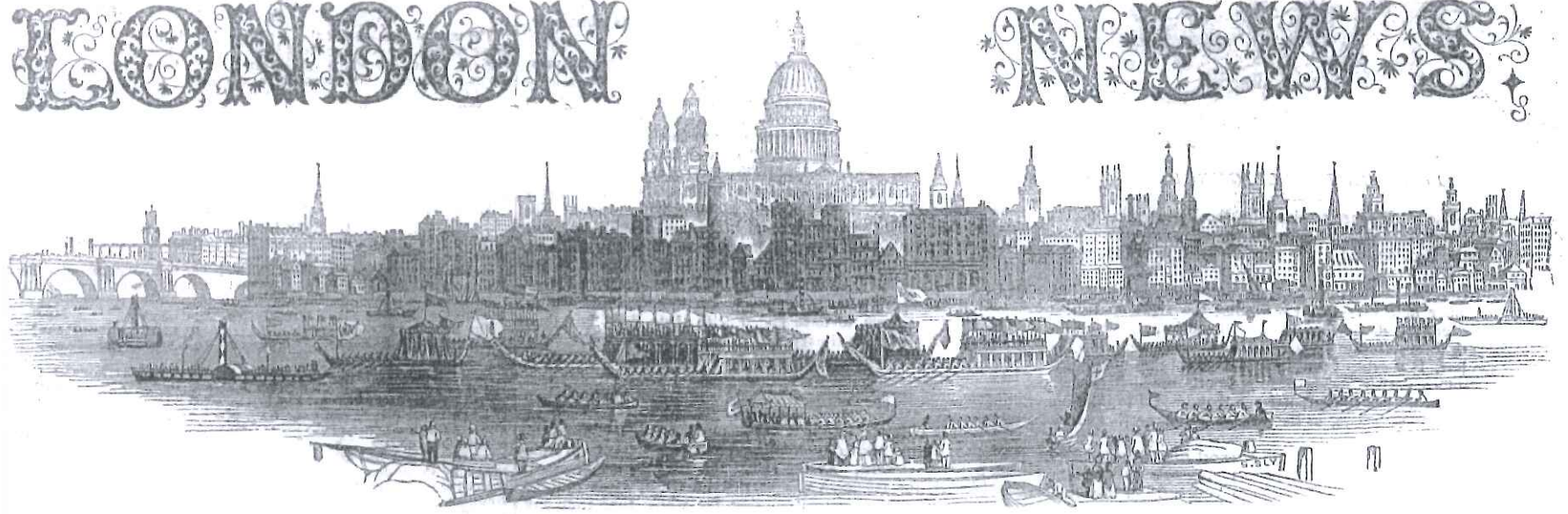


# THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS



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FOR THE WEEK ENDING SATURDAY, JULY 16, 1842.

[SIXPENCE

## BRITISH AGRICULTURE.

The grand Agricultural Meeting at Bristol—of which the details and illustrations this week occupy so large a portion of our space—naturally induces us to a contemplation of the fine subject which it involves—the condition, prospects, and influences of British Agriculture. The tone of this journal has, we hope, hitherto been a marked and determined one. We trust we have proved to our readers a strong and honest impartiality of purpose in our treatment of every political discussion; and that the social happiness and moral condition of the Empire have been studied by us with all our considerations of the means of national greatness—or the remedies for national distress. It is plain, we hope, to the wide community which has so largely patronised us, that we are wedded to none of its parties—not biased towards any of its monopolies—not the advocates of any of its individual influences—but only the general supporters of a general public good. It will never, therefore, be expected of us, that we shall set up the great Commercial and Manufacturing interests of England against the equally great Agricultural; or that, on the other hand, we shall crush the energies of invention, and bow down the loom unto the plough. We look upon both of these sections of the national grandeur of our country with an eye of pride that will gather no jealousy within its beautiful vision: philosophy weds rather than severs them in our mind—we make them contingent, in our mental speculations, upon each other's welfare—we refuse to regard them as antagonistic—and we believe their union in peace capable of achieving, only in a happier direction, as much as the union of our glorious navy with our invincible army amid the wilder strifes and contingencies of war.

This is the spirit in which we are determined to survey the two interests—not indeed without respect to the present condition and sufferings of the country, although certainly without consideration—except for the relief of the people—for any of their rival claims for political sympathy and support.

With this preliminary we can draw no odium upon our principles; we need invent no excuse for our pride, when we confess to an exulting approval of the value, the importance, and the social benefit of such a distinguished celebration as that which the Royal Agricultural Society has been all the week displaying in the bosom of the ancient city of Bristol; and thence communicating its energies, its spirit, and its power through a thousand warm and cheerful ramifications of the national heart.

The mighty spirit of English commerce has made its giant strides up to the gates of the garner-house and among the furrows of the plough; and thither we bear it company with honour so long as the tide is allowed to ebb, and prosperity to roll its golden flood, in equal measure, over the farmer's freehold, the merchant's city, and the manufacturer's home. We are content, too, that their adversities—when adversity cannot be averted—shall be borne alike; and it is only a false struggle for power that we would reprobate, and a flimsy political economy that we abjure.

But in such a meeting as that of the Bristol Association we see neither of these; we see only the fine old agricultural spirit of the land breaking out in its purity and strength. We recognise the attachment to the soil—a feeling identical with the love of country—asserting its mastery over the yeoman-heart of England. The farmer-gentlemen assemble in the farmer-spirit of a more innocent and less advanced age, in the manly open-heartedness of a noble calling, in the pride and purpose of a truly English pursuit. Their politics are left at home; their jealousies are discarded; they have one cherished ambition to blazon before the world, and that is the elevating, the improving, the strengthening of the glorious agriculture of their native land. They repair to the *rendezvous* with a feeling as glowing as the seal of glory upon a sunset landscape—and yet as gentle and affectionate as the emotion of a mother who greets her child at school. With all this they mix up the emulations of science—the enterprise over new discovery—the contentions of personal skill—the honourable strife for prizes—the noble pursuit of perfection through every vein and artery of their manly craft. And in their great gathering they are countenanced by the high, the noble, the estimable of all classes in the state. The great leaders of legislative power, the commercialist, the free trader, the oppositionist, and the minister, fling away party distinctions and personal predilection and go “to lend a hand unto the plough.” Toryism

becomes liberal, liberalism is grown tory, and yet the consistency of each remains unscathed.

There is something especially exhilarating, interesting, English, in the whole exhibition. In almost every section of the great display, some national superiority is indicated. In the implements of husbandry, the qualities of grass and grain, the splendid breeds of quadrupedal animals, the improving principles of general cultivation, and the domestic produce of the field and farm—in and by all these there is a gratifying conviction brought home to us, that our ambition is brighter, our domestic industry more toilsome and enduring of spirit, our labour more productive, and our enterprise more full of reward, than the similar attributes of any other country in which commerce asserts her rivalship, and manufacture is a rushing river that has an overflowing torrent for every tributary stream. In such meetings, and on such occasions as our journal this week illustrates and describes, the genius of British agriculture is triumphant and alive; and it is impossible that it should have presence in any part of an empire like this without greetings of cordiality, and the enthusiasm of a true and national admiration.

After all, however, these great demonstrations—no matter in what sections of society they may occur—are, when divested of politics, only the landmarks of example—the example of doing good in the immediate sphere of interest, in which they are worked

out. But as they thus lead to benefit in one way, we have many fond anxieties that the spirit which they engender will also much provoke it in many others—that it will tend to allay jealousies and promote the common-sense welfare of each particular class—that every new improvement suggested, and every powerful result achieved, may be directed towards the amelioration of the present distresses of the land, and that a communicative spirit may be engendered by speculation between the poverty of the humble and the purses of the rich. Nor, while the theme now flashes upon us in another aspect, can we forbear from including the state of many of our agricultural districts, in our contemplation of the acts of this very Association, for enlarging their general influences, and aiding their capabilities of wealth. We hope most faithfully that the labourer, in all the contingencies of his present destiny, may be benefited equally with the farmer, and that the genius of invention may never be too powerfully marshalled against the genius of the soil. We earnestly desire a speedy amelioration of the sufferings of all classes of the population; and as we believe those of many of the agricultural peasants are not among the least, we cannot pour out our praises upon any celebration of interest among the lords of the soil, without anxious aspirations for its children too—we must, while lending our support to the best interests of agriculture, find a sympathizing voice also for its depression and distress.



GROUP OF CIRCASSIANS.

We present to our readers another of our characteristic sketches of the people of distant lands. In the bold grouping of the armed mounted militia of the Texas, which embellished the first page of one of our former numbers, we enlisted the interest of many of our subscribers who had fixed their eyes upon the Eden-like allurements of that fertile territory, and whose curiosity—newly awakened by the pencil of our artist—appealed to us for information with no small eagerness, and asked our advice and guidance regarding the selection of the new country as the emigrant's home. The subject of the present sketch is of character similar to that of the former one, but its aspect of interest is quite of another kind. Circassia does not, like the Texas, afford any lure of advantage to the oppressed and over-abounding population of these realms; but yet we regard its destinies as a country with no small sympathy, and its people have many claims upon our peculiar regard. In a political sense, we may regard the land as one of the hardest barriers against the ambition of Russia; in a social sense, we have possessed to an

extraordinary degree the respect and affections of its entire people. The deep reverence which the Circassians have taught themselves to entertain towards the name and character of Great Britain has become proverbial among travellers. They have appreciated, and even magnified our power; they have courted our alliance with the warmest protestations of regard; they have looked to England as their giant-arm of protection against aggressive Russia; and have, we lament to say, bestowed upon us a much larger amount of good feeling than we have ever had the gratitude to return. They are honest, hardy, brave, and powerful, and deserved better treatment at our hands. Russian ambition is now pouring into their territory large armies of barbarian troops, and the persecution which Circassia hoped to have seen averted by England is hot and vengeful in its pursuit of her sons. In the group which our artist has depicted, a Circassian woman is supposed to have escaped from the invading enemy, and is bringing intelligence to her countrymen in arms.