as a journal of the importance of the *Times* wishes to kill him morally, is morally dead. In vain will he obtain elsewhere the publicity which is denied him there. Has not every organ of opinion its own public, which is not that of other papers? It is to Peter that I am calumniated, and it is Paul who is to hear my defence! Is not that a fine resource, a fine consolation! The calumny which crushes me has been struck off in 60,000 copies, and the truth which I invoke will be in five or six hundred! Truly, I am much the better for it!

LETTER CCXXVIII.

MR. COBDEN AND MR. BRIGHT.

December 18th, 1863.

I READ in to-day's *Morning Star* a letter in which Mr. Cobden summons Mr John Delane to cite the passages which prove that he and Mr. Bright are in favour of the partition of lands, and a reply from Mr. John Delane, in which the latter says in effect, "I do not accuse you of wishing to recur to violence in order to transfer lands from the hands of the rich to those of the poor; but violence is not the only procedure which leads to that result. Have you not deplored the state of things in virtue of which territorial property in England is owned by a small number of individuals? Have you not contrasted, with an expression of regret, the tenure of the soil such as we understand it, with the tenure that exists in countries where the peasant possesses the land? And in indicating as a remedy for this evil the extension of political rights, have you not clearly unveiled your wish to see the laws of real property modified by means of the legislature?"

I know not what Mr. Cobden will reply, but I am sure that he will accept the accusation when posed in this fashion.

Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright are certainly not tribunes after the manner of Caius Gracchus. The system of the agrarian law is by no means to their taste, and there are probably not two men in this country to whom violent proceedings are more repugnant. But that the aristocratic tenure of the soil is contrary to all their ideas and tendencies; that they aspire from the bottom of their heart to the gradual, pacific, legal establishment of a system by which the proprietor should be identical with the cultivator; that they regard as abusive and monstrous the rights of primogeniture and entail, and that they bless the French revolution for having abolished them—appears to me beyond a doubt; and if that is all the *Times* meant to reproach them with, either I am greatly mistaken, or, instead of complaining, they will glory in the accusation.

Both of them, in fact, aim with equal ardour at the destruction

of every aristocratic and exclusive situation, though under the influence of feelings the diversity of which is explained by that of their respective temperaments.

In fact, what dominates in Mr. Cobden is the economist; in Mr. Bright, the tribune. Mr. Cobden thinks only of the well-being of the people; Mr. Bright, of their liberty. Mr. Cobden rejects in the aristocratic system an obstacle to the diffusion of material well-doing among the masses; Mr. Bright detests in that system an usurpation of the abstract rights of the people.

As for Mr. Cobden, everything with him is a question of productive power, utility, free trade. If he is against slavery, it is less through horror of the principle than through hatred of its economic disadvantages. He would scarcely object, I suspect, to accept despotism, provided it were—if such a thing were possible—an intelligent, tutelary despotism, capable of assuring to each individual a fair proportion of happiness—of that sort of happiness which is implied in the absence of privation and the enjoyment of riches. I will not go so far as to say that human dignity is a trifling matter in the eyes of Mr. Cobden; but I do not think that it is entered on the first line in his calculations. His disdain for classical studies is one of his characteristic traits. Talk to me, in the matter of books, about knowing how to keep books! What necessity, in fact, is there for ascertaining if the city of Troy ever really existed? Talk to me of being thoroughly acquainted with the commercial statistics of each country! One day he allowed the expression to escape him—as the *Times* duly reminds him—that he preferred a page of the *Times* to all the works of Thucydides.

Mr. Bright is a very different man. It is especially from their moral point of view that things strike him. He would curse slavery, even though the economical superiority of that system had been proved to demonstration. He would value highly mental culture did it not constitute the privilege of a few and add to their means of domination. In fine, with Mr. Bright it is the heart that guides the intellect; while with Mr. Cobden it is the intellect that guides the heart.

Nothing, therefore, is more calm, more positive, more matter-of-fact than Mr. Cobden's eloquence; while Mr. Bright's is the very blast of the hurricane.

Need I add that, united as they are, these two men complete one another after a marvellous fashion, and derive from their

alliance a prodigious increase of strength? The questions which are lighted up by the one, would be roused to a flame by the other; and, on the other hand, the souls which the former would leave frigid, the latter kindles and elevates.

You will no doubt be surprised that as Mr. Bright, in his alliance with Mr. Cobden, represents the element of passion, it should be Mr. Cobden who defies the *Times*, while Mr. Bright adopts the line of silent disdain and indifference. It is, in fact, a curious phenomenon. But the result shows in the matter of division of labour—to borrow Mr. Cobden's style—every one ought carefully to confine himself to the sort of work which suits him the best. Passion so ill becomes Mr. Cobden, that when he took it into his head to be angry, he did not know how to do it, and put himself all in the wrong. Where Mr. Bright would have been terrible, Mr. Cobden has only been awkward.

LETTER CCXXIX.

ANONYMOUS JOURNALISM.

December 20th, 1863.

One day Mr. John Stuart Mill asked me what I thought of the system which prevails in the English press, that of anonymity. I replied that it was most decidedly the opposite system which I preferred—at least, in a free country; and I was delighted to find that in this I was borne out by a man whose opinion is an authority in all that refers to intelligence and feeling.

Whence comes it that in such a country as England journalism is anonymous? Whence comes it that, generally speaking, anonymity is considered an indispensable condition of journalism? I confess that I am at a loss to explain it.

The English, as every one knows, are naturally proud. They possess the sentiment of personal dignity to such a point that it frequently degenerates with them into stiffness. In all their social arrangements, in all their ideas, what dominates is an ardent solicitude for the rights of *the individual man;* and certainly if there is a country in the world where fair play is respected, that country is England. Whence then, I repeat,

proceeds the favour obtained by a system which seems so little in harmony with the most salient traits of the English character?

For it is certainly not the part of a proud spirit to hide itself behind anonymity. To shirk the moral responsibility of one's words is a proceeding which cannot be reconcilable with the sentiment of personal dignity. The individual is badly protected where his reputation is exposed to darts hurled by an unknown hand; neither is it conformable to the rules of fair play that a man should be authorised to conceal himself behind an impenetrable shrub, in order to fire thence, without peril, on his enemy as he passes.

In my last letter I expressed my astonishment that the insertion of a reply in the journal in which the article was made, should not here be obligatory. Let me be just. On this point, as on many others, usage supplies the absence of law; and I am happy to say that English journalists are in general too jealous of the honour of their profession, too much given to fair play, too thoroughly gentlemen, to refuse to any one whom they attack on any particular subject an opportunity of addressing the public through their own columns. But why subordinate the application of a social principle to an inspiration of kindly feeling, to a generous caprice, to a scruple of delicacy? Why reduce a man who is dragged before the tribunal of public opinion to accept as a favour from his adversary the recognition of his right?

The consequence is that, if the accordance of hospitality to the protest of an individual who has any complaint to make be the rule, it is, in any case, one which admits of not a few exceptions. There is the mischief. I could cite several examples, but is it not enough to refer to the dispute between Mr. Cobden and the *Times*? In my opinion, the excessive violence of Mr. Cobden's letter explains, but does not justify, the *Times*' refusal. It was for the public, not for the journal, to judge, both as to manner and matter, of the merits of the reply. We are too apt to deceive ourselves when we are both judge and suitor. The less doubt the *Times* may have had as to the impropriety of the language used towards itself by Mr. Cobden, the greater was the reason why it should confide to the safe tribunal of public feeling the task of doing justice. No; it rested with itself whether the letter should or should not be published in its columns, and it was not. Before the readers of the *Times*, who constituted

the proper tribunal, one of the two parties was not allowed to speak. Was the cause, I ask, fairly tried?

And now to this power on the part of a journal to reject, when it pleases, any answer that may have been provoked by its own attacks, add the power conferred by anonymity. Is there nothing there to inspire alarm, or give cause for complaint? The independence of the newspaper-press is a blessing as a safeguard to truth, but not as an obstacle to its triumph. It is of supreme importance that the liberty of the press should be guaranteed against possible injustice on the part of the Government; but it is also of consequence that the honour of each individual citizen should be guaranteed against possible injustice on the part of the press.

That under the influence of certain particular and exceptional circumstances the signature may not be absolutely requisite, it would be very unbecoming on my part to deny; but, even in such a case, the writer, as soon as an interest wounded by his hand cries aloud, should be prompt to exclaim, *Me, me, adsum qui feci!* And I need hardly add, that this question has never been otherwise understood by the writer of these lines.

Without doubt, anonymity presents certain advantages. Such a one will not hesitate to unveil an abuse in the Government, who would have been checked by the fear of compromising his position had it been necessary to sign his denunciation. Such another will not fear to reveal an iniquity upon whom silence would have been imposed by family or social considerations, had he been compelled to make himself known. But, on the other hand, let us think of the calumnious insinuations which anonymity encourages, the murderous attacks which it covers with its shadow, the personal enmities whose outpouring is invited by the prospect of impunity.

Again, if we station ourselves on a lofty stand-point, what are the advantages of which they tell us when compared with the lowering of personal character likely to result from the habit of speaking the truth without personal peril, of serving justice without self-devotion, of striking without being seen? It is not thus the strong are produced. If England possesses virile virtues, which nobody will deny, it comes not from the existence of an anonymous press; but, on the contrary, from natural temperament, and from a combination of causes through which the evil effects of this system have been partially paralysed. Even

the reign of an anonymous press has not succeeded, in a free country, in emasculating men's minds, so strengthening is the action of liberty. Such is the fact.

Be this as it may, I have certainly never met, as long as I have lived in England, with a single English journalist who does not hold in horror the theory of signed articles. All are convinced that by the application of this theory the press would lose a notable portion of its influence; and, so far, they are right. But the point at issue is, whether the sort of influence it would lose is a rightful one, and that is precisely what I deny. It is quite certain, for instance, that no article, were it signed by the most popular statesman in England at this moment, or by the foremost thinker of the day, by Lord Palmerston or by Mr. John Stuart Mill, would carry in the opinion of its readers the weight of an article having apparently no other author than that invisible, impalpable, mysterious personage, the *Times*. "What will the *Times* say?" You cannot imagine the number of persons whose ruling idea is expressed by those words whenever a new question presents itself; and such is, for many, the prestige which attaches to that impersonal power,—such is the splendour which beams from that vague divinity, that they are completely dazzled by it. Is that an advantage? Can public reason derive any true benefit from transforming its organs into fetishes? Is the system which tends to substitute a sort of superstitious idolatry for the deference due to the highpriests of thought, favourable to the development of the critical faculties in the individual, or calculated to advance the education of men's minds? Is it good that any argument should weigh more than its intrinsic weight?

The *Morning Post* maintained the other day that the value of an argument depends in no way upon the signature placed at its foot. Speaking in the abstract, nothing can be more true; speaking relatively, nothing can be more false. How many are there for whom the thinking is done by men who do think! How many are there upon whom the effect of a line of argument is merely that of the authority of a name! It must be admitted, therefore, that, from this point of view, the system of signatures itself is not free from substituting to a certain point, the power of prestige for that of reason. But here, at least, the inconvenience proceeds from the nature of things, and not from any artificial combination. Nor is this all. It is oftentimes a useful homage

which an inferior intelligence renders to an intelligence whose superiority it accepts and loves. This is surely better than submitting to an influence, before which one bows the head solely because of the cloud in which it is enveloped.

Another consideration is this. You are attacked. If the arrow springs from the hand of a disloyal man aiming at your heart from behind the mask of anonymity, is it not manifest that in order to form a right judgment on the fact, supposing there is any doubt in the case, the public is destitute of one of the necessary elements?

Failing space compels me to be brief: I hasten, therefore, before concluding, to examine the most curious aspect of the question. A great secret lurked behind this question, and literary men owe their warmest thanks to the *Economist* for having brought it to light. With a most laudable candour this journal declares that the great advantage of anonymity is in reducing newspaper editors to be the most humble and obedient servants of moneyed men. In this way, if articles were signed, the public would take a fancy to certain writers; it would every morning look for their name at the foot of the articles provided for them to read; it would regret their absence, if it found them not in their accustomed place. And what would be the result? That the success of a journal would at length become identified with the popularity of such or such a name, and its value as a property would depend on the co-operation of such or such a writer. Mark the importance that would thereby be acquired in a journal by those who conduct it, at the expense of those who own it. Think of the price the former would fancy themselves justified in setting upon their services. It would be in their power to inflict a terrible blow upon the paper in which their signatures had shone, by leaving it for a rival paper. The consequence would be the immense evil of having thought less dependent on money. And then, farewell to order! Farewell to conservative ideas! Farewell to the security of the prosperous! Who knows what might not be devoured by that bulldog, if once set free, whom happily money now holds in check—thought!

France, governed by the law of signatures, has escaped pretty well thus far, as you see; a fact which the *Economist* explains by the existence of another curb than anonymity. But, in England, where this curb does not exist, who would protect society against

the danger of an intellectual deluge, if journals were somewhat more in the hands of journalists?

It is a sorry compliment to pay to human intelligence to suspect it of being necessarily well disposed towards disorder, anarchy, and spoliation. It is a sorry compliment, too, to pay to those who so strongly awaken the solicitude of the *Economist*, to represent their interest as necessarily hostile to the free development of the human intellect.

The *Economist* assures us that the prudence of the English press is due to the severe control to which it is subjected by money by means of anonymity. We ask the *Economist's* pardon, but our sympathies for England, and our respect for the English people forbid us to believe this.

LETTER CCXXX.

DEATH OF THACKERAY.

December 31st, 1863.

One day I was passing, towards nightfall, down Palace Gardens Road, when I heard my name called. A man of tall stature, whom the darkness prevented me at first from recognising, was standing on the threshold of a handsome, red-brick mansion, newly built, in the style of Queen Anne's time. As soon as I had come up to him, he held out his hand to me cordially, and begged me to walk in.

The house was only half furnished. He made me go over it from top to bottom, showed me every hole and corner, and after satisfying himself that I thought it a very desirable habitation, he said: "Well, this house which I have just built, and which has cost me upwards of £7,000, is the price of the last novel I published in the *Cornhill Magazine* (no doubt he included in that enormous sum his salary as editor of that periodical). "Bravo!" I exclaimed, "You have publishers in England, whom one would suppose to be descended in a straight line from Lorenzo de Medici." He made no reply, and there was a moment's silence, after which he began speaking of other things. As I was leaving him, I fancied I saw the shadow of a mournful thought pass over his brow, and, in fact, he asked me, with a

sudden burst of bitter sensibility, which certainly broke from the heart: "Are you acquainted with the history of Chatterton?" "Yes," I replied, "and I know that of Gilbert, also."

The name of the man with whom is associated in my mind the memory of this anecdote was William Makepeace Thackeray, the same whose mortal remains were laid, last Wednesday, in the cemetery at Kensal Green. There was a crowd around the grave, and what a crowd! There was Charles Dickens, the great rival of the illustrious deceased; Mr. Browning, who, among the poets of modern England, has his place by the side of, though a little below, Tennyson; Mr. Robert Bell, whose supple and delightful talent has enriched almost every branch of literature; Mr. Edward Pigott, of the *Daily News*, a writer of whom English journalism has every reason to be proud; Mr. Lewes, author of the *Life of Goethe*; Mr. Mark Lemon, the witty editor of *Punch*; Mr. R. Doyle, the celebrated caricaturist; Mr. Millais, the artist —I mention those whom I myself recognised, and whose names drop spontaneously from my pen. Here also stood, in violation of the laws of an etiquette which the *Spectator* rightly denounces as absurd, Mr. Thackeray's daughters, whose presence, acknowledged with profound sympathy and tearful respect, intensified the mournfulness of this ceremony of the last Farewell.

Thackeray was born in Calcutta in 1811. He was consequently only fifty-two years of age when death suddenly carried him off. Twelve days previously he had gone to celebrate at Charterhouse, in company with old schoolfellows, the anniversary of the foundation of the school in which he had been educated. The speech which he made at the dinner given on that occasion was said to have been full of vivacity, full of humour, full of life. Who would have thought that the hand of death was already upon him? For some time past, indeed, he had been sensible of the first attacks of a serious illness. Last year, I think it was, he said one day, laughing: "I must pack up my things; my doctor has given me notice to quit." On Christmas Eve, not one among those who were around him, had the slightest suspicion of the blow that was about to be stricken. In the course of the night his mother, whose bedroom was over his own, heard him get up and walk about. He was in the habit of doing so when seized with cramps of the stomach, and the circumstance was not one to cause any alarm. On the morrow his manservant entered the room and placed a cup of tea, as usual, by his bed-side. When

he returned, he noticed that the tea had not been touched. Hearing no movement, he drew near. Calm and with his hands stretched out over the counterpane, Thackeray slept the sleep from which there is no awaking.

A vacancy thus remains to be filled in English literature, but by whom will it be filled?

Thackeray certainly had not either the classic lore, or the rich imagination, or the flexible genius of Sir Edward Bulwer—now Lord Lytton. Neither was he a man, like Charles Dickens, to conduct the reader through a whole world of pathetic incidents and moving situations, into the innermost depths. To tell the truth, he was deficient in several of the essential qualities of a novelist. He was not skilful in working out the plot of a story; he knew not how to carry along the reader by an artistic connection of circumstances; how to put thought into action; how to concentrate the interest upon any particular point or person. Colonel Newcome is, perhaps, the only one of his heroes to whom it is possible to become attached.

What constitutes Balzac's greatness is the marvellous manner in which, in his case, the genius of the novelist is united to that of the observer and moralist. There was nothing of the kind in Thackeray. In his novels, fine observation, subtle analysis, avenging satire, are in every page, but drama, such as results from action, nowhere.

Neither had he that creative power which springs from an ardent imagination. What he saw, he saw clearly, and he reproduced it with power; but he did not divine, he did not generalise, he did not create *types*.

In reality, the author of *Vanity Fair* was a satirist, a moralist, a humorist, in whom was wanting, to make him absolutely great, the artist.

I say, absolutely great; for, if it be doubtful that as a humorist he can be compared to a Lamb, or a Sterne, it is at least certain that as a satirist, he had no superior, not even Dryden, not even Swift, not even Pope. And what distinguishes him from them, what raises him above them, what makes him an essentially original genius, is that his anger, if we take the trouble to penetrate the secret, was at bottom but the reaction of a tender nature, furious at disappointment.

When, yet an obscure writer, he first essayed his strength in *Fraser's Magazine*, under the name of Michael Angelo Titmarsh,

many fancied that it must be a talent without bowels which was being displayed by a man whose antipathies could dispose of such an abundance of poisoned darts. Those whose pretentions he chastised without pity denounced him as a cynic, called him Diogenes, denied him the gift of goodness. But when he had given all that was within his talent, he met with more equitable judges, and people began to suspect that his apparent misanthropy was nothing more than discouraged sensibility, love embittered, and, if I may so express myself, soured milk.

Hence that vein of melancholy which runs through his sarcasms, as if his heart bled for the wounds inflicted by his hand. Hence, too, those accents of emotion which sometimes escaped him between two bursts of laughter. In his novel of *Esmond*, in his historical essays on the Four Georges there are lines which never could have been traced by a man to whom it did not often happen to weep inwardly. Sadness has two ways of expressing itself—by laughter, by tears; and of these, tears are not always the saddest.

Thackeray raised a corner of the veil which concealed from unpractised eyes the true character of his genius, when he wrote: "Life is not all joy. One meets, without expecting them, grave thoughts, as one meets in the street, without expecting it, a funeral procession."

For the rest, his bitter philosophy drew its source neither from a naturally gloomy disposition, nor from the habits of a retired and morose life.

He sought the world; he frequented houses from which gaiety is no exile; he was a joyous companion, a generous and delicate-minded friend. Here is an anecdote which falls within my personal knowledge, and which exhibits Thackeray under too amiable an aspect for me to resist the pleasure of relating it.

Some few years ago the London papers announced that a French gentleman, whose name it is unnecessary to mention, was going to deliver a lecture in the English language, in the district of St. John's Wood. Among those who, actuated by a feeling of delicate kindliness and hospitable curiosity, resolved to encourage him by their presence, Thackeray was one of the foremost. On the conclusion of the lecture the manager of the local literary institution, thought proper, for some reason or other, to recommend the audience to take care of their pockets as they went out, there being a considerable crowd at the doors. This

warning, addressed to an audience composed of most respectable persons, some even highly distinguished, produced a very bad effect.

Some voices were raised as a protest, but no one spoke out with a more lively eloquence than an extremely well-dressed stranger, who was seated by the side of Mr. Robert Bell. Not content with speaking, the stranger gesticulated, and with strange animation, "Is not such advice, Sir," said he to Mr. Bell, "misplaced and insulting? For what do they take us?" and so on. After thus giving vent to his indignation the susceptible stranger disappeared; and when Mr. Robert Bell, wishing to know how long the lecture had lasted, was going to consult his watch, he found that it had been stolen. Thackeray, when informed a few minutes afterwards by his worthy friend Robert Bell of this unpleasant misadventure, asked him to dine with him on a certain day that was named. When the day came, Mr. Robert Bell took his place at a table enlivened by the presence of several men of parts, and was not long before he had to sustain a merry attack on the subject of a much noticed and very remarkable article from his pen, which had appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, at that time conducted by Mr. Thackeray—an article containing a faithful, serious, and philosophical statement of the spiritualistic incidents which the author had witnessed at a *séance* given by Mr. Home. Mr. Robert Bell is an admirable conversationalist, full of sound British sense combined with Irish vivacity. His catechists, therefore, met with their match, and every one surpassed himself. On the morrow a mysterious messenger waited upon Mr. Robert Bell and delivered into his hands, without being able to say who sent it, a box, in which was a note somewhat to the following purpose: "The spirits present their compliments to Mr. Robert Bell, and as a token of their gratitude have the honour to restore the watch which was stolen from him." It was, in fact, a watch that the box contained, but one far more valuable than that which had disappeared.

Mr. Robert Bell at once thought of Thackeray and wrote to him, without entering into explanations: "I don't know if it was you—but it is very like you." Thackeray replied by sending him his portrait, sketched by himself as a caricature, under the form of a winged spirit, with flowing robes, and spectacles on nose. Thackeray had in the first instance applied himself to painting, and had he followed his first vocation would perhaps have suc-

ceeded in handling the pencil as well as he has done the pen. In any case the sketch in question, which I have seen with my own eyes, made one laugh till the tears came. It was accompanied by a note couched in these words:—"The spirit Gabriel presents his compliments to Mr. Robert Bell, and takes the liberty to send him the portrait of the person who stood the watch."

Is not this a delightful little story? What grace, what delicacy, what humour in this inspiration of a friend who, to punish a friend for having done the spirits the honour of talking about them, sends him, with a smile on the lips, a magnificent present. Honourable to Thackeray, this anecdote is equally so for Robert Bell, who was capable of inspiring such a man with such sentiments. It is therefore a double pleasure to me to relate it in this place.

One more characteristic trait, and I have done. Thackeray, that writer so terribly subtle, was a simple-minded man—that writer so terribly "acid," was a man of singular timidity. In the world he appeared ill at ease, and if his conversation was not very brilliant, it was—at least so I have always fancied—because he was under the influence of this feeling of nervousness. His sensibility was so feminine, that I have seen him on certain occasions blush like a young girl. If I were asked to explain in two words what I think of his genius, I should say: "It was a genius sprung from the union of an extraordinarily sagacious mind, with a tender and candid soul.

LETTER CCXXXI.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

CHRISTMAS-DAY has passed and gone, but the Christmas holidays still go on. For some, no season more gay than these holidays; for others, none more melancholy. Without speaking of the poor, by whose hearths there is such little room for joy, to how many even among those who are deemed fortunate does not Christmas bring gloomy thoughts! The joyous family dinner; the traditional plum-pudding displaying itself on the

table with a triumphal air; the human beings great and small, old and young, loving one another under the same roof, grouped around a blazing fire; the animated faces and adorable babble of children loaded with presents; the romping dances; the kisses stolen under the mistletoe; out of doors the theatres full; the people crowding to see the new pantomimes; the shops making a brilliant show of their treasures on the path of the purchaser importuned to part with his money—all that is, doubtless, delightful for those who do not yet wear, or who no longer wear mourning for the past. But what must not those suffer who recall to mind that at the last Christmas-dinner, the year before, there was another guest at the table—those who, in the drawing-room when the family are gathered together, have to say to one another, their eyes fixed on the empty arm-chair: "At this time last year, he was there!"

This sorrow, rendered still more bitter by the uproar of surrounding mirth, the daughters of a prince of modern literature have just been condemned to endure, and, gracious Heavens! with what aggravation of circumstances. On the eve, yes, on the very eve of Christmas, William Makepeace Thackeray was found dead in his bed. For some time past he had been complaining of spasms in the stomach, but no one could have imagined that his end was near. A few days previous to the catastrophe, Charterhouse, the school where he was educated, had seen him seated, smiling and full of life, at a table laid out in memory of youthful days. It may be said that death walked in without knocking at the door.

The author of *Vanity Fair*, of *Pendennis*, of *The Newcomes*, was fundamentally deficient in the art which constitutes a novelist, and which his great rival, Charles Dickens, so largely possesses—the art of interesting by action. Thackeray's novels depict life, but do not exhibit by movement. They abound in observations, but are very meagre in incident. They speak much to the mind, little to the heart, and hardly at all to the eyes. The dramas developed in them are of those whose scene lies only in the world of intelligences. Personages live in them without bestirring themselves. The interest one takes in them is of an almost exclusively philosophic character. In other words, in Thackeray England has not to mourn the definitive departure of a novelist; but she has certainly lost in him a moralist equal to Addison, a humorist almost equal to Sterne, and a satirist

superior to Swift—superior to Swift in this sense, that Thackeray had what Swift, I am afraid, had not—a heart.

In fact, far from being, in Thackeray's case, the result of a morose character, a cross-grained disposition, a malicious or jealous temperament, the satirical faculty in the author of *Vanity Fair* is only the avenging cry of a sensibility sorely fretted, of a gentle kindliness forced to stand at bay. Endowed at once with a penetrating glance, with an almost feminine sensibility, and a candour prompt to take fright, Thackeray had seen much and suffered much from what he had seen. His experience, the fruit of much travel, was wide and varied. Born in Calcutta in 1811, he had visited most countries in Europe, America, and the East. Seized with a violent desire to paint before he was conscious of his vocation to write, he had enjoyed opportunities of studying in Rome the manners of artistic life. While yet a child, he had been shown Bonaparte walking in his garden at St. Helena. At Weimar he had listened to the wisdom of Goethe. Become a man of letters, it had fallen to his lot to initiate himself into all the secrets of literary life. Entered upon the path of glory, every house was open to him. For him neither the Quartier Latin in Paris, nor the West End of London, contained any mystery. Everywhere he had found abundant matter wherewith to exercise the penetration of his mind and irritate his heart. There were few forms under which he had not studied the vices of human nature. His writings are consequently remarkable for an invariable mixture of tolerance and disdain. He is tolerant towards the most vicious because he knows where lurks, even in the case of the most virtuous, the weak point of the cuirass; and the most illustrious he regards with disdain, because he knows better than anyone how little they are heroes for their own *valets-de-chambre*.

One thing, I confess, always pleased me in Thackeray, and that was the invincible repugnance which he felt for famous men-slayers. He had analysed what was contained in the words military glory, and horror-struck at finding blood in it in such large proportions, he loved to hate the mighty captains. He was not the one to forgive Marlborough, in consideration of his victories, for his tyrannical behaviour, his meannesses, his ignoble avarice.

Not that Thackeray has always struck where it was deserved. Unjust he certainly was sometimes, but always with an upright intention, and in consequence of an honest mistake.

Under another head also Thackeray deserves to live in the annals of English literature—he was a writer. Style is a rare gift, much rarer than is generally supposed. The style of the author of *Esmond* possesses a simplicity, a purity, a perspicuity, which assign him a place among the best models of the art of writing. In the historical novel of *Esmond*, in the essays on the Four Georges, in the essays on the English Humorists, there are pages which are void, absolutely void of any alloy—they are of the purest gold.

Be not surprised that I speak to you of Thackeray's death as of the great event of the day. A potentate, a court or antechamber celebrity, an illustrious swordsman, are all easily replaced; but when a man of genius departs, humanity feels that it is irreparably impoverished.

Thackeray's funeral took place on Wednesday last. He had made some enemies, especially by his earliest writings published in *Fraser's Magazine* under an assumed name; but the news of his death was greeted with a unanimous cry of regret.

The hearse and a mourning coach, containing two of Thackeray's cousins and his brother-in-law, started from the deceased's mansion in Kensington Palace Gardens at eleven o'clock. These were followed by a very few private carriages, the family having expressed a wish that the funeral might be a plain one. Strictly speaking, there was neither procession nor ceremonial. Only behind the coffin were seen to walk two young ladies veiled, and, if you happened to be near, you heard them sobbing. The crowd collected to see the body borne past was not ignorant who these young ladies were, and followed them with their eyes with sorrowing respect.

It was in Kensal Green cemetery that Thomas Hood was committed to the earth in 1845, and Leigh Hunt in 1859; and to Kensal Green cemetery were borne on the last day but one of the year 1863 the mortal remains of Thackeray. When I myself reached the scene of the last farewell, the grave was surrounded by a crowd of some two thousand persons, every one of whom was a distinguished representative of journalism, literature, or the arts. Charles Dickens had come from a distance to pay to his rival the tribute of admiration and grief that was due to him. In 1857 Dickens and Thackeray had conducted the funeral of Douglas Jerrold; of the two, one now wept for the other. The weather was fine, the air calm, the sun shining. In this respect

nature in her outward aspect did not respond to the mournful feelings that filled every heart; but in thus bestowing upon us in mid-winter a foretaste of spring, she seemed to tell us that there is a life beyond the grave,—that death is only a gate which opens upon eternity!

LETTER CCXXXII.

TERRITORIAL PROPERTY IN ENGLAND, AND MR. BRIGHT.*

January 5th, 1864.

EMERSON says, in speaking of those who are tormented by the passion of acquiring: "Their desires are a gulf which the possession of the entire earth would not fill. Gladly would they prevent the sun from shining upon the world—to make a private property of it, if that were possible: gladly would they shut up in their writing-closet or bedroom the star of the morning and the star of the north. What they do not covet for its usefulness, they covet as an ornament, and what their comfort can do without their pride cannot." The bitter sentiment expressed by these strong words breathes through the two speeches delivered, not very long since, at Rochdale, by Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright.

Here is a passage from Mr. Cobden's speech:

"I have travelled much; I have travelled in most of the civilised countries, and I say that the mass of the people in this country cannot be so favourably compared with the mass of the people in other countries as I should wish. In other countries I find a greater number of owners of land than in England. . . There is not on the face of the globe a country where the peasants are what we see they are in England; there is no country where, as in England, there exists a complete divorce between the peasants and the land; there is no country, with the exception of England, where you do not meet with men drawing a furrow in a field that belongs to them. As a means of modifying this state of

* The dispute between Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright on the one side, and the *Times* on the other, having led me to investigate the important and interesting question of land tenure in this country, I have thought it best to bring together, and publish in a series, the different letters which I wrote upon that subject, and which, thus collected, form a whole.

things, I ask neither for a revolution, nor for any violent proceedings borrowed from the system of the agrarian law; but I believe that there is in this something contrary to human nature, and I have remarked wherever I have gone that the well-being of the people is in general proportioned to the power it has of busying itself about its own interests. Wherever one class possesses the political power, those who compose it will always be treated with more consideration, will obtain greater advantages, will have more chances of becoming landowners, than when that class does not possess the political power."

Listen now to a passage from Mr. Bright's speech:

"England is called a rich country, and there is no doubt about there being rich men in England: but without speaking of the distress, temporary I hope, which prevails in Lancashire, there are also in England a million of paupers at the charge of the parish, and at least another million—upwards of two millions I am afraid—of human creatures, men, women, and children, who are always on the eve of falling into pauperism. Now, if we consider the real condition of the mass of the people; if we cast our eyes upon the houses they inhabit; if we take account of this fact, that so large a number of citizens have no real property; if we look closely to the state of public instruction, as regards the people; and if we place the misery of this numerous class of the population in contrast with the abundance and luxury of the other classes, we shall arrive, I greatly fear, at this conclusion, that legislation has yet something to do to ameliorate the condition of the mass of the people. . . . Is it then, I ask, in virtue of an immutable decree of the Almighty that one half of the inhabitants of this country are living in houses whose annual value does not exceed £5 sterling; and that the children of the poor, as compared with those of the rich, do not receive either care or instruction; and that for so many of our fellow-creatures life is a struggle; and that the light of the sun which falls across our path only gilds for them a land which they can see afar off, but without any hope of ever reaching it?"

These two passages are singularly characteristic; they throw a very remarkable light upon the difference which exists between the natural character of Mr. Cobden and that of Mr. Bright. By the side of the wail of the economist, we have the piercing cry of the tribune. Where the former sees the misapprehension of an interest, the latter beholds the violation of a right.

But what they both attack, and together, is the aristocratic tenure of the soil which has always prevailed in England.

There was no room for any mistake about it, and no one was mistaken. Formidable, therefore, was the clamour which arose in the midst of the class thus taken to task, and the *Times* was only the faithful echo of that clamour, when, after denouncing Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright as desiring the partition of the properties of the rich among the poor, it repeated the accusation, addressing it more particularly to Mr. Bright.

Was this accusation just? Have those against whom it was directed really dreamed of an agrarian law? Has the Manchester school produced successors to Tiberius and Caius Gracchus? Are Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright the sort of persons to employ violence to carry out their ideas or even to serve their resentments?

No, certainly not. Under this head there was manifest injustice in the imputations of the *Times*, or in what they seemed to imply; and Mr. Cobden, in defending his friend and himself, had reason to protest against the calumny, though he did it with an excessive violence that was prejudicial to his cause.

At the same time, what neither Mr. Cobden nor Mr. Bright, I fancy, would be disposed to deny, is the fact that "landlordism" is odious to them; that they burn to substitute for the feudal aristocracy which repels them, the manufacturing aristocracy of which they are the most illustrious and most logical representatives; that the sort of land tenure preferred by them would be that by means of which the owner would become identical with the cultivator; a result which on no account would they wish to welcome as the fruit of employing revolutionary proceedings, but which they would bless if it could be obtained gradually, peaceably, by the adoption of a well-combined series of legislative measures.

Such being their aim, their ardour in demanding for the people a share of political power is easily understood.

On the other hand, if their views are pacific, as much cannot exactly be said for their language, which is surprising on the part of Mr. Cobden, naturally cold, intellectual, and calm, but not so much so on the part of Mr. Bright, whose stormy eloquence responds to the emotions of an impassioned disposition.

The truth is, that Mr. Bright cordially detests the aristocracy, and in measuring himself against them experiences a sort of haughty gratification. One day somebody asked Charles Lamb

how he could hate people whom he did not know. "And how could I hate them," he replied, "if I did know them?" The hatred of a class which Mr. Bright looks upon as invested with a political and social monopoly, doubly unjust, is a sentiment the bitterness of which is dear to his soul, and by which he loves to be tortured, and which he is powerless to control. Hence the anathemas which escape him, in some sort in spite of himself; hence his eagerness to shake over a train of gunpowder a lighted torch, at the risk of an explosion which he does not at all wish. However that may be, his last sally against the "institutions which the rich enjoy and the poor submit to"—these are his very words—this sally, so vehement, so terrible, has raised a question which, to all appearance, will continue to occupy public attention long after the dispute associated with it has been forgotten. The question really at issue is not the *Times*, or Mr. Cobden, or Mr. Bright—it is the feudal institution of landed property in England. The subject is a serious one, and interesting from every point of view. It is worth while, therefore, to take it up and dwell upon it.

LETTER CCXXXIII.

THE LANDLORD IN ENGLAND IS, STRICTLY SPEAKING, ONLY A COPYHOLDER.

January 6th, 1864.

I DREW your attention in my last letter to the agitation created in England by two recent speeches—one from Mr. Cobden, the other from Mr. Bright.

The uproar and duration of this agitation prolonged, first of all, by the London papers, and then by the provincial press, as if by so many sonorous echoes, sufficiently show that people in England are beginning to give serious attention to the condition to which the agricultural classes are reduced by the feudal tenure of the land. If this question were not a dangerous one, Mr. Bright would not have excited, by taking it up, so much resentment against himself. If the territorial constitution, which reposes on the rights of primogeniture and entail, did not

awaken ideas of reform, the subject of hope for some, of anxiety for others, the words "agrarian law" would never have dropped from the terror-stricken pen of the *Times*, and Mr. Cobden the peace-lover would not have had to complain of being compared to Caius Gracchus.

All this is, no doubt, exaggeration—intentional exaggeration. A radical revolution in the actual system of obtaining possession of the soil in England is absolutely impossible. The aristocracy fears nothing of the kind. The most violent denouncers of Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright are very far from thinking them as black as they like to paint them; and when the *Times* ascribes to them views of spoliation, the *Times* knows right well how completely they are innocent of this charge, and that the principle of property is in no danger from them or from any one else. But they want a reform—and is not that a sufficiently heinous crime? For, after all—who knows?—if a revolution be impossible, a reform perhaps may not be. Now the aristocracy in England is the sacred ark. Woe to him who lays hand upon it!

What, however, is the real state of things? That the condition of the peasant in England is very sad, is beyond all denial. He is badly fed, badly housed; he is delivered over, without defence, to the attacks of old age; he has no chance of raising himself in the social scale. His lot is not, in truth, more lamentable than that of the Belgian, Italian, or French peasant, as the *Spectator* justly remarks; but what must not be lost sight of, and what the *Spectator* has no mind to forget, is that everything is judged by comparison. England being the richest country in the world, misery is more miserable here than elsewhere.

The consequence is, that the tendency of a labourer to turn his steps to the town begins to be keenly noted. It is not much in itself; but the rural population seems to be less and less attached to the soil through love of the fatherland. In Wales, for instance, there is, it is said, a migratory movement almost as active as that which prevails in Ireland; and the paper I have just quoted asks, with some anxiety, what would happen if this emigration movement came to develope itself, and if, which is not at all improbable, the practice of strikes should extend from the artizan class to that of the agricultural labourers.

Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright have therefore laid their finger upon an evil which is something more than imaginary. They

have directed the attention of their fellow-countrymen to a danger which is something more than chimerical.

But what is the nature of the remedies they propose? what is their value? what is their tendency?

To judge correctly of this, we must first of all make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the system to which they would have to be applied.

Everyone knows that the feudal system was introduced into England by William the Conqueror, very shortly after the Norman conquest. Was his object in doing so to divide among his companions the spoils of the conquered country? So it has often been said and repeated, but it is contradicted by genuine history. England at that period was threatened with a Danish invasion. The establishment of the feudal system, admirably adapted to the military manners of those barbarous ages, was demanded by the great assembly of the realm as a means of defence and safety—such is the fact. But it is not less indisputable that the feudal system, once established, became a formidable instrument of oppression. The nation only escaped from the attacks of its external foes by placing itself at the mercy of its internal masters. The whole soil of the country was from that moment considered to be the absolute property of the sovereign. It was divided into fiefs, which the king either appropriated or bestowed upon his principal companions, who installed themselves under the name of barons, vassals, and tenants *in capite*, on the condition of swearing to him fealty and homage, and of following him to the wars with a certain number of men-at-arms. On their side, whether to put themselves in a position to fulfil the conditions of the feudal contract, or that, during their absence, their lands might not be left uncultivated, the great feudatories were induced to subdivide their domains, with the proviso of receiving from their new occupants a rent—*redditus*—which should enable them to meet thé charges of their warlike excursions. Thus was formed the relation of the lord to the vassal; a relation of fidelity and obedience on the part of the latter, of protection and justice on that of the former. What was the foundation on which this scaffolding arose?—Force.

In the beginning, the possession of fiefs was subordinated to the will of the lord. They who held of him direct, could not dispose of their fiefs as they pleased, or transfer them by succession or otherwise. But, insensibly, the heirs of the deceased

copyholder came to divide among them his heritage, setting apart a fine to pay to the lord—a fine which consisted in the presentation of a suit of armour, or so many horses, or a sum of money. After a little while it was discovered that this division of estates tended to render the sub-feudatories incapable of discharging the various services to which they were obliged as towards the lord, and the custom crept in among the copyholders to leave, at their death, the whole of the lands which had been confided to them to one of their sons, sometimes to the eldest, sometimes to the youngest. At last, in proportion as knowledge and wealth made progress, fiefs acquired in the hands of the copyholders more and more the character of absolute property, and the vassals became transformed into freeholders.

But it is worthy of note—and, indeed, emphatically so—that this transformation of sub-feudatories into freeholders did not go so far as to infringe the principle in virtue of which the sovereign was held to be the sole absolute proprietor of the realm: *Tout fuit en luy et vient de luy al commencement.* Blackstone says in so many words: "No subject in England has allodial property. It is a principle admitted in legislation, and impossible to deny, that all the lands of the kingdom are held of the king, directly or indirectly." And again: "A subject has the usufruct, not the absolute property of the soil, or, according to the expression of Sir Edward Coke, he has the *dominium utile*, not the *dominium directum*."

Whence it results that, strictly and legally speaking, the first landlord of England is only a copyholder. There is no proprietor recognised by the law except the sovereign, or the one he represents—the State.

It is very true that at the present day the suzerainty of the Crown has actually no other value than that of a legal fiction: it is very true that everyone here has the right of enjoying and disposing of his property as he thinks fit; indeed, testamentary liberty so rigorously circumscribed in France knows no limits in England. But by the side of the question of fact, the question of right remains. In the legal fiction there is a principle whereof it depends upon the nation to draw, when it pleases, the logical consequences. If the soil belongs to the State *in virtue of the law*, it is the height of absurdity to call Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright factious men because they desire, rightly or wrongly, that the feudal constitution of property in this country

should undergo legislative modifications calculated gradually to augment the number of yeomen-farmers; whether by the pure and simple abolition of the law which, when a man dies intestate, leaves the succession to his real property to his eldest son, to the exclusion of the other children; or by restrictions imposed, as in France, upon the liberty of making a will; or finally, by the peaceful and legal removal of the obstacles which the aristocratic spirit has succeeded in opposing to the transfer of territorial property.

It remains to be considered how far the adoption of such measures would be desirable—how far the progress of agriculture is connected with the parcelling out of the soil—how far it would be expedient to encourage that passionate longing of the peasant for a bit of land, which prompted M. Michelet to say, in speaking of France: "Let us walk into the country on a Sunday, let us follow the peasant. There he is, going along there in front of us. It is two o'clock; his wife is at vespers; he is dressed in his Sunday suit; I'll answer for it, he is going to see his mistress. What mistress? His plot of land."

LETTER CCXXXIV.

ON WHAT BASIS THE ARISTOCRACY REPOSES IN ENGLAND.

January 7th, 1864.

In his novel of "Coningsby" Mr. Disraeli says that, in 1471, after that famous battle of Tewkesbury in which Edward IV. defeated and made prisoner Margaret of Anjou, a Norman baron was almost as great a rarity in England as a wolf is now-a-days, so completely had the wars of the Two Roses mowed down the nobles. The same author relates that when Henry VII. convoked his first Parliament, there could not be found in the whole realm more than twenty-nine temporal peers. And of those twenty-nine peers how many have survived in their descendants? Not five. George II. was accustomed to say that the best gentleman in England was Lord Denbigh, because he was descended from the Counts of Hapsburgh. There is no doubt that the families of the great barons of the olden times are now extinct. There is not at the present day in England any nobility, that can

be called a nobility by blood; so far as it is concerned, it is all over with the genealogical trees.

Whence proceeds, then, the extraordinary prestige that surrounds the English aristocracy? Is it due to the very restricted number of its members? Is it explicable by the fact that the number of peerages in the kingdom does not exceed 687, and that of actual peers 570? Does that imposing House of Lords, —in which all the English and Welsh lords take their seats on attaining the age of twenty-one, and where sixteen lords elected every Parliament by the Scotch peers represent Scotland, while twenty-eight peers named for life by the Irish lords represent Ireland—does it derive its consideration from the fact that it is composed of only 3 royal dukes, 3 archbishops, 27 bishops, 20 dukes, 22 marquesses, 131 earls, 28 viscounts, and 225 barons; in all, 30 spiritual and 429 temporal peers? To think this, would be to fall into a strange error.

In England it is understood, what was never understood in France by the nobility, when there was a nobility in France, that the aristocratic principle can gain nothing by being shut up in a narrow circle, jealously traced, and inaccessible or very nearly so. In England, far from seeking to separate itself from the bulk of the nation, the aristocracy is ever plunging into it. It is from the notabilities of every kind and of every condition that it is recruited. From the moneyed class it called for the opulent personage who is now addressed as Lord Overstone; from the literary class it summoned the illustrious historian who died Lord Macaulay. A man of great parts whom I have known for fifteen years under the name of Monckton Milnes, has been known to me during the last few months only by the title of Lord Houghton. In this manner, and owing to the right vested in the sovereign of creating peers of England, the aristocracy is a power that maintains, nourishes, and perpetually renews itself, by the accession of all the living forces of the country.

Nor is this the only advantage. The system pursued has the effect of saving the aristocracy from the always odious character of a caste. Accessible to every one, it is a subject of offence to no one. It offers a goal to ambition, which prevents it from being the butt of envy.

Besides, feudality in England had not the same character as in France. In France, where the feudal lords were sometimes independent, or nearly so, of the Crown, and where the royal

power was often held in check by one of the great vassals, feudality weighed hard upon the peasant. In England, on the contrary, the burden of feudality fell upon the great vassals, through the exactions to which they were subjected by the Crown, which they were not strong enough to control. Feudality had in England a fiscal character, from which the rich chiefly had to suffer. It was much less oppressive than in France; consequently, less odious.

Vast, therefore, have been the conquests achieved by the aristocratic spirit in this country. There is not a class into which it has not penetrated, not a condition in life that it has not contrived to invade. It has descended, through the successive layers of the social system down to its very lowest depths. You breathe it in the hovel where poverty hides its head, as in the palace where opulence displays itself. You meet with it even in the world of menials, which has its magnates and its etiquette. England perspires it through every pore.

It must be admitted, moreover, that in England the principle of equality before the law serves to disguise to a certain point the rule of social inequalities. I say, to a certain point, for the system of equality before the law cannot exist in its full integrity where it is optional with the rich, in police cases, to escape imprisonment by paying a fine, and where peers cannot be arrested for debt. Under George II. Lord Ferrers having committed a murder, it was thought for a time that he would not be hanged; but the king, who was anxious to popularise the new dynasty, insisted upon it. Lord Ferrers was accordingly hanged, but with a silken rope! It is also to be said that the peers affirm, not on oath, but upon their honour.

No matter. Public opinion easily accommodates itself to social inequalities; and not only so, but considers them as perfectly compatible with liberty. Milton only expressed an idea very widely spread in this country when he wrote: If we are not all equal, we are all free, equally free—orders and a hierarchy harmonising quite well with liberty, far from being contrary to it. It is fair to add that Milton, a determined republican, put this language into the mouth of Satan.* Add to all this the real

* "And if not equal all, yet free,
Equally free; for orders and degrees
Jar not with liberty, but well consist."
Paradise Lost, Book V.

services rendered by the aristocracy, the political activity of its members, the initiative which many of them study to take in questions connected either with the intellectual progress, or the material well-being of the working-men.

Abundant reasons these for explaining the ascendancy of the English aristocracy. But not one of these reasons is the decisive reason. The accumulation of territorial property in the hands of a limited number of great families is the real point round which turns the social system that makes England what she is; and Mr. Bright strikes home, when, in his desire to shake the edifice of aristocratic power, he attacks the system of land tenure.

According to the estimates which were supplied to me a few years ago, and which I have reason to regard as perfectly accurate, there were then reckoned in Great Britain (England, properly so called, and Scotland) four millions of families, comprising about twenty millions of souls. Now, out of this number the agricultural population was reckoned at 1,250,000 families, distributed as follows:—

Families of landowners having each about six tenant farmers	30,000
Families of farmers employing each about five labourers	180,000
Families cultivating on their own account fields, gardens, small farms	140,000
Families of labourers working on account of others	900,000
Total	1,250,000

Each of these 30,000 estates being, on an average, of 600 hectares to each tenant, it follows that to not more than 30,000 families belonged at that time, if not the whole, at least a very notable proportion of the soil.

As for the farmers, they are capitalists more or less considerable, possessing in live stock, agricultural implements, &c., something like £10 per acre, and pressing with a crushing weight upon the mass of labourers.

The foundation upon which reposes this scaffolding is the right of primogeniture, combined with the right of entail.

It is not, as some imagine, that the English law consecrates the right of the eldest born in an absolute manner. It intervenes only with regard to successions *ab intestat.* If a man dies with-

out leaving a will, his personal effects are divided among all the children of either sex; but his real property devolves by law upon the eldest of the sons, to the exclusion of his brothers and sisters.

For the rest there is entire liberty of testation; there is nothing to prevent a landed proprietor from doing whatever he may deem expedient with his property, after he himself will have ceased to use it, except in the case of estates that come under the law of entail. Usage, however, is in perfect keeping with the law, so that it rarely happens that as regards the succession to real property the heir exclusively selected by a testator is not the eldest son. And observe that this applies not only to the real property which belongs to the nobility, but also to the live stock, the agricultural instruments, the leases, which constitute the personal property of the farmer. If the latter can, as a matter of legal right, disinherit his eldest son, divide his fortune, and dispose of it as he pleases, he very rarely makes use of that power. Like his superiors, he is anxious to perpetuate his name, to survive in his heirs. A second-hand aristocracy! It is, before all things, this organisation, complemented by the right of entail, which, by preserving the class of great landed proprietors, by placing difficulties in the way of a division of the soil, enables the English aristocracy to maintain its position. Mr. Bright makes no mistake about this, and I repeat, he aims straight at the heart when he protests against the divorce established in England between the agricultural labourer and the land.

LETTER CCXXXV.

TWO SYSTEMS FACE TO FACE: SMALL ESTATES AND LARGE ESTATES.

January 8th, 1864.

Was Jean Jacques Rousseau right when he wrote:—

"The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, took it into his head to say, 'This is mine,' and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. What crimes, what murders, what miseries and horrors would have been spared to the human race had some one, tearing up the stakes and filling up the ditch, cried aloud to his fellow-men,

"Beware of listening to this imposter: you are lost, if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong to all, but the earth itself belongs to no one"?

When Rousseau, trembling with emotion, traced these eloquent lines, he forgot how necessary it is in the very interests of the human race that the land should be divided in order to be cultivated; he did not bear in mind that no one would give himself the trouble to sow if he did not feel sure that he would also reap.

No doubt, the earth is the domain of mankind, like the light of the sun, like the air, like everything that is absolutely indispensable to man's existence. But, on the one hand, light and air are given to us gratuitously by nature, while the earth requires to be tilled; and, on the other hand, light and air are given in profusion, while the soil is a limited quantity. To make it profitable to mankind, the first condition is that the labour of which it stands in need must not be interrupted, or rendered unattainable, by the disputes which the title to its possession, if left uncertain, could not fail to provoke.

The soil differs also from light and air in this sense, that it does not constitute of itself an inexhaustible stock of riches. Far from it: it is subject to deterioration; it becomes worn out; it is liable to exhaustion. What vast plains in Asia and Africa have become barren, which were once fertile! How many countries are now deserts, which once supported teeming populations! Even in Europe the exhaustion of the productive forces of the earth might become a danger, were it not fortunately combated by the eagerness of human intelligence to procure manures; for that fertilising substance, guano, which is furnished by certain islands in the Pacific Ocean, is by no means a treasure of which the end cannot be foreseen.

The lasting enjoyment of the fruits of the earth is, therefore, for man the prize of a struggle in which he must triumph, or die; and, consequently, as soon as the appropriation of the soil is mooted, the question which overrules all others is that of ascertaining what social arrangements are the best calculated to realise this supreme end and object—the preservation of the human race.

That the products of cultivation should belong to him whose labour and capital have been employed, or in other words, that he who sowed should be called to reap, is what the interests of agriculture seem imperiously to demand; but do these interests

require, that by the side of and above the cultivator there should be a feudal lord, and that, in the tenure of the land, the ownership of the produce should be distinct from that of the soil?

France and England have furnished this problem with two solutions, not only different, but absolutely contrary to one another.

It is the former system which France exerted herself to enforce when she laid her hand, in '89, upon the property of the Church; when, after breaking up so many vast domains, she sold the fragments at low prices; when in her eagerness to facilitate the purchase of land and to hasten the dissolution of the feudal system, she expressly created a paper currency; when. finally, she wrote in the Code, "Voluntary gifts, whether by deeds *inter vivos*, or by testament, may not exceed a moiety of the grounds of the disposer if he leaves only one legitimate child; one-third part if he leaves two children; one-fourth if he leaves three or more children. . . . . A landowner may not dispose of more than a moiety of his lands if, in default of children, he leaves one or more ascendants in either the paternal or maternal line, but he may dispose of three-fourths if he leave ascendants only in one line. . . . The children or their descendants succeed to equal portions and *per capita*." These legislative dispositions put an end, in France, to the monarchical and feudal tenure of lands; they inaugurated the system which tends to make cultivation the condition of the right of ownership,—which tends to give the soil to the peasant.

In England, on the contrary, both public opinion and law have combined to concentrate the ownership of the soil in the hands of a limited number of great families, who possess it neither as a recompense for their labour, nor as a return for their capital. When a landowner dies, his eldest son succeeds, either through his father's will, if he has left one, or conformably to law if he dies intestate. It thence results that the soil escapes being parcelled out; that the class of wealthy landed proprietors is perpetuated; and that by the side of, and above the cultivator who lives on the produce of his toil and the application of his capital to agriculture, there is the landowner, who lives on the rent paid to him by the former.

Of these two systems which is the better?

Each of them is open to very grave objections: the one, more particularly with reference to the development of agricultural riches; the other, more particularly with reference to distributive justice and the remuneration due to labour.

In France, the multiplication of landowners, which is beneficial, has for effect the system of small farms, which is injurious.

In England, the degradation of the labourer, which is injurious, has been the result of the system of large farms, which is beneficial.

Would not a combination of the two afford a material means of deriving from each of these systems what is good, while eliminating what is bad?

LETTER CCXXXVI.

TERRITORIAL PROPERTY IN ENGLAND AND THE REFORMS PROPOSED BY MR. BRIGHT.

January 26th, 1864.

The speech which Mr. Bright delivered yesterday in the Town Hall at Birmingham was looked forward to with great impatience. Could it be otherwise? Accused by the *Times* of having preached the principles of the agrarian law, of cherishing thoughts of spoliation towards the English aristocracy, of desiring the gratuitous division of the territorial properties of the rich among all the poor—Mr. Bright had, until now, met this accusation, so homicidal in England, with stoical and contemptuous silence. He had allowed his friend Mr. Cobden to rush unsupported into the thick of the *mêlée* and fight out their common quarrel. What would he say, the first time he caused the accents of his fierce and mighty eloquence to vibrate in public? In what terms would he reply, both on Mr. Cobden's account and his own, to the attacks of the most influential journal in the world? But, above all, of what remedy would he demand the application to those grievances of the agricultural class which he had so energetically denounced?

Well, Mr. Bright has spoken; and—shall I own it?—his speech, though passionately applauded at Birmingham, has produced upon myself an effect very similar to that of a disappointment

Against the aggressive portion of this speech I have nothing to say, though violence is not in general much to my taste, because an orator, when the enthusiastic applause of his audience

applies the spur to his side, is hardly as much a master of his tongue as a writer is of his pen.

Against the *Times* Mr. Bright was what he always is—eloquently terrible. He repelled the calumny, of which he and his friend were the object, with a singular mixture of haughty disdain, anger, and irony. He made, too, a truly formidable use of that well-known rhetorical device—repetition. When, alluding to the anonymous sovereignty of the *Times*, he repeats, in almost every sentence, the avenging words "the gentleman in the mask," applied to the editor of that journal, you might fancy a hammer falling on an anvil.

Nor was he less terrible against the class of large landowners whom he represented as victims to a blind rage for acquisition, and incapable of raising themselves—in vital questions, such as that of the Corn Law, for instance—to the understanding of their own interests. But where Mr. Bright failed was in the exposition of his own views touching the best system of land tenure. To assert with a voice of thunder, with a tone that goes straight to the heart, that the situation of the labourer in England is still what it was in the feudal times; that there cannot be anything but suffering and wretchedness in hovels infested by vermin, in which as many as seven and eight persons sleep huddled together; that ten shillings a week constitute sorry wages; that it is a cruel mockery to urge the peasant, as the means of attaining to the perfection of his condition, to bring up a large family respectably, to take off his cap to gentlefolks, to go regularly to church on Sundays, to avoid the pothouse, and to allow himself to be led heavenwards by the young ladies of the district acting in concert with the pastor—all that is excellent. But is that enough? A lively description of the disease must not be held as equivalent to indicating a mode of treatment!

Now, what does Mr. Bright propose?

In England, when a man dies without having made a will, the law divides his personal effects in equal portions between all his children. Mr. Bright demands that this law shall be extended to territorial property. In England, it is optional for a testator to leave the land he possesses not only to a person who may not yet be born, but to one who may not come into the world for twenty-one years after the framing of the will. Mr. Bright demands that the right of testation shall be exercised only in favour of persons then living.

In England, the man who sells a territorial property and he who purchases it have such a roundabout way to go to ascend to the original title, and find the transfer of this species of property governed by regulations so obscure, so uncertain, so hard to disentangle, that, in the words of our orator, another judgment of Solomon becomes necessary in such cases. Mr. Bright demands that the legislative complications which impede the transfer of land shall be done away with.

In all this, Mr. Bright proves that he looks neither from a sufficient height nor to a sufficient distance?

In the first place, it would little avail to extend to territorial property, in such a country as England, the law of equal division between the children in the event of a landowner dying intestate. And the reason is very simple: the number of those who die here without leaving a will is so small, that it would really not be worth the trouble. In reality, the right of primogeniture in England is founded upon public opinion, much more than upon law. Every landed proprietor in this country burns to survive himself in *a* heir; to perpetuate his property in his family by concentrating it upon *one sole head*, and thus attach to his name the prestige of an indivisible fortune. This desire, universally entertained, deliberately formed, and deeply rooted in the heart, the law sanctions by enforcing for the event—a very rare occurrence—of no will having been made, what would have happened had there been one. To abolish this law and substitute in its place the principles of equal partition in case of death *ab intestat*, would not attain the object. All that would thence probably result would be that, to save his property from the action of the new principle, he who now defers making his will because he knows that what he neglects to do the law will do for him, would make it without delay.

It is true that if the right of primogeniture is worthy of condemnation and unjust, there would be some advantage in withdrawing from it at least the support, the encouragement, the moral sanction of the law. But England is a country governed in a sovereign manner by usage, received tradition, public opinion; and the advantage in question would be unappreciable, the liberty of testation remaining absolute and the aristocratic spirit untouched.

In order that the right of primogeniture should be really suppressed it would be necessary that, as in France, the law

went so far as to impose, with a view to an equal partition, some limits to the liberty of testation; and that not even Mr. Bright's democratic audacity ventures to propose.

As for confining the right of entail within narrower limits, and facilitating the sale of landed property, there is no doubt that both measures belong to the category of means fitted to assail the feudal tenure of the soil. But, on the one hand, neither of these procedures would be decisive; and, on the other hand, Mr. Bright did not explain, as concerns the second, by what system he intended to issue from the complications which, in England, obstruct the transfer of territorial property.

Be this as it may, one thing is clear, and that is, that Mr. Bright envies the countries of small farms. Is he right? Is he wrong? I will reply to the question by returning to the point at which I left it in my last letter.

LETTER CCXXXVII.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS ON THE TENURE OF LAND.

February 10*th*, 1864.

On the very day before that on which the opening of Parliament was to take place, in the very thick of the anxieties awakened by the Danish question, while everyone was anxiously inquiring if the Premier were going to speak the language of peace or of war, the *Times* was exerting itself to save the House of Commons from the reproach of being a House of Landlords—so prolonged, echo answering to echo, had been the sound of those words of Mr. Bright: The peasant's right to the land!

Right to the land! It is also Hertzen's cry in a letter he has lately addressed to Garibaldi. "What the people desires," says he in this letter, "and where it is going, nobody knows. Would it reconquer its liberty, its independence, reestablish, like Poland, its glorious past? No! The Russian people has never possessed liberty, and has never lost its independence; it has nothing to reconquer, nothing to conjure up from its gloomy past; what the past has bequeathed to it, has entered into its blood. The social religion of the Russian people is the Right to the Land."

And after showing that it would be as impossible to take the

land from the Russian peasants as it would be to take the sea from the Lazzaroni, Hertzen laughs at this Head of Medusa, which, under the name of Right to the Land the *Times* has held up to England to terrify her, and ironically expresses his astonishment at the noise made about the timid strokes of the hatchet which Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright have, with unsteady hands, dealt at the tree of feudalism.

In fact, the manifest insufficiency of the reforms demanded by Mr. Bright detracts not a little, I confess, from the force of his anathemas. I have already pointed out, in a preceding letter, that these reforms, were they adopted in the form they are presented by Mr. Bright, would produce no decisive effect. Their insignificance is especially striking when they are compared with the nature of the evil. It is necessary, therefore, in order to judge of them properly, to have before the eye an exact statement of all that is associated here with the tenure of land; and this statement I propose to draw up.

But, in the first place, it appears to me expedient clearly to lay down the principles which, in my opinion, rule the matter.

The domain which man has to conquer and fertilize by labour —as I have already had occasion to observe elsewhere in a book devoted to the investigation of the play of the various productive forces—is divided into three kingdoms: The animal kingdom, which comprises the ox, the sheep, the horse; the vegetable kingdom, which comprises vegetables, fruits, and grain; and lastly, the mineral kingdom, which comprises stone, coal, and minerals.

If we examine in what manner this domain ought to be worked to furnish the means of satisfying in the highest possible degree, the four principal wants of man—food, clothing, lodging, and fuel—we shall soon come to acknowledge that of the three the animal kingdom is the most important. Is it not evident, in fact, that the flesh of the ox and the sheep constitutes the really vivifying portion of our nourishment, vegetables and fruits answering the purpose only in climates where the excessive heat prohibits labour? Is it not further evident that it is by means of the wool, the hides, the skin, the grease, in a word, with the spoils of the sheep and the ox, that we contrive, through the intervention of industry and commerce, to clothe ourselves, to furnish and light our dwellings? The animal kingdom, then, provides for a notable portion of our wants.

Nor is this all. So close is the mutual connection of Nature's laws, that on the prosperity of the animal kingdom depends that of the two other kingdoms. In order that man may obtain an increasing quantity of vegetables and grain is he not obliged to feed the earth with that precious manure from the cattle, which contains the generative principle of vegetation? In order that he may extract from quarries and mines the treasures hidden in them, in order that he may turn them to account, must he not have horses to transport the fruits of his toil, oxen and sheep to provide flesh for his subsistence, sheep and oxen to supply materials for his clothing? Let us imagine two countries, one of which has, out of sixty hectares, fifty hectares of arable land, and ten of meadow and pasture land, while the other has ten hectares of arable land, and fifty of meadow land. The ten hectares of arable land in the latter example, receiving the manure of live-stock kept upon the fifty hectares of meadow land, will produce more grain and vegetables than the fifty hectares of arable land fertilised only by the manure from ten hectares of meadows. The second of the two countries thus compared will also have the advantage of a surplus of considerable value, not only in meat, hides, skins, and wool, but even in vegetables and grain. Whence this consequence, that the best system of cultivation is that which most favours the development of the animal kingdom.

Is this the small plot system? Mr. Bright ought to have asked himself this before seeking in partial measures, tending to the parcelling out of lands, a remedy for the evils and abuses which characterise in this country the feudalism of the land tenure.

Those evils are, undoubtedly, very profound: those abuses are very real. The keen impression they make upon lofty minds and generous hearts explains how such men as Mr. Thornton and Mr. John Stuart Mill have been led to close their eyes to the obstacles opposed to the progress of agriculture by the system of agricultural operations on a very small scale. But because the system of large estates is assailable at many points, that is no reason for precipitating oneself, head foremost, into a system diametrically opposite, before examining whether it might not be advantageous to combine the two, so that the amelioration of the peasant's condition and agricultural progress might be made to go hand in hand; so that the Right to the Land might be realised without impoverishing and exhausting the soil; so that, in short, both justice and science might be conciliated. For

if it were proved—and I will endeavour to do so—that in agriculture infinitesimal division means destruction, it would be rendering an ill-service to the interests of the people, to strive to multiply the number of landowners without reflecting that the principle of association supplies a means of attaining to a blessing while avoiding a curse. Besides, little as people may be in the habit of contemplating justice in its highest and most comprehensive acceptation, they will see that it cannot be divorced from science. I have said it before, and I repeat it: as soon as the land tenure is at issue the question which dominates all—I ask pardon of Jean-Jacques — is that of discovering what social arrangements will best conduce to that sovereign aim and end—the preservation of the human race.

LETTER CCXXXVIII.

THE FRENCH SYSTEM OF SMALL PROPERTIES; ITS DISADVANTAGES.

February 11*th*, 1864.

If it be true that the best system of cultivation is that which most favours the development of the animal kingdom, we must conclude that Mr. Bright turns his back upon agronomical science when, without so much as pronouncing the word association, he aims at the parcelling-out of lands.

It is, in fact, clear:

That the rearing of cattle requires a certain quantity of ground;

That without advances, or capital, they cannot be purchased, or kept, or renewed;

That, for want of advances, farmers are compelled to wear them out by overwork, and to feed them insufficiently;

That a small property means absence of capital;

That the system of the infinite division of property tends, from its very nature, to paralyse the development of the animal kingdom, the true source of agricultural wealth;

That the necessary consequences of such a system are to substitute everywhere fields for meadows; the raising of corn, which exhausts the soil, for the rearing of cattle, whose manure restores it;

That the division of estates pursuing its course, the very fields are broken up, reduced to dust, until the plough, which economises human strength, gives place to the spade, which uses it up and destroys it.

When M. de Sismondi sought to prove how beneficial the appropriation of land had been to the human race, considered as a whole, he did not fail to connect the happy effects of such appropriation with the sentiment of perpetuity. He pointed out that, without the guarantee of perpetuity, man would never have undertaken to apply drainage to marshes, to raise embankments against inundations, to fix upon hilly slopes the soil that was slipping away, to distribute by means of canals of irrigation fertilising waters over fields which those very waters would have condemned to sterility. He showed that in order to perfect the culture of plants, shrubs and trees likely to be useful, in some degree to change their nature, to bring certain fruits to perfection, to renew the soil, to cover the entire face of the country with an abundant vegetation, and augment the productive force of nature, it had been necessary to adopt measures taken with a view to the future.

But is it possible that such costly labours will be continued, or their fruits preserved, where the system of small holdings forbids all collective action, where the partition of the soil into ever diminishing fragments deprives its cultivation of all character of permanence, and replaces views for the future by the absorbing anxieties of the present? What grand schemes of improvement, what efforts of science, are to be expected from a landed proprietor who knows that after his death, his estate will be divided between his three, four, or five children—in other words, torn to pieces? Will he invest much money, or much pains, in laying down meadows? At his death, they will be broken up. Will he take the trouble to erect a dwelling-house in the centre of his possessions? At his death, the dwelling-house will disappear. Will he study to apply different kinds of cultivation according to the quality of the soil and the situation of the ground? At his death his agronomic plan will be torn to shreds.

"Poor agriculturist, poor agriculture," says the proverb, and there is no disguising the fact that, where, as in France, the multiplication of landowners is identical with the multiplication of small plots, that where, as in France, the division of successions involves the parcelling-out of the soil—agriculture must neces-

sarily fall into the hands of poor agriculturists. What is the result? Little by little the soil is covered with hedges which occupy space; the boundary lines, in being multiplied, multiply ruinous disputes and law suits; unable to live in the midst of properties which are not even of sufficient extent for a dwelling-house, the cultivators are compelled to exile themselves into villages whence they cannot proceed to the scene of their daily labours without fatigue and loss of time. Talk not to them of new methods: these cannot be studied without repose of the body, without intelligence to understand them, without some capital to apply them; and where all this is wanting, routine must infallibly bear sway. Is there any occasion to add that, under such a system, all economy of human labour is out of the question? You ask why a man, one whole man, is employed to watch a cow. It is because in the system of small holdings, untempered by the principle of association, a cow counts for a herd.

Is not the picture I have just sketched that of agricultural France? Some idea may be formed of the action of the Civil Code upon the parcelling-out of the soil, from the following statistical statement. From the registration return for the year 1814, the number of families in France at that time connected with agriculture was 3,805,000, of whom 1,101,421 did not possess each more than half a hectare;* while at the present day the number of agricultural families, proprietors of the soil, is estimated at upwards of 5,000,000. Of this number it is reckoned that there are about 2,600,000, comprising very nearly 13,000,000 of souls, whose average income does not exceed fifty francs. And this notwithstanding that up to a certain point the subdivision of lands is checked by a movement of recomposition, resulting either from arrangements between co-heirs, or from sales, or from marriages. Without that, estates would soon be reduced to a handful of dust.

But the evil does not stop there. In addition to the fact that in France the land happens to be divided into a very great number of microscopic properties, each property in its turn is subdivided into a very great number of small plots. This is carried so far that, according to Mr. John Stuart Mill, there are ten times more plots than separate assessments; and as every landowner has two assessments, it follows that every property is composed of

* A hectare is very nearly equal to 2½ acres: the exact area is 11,960·47 square yards.

twenty fragments, situated in twenty different places. What a loss of time and manure! What an amount of cultivable soil taken up by hedges and pathways! What a crop of boundary disputes!

If Mr. Bright ever reads novels—a subject on which I am ignorant—I would strongly recommend to him the following passage taken from a writer who dwells in the country, who loves it, and knows it:

"The prettiest thing about this property of Morand," said Joseph, "is that it lies altogether, all under the hand: your house is set down there; on one side, the woods; on the other, the arable land; not a single neighbour between the two, not one unaccommodating little proprietor shoved in between your patches of wheat, no peasant's she-goat in your hedges, no flock of geese waddling across your oats; it is an advantage that." "Yes," replied M. Morand; "but, do you see, if I were obliged to make a separation of my own property from that which came to me through my wife, things would be very different. Just conceive, Louisa's property happens to be mixed up with mine. When I married her, I knew well what I was doing. Her dowry was not large, but it suited me as a ring fits the finger. To mow her meadows, there was only a ditch to jump over; to harvest her crops, there was no cross-road, no waggon breaking down, no bullock lamed in the ruts. You could go and come from my barn to her field, as from my bedchamber to my kitchen. That is why I took her for my wife, though her character certainly did not please me, and she has given me a son, cross-grained and sullen, the very picture of herself."

Such is, described in the style the secret of which belongs to George Sand, one of the thousand untoward results of that division and subdivision of properties in France which are sanctioned by the Civil Code, and of which Mr. Bright appears to see only the bright side. Under the sway of this system the lands of each proprietor, instead of being gathered together in one spot, are scattered and entangled in several different places, often at a considerable distance from one another. Peter possesses so many roads within the estate of Paul, who in his turn possesses so many within the estate of Peter. It is the most absurd confusion, the most ruinous pell-mell, that can be imagined. To plough or mow your land, it is necessary to pass over your neighbour's. The furrows cross one another in all directions,

forming points and odd bits which waste the land and augment the labour. Do you wish to mow your meadow? There is a ditch to cross. Do you wish to carry your corn? There is a cross-road to traverse. It is very easy to understand how, in order to escape these annoyances, M. Morand, like a genuine countryman as he was, married Louise, at the risk of having a son as cross-grained and sullen as his mother.

In the *Tableau de la division du sol de la France*, arable lands figure for 21,559,151 hectares, and meadow lands for only 4,834,521 hectares. In other words, to fertilise an extent of more than twenty millions of hectares there is, in France, only the manure furnished by less than five millions of hectares. It would be very extraordinary if, under such a system, agriculture were in a flourishing state. After that, it is scarcely necessary to say that the condition of the peasant cannot be a happy one.

That we may not be accused of materialism, let us commence with what relates to the intellectual life of the country. Mr. Thornton—who, under the title of "*A Plea for Peasant Proprietors*," has written a remarkable book on the advantages of the system of small holdings—Mr. Thornton himself describes in the following terms the moral and intellectual condition of the peasant wherever this system is in vigour:—

"Ignorance, combined with self-conceit, a coarse mind, rude manners, are natural to those whose entire lives are absorbed by purely manual labour, and who are not united by any bond derived from social relations to the classes that have leisure and means to cultivate their intelligence. Wherever, as in a great part of Germany, the citizen class resides in towns and abandons the rural districts to peasant labourers, the latter, from not being acquainted with persons superior to themselves, form their ideas of the beautiful and the great from the habits which are familiar to them, become rooted in them, and conceive a stupid aversion for practices different from their own. Entirely surrendered to the cares of a thoroughly material existence, they live in a complete ignorance of the refined enjoyments of which man is capable. How should they aspire to an elegance of which they have no examples? How should they sympathise with a mode of feeling of which they have not the slightest idea? They go on living, working without relaxation, and, so to speak, besotted, their manner of acting responding to the dulness of their nature."

Such, as described by the cleverest and most experienced

defender of the system in question, are the effects which that system produces upon the intellectual and moral development of the agricultural population. It narrows the soul, blunts the mind, and dries up the sources of thought.

In traversing the greater part of the *communes* (rural parishes) of France, what is the spectacle that will strike the eyes of the attentive observer? Is not the ignorance, in which they are plunged, a lamentable contrast to the lights which day by day penetrate more and more into the towns, and of which Paris presents such a brilliant concentration? Does not the labour of the farm constitute a victorious competition with that of the school? Does not one encounter at every step the despotism of routine, the tyranny of prejudices? In 1861 it was stated that out of 270,896 marriages, the number of bridegrooms who were found unable even to write their name amounted to 83,905. As regards the brides, the figures are still more disastrous for they amount to 136,447. That is to say, that, in that France which through its capital and chief cities sheds its light over the intellectual world, the number of persons who marry without being able to trace their name at the foot of the contract is 1 in 3 for the men, and 1 in 2 for the women!

Here are some other figures not less significant. In 1860, of 294,761 young men called out by the conscription there were reckoned 90,373 who could neither read nor write; 9,142 who could read and write very imperfectly; 186,530 who could both read and write.*

Tell us, after this, that the poor cultivator, precisely because he is poor, incessantly addresses himself to bringing out the full value of every inch of ground that belongs to him, neglecting nothing, forgetting nothing, losing nothing, giving to the cultivation of his fields all his thoughts, all his time, his whole industry, his whole life. What does that avail, if what is really sacrificed in this excess of labour, is the labourer himself? That the peasant proprietor makes the land produce, on a given space, all that, with reference to the slender means at his disposal,

* I take these figures on the state of instruction in France from an excellent book recently published in England by Mr. Frederick Martin, under the title of "The Statesman's Year Book." This work answers perfectly to its title; for it contains, with reference to all the countries of the world, a treasury of information which renders it indispensable to every one who is concerned with public affairs. It is really th "Statesman's Manual."

he has any chance of extracting from it, I am ready to admit; but again I ask what does that avail, if he is thereby obliged to deliver himself up to toil without relaxation, which devours all his time, exhausts his strength, petrifies his faculties, and renders him incapable of every thing that is of a nature to exalt his intelligence, and enlarge the horizon of his desires and thoughts? Is the destiny of man on the globe, his own domain, the same as that of a beast of burden? To produce the greatest possible result with the least possible expenditure of force—therein lies true progress.

It might be something, if this scrap of ground in cultivating which the peasant, from want of sufficient resources, wears himself out, made him some return in the form of material welfare for the mortal fatigues it costs him. Nothing of the kind. The cultivator is compelled to borrow money; he cannot help it. If any one doubts this, let him take the trouble to meditate upon the figures which express the liabilities of landed property in France. More than one-third of its net revenue is absorbed by the interest of the registered or unregistered debt which weighs upon it.*

Twelve milliards and a half is the amount which, in 1850, if I rightly remember, represented in France the mortgage debt, bearing interest. Now, as may be supposed, it is chiefly upon small properties that this burden is laid. The unfortunate beings, decorated with the name of proprietors, are for the most part nothing more than the bondsmen of usurers. When one of them is driven to raise a loan, would you like to know on what terms the Shylock of the neighbouring village accommodates him? In the prospectus of a mortgage bank, the author of which, Isidore Debrie, evidently possesses a large knowledge of the subject, we read:—

A mortgage loan of 500 francs entails in the cost of deeds an expence from . . .	14 per cent.
Agent's Commission	1 ,,
Legal Interest	5 ,,
Fifteen days' loss of interest during the time required for the legal formalities, about .	½ ,,
Total	20 per cent.

* See the book of M. Baudot (de l' Yonne), entitled "Decadence de la France," p. 100.

Where such bargains are possible, it is clear that the usurer is master of the property—and of the proprietor.

Let us look at the question from the consumers' point of view. According to the *Statistique Générale du Royaume*, officially published in 1837—I have no more recent statistics within reach—the average annual consumption of butchers' meat in France was for each individual, at that period, 11·35 kilograms, or about one ounce a day. "Assuredly," remarks M. Baudot (de l'Yonne), "this would be little enough; but when we notice that eighty-five towns, capitals of departments, whose total population amounted to 2,990,358, appropriate to themselves alone 2,284,456 head of cattle and sheep out of the 9,503,904 slaughtered in all France, it is very evident that the great majority of Frenchmen cannot eat meat except by accident." [Page 94.]

The prosperity of the vegetable kingdom depending upon that of the animal kingdom, and the production of cereals naturally diminishing where manure is scarce, it would really be matter for surprise if those who cannot get meat had yet abundance of bread to eat. The author above quoted accordingly adds, "More than one-third of the French people eat only barley or rye bread, and by way of supplement betake themselves to an innutritious diet of chestnuts, maize, buckwheat, potatoes, and dried vegetables. In some departments the poor creatures eat even oats."

Plainly, then, in what precedes I have not disguised the disadvantages of the system which appears to have Mr. Bright's sympathies; but does it thence follow that the system is preferable which Mr. Bright has so warmly denounced? Is there nothing to be said in favour of the system which, by the pride of property, leads the labourer to the sentiment of independence? Are his liberty, his well-being, his moral dignity, better promoted in those countries of large holdings where the tenure of lands is *aristocratic*, and where, as in England, the soil is divided among a very small number of opulent landowners, to be cultivated, under a small number of rich farmers, by white slaves, mere agricultural instruments with human faces? Heaven forbid that such should be my conclusion. I have shown one side of the medal—it now remains for me to show the reverse.

LETTER CCXXXIX.

ENGLISH SYSTEM OF LARGE ESTATES: ITS DEFECTS.

February 21st, 1864.

I HAVE not sought either to veil or to palliate the disadvantages of the system of small holdings where, as in France, it is not corrected by the principle of association scientifically applied; but it is only fair that, having pointed out the defects, I should also indicate the good points, which will supply me with a natural transition for the investigation of the defects inherent in the contrary system, which prevails in England, and which was so awkwardly defended against Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright by the *Times*, by the *Saturday Review*, and by several of the principal organs of the English press.

In the first place, it must be admitted that nothing can equal the care, the attention, the vigilance which the peasant-proprietor displays in the working of his land. It may be that oftentimes he has only a scrap of ground, but that scrap he cultivates with affection; he cannot detach his soul from it; he is, as it were, married to his plot. In his little property there is not the slightest trace of negligence, not an inch of space lost for purposes of production. Even the lands of inferior quality, from which the capitalist turns aside with affright, the peasant-proprietor finds means of fertilising by force of toil and attention. It has been said, "Give a man a rock, he will convert it into a garden." In a slightly different form, it is Arthur Young's epigram, "The magic of ownership turns sand into gold." If it be true that the system of small holdings excludes the adoption of scientific methods, the use of costly machinery, it is also true that it leads, under the spur of necessity, to the discovery of excellent methods, not unfrequently unknown on large farms; and that it derives from certain kinds of produce,—poultry, for instance,—profits the extent of which is hardly suspected by large cultivators.

And shall we count for nothing the zeal of the peasant who toils with the certainty of reaping what he has sown? Who can forget what happened when the French Revolution broke up and

divided the estates of the old system? The impulse given to industry by the spirit of ownership transformed the soil from one day to another: the yield increased rapidly, the progress was manifest. Flanders, Switzerland, and Norway are countries with small holdings, and the agricultural prosperity they enjoy furnish Mr. Thornton and Mr. Mill with one of their strongest arguments.

In reality, the consequences of a subdivision of the soil are only disastrous when that subdivision passes beyond a certain limit, when the soil is cut up beyond all measure—broken up, as it were, into crumbs.

Such is decidedly the case in one part of France. But even there things are not exactly as they are supposed to be here, because the *indefinite* decomposition of the soil in France is, after all, partly balanced by a movement of recomposition resulting from various circumstances which the English do not sufficiently take into account.

In general, the latter imagine that the equal division of the succession among the children, after the death of the father, is prescribed by the French law in a peremptory and absolute manner. Nothing of the sort. Article 913 declares, "Voluntary gifts, whether by deed *inter vivos* or by testament, shall not exceed one-half of the goods of the donor, if he leaves at his decease only one legitimate child; one-third, if he leaves two children; one-fourth, if he leaves three, or a greater number." The law thus allows the father of the family to dispose as he pleases of one-fourth of his property if he has three or more children, and even of one-half, if he has only one child. An equal division, therefore, is not compulsory, though certainly encouraged by public opinion and usage.

As for the prescriptions of the Civil Code, so far as they refer to the division of the soil, it is very true that Article 826 states, "Each of the coheirs may demand in kind his portion of the real and personal property forming the succession;" but Article 827 adds, "If the real property cannot be conveniently divided, recourse must be had to a sale by auction under the direction of the tribunal." Accordingly, when the exercise of the admitted right of the coheirs to demand their share in kind involves serious inconveniences from the agronomic point of view, it is less the fault of the law than of the mode in which it is administered.

It would be an exaggeration to pretend that it is always badly applied. There are cases where the only division among the brothers is that of the price of the property, sold conformably to the provisions of Art. 827. Sometimes it is amicably arranged that one of the brothers shall keep all the property, on the condition of acknowledging himself debtor to the others for the portions belonging to each respectively. Brothers can also possess and work in common their paternal inheritance, if it so pleases them: the law, at least, does not prevent them.

All this the partisans of the aristocratic tenure of land, on this side of the channel, either do not know, or do not wish to know.

Neither do they seem to be aware that the fact of the ownership of the land being vested in him who cultivates it, developes in the man himself very valuable qualities—frugality, foresight, economy, and above all, that sentiment of independence which is so calculated to elevate the heart. "Thou shalt have land," writes M. Michelet, "which means: Thou shalt not be a hireling, engaged to-day and dismissed to-morrow; thou shalt not be a bondsman for thy daily food: thou shalt be free. Free! a grand word, which comprises, in fact, the whole dignity of man: there can be no virtue without liberty."*

This much being premised, let us see what is the state of things in England and Wales, as regards the Right to the Land.

In fixing at 30,000, the number of landed proprietors in England, I have followed the computation which I believe to be the most exact, and it is that which is given also in the *Morning Star*, the journal of Messieurs Bright and Cobden. These figures, however, are not official. The truth is, that on this important point statistics are either silent or stammer, the landlords taking great pains to make a mystery of their number. Mr. McCulloch estimates it at not less than 200,000, without troubling himself about any other proof than the opinion of Dr. Beeke.†

But it results from his own confession that in this number he includes the landowners whose property is of the annual value of forty shillings. And thereupon he falls into ecstasies about the happy mortals to whom Providence has secured the sentiment of ownership. If we are content to rank in the class of landlords

* "Le Peuple," p. 58.

† "A Descriptive and Statistical Account of the British Empire." Vol. I. p. 451.

the poor wretch who has a bit of a garden round his house, it is clear that we may safely go as far as 200,000 landlords, and even beyond. But statistics presented in this fashion are very like a bad joke.

M. Fischel, I am inclined to think, falls into an exaggeration of the opposite description when he reduces the number of landed proprietors in England and Wales to 17,047. He founds this estimate upon the census of 1851; but he has made no allowance for the fact that the data furnished by that operation are in general very inexact, seeing there are many persons who to the title of landed proprietor add another, and by declaring the second pass over the first in silence.

Taking one thing with another, the number 30,000 appears to me, I repeat, the least remote from the truth.

There can be no doubt that the ownership of the soil in England is not only accumulated, but tends to still further accumulate in a few hands. "I know," said Mr. Bright, in his speech ot the electors of Birmingham, "I know the case of a noble personage who is supposed to have an annual income of £120,000. He spends £40,000 a year, and the £80,000 which remain he lays out in rounding his property by buying up every estate which is for sale." Examples of this kind abound. The eastern portion of the county of Sussex, which contains 800 square miles, is almost entirely the property of two noblemen, the Duke of Richmond and Lord Leconfield. The city of London, a city astonishing through its immensity, belongs to a mere handful of individuals. Such a great lord may possess a quarter as extensive as the capital of certain kingdoms. The wealth of the Grosvenor family shines with a splendour which makes even that of the throne look pale by its side, and it is as yet nothing in comparison with what it will be at the expiration of the leases in Belgravia. The domains of Dudley, Buccleuch, Brownlow, assume monstrous proportions. The other day we read in the public journals that the guardians of the Marquis of Bute, a youth sixteen years of age, had expended £2,000,000 in improving the estate of the House of Crichton Mountstuart at Cardiff. We may form some idea of the value of a property when, in order to improve it, only to improve it, two millions sterling are expended.

Pliny, a philosopher though a patrician, has observed:—*Verumque confitentibus, latifundia perdidere Italiam.* If these words, quoted approvingly by Gibbon, express a well observed

fact; if it be true that it was the existence of too widely extended estates which occasioned the downfall of Italy, the English aristocracy would do well to ask themselves if, peradventure, England may not be stricken with the social disease of which the Gracchi wished to cure the Roman empire, and which finally caused the death of the mighty "sick-man."

LETTER CCXL.

THE RIGHT OF PRIMOGENITURE IN ENGLAND.

March 22nd, 1864.

Do you remember the answer given by Rameau's nephew to Diderot when the latter, happening to meet him one day, said:—"It is an eternity since I saw you. What have you been doing?" And Rameau's nephew replied: "What you, I, and every body else are doing—right, wrong, nothing at all. Besides, I have been hungry, and have eaten when an opportunity presented itself."

Well, not only is the number of people here *who eat when an opportunity presents itself* very considerable, but it seems to be increasing every day. As an English journal bitterly observes, the "cream of society" has not for some time past been able to sit down to a sumptuous banquet, without some one immediately coming to inform them that Lazarus is lying at the door—a Lazarus who has not even a dog to lick his sores. Now, more than ever, we see in London, that capital of the world of wealth, poverty striking down its victims with blow upon blow. "I am hungry"—such are the words one sometimes sees traced with chalk upon the pavement, in front of a spectre crouched against a wall. "Bah!" exclaims many a well-fed passer-by, "that fellow plays the comedy of want; he has fashioned his face to look wan. Does not our Poor Law keep open house? Is it possible to want food to eat when the workhouse is there." And they go on their way. But the Coroner's verdict is there, also. And what does that melancholy verdict tell us, almost every day? It tells us that the existence of workhouses in no way prevents men, women, and children, from literally perishing of starvation, in a city through which flows the flood of Pactolus. I will write this

history of woe and want—the materials for which are, alas! only too abundant—I will write it as a philosophic complement to the history of riches which I have begun in your columns, and to which I now return.

In my last letter I quoted facts which prove with what rapidity and in what monstrous proportions the wealth of the great landed proprietors in England tends to increase. Morose observers already predict the time when the rural population will consist of only two classes—the nobles and a species of serfs—and when the country will be divided into a small number of princely domains, appanages of families more powerful than the Dukes and Earls of the Plantagenets. These fears I myself believe to be greatly exaggerated; but it cannot be denied that the land-owners show themselves more and more disposed to adopt the system of leases frequently renewed and given to the highest bidder. This system, if it were to become general, would lead by degrees to the extinction of the yeomanry, that is to say, of the middle agricultural class.

But before inquiring what are the consequences of a monopoly of the soil, it is worth while to obtain proper understanding of the means of which it is maintained.

The first means is furnished by the sanction of the right of primogeniture.

The ancient Norman law—the *Grand Coutumier*—only partially recognised this right. It gave to the eldest son the largest share of the succession, but it divided the remainder among the other children. In the Norman Islands, Jersey and Guernsey, the ancient law still subsists. Only, instead of receiving the largest portion, the eldest has no more than the first choice from among equal lots. William the Conqueror having made himself master of England, lost no time in modifying the existing state of things, and he did so in favour of the eldest sons, actuated by the desire of surrounding his throne with a serried phalanx of rich Norman families, capable of serving as a rampart to his dynasty against the hostility of the barons of Saxon race. From that time the English aristocracy has never ceased for a moment to regard the right of primogeniture as the true foundation of its power. And, in so doing, it has not been mistaken.

In the United States the equal division of the succession between all the children is not, as in France, a principle laid down in law. In the United States a father can leave by will

his property to whomsoever he pleases; but if he dies intestate the law distributes his fortune among his children, on the supposition that he loved them all equally. Nothing of the kind in England. Does a man die intestate, the law instantly intervenes so far as his landed possessions are concerned. To what end? Precisely to the end which, to use Mr. Bright's expression, natural justice reproves—that of enriching one of the children, though the others should be reduced thereby to want.

It is worthy of note that the right of primogeniture does not apply to personal effects, nor even to landed property when only daughters would succeed to it; so true it is that the law of primogeniture is maintained by law merely as a means of perpetuating the aristocracy.

It is a much controverted question to determine whether, in principle, the right of ownership can be extended beyond that of disposing of one's property by testament. That it should be optional with a man to give away what is no personal privation, and to remove beyond the limits of his life the influence of his will, is going a great length; but even of those who consider the right to will away as a natural consequence or, rather, as an integral part of the right of property, all are not ready to defend with equal vivacity the right of succession in the absence of testamentary dispositions to that effect. Bentham, and many other writers of high authority, are of opinion that when there are no heirs either in the descending or the ascending line, the property of a man who has died without making a will should devolve to the State. John Stuart Mill goes further, and does not hesitate to say that it may, or may not, be expedient to recognise the right of the children to succeed to their father in the event of his dying without a will, but that it is not a necessary consequence of the principle of private property. The reason that he assigns for this is that, since the extinction of feudalism, the last historical form of patriarchal society, property has lost the collective character impressed by the system of living in families and clans, and has assumed a strictly individual character.*

The right of children to succeed to their father, when the latter has died without disposing of his property either in their favour or in the favour of any one else, is, according to John

* "Principles of Political Economy," by John Stuart Mill. Vol. I. p. 268-69.

Stuart Mill, a right that rests upon nothing absolute, upon nothing that is inherent in the principle of private property as it exists at the present time; and it consequently belongs to society to regulate the full bearings of that principle in conformity to its own interests and the laws of reason. "Whatever fortune," he says, "a man may have inherited or acquired, I cannot admit that he owes it to his children, solely because they are his children, to leave them rich to such an extent as to dispense with all exertion on their part. . . . A father owes it to society to make his child a good citizen, a useful member of the community; and he owes it to his children to provide them, so far as it is in his power, with an education sufficiently complete, with resources sufficiently large, to enable them to enter upon life with a chance of succeeding in it through their own exertions. To this every child is entitled; but I cannot admit that, as such, he is entitled to more."*

These are the words of a writer in whom England of the present day recognises the foremost of her thinkers. Measure now the distance which separates Mr. Mill's ideas upon the point in question from those which are implied in the right of primogeniture, as it is understood and practised in England.

As for the different effects that are produced by the practical application of this right, they are very curious and very interesting to analyse, as I shall endeavour to show in my next letter.

LETTER CCXLI.

EFFECTS OF THE RIGHT OF PRIMOGENITURE.

March 28th, 1864.

The effects of the legal right of primogeniture in England are very different, though all equally regrettable, according as it refers to small or large fortunes.

Let us take the case of a small landed proprietor, with four children. If he dies intestate the law hands over to the eldest son the whole of his inheritance. His three other children are thus reduced to poverty.

Let us suppose now that the man who dies without having

* *Ibid.*, p. 271.

made any testamentary disposition is a wealthy landlord, an important member of the aristocracy: the result will be very different. The eldest son placed, by his father's death, in possession of an immense fortune, will be in a position not only to help his brothers, but to open the way for them to office, honours, and dignities. Representing a powerful family, he will dispose of several seats in Parliament; will exercise considerable political influence; will compel ministers to reckon with him; will obtain for one of his brothers a lucrative post in the administration, for another some high dignity in the church; in short, from the very concentration of the whole paternal patrimony in his hands will result power on his part to largely indemnify the members of his family at the cost of the public. The Earl of Shrewsbury has five brothers in Holy Orders, four of whom divide between them an annual income of £4290. A sixth is sergeant-at-arms in the House of Lords. Here is the mechanism of aristocratic power in England explained. To the eldest of the sons, the land; to his brothers, public posts. To the eldest, the possession of the soil; to his brothers, the fruits of patronage.

After that, are you surprised that the principle of primogeniture in England should find in the younger sons quite as fiery partisans as in the eldest sons themselves.

Will this last? On that point, it may be permitted to doubt. I am much mistaken if the principle of competition recently introduced as a motive for preference in the distribution of public functions do not prove to be a mine driven under the edifice of the English aristocracy. If this principle of competition, which goes on silently developing itself, ever succeeds in becoming universal, farewell to the compensation which eldest sons have to offer to their younger brothers. And then it is not improbable that what has happened in France will happen in England also. On the day when only the eldest sons will be interested in maintaining the right of primogeniture, the edifice will totter. That moment, however, has not yet arrived.

At the same time, though it most frequently happens that the younger sons of great families are provided for at the expense of the public, there are exceptions to the rule; and it is especially when this does not happen, or is slow to come to pass, that it is curious to study the effects of the right of primogeniture. Brought up with haughty notions and in habits of luxury, the younger sons of great families are naturally led, while fortune fails them,

to unite the vices of the aristocracy with those of poverty. A fashionable life is indispensable to them, whether or not they have the means of indulging in it honourably. The character of their relatives condemns them to a mode of life out of all keeping with the extent of their resources. The world, parties of pleasure, sport, high play, wine, and women, are the things they like, but which cost money. So they run into debt; accustom themselves to putting aside certain scruples that hamper them; take a mistress whom they deceive and finally abandon, because they cannot marry her without derogating from their position; and thus because they cannot forget that they are the sons of a nobleman, they sometimes forget to be men of honour.

There can be no doubt about that being a great evil. But—as I have observed in a previous letter—Mr. Bright, in confining himself to a demand for the abolition of the *law* of primogeniture, proposes a remedy the inadequacy of which is manifest. It must not be lost sight of that, if the law of primogeniture intervenes in England, it is only in the case of a landowner dying intestate, and cases of this sort occur only at long intervals. Availing themselves of the right of testation, the great landed proprietors nearly always bequeath their property to the eldest son, and so likewise do the small landed proprietors, without the law having anything to do with it. In reality what constitutes in England the power of the right of primogenture is not the law, but public opinion. The suppression of the former would certainly not suffice to do away with what proceeds from the latter. If the law ceased to give to the eldest son the heritage of the father who dies intestate, and ordained in this case alone an equal partition of the property, what would ensue? Simply that the number of those who now neglect to make a will in favour of the eldest son, because the law renders that precaution unnecessary, would avail themselves of the liberty of testation in favour of the right of primogeniture, as soon as the protection of the law was withheld. Where would be the advantage?

Mr. Bright replies that it would be in giving the sanction of the law to what is just, and in withdrawing it from what is not. Theoretically, yes; but, practically, it is to be feared that the effect would be inappreciable in a country like this, where everything depends upon public opinion.

It is true, indeed, that in America, Jefferson having succeeded

in prevailing upon the Virginian legislature to abolish the law of primogeniture which was applied, as in England, to cases of death *ab intestat*, and which until then had been rigidly enforced, the abolition exercised a salutary influence upon the use made of the liberty of testation. But Mr. Bright, who quotes this example, ought not to have forgotten that it is the democratic spirit which rules in America, while in England it is the contrary spirit that explains the sanction and maintenance of the right of primogeniture. Peers cannot do without large territorial possessions to support the splendour of their houses and to monopolise political power. Now, the existence of the right of primogeniture prevents the great properties from being broken up at the death of the father. That is the great secret.

But supposing the eldest son were a spendthrift, supposing he were to contract debts, supposing he were seized with a fancy to sell such or such a portion of his patrimony, supposing he found himself obliged to do so? It was the presentiment of this danger which caused the right of primogeniture to be supplemented by the right of entail, that is to say, the outrageous right of a landed proprietor to bequeath his real estate to his eldest son, and on the latter's death to *his* eldest son, and so on. According to the law at present in force, it is free to any one to leave his property to children who, perhaps, may not come into the world until twenty-one years afterwards. In virtue of this system the soil in England is rendered unrealisable for fifty, eighty, one hundred years; and as long as the property remains subject to entail, it is unalienable, however advantageous the power to sell might be to the public or even to the owner himself. It would be waste of time to insist upon the nature and bearings of such an arrangement, the manifest end and effect of which are to prevent the division of large estates, to keep them in the same families, and consequently to perpetuate the aristocracy.

It is vain to allege in favour of this system the necessity of depriving a certain class of persons of the power to ruin themselves. It is no business of society to protect against the natural consequences of their own vices or follies, libertines, spendthrifts, the degenerate heirs of some ancient name, or the too worthy heirs of a fortune acquired through some recent intrigue.

LETTER CCXLII.

SETTLEMENTS.

March 29th, 1864.

SINCE I first took up the subject of the aristocratic tenure of the soil, every day has borne witness to the permanent importance and ever recurring seasonableness of this great question.

To-day, for instance, what is public attention engaged about? I cast my eyes over the *Times*, and I read that the Irish peasants are emigrating in masses. Unable to exile their landlords, they exile themselves. There is nothing in the wide extent of the ocean to make them pause. There is nothing in the storms concealed in its bosom to cause them alarm. Lo! America is their promised land. On their arrival there they may, perchance, be obliged—who knows?—to become food for powder in the ranks of the Federal army. What matter? A cannon ball is sudden death, while starvation is a slow one. You ask whence these men derive strength to flee from their native land? What they flee is famine, the insupportable and degrading poverty which is born to them out of the aristocratic constitution of landed property, for, although Ireland is addicted to the system of small holdings, that is not the principal cause of its woes. Like England, and yet more cruelly than England, Ireland is alloyed with the malady of "landlordism." In France the peasant is at least master of his field. In Ireland not only is the peasant not a landowner, but he does not even enjoy that sort of possession the peaceable duration of which is guaranteed by a good lease. He is simply a tenant-at-will; that is to say, he is turned off when no longer wanted, and in most cases eviction is a sentence of death. Besides, the Irish peasant has to submit to a crushing rent for a mere scrap of ground. The agricultural population, in this unhappy country, is so out of proportion to the capital that is set apart to support them; the number of starved wretches who dispute with one another, as for a prey, the right of scratching the earth, is so large, and the desperate competition they carry on against one another renders the landlord so completely master of the situation, that there are no limits to the raising of the rent.

The Irish peasant must pay what is demanded of him, should it have to exude from every pore. If not, let him make room for others, and go and die elsewhere. But it is dangerous to reckon upon the docility of despair. He who is in danger of perishing by starvation, arms himself with a gun, and opposing menace to menace, terror to terror, assassination to eviction, not unfrequently tenders a murder by way of termination to a contract. From that moment, no safety for the person, no security for property. Capital takes fright, dares not approach, or flees away, without the flood of population ceasing to mount higher and higher. The disproportion between the number of mouths to be fed and the means of subsistence augments with a terrible rapidity. The competition becomes more and more furious; the rent runs up to any amount; engagements accepted through necessity are violated without scruple; cases of eviction multiply fast, and likewise—cases of murder. The frightful abyss goes on digging itself deeper and deeper every day.

This, I fancy, will sufficiently explain the wholesale emigration of the Irish. And there is assuredly no reason why the *Times* should be uneasy about it, provided it does not extend beyond certain limits. But if, perchance, it came to pass that these limits should be exceeded? If it came to pass that the ranks of the haggard army of labourers were to become thinned to such a degree that labour, instead of being now in excess of the demand, were to fall short of the demand, would landlordism find its account in the change, and would the *Times* continue to say in that airy manner, which seems to cost it so little to assume: "The Irish are going away. Well, a pleasant journey to them!"

But let us hasten to the history of landlordism in England, properly so called.

Among the means through which large properties are preserved unbroken, must be placed what is called a "Settlement," that is to say, a deed in virtue of which the person in possession of an estate enjoys it only for his own lifetime, his eldest son being entitled to succeed by right of entail.

The purpose of "settlements" is to paralyse in the hands of the occupier the exercise of any absolute right of property, consequently to prevent the alienation of the estate, either in whole or in part, and thus to oppose an obstacle to the estate passing out of the family.

Not that the power recognised by law of rendering land

inalienable by means of settlements is absolute and unlimited. Far from it; the law desires, on the contrary that, under certain circumstances, every estate should be liable to alienation.

It is sufficient, for instance, in order to effect the sale of an entailed estate, that the actual occupant—generally speaking, the father—should obtain to that effect the consent of the heir who is to succeed to him, and who is usually his eldest son, technically called the remainder in tail. But public opinion and usage baffle the provisions of the law, which merely gives a power of which those upon whom it is conferred think themselves interested in not making use.

On the other hand, it is very true that no one can dispose of his estate so as to paralyse the absolute right of ownership for a longer period than the life of the person or persons existing at the period of the settlements, with the addition of an interval of twenty-one years. Such is the law. But in the matter of settled estates, this is what really happens. As soon as the son, upon whom the estate is settled, has attained his majority, or is about to marry, his father, who has a life interest in it, and himself take the necessary steps to make the ownership absolute; after which a new act of settlement takes place, the father again becomes a life occupant, the son is invested with the same title, and the estate which was formerly entailed upon himself, is now entailed upon the eldest son who shall be born to him in wedlock. And so on in succession. In this manner, thanks to successive and systematic renewals of the deed by which the land is supposed to be exempted from alienation for a given period, the possession of the soil is perpetuated in the same families.

Add to this that many estates are held in trust, the sale of which, supposing such a thing took place, would be null and void, for want of a recognised marketable title on the part of the trustee. This system has its good points, no doubt. It places beyond mishap, from accident or fraud, the property of women and minors; but as recourse is often had to it for no other purpose than to tie the hands of the real proprietor, there arises from it a fresh impediment to the realisation of landed property.

As for the transfer of land, when otherwise practicable, it is hampered by all sorts of difficulties, without speaking of what it brings to the lawyers, and what it costs the contracting parties. It often takes months to procure a title; sometimes years. The various restrictions imposed upon the exercise of the rights of

property, with a view to the maintenance of the great families, bring it about that in most instances this right is the *bouteille à l'encre*. An individual who desires to purchase an estate must first of all traverse a maze where he can advance only by feeling his way; and the law which regulates this species of transactions is so obscure, so complicated, that, to use Mr. Bright's expression, "Solomon himself would be greatly embarrassed to come to a decision, unless it were the one which he is said to have taken in a very different case."

This is one of the abuses which Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright denounce with the greatest vehemence, when they demand that the doctrines of Free Trade shall be applied to the soil. Unfortunately, it is not certain that, if facilities were afforded for the transfer of landed property, the effect would be what these gentlemen seem to anticipate. The evil calls for more heroic remedies. The large properties would avail themselves of these very facilities to devour more easily the small properties. And as for the condition of the labourer, how would that be benefited by this partial change? It is not by confining themselves to freeing the realisation of landed property from such shackles as these, that the poor man will be placed in a position to purchase what it is now impossible for him to pay for.

I have thus far endeavoured to explain the characteristics of the aristocratic constitution of landed property in this country, and how it is maintained. It remains for me to point out the injustice it hides under its wings, the evils it engenders, as well as the services it may render, and the dangers which threaten it.

LETTER CCXLIII.

ENGLISH THEORY OF RENT.

March 31st, 1864.

It is just, it is expedient, it is necessary that he who has sown the seed should be entitled to gather the fruits. But is it just, is it expedient, is it necessary that the title to gather the fruits should belong to him who has not sown, and should belong to him for ever? Equity, the interests of the public which are inseparable from equity, the security indispensable for the labours

of the field, the time which they require, all combine to prove that the ownership of the *produce of the soil* ought to be secured to him who fertilises the soil by the application of his capital and the employment of his labour. But can the ownership of *the soil itself* be monopolised in advance, unconditionally, and for ever, by a few, without wrong-doing towards the human race, without the confiscation of its rights? In other words, is there no distinction to be made between the *cultivator* and the *landlord?*

The reply to these questions presents itself so naturally, that scarcely at any period or in any country has *the right of all to the land* been alienated in favour of a few, in an absolute and irrevocable manner. Almost everywhere, almost in all times, the State has reserved to itself the power of regulating, limiting, and moderating the exercise of the individual rights of ownership, according to the law of general expediency and the peculiar exigencies of each case. What is the proclamation of the principle of expropriation for objects of public utility, but a solemn affirmation of *the right of all to the land?* And on this point what argument could counterpoise that which results from the construction of railways? It is vain to quote as an objection the condition of an indemnity. As soon as the acceptance of an indemnity becomes obligatory, the individual right of ownership ceases to be absolute: it is the State which is recognised as proprietor of the soil as soil. And do not the laws of inheritance, the laws relating to testaments, imply the principle of proprietorship in the State, as representing society taken as a whole. But why insist upon this? It is enough to let the evidence speak for itself. Even in England, as I have already remarked, no one, legally and strictly speaking, has an individual right of ownership over any portion whatsoever of the soil. In principle, the State alone is considered as absolute proprietor of the soil. The citizens are simply occupiers, with different kinds of titles. They are judged to have the *use*, not the *ownership*; the *dominium utile*, not the *dominium directum*. On this point Blackstone expressed himself precisely as did Edward Coke: no doubt is possible; and the fact that the practice does not harmonise with the principle, allows the social importance of the title thus reserved to maintain its existence.

John Stuart Mill had certainly good reason to say: "It is in itself a privilege to enjoy, to the exclusion of all others, a portion

of the common patrimony. However large may be the quantity of personal property that a man can procure by his labour, another man can always, by employing the same means, arrive at the same result; but in the matter of territorial property, it is not so: whosoever possesses a piece of land deprives, thereby, somebody else of it. Such a privilege or monopoly cannot be justified except as a necessary evil; it becomes an injustice, when it is pushed to the point of being unable to engender the good that ought to serve as compensation to this evil."*

Let us see if this be an ordeal from which English landlords have a chance of issuing victorious.

What constitutes their wealth is the rent. What is rent? Whence does it derive its origin? What is the law of its progressive augmentation? With all this it is indispensable to make ourselves acquainted, if we would form a just idea of the prodigious and persistent development of the opulence of the landlords.

The law of the origin and progressive augmentation of rent, as it is now-a-days generally accepted, was laid down for the first time in 1801 by Dr. James Anderson, in a book entitled "Recreations in Agriculture." No great attention was paid to it at the time, and the question slumbered until 1815, at which date it was again taken up and very learnedly developed in two works which made some noise: the one by a barrister named West, the other by the celebrated Malthus. The title of the first of these two works was: "Essay on the Application of Capital to the Land." The second had for title: "Researches into the Nature and Progress of Rent." Next came out, in 1817, a pamphlet in which Ricardo set forth in a complete manner the theory enunciated at the commencement of the century by James Anderson, and which has since been adopted by the world of political economists.

In order that a cultivator should have any interest in confiding his capital to the earth, he must be able to find in the value of the total produce a return for all his advances and, in addition, the ordinary profits of trade; for, otherwise, it is clear that he would seek in some other branch of industry a more profitable employment of his capital and his energy.

* "Principles of Political Economy," by John Stuart Mill. Vol. I. p. 287.

Hence it follows that there is a limit below which prices cannot fall, without production being stopped. But if prices cannot fall below this limit, they can very easily rise above it so that there should be a surplus. It is this surplus which, when the landowner is in a position to appropriate it, constitutes what is named Rent.

Does the owner of the land always possess this power? No. Under what circumstances does he possess it? Only when his land is of superior quality to other lands also under cultivation.

In fact, the cultivator of an estate that is of an inferior quality or—what comes to the same thing—less advantageously situated with regard to the cost of transport, must necessarily sell his produce at a price that permits him both to receive a return for his advances and to realise the ordinary profits of trade. The price at which he is forced to sell his produce becomes thus the regulating price, as there cannot be two prices in the market. In other words, assuming as equal the labour put in action and the capital expended, if the cultivator of land No. 1 is able to raise one hundred quarters of wheat, while the cultivator of land No. 2 can raise only ninety, the former will sell at the same price as the latter. There will therefore remain to the former, over and above the return for his advances and the ordinary profits of trade, the value of ten quarters of wheat, which the owner of the land will not fail to claim as his own share, and will do so successfully, because, in case of refusal he would have no trouble in finding another capitalist ready to renounce, in order to secure the preference, what is only an excess of profits, and which does not impose upon him any ruinous sacrifice. Such is the origin of Rent.

If, now, the population increase to such a degree that it becomes necessary to put in cultivation land inferior in quality to No. 2, and producing, for example, only eighty quarters of wheat, after employing the same capital and the same labour which produced ninety from No. 2, and one hundred from No. 1, the regulating rate of the selling price will be that which will place the cultivator of land No. 3 in a position to replace his capital, and to draw a profit equal to what is offered by other branches of industry. The cultivators of lands Nos. 1 and 2 selling at this price, the former will have a surplus of twenty quarters of wheat, and the latter a surplus of ten. The first then will be induced to pay a double rent, while the second, who previously did not

pay any, will pay a single rent, the cultivator of land No. 3 paying nothing until land of a quality still inferior, a No. 4, be brought into cultivation. And so on.

In proportion as the population increases it becomes necessary, you perceive, that corresponding means of subsistence should be acquired from lands more and more inferior in quality; and in proportion as cultivation extends to lands of inferior quality, the rent of lands of superior quality rises, rises, rises ever. That is to say, an unlimited increase of the population, a source of misery for society taken as a whole, becomes for the landlord a new source of riches. The following table indicates in a striking manner the proportions in which the annual value of land has risen in England and Wales, from 1800 to 1852:—

Years.	Rent.
1800	£22,500,000
1806	25,908,207
1810	29,503,074
1815	34,230,462
1843	40,167,089
1852	41,118,329

So that between 1800 and 1852 the territorial incomes of landlords very nearly doubled.

It is true that in these comparisons allowance must be made for the variations undergone by the value of money. Let us take then a table in which the requisite deductions have been made — that one in which McCulloch compares the years 1814-15 and 1851-52. This teaches us that the total amount of rents paid to landlords rose in England and Wales to £30,897,416 in 1814-15, and to £41,118,329 in 1851-52, so so that within an interval of a few years the increase amounted to £10,220,913.

Observe, too, that these figures have been supplied to me by McCulloch,* the most ardent and systematic advocate of landlordism. Let us admit that they are happy beings to whom money comes while they are sleeping.

* "A Descriptive and Statistical Account of the British Empire." Vol. 1. pp. 557, 558.

LETTER CCXLIV.

OBSTACLES TO THE SALE OF LAND IN ENGLAND.

April 26th, 1864.

THE idea of rendering the transfer of land as easy as that of a watch, and a title to landed property as simple, as clear, as easily negotiable as a title to consols, is no new idea in this country. Ever since 1857 it has been forced upon the attention of the legislature. A Bill aiming at its realisation was brought forward in 1859 by Lord Derby's Government, and, though that one was rejected, the same fate did not await the bill introduced in 1862 by the present Lord Chancellor, Lord Westbury.

Lord Westbury's object was to assimilate the possession of land to that of consols; to contrive that every estate might be sold, or mortgaged, just as if its proprietor had his name inscribed on the books of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England; to give every facility, in fact, to the vendor, by removing every possible doubt as to the validity of his title, and thereby guaranteeing the safety of the purchaser.

To attain this end he proposed the adoption of a very simple means: the establishment of a public register in which all titles to property should be inscribed in a manner to inspire confidence.

The Bill which established this system of registration was passed in 1862; but instead of giving it a compulsory character, as was desired by men of the most logical and clear-sighted minds, it was decided that every one might, as he pleased, avail himself or not of the advantages it offered. Here, up to the present day, has been the rock in its path. Scarcely any one has taken advantage of the facilities so liberally placed within reach of all. The number of demands for registration has not exceeded sixty-five, while the number of titles actually registered barely amounts to eleven. Strangely enough, the landowners upon whom was conferred the means of enlarging their liberty of action, of increasing their individual power, of augmenting the value of their property by rendering it easily transferable, and of strengthening their title by taking it out of the region of darkness into broad daylight,

have preferred to leave it, as it were, imprisoned in a system where everything is a hindrance and a source of obscurity.

Was the Bill of 1862, then, like a still-born child? Does it only remain now to inter it? That is the opinion of Lord Chelmsford, by whom the funeral oration of that ill-omened Bill was pronounced at the sitting of Thursday last. But before a father will give orders for the funeral of his child, the heart of the latter must really have ceased to beat and its eyelids closed for ever. Accordingly, as might have been expected, Lord Westbury declared that he did not share the opinion of Lord Chelmsford as to the gravity of the case, and gave excellent reasons for his own views.

Do you remember that fantastic Arab story of Sinbad and the Old Man of the Sea? Sinbad had fallen asleep, when there came up a sea-monster, very ugly, very heavy, who, passing his legs round the neck of the imprudent sleeper, expressed his intention of never quitting him. Did Sinbad feel it necessary to sit down, the monster had a fancy for moving on. Did Sinbad feel fresh and vigorous, the monster fell into a lethargy. Well, the landowners in this country have their marine monster to carry also, and that is—their solicitor. Is it not the solicitor who draws up their marriage contracts, who holds in his hand the key of their coffers, who is their inevitable adviser, to whom they submit as the unavoidable depositary of all their secrets? If he advances, they too must advance; if he stops short, they too must stop. Little would it avail them to approve of what he disapproves of, to accept what he rejects, to applaud reforms which are not to his liking.

It was consequently impossible but that the immediate success of the Reform of 1862 should depend upon the support it received from the lawyers; and what chance was there of such support being given to it?

If lawyers here were paid in proportion to their labour and responsibility, instead of in proportion to the length and multiplicity of the deeds which they are instructed to prepare, it would be all right. But unhappily the solicitor's remuneration in England is founded, as Lord Westbury remarked, upon the false principles which formerly led the legislature to fix a certain rate for the wages of artisans and the profits of trade. Under the sway of the system at present in force, as far as his emoluments are concerned, the solicitor is compelled, on pain of starvation, to

render every business on which he is engaged as difficult, obscure, and complicated as possible. If he fishes in troubled waters, it is as much the fault of the law as of himself.

And what is the result? The result is, that the right of ownership is, as it were, buried beneath a mountain of parchments, blackened all over with an unintelligible jargon, and to which no one has ever affixed his signature with anything like a clear idea of what it was that he was signing. The Lord Chancellor rightly observed: the invention of printing, which has lighted up so many branches of human knowledge, stopped at the door of the dingy domain of the lawyer. Many mysteries have been penetrated, but not those of which he is the guardian, and upon which he lives, so that these words of Scripture are found true to the letter; "The lawyer holds the keys of science, and lays upon men burdens hard to be borne." What think you of this question, addressed by Lord Westbury to his brother peers, "I appeal to your lordships; is there one of you who knows anything whatever about his title to the ownership of his estates?"

Is not that a fine state of things? But what does it matter to the landlords? The principal inconvenience attending the extreme complication of the actual system is its hindrance to the transfer of landed property; but that inconvenience, if a serious matter for the public at large, becomes an advantage for the territorial aristocracy, who would soon crumble away under an easy transfer of land. The difficulty of selling and mortgaging, from which landlords may suffer in certain circumstances, as individuals, benefits them as a class. It contributes to securing the possession of the land to a small number of great families. This is felt as an instinct by the aristocracy, and partly explains the indifference shown by landowners of any importance about registering their titles, though Lord Westbury did not think it expedient to say so. He preferred to attribute the ill-success of the Bill of 1862 to the spirit of unreflecting fear inspired by everything that is novel, and to the opposition of the lawyers, the natural enemies of whatever tends to simplify business transactions.

I must, however, in justice to him, add that he has given notice of his intention to propose a radical change in the basis upon which at present rests the system of remunerating solicitors. So far, so well. It would, indeed, be taking the bull by the horns. There is no abuse after all that is essentially immortal.

This reminds me that I did not complete my illustration drawn

from the story of Sinbad. The poor merchant of Bagdad was long, very long, tormented by the monster astride upon his shoulders, and that because he fancied that the frightful incubus was a spirit, something mysterious, a demon impossible to overcome or kill. One day, however, the idea came to him that since the monster had a skull, the skull might be broken. Therefore he schemed to make his persecutor drunk, and then smashed his skull with a stone. It was very simple, was it not? To disembarrass himself of the monster all that was needed was for Sinbad first of all to get rid of a false notion—to wit, that the monster was immortal.

LETTER CCXLV.

ARISTOCRACY FOR ARISTOCRACY, WHICH IS THE BEST?

April 28th, 1864.

I RECENTLY gave you some figures which demonstrate in a striking manner the rapid progression in which landlords' wealth increases. Since then I have further prosecuted my researches, and from information obtained at an official source, the Inland Revenue Office, I find that in 1861-62 the net revenue annually paid by the land to its owners amounted to not less than £54,678,412.

Now, if we consider that in the Budget presented on the 15th April, 1863, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the receipts of the United Kingdom were estimated for the financial year terminating on the 31st March, 1864, at £68,280,000, it will be seen that with the sole produce of the rent of the land, the State could almost entirely provide for the public expenditure, and almost entirely dispense with taxation.

Where will this accumulation of riches stop? It is clear that the discovery of new scientific methods and the application to agriculture of new machinery, tend to augment to an indefinite extent the wealth and consequently the social influence of the proprietors of the soil. In a letter addressed to the *Morning Star* by Mr. James Thorold Rogers, author of a learned work presented to the Statistical Society, I read that the soil of England now produces eight times more than it did in the sixteenth century, and that the rent of its natural forces has risen from one to

eighty, while the nominal price of wheat has risen only from one to twelve, and that of labour from one to eight or ten. It is very true that the progress of agriculture in this country is seriously impeded by the practice of giving leases liable to be cancelled at pleasure—a practice introduced with a view to render the landlord master of the farmers' votes; but this sacrifice of agriculture to political interest does not prevent the gradual introduction of improvements, the diminution of the cost of production, and augmentation of rent.

If now it be asked on what is founded the rightfulness of the enormous tribute which the landlords thus levy upon society, the answer, I fear, will not be easy.

What does rent represent? The remuneration of labour? No; for those who receive it never put their hand to the plough. The interest of the capital employed in cultivation? No; for that capital is advanced by the cultivator. Is it the price of improvements effected? No; for the money expended in improvements by the landlords is comparatively very little, when anything at all is expended by them. What, then, does rent represent? It represents the ancient right of conquest, the division of the common patrimony accomplished in olden times by force, the abandonment, in fact, to a few of what has never ceased to be regarded in principle as the property of all.

It is a strange and dangerous error which consists in confounding the absolute proprietorship of the soil itself with the proprietorship of the produce raised from it by the employment of capital and the action of labour. It is of the highest importance and only just that the ownership of the produce of the land should belong to him who makes it fruitful; but it is at least doubtful how far the interests of society and justice find their account in a system in virtue of which a privileged class of citizens is invited to reap what it has not sown.

At the same time it would be flagrantly unjust to abolish this system without amply indemnifying those in whose favour society has allowed it to be established and maintained. It would be equivalent to brutally trampling under foot the respect due to transactions entered upon in expectation of its continuance; it would be, as it were, passing the sponge over contracts concluded under the empire of rules rightly or wrongly sanctioned, but in any case sanctioned by the entire social body; it would be a violation of public faith.

This being premised, the question is to determine first of all, if a reform is necessary; and, secondly, in what sense, in what manner, and in conformity with what principles, it ought to be attempted.

If certain persons are to be believed, there is this advantage in the existence of an opulent aristocracy, that it raises the standard of social life, that it diffuses a taste for the arts, and that it maintains, with a leaning unto luxury, a desire for elegance and the love of refined pleasures. This would be delightful, if the satisfaction of very real wants was not thus sacrificed to the pursuit of wishes oftentimes artificial and imaginary: if the excessive wealth of some had not as a corollary the extreme poverty of others; if the refined elegance of manners and cultivation of mind in the upper circles were not coincident with coarse habits, ignorance, and brutality in the lower circles. How can any one come and talk to us about assuring to a small number of happy mortals the possession of a common inheritance, in order that they may be thereby induced to encourage the progress of civilization by making it tributary to their enjoyments? In what respect does the bulk of society benefit by the refinements upon which the aristocracy plume themselves? What intellectual or moral advantage is derived by so many poor wretches in want of their daily food and lodging, from the precious objects, the beautiful statues, the exquisite paintings, imprisoned in the palaces, or exiled to the country houses of the aristocracy? Without doubt, a wealthy aristocracy does provide eager purchasers for the productions of art and industry; but a society of workers who, in order to possess rich clients, should begin by depriving themselves of everything in their favour, is not unlike a merchant who should supply his customers with money to enable them to purchase his merchandise.

In the book in which he specially comes forward as the champion of the aristocracy,* McCulloch says: "It is to those who from the inferior ranks of society have succeeded in reaching the highest rounds, that humanity is indebted for the majority of the inventions and improvements which have so widely extended the empire of mind over matter, and added so much to the sum of human happiness. If the large fortunes were divided, if the level of opulence were lowered, the stimulant of inequality dis-

* "Succession to Property."

appearing or becoming greatly weakened, there would be less emulation, and society would approach a stationary condition."

But that is not the lesson which history teaches us. What it teaches us, on the contrary, is that the great geniuses which have done honour to humanity have been actuated by quite other motives than cupidity, vanity of rank, thirst for titles, and what Mr. McCulloch calls, "the stimulant of inequality." What gave to the world such men as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Tacitus, Dante, Galileo, Raphael, Leibnitz, Descartes, Schiller, Molière, Shakspeare, Watt, Newton, Pascal, &c., was a passion for truth, a disinterested love of art or science, the inward happiness evolved from the exercise of the faculties and from following the law of aptitude. The "stimulant of inequality" does not act as a motive power, except in the formation of artificial aristocracies; it does not count as anything in the formation of the true aristocracy, which is composed of great philosophers, great poets, great artists, great inventors, of all who really contribute to raise the standard of humanity. Goëthe was a courtier, but it was not the courtier in him that wrote *Faust*. Bacon is accused of having been too fond of money, and of having preferred honours to honour: but even if this charge, which is now declared by many clear-sighted minds to be unjust, were well-founded, it certainly was not any greediness for gain or a vulgar vanity that rendered Bacon capable of composing the *Novum Organum*. A singular idea of genius, truly, do those entertain who regard it as the creature of ignoble appetites. To represent it as such, is to calumniate it.

LETTER CCXLVI.

POLITICAL POWER OF THE ENGLISH ARISTOCRACY.

May 28th, 1864.

EVERY day, as I advance in the task to which you have accorded the hospitality of your columns, some new fact turns up to throw fresh light on the abuses inherent in the aristocratic constitution of property in England.

Among these abuses figures the concentration of political power in the hands of a particular class.

It is no matter for wonder that the House of Commons should have recently rejected by a large majority Mr. Baines' motion touching the extension of the electoral franchise. It is no matter for wonder that it has closed its ears and its heart to the eloquent appeals of Mr. Gladstone. In the distribution of power does the House of Commons really represent the popular element? It does not even represent the shopkeeper element. Look at its composition; the House of Commons is essentially aristocratic; it is, in reality, with respect to the House of Lords, what, in the governing classes, younger sons are to the elder.

The following statement, which I take from Dr. Edward Fischel's work, shows how the House of Commons was composed in 1789. It then contained 216 Irish peers and sons of English peers; 190 squires; 50 officers belonging either to the army or navy; 35 members connected with the East India Company; 36 lawyers; and 31 merchants; in all, 558.

And now, at the present day, after that Reform Bill about which so much noise has been made, how is the House of Commons composed?

You are aware that in England the sons of peers receive, during the lifetime of their fathers, titles which are called titles by courtesy. Thus, the eldest sons of dukes, marquesses, earls, and viscounts take their father's second name with the next inferior title; while the younger sons of dukes and marquesses place the title of Lord before their family name—the younger sons of earls and viscounts as well as of barons assuming the title of Honourable. You are also aware that those Irish peers who do not sit in the House of Lords are eligible to be returned to the House of Commons.

Thus much being premised, how many names decorated with an honorary title, do you suppose, are to be found in the existing House of Commons?

Among the members, whose numbers amount to 658, I find 71 baronets, 34 lords, 7 viscounts, 4 earls, 2 barons, 1 marquess, and 47 Honourables. I do not count the knights bachelors though, like the baronets, they have the title of Sir, because this title, so far as they are concerned, is not hereditary. Neither do I reckon those who are greeted as Right Honourables, because this qualification is attached to the exercise of certain high functions, and may consequently be conferred upon Commoners, without their ceasing to be such.

Here then are 166 noble families directly represented in the bosom of that power which is supposed to act as a counterpoise to the influence of the aristocracy. Now, if we consider that among the members who have no other qualification than that of Esquire, not a few are closely united to the aristocracy by the bonds of relationship or matrimonial alliance, we must admit that a legislative assembly thus constituted is not likely to attend to the affairs of the *people* except with reference to the interests with which it is more especially connected.

For the rest, it would be surprising if it were otherwise. Has it not everywhere and always happened that the monopoly of political power has followed the monopoly of the soil?

LETTER CCXLVII.

HOW THE ENGLISH ARISTOCRACY USES ITS POWER.

May 30th, 1864.

I FANCY that I have clearly shown that, in England, the monopoly of political power is the natural result of the aristocratic constitution of property. In common justice, I must say that this monopoly has not opposed too many obstacles to the gradual development of public liberty.

There are many reasons for this.

In the first place, the House of Lords and the House of Commons, though prompted by the nature of the elements of which they are respectively composed to serve very nearly identical interests, have nevertheless tended, thanks to the potency of the *esprit de corps*, to act as a counterpoise to one another.

In the second place, the division of the English aristocracy into two rival parties, Whigs and Tories, has contributed in the most efficacious manner to persistent progress, each of the two parties finding itself compelled, when out of office, to court popular favour in order to get in again, either by making wise concessions to the spirit of freedom, or by supporting measures of public utility, or by taking the initiative in reforms that have become inevitable.

In fact, it would not be an easy matter to trace between Whigs and Tories, since 1679, the date at which those designations

began to be used, a hard and fast line of demarcation, taken from the point of view of difference of principles. That the doctrine of passive obedience, respect for the prerogatives of the Crown, attachment to the privileges of the Church, were more particularly represented by the Tories so long as the movement which overthrew James II. retained its full force, is beyond a doubt; and it may even be said that during the eighteenth century the Whig aristocracy narrowly escaped republican tendencies. In any case it did not scruple to regard kings as responsible to their peoples. Did not Horace Walpole, for instance, hang up in his bedroom a copy of the capital sentence pronounced upon Charles I., with the characteristic inscription: *Major Charta?* But it is not the less true that Whigs and Tories have often been seen absolutely to change places, according as they happened to be in office or out of it. In the reign of Anne and in that of George I. the Whigs were for septennial Parliaments, protective tariffs, standing armies; the Tories, on the other hand, were for triennial Parliaments, free trade, and militia force. The "rotten boroughs," at a period when they secured to the Whigs political preponderance, had no more zealous denunciators than the Tories; and every time that the former have affected an intention of conciliating the middle class, the latter have sought for support from the working class. At the present moment the difference of opinion between the two is so imperceptible that you would embarrass me sorely if you were to ask me to define it. The struggle is now between one set of families and another, between one set of names and another. The question is simply whether a Lord Russell or a Lord Derby shall be in office, and retain it. Yet a little while and the designation of Whig and Tory will have fallen into disuse. Assuredly, those of Liberals and Conservatives, which are now usually employed in preference, do not correspond to anything very precise, so far at least as the home policy is concerned. For Liberals, as for Conservatives, the question is who shall take the helm, dispose of the patronage, govern the nation; and for Conservatives, as for Liberals, the only means of attaining that goal is by satisfying the exigencies of public opinion, whenever they become imperatively demonstrated. It thus follows that the rivalry of the two great factions into which the English aristocracy is divided, becomes profitable, in the long run, to liberty and progress.

It must also be acknowledged that the English aristocracy is

the most intelligent aristocracy that has ever existed. It never compromises by a blind obstinacy the power of resistance it really possesses. It knows when to give way. So far from opposing itself to the movement of the popular mind when there would be danger in doing so, it places itself at the head, and leads.

Not that we can credit the English aristocracy with an enthusiastic and disinterested love of progress. No. It acts under the influence of a sound knowledge of its own interests—that is all. It accords what it would find dangerous to refuse. If it chance, by some of its members, to take the initiative of a reform, it is to prevent this reform, whose hour has struck, from being carried without it and against it. It may even be said that in most cases it connects itself with progress only in the hope of checking it half way, under the pretence of forwarding it. To vaunt its disinterestedness, then, would be childish, but to deny its sagacity would be unjust.

Of the questions calculated to interest or excite the people, there are few which are not associated with some great name. The Earl of Shaftesbury, the Earl of Carlisle, Earl Grey, Lord Stanley, Earl de Grey and Ripon, Sir John Pakington, these are the individuals to whom eyes and thoughts are turned whenever questions turn up relating to the establishment of schools for the indigent, or to the purification of districts inhabited by the poor, or to the limitation of the labour of women and children in manufactories, or to the reforms to be introduced into education.

I have just mentioned Earl de Grey, formerly Lord Goderich. Never shall I forget the impression made upon me by the first visit which his lordship did me the honour to pay me. Earl de Grey, still a young man, is gifted with that perfect distinction of language and manners which, in England, characterises the aristocracy; but with that there is united, in his case, a penetrating and naturally *searching* intelligence. He conversed with me, with grave solicitude, on the interests of the lower classes, and I was as much astonished as delighted to meet in a man of his rank with one of those minds who reject nothing without previous examination, and to whom,—to borrow an expressive phrase of M. Emile de Girardin—no idea causes fear.

It is undeniable that at the head of the English aristocracy figure men broken-in early to the management of public business, active, vigilant, capable of the initiative.

This is easily accounted for. The English aristocracy, in fact, does not form, like the old French nobility, an exclusive caste, superimposed upon society and stupidly imprisoned in its pride. You are aware that the sovereign of Great Britain can neither create Scotch peers, nor institute more than one Irish peerage for every three vacancies; but you are also aware that he can create as many English peers as he thinks proper. It thence results that the English aristocracy is recruited from all ranks, offers a goal to every ambition and a perspective to every talent, renews itself and its youth, incessantly, by the absorption of all the living forces of the country. The historian Macaulay died a peer of the realm. The concentration of political power in the hands of the aristocracy loses, in this manner, some portion of the odious character attached to the exercise of a monopoly, without taking into account that the bad effects of this concentration are considerably diminished by the existence of a free press, from whose control escapes no act of public life.

It is right, therefore, not to exaggerate the gravity of the consequences entailed by the abuse which I have pointed out. But it is also right not to close the eyes to what it contains of evil, in spite of every corrective.

It is unfortunately the rule that those who frame the laws strive to make them as much as possible for their own advantage. Can the English aristocracy boast of having displayed, under this head, an exceptional disinterestedness? The reverse is only too well proved by the history of the Land Tax. It is a marvel to see how low is the figure to which the landlords have succeeded in keeping down the tax imposed upon their property, even while the revenues from this property were incessantly increasing, and that to an enormous extent.

LETTER CCXLVIII.

THE LAND TAX.

June 5th, 1864.

A VERY curious and instructive history is that of the department of public revenue known in England as the Land Tax.

You are aware that under the feudal system the soil was

supposed to be the absolute property of the sovereign. To do him fealty and homage, to follow him to the wars with a certain number of men-at-arms, such were the conditions attached to the possession of fiefs by barons, vassals and tenants *in capite*. On the other hand, lands held on this tenure were exempted from Land Tax.

The redemption of personal service by payment of scutage was the first breach made in this system. Military tenures were abolished by the Long Parliament, a measure subsequently confirmed by the first Parliament of Charles II. The exemption from taxation enjoyed by land up to that time ceased to be grounded in reason, and thence arose the Land Tax.

From 1698 to 1799 the Land Tax was levied as if it were a new tax voted by Parliament every year. But in 1799, in the reign of George III., it was converted into a perpetual tax, declared redeemable, and fixed at the sum of £2,037,627.

The redemptions operated by the proprietors who have thought proper to take advantage of the alternative offered to them, amounted on the 25th March, 1864, to the sum of £779,819.

Consequently at the present moment the Land Tax is represented by the comparatively insignificant sum of £1,257,808.

Now, if you please, let us compare the charges which weigh directly upon land in France with those to which land is subject in England.

I will take the year 1859, because I have lying before me all the figures for both countries relating to that year; and as it is only fair to take into account what has been redeemed, I will suppose that the Land Tax is as high now as it was in 1799. This being assumed, the results of the comparison are as follow:—

FRANCE—1859.

Budget of Receipts	£70,956,764.
Tax upon Land .	11,173,906.

ENGLAND—1859.

Budget of Receipts	£65,477,284.
Land Tax . . .	2,037,627.

The meaning of which is that the land which, in France, pays nearly the sixteenth part of the whole taxation, pays only the thirty-second part in England.

Here is another comparison worthy of reflection. The Land Tax is at the present day very much as it was in the time of William III.—a century and a half ago. Now, since that period the public revenue in England has risen from £3,895,204 to £70,683,860, and the rents of landlords from £9,724,000 to £54,678,412.

The English aristocracy, you see, has made good use of its parliamentary power, and no one can accuse it of having neglected its own interests. And yet what might justly be demanded?

"I suppose," writes John Stuart Mill, "that there is a kind of revenue whose tendency is to increase indefinitely, without any effort or sacrifice on the part of the owners, these owners forming a class whom the natural course of things suffices to enrich in a progressive manner; the State would not violate the principles upon which is based the right of private property, if it appropriated this surplus of riches as fast as it is produced. It would not be, properly speaking, taking anything whatsoever from anyone whomsoever: it would only be benefiting society by the increase of riches created by circumstances, instead of suffering that, without having been earned, it should add to the wealth of a particular class. Well, such is the case with regard to rents."*

The truth is, according to an expression of the same John Stuart Mill, landlords grow rich in some degree while they sleep, without doing anything, risking anything, economising anything. And the great thinker I have just quoted was certainly not the first to utter this cry.

Not content with calling rent a "prize of monopoly," Adam Smith says: "Rent may be considered as the produce of the *powers of nature*, of which the proprietor lends the use."

He also says: "Every augmentation of the real wealth of a society, every augmentation of the bulk of useful labour which is set to work, tends indirectly to raise the real rent of the land."

And in another place: "Of the three classes (among whom is divided the total mass of the annual produce of the land and of the labour of a country, namely, that which lives on *rents*, that which lives on *profits*, and that which lives on *wages*), the first is the only one to whom its revenue costs neither labour nor anxiety,

* "Principles of Political Economy." Book V. chap. 2.

but to whom it comes, so to speak, of itself, without their aiding it by any design or plan whatsoever."

It is, in fact, the use of the power, of the fecundity of nature, which is let out by the proprietor of the soil. Yes, it is for the use of air, of moisture, of heat that the cultivator pays him, absolutely as if nature herself belonged to him. And everything seems to conspire with a sort of rivalry to augment more and more the tribute levied by him on the natural as well as on the acquired fecundity of the soil. For, as Adam Smith remarks, all progress in the productive power of labour has this effect, that it tends directly to reduce the real price of manufactured produce, while it tends indirectly to raise the real rent of the land. Is it not against manufactured produce that the landed proprietor exchanges that part of his revenue which exceeds his personal consumption? And when their price falls, is he not in a position to purchase with the same revenue a larger quantity of objects of convenience, of ornament, or of luxury?

He has no need then to work, to add to his riches; time takes upon itself to enrich him without his troubling himself about it.

What a difference, in this respect, between him and the capitalist: The greater the abundance of other capital than land, the greater its depreciation, a risk not incurred by land, which is a limited quantity. One hundred thousand francs of floating capital are very far from being worth as much now-a-days as they were a century ago, while an estate that was worth one hundred thousand francs a century ago, is worth very much more at the present day.

The general wealth and the population are susceptible of an almost indefinite increase, and in fact never do cease increasing; commerce demands for its operations a territorial basis wider and wider; towns are enlarged and new ones built; the construction of a railway suddenly gives to this suburb, to that district, an artificial value of some importance. All this combines in a manner to raise the price of land.

In England, this rise, in the great industrial or commercial cities, presents us with something truly fabulous. In London the tiny bit of ground at the corner of St. Paul's Cathedral, towards the south-east, is worth not less than £60,000. When New Oxford Street was being built, the soil cost not less than £57,000 the acre. In Manchester, in the best parts of the town, ground has been bought as high as £200,000 the acre. At Birmingham,

the space occupied by the London and North-Western Railway was sold for £60,000. It is the same at Sheffield, at Leeds, at Bradford, at Glasgow, at Belfast,

If there are hospitals in London which possess princely revenues, it is because, instead of leaving them a sum of money in hard cash, their founders bequeathed unto them lands whose market price was at that time very low, but has since become immense, by reason of the houses built upon them, and by the single effect of the progress of the general wealth joined to that of the population.

This much being premised, in virtue of what logic, in virtue of what law of public interest, in virtue of what principle of justice, should society, taken as a whole, be excluded, for the benefit of a few individual members, from all participation in that augmentation of riches which is due to the fecundity of the soil, to the air, to moisture, to warmth, to the rays of the sun, to the increase of the population, to the building of towns, to the inventions of science, to the progress of commerce, to the labour of the entire society?

LETTER CCXLIX.

LAND BECOME IN ENGLAND AN ARTICLE OF LUXURY.

June 17th, 1864.

After enunciating the principle on which the tenure of land is founded in England;

After describing the steps by which it has come to pass that the ownership of the land is concentrated and perpetuated in a limited number of great families;

After expressing in figures the immense accumulation of wealth in the hands of the aristocracy which results from that system;

After exhibiting this aristocracy exercising political power through the House of Commons, as well as through the House of Lords;

I sought in the history of the land-tax for a proof of the solicitude and success with which the English aristocracy had turned to its own advantage the monopoly with which it is invested, and stated:

That in 1799, in the reign of George III., the land tax, trans-

formed into a perpetual tax, was fixed at the sum of £2,037,627;

That, this tax having been at the same period declared redeemable, and several redemptions having since been effected, it did not amount at the present day to more than £1,257,808;

That, consequently, the land-tax appeared in the annual statement of the public revenue as a comparatively trifling amount; and that this amount remained almost stationary, while the revenues of territorial property, through the natural course of things, and without any effort or sacrifice on the part of the proprietors, had never ceased increasing in enormous proportions.

In support of Adam Smith's explanations of the natural causes whose action tends to augment indefinitely the wealth of the landed proprietors, who grow rich while resting with their arms crossed, and by the simple effect of the general progress,—I quoted characteristic figures and detailed the fabulous increase of value acquired by an acre of land in this country, especially wherever industry and commerce have displayed their power, as in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Glasgow, and Belfast.

Possibly an objection may have presented itself to the minds of your readers.

Some little time ago the *Times* remarked that the purchase of a landed estate was the poorest of all investments. It is undeniable that an individual who looks for a lucrative employment of his money will not derive as much profit by purchasing land with it as by placing it in the public funds, or by entering into partnership in some stable business, or by lending it out on mortgage.

But it is important not to confound what the land yields to a man who purchases it *to-day*, with what it yields to a man who has held it *for a long time past*. For it is precisely because the marketable or nominal value of the soil has so prodigiously increased that the purchaser is obliged to give a price out of all proportion to the income which he has a chance of drawing from it. In fact, in that income he must find the interest of the capital employed in the purchase, and if he has paid a comparatively high price, his income will so far be diminished. In other words the rents of the estate purchased by him will not constitute, in his case, a good return for his money, because he will have paid very dearly for the ownership.

If the actual purchasers cannot expect to derive but a very small revenue from the lands they have taken a fancy to purchase, it is precisely because, in the hands of the proprietors of old date, the marketable value of the soil has prodigiously increased. If money, invested at the present day in real property, yields but little, it is precisely on account of the persistent rise in the value of land, a rise proportioned to the persistent augmentation of the rent, which, as I have already observed, is the result, not of the efforts and sacrifices of the landlords, but of the natural development of the general wealth, the progress of industry, the progress of commerce, the discoveries of science, in a word, the labour of all.

This has been well pointed out and illustrated in a remarkable work by M. Vidal :—" An estate which was worth 100,000 francs a century ago, and which was then let for 5,000 francs, now pays 10,000 francs rent; but it has cost the actual proprietor 300,000 francs, and perhaps more. The rent of this land has really doubled, and yet the interest of the capital, in the case of the actual proprietor, as compared with the revenue of the ancient owner, has lowered. The estate which formerly yielded 5000 francs rent, now yields 10,000; and yet the ancient proprietor drew for his capital five per cent., while the actual proprietor draws only three and a half."*

This example shows clearly and decisively how it happens that it does not answer now-a-days to invest one's capital in real property—unless with reference to ground purchased with a view to some commercial speculation—although the fact of the progressive augmentation of rent is one absolutely beyond all doubt.

Thence follow two consequences :—

1. That the great families in whose hands the possession of the soil in England has been perpetuated, by means of the rights of primogeniture and entail, have not ceased, and do not cease, to grow rich, without taking the slightest trouble about it.

2. That, to purchase land at the present day in this country—that is, if it be purchased with a view to proprietorship, and not for a commercial speculation—one must not only be rich, but in some sort at a loss to know what to do with one's money.

The *Times* made a remark from which it draws an entirely

* " De la Repartition des Richesses," p. 154.

false conclusion, though the assertion itself is perfectly true:—"Land has become here a fancy thing, an article of luxury." It is bought when it can be had, not because of the profit which it offers, but because of the social position which it gives. In fact, the individual who succeeds in rising to the rank of landed proprietor by the purchase of an estate of tolerably large extent, thinks himself, and is really not far from becoming, a personage. He will take his place among those who, in his county, pride themselves on belonging to the "gentry"; he will be on the grand jury at the assizes; the local Duke will perhaps admit him to the honour of his table, when election time comes round; the produce of his estate will have a chance of being admired at the horticultural fêtes, and his daughters will figure at the county balls.

Thus landed property possesses here an incomparable charm. The golden dream of every Saxon merchant is to be one day classed among the landlords. The manufacturer sighs for the happy moment when he will be able to say, while taking his morning walk, "This is mine." If, far, very far from his fatherland, the colonist turns his eyes towards her, it is in the hope of returning as a "country gentleman."

And whence springs this general earth-hunger? From the love of lucre? Not at all. There are estates of great extent, recently purchased, which return barely two per cent. to their owners, in a country where it is easy to place one's money, and with perfect safety, at four and five per cent. It is because, as the *Times* observes, land at the present day in England is an article of luxury. There is the whole secret.

But there is one point which the *Times* has omitted to clear up, and it is this:—How comes it that where taxation weighs so heavily upon articles of first necessity, it does not weigh at all upon an article of luxury?

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