

LONDON, November 30.

THE TWO BILLS.

OUR readers have seen the alterations that have been made in the committee on the bill to prevent seditious meetings. We submit them to reflecting minds, and challenge any man to prove that the poison is extinguished.

A single magistrate has still the power of dispersing a meeting, and in case they do not separate they shall be adjudged "felons, and shall suffer death as in cases of felony, without benefit of clergy." He may arrest any person for using words which he may think are calculated "to stir up the people to hatred, or contempt of government"—and in case of what he may call obstruction, he may disperse the meeting, under the same penalty. And in case that any person or persons "shall happen to be killed, maimed, or hurt, in the dispersing, seizing, or apprehending"—the justice "shall be freely discharged, and indemnified of, or for the killing, maiming, or hurting such person or persons."

And what, in our minds, more important than any other part of the bill, the clause which authorizes domiciliary visits, after the pure model of the school of Roberispierre, remains: by this clause no dwelling can be sacred; no tavern club, no society, no private family even can be safe against the forcible intrusion of the minions of office. For mark the words—"It shall be lawful for any justice who shall by information upon oath, have reason to suspect (the word is curious) that any house, room, field, or place, are, or is opened or used for the purpose of delivering lectures or discourses, or for public debate, contrary to the provisions of this act, to go to such house, room, or place, and demand to be admitted therein; and in case such justice shall be refused admittance, the same shall be deemed a disorderly house, and every person refusing such admittance shall forfeit one hundred pounds, to any person who shall sue for the same."

What may not be the abuse of this unqualified outrage on the privacy of families? What harmless lodge of free masons; what body of religious men, meeting for mutual instruction; what friendly society of neighbours who make themselves select by ballot, and who pay a nightly sum for the expenses of their meeting, can be safe after this bill shall pass into a law?—What private house even may not be violated, under the pretence of an information? We know of what materials common informers are composed; and it is not an unwarranted conjecture that even justices may be found so devoted to power as to violate that which the principles of the constitution call the castle of an Englishman.

This bill has with truth been asserted to be on extinction, directly and pointedly, of the seeds and sources, the element and germinations, of civil freedom in this country. A demolition of that on which stands the wide fabric of British liberty, freedom of thought, freedom of communion, freedom of discussion, freedom of petition, (growing in the very heart and vitals of a free state, even if it were not consecrated by express laws) in a word, that which constitutes the essence of our government, without which, whatever liberty remains to us is comparatively nothing, even if that remainder must not soon totter, after its foundation is removed by passing the bills.

Mr. Adair, in the committee, said in substance, that the right of discussing the conduct of ministers remained untouched by this bill, and that by the alteration in the principal clauses there would now be an end of misrepresentation, for the great grievance was remedied, that we affirm this bill, as it stands at this moment, is more dangerous and detestable than before it went into that committee.

The original bill consisted of twenty two clauses; the amended bill of the same number, with some compression and transposition,

on, and with one new clause, 4th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 19th, 20th and 21st clauses in the amended bill, are mostly word for word, the same as in the original.

Their meaning is strictly so—and the only addition to them is the filling up the blanks. The 14th and 22d are new clauses; the 22d relates to the commencement and duration of the bill; the 14th extends the power of the magistrate to places that are licensed, as well as to those that are not, inflicting the penalty of 100l. there upon refusal of admittance, as well as where no license has been obtained.

In the 18th clause, the difference is indeed very material. This clause in the original exempted the Dissenters, according to the law of the first William and Mary, and the Papists, according to the 31st of the present king, from the operation of this bill, as well as the universities of this kingdom.—In the amended bill, it is entirely omitted, and is in favor of both the Protestants and Papists, and only protects the Universities.

The first clause takes out of the bill a greater description of meetings than were excepted in the original bill, and so far the amended copy is better than the original; but as these do not extend beyond meetings called by aldermen, head officers of districts, or grand juries, the mass of the people are liable to the inconveniences of this bill in assembling together, in direct violation of the fifth article of the bill of rights—which, let it be observed, was made for the poor and powerless, not the rich and great. But this inconvenience sinks into nothing, before the other evils of this bill, "for where the malady is placed, the lesser is scarcely felt." An inconvenience in the mode of meeting is a trifle light as air, in comparison to the bloody consequences which the bloody code of last Friday has hoisted over the heads of the people of England.

No meeting of more than 50 persons can be held otherwise than under this act. At all meetings, whether convened according to the provisions of this act, or in neglect of them, any magistrate has the right to arrest any speaker at his discretion. He has a right to disperse the meeting; and if 12 persons remain one hour after his proclamation, he has a right to order those to be killed, and is indemnified, together with all his assistants, military and civil, from all consequences!

If the person arrested by the justice should in any way resist, the penalty is death.

If any person should in any way, aid the speaker so arrested, the penalty is death.

If more than 12 persons remain one hour after the magistrate orders the meeting to disperse the penalty is death.

If any person or persons should oppose the magistrate, by arm or without; in the words of the act itself, if they should "in any manner let, hinder, or hurt," the justice or his assistants, or obstruct them in any way, the penalty is death! death! death!

From such a law may the Almighty God defend our country, ourselves and our posterity!!

Query. Do not promoters of these bills subject themselves to an arraignment for high treason, for endeavouring to procure laws, which in the application for the royal assent may fairly be construed into acts tending to instigate his Majesty to violate his coronation oath, by which he swore to maintain inviolate every article of the Bill of Rights, the 5th of which declares "that it is the right of the subjects to petition the King, and that all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal;" one of the conditions by which the house of Brunswick holds the crown of these kingdoms?

These bills we are informed, are to be followed by a bill which will at once blot out from our system the freedom of the press, by obliging every man to sign his name to eve-

The country has still one mode left to prevent these bills from passing into laws; but no time is to be lost. New meetings should be called, and humble petitions sent to his Majesty, praying him to use his royal prerogative in refusing the royal assent to the bills, should they pass in the two houses of parliament.

The ancient and royal city of York, at a public meeting of the inhabitants, summoned by the Lord Mayor, came to spirited resolutions against the bills now pending in parliament. To-morrow there is to be a public meeting of the freeholders of that great country, when similar resolutions are expected to be carried.

The large and populous city of Glasgow too have come forward in a spirited manner against the bills.

The county of Northumberland has petitioned against the bills, as well as many other places.

N A S S A U, (N. P.) December 4.

Yesterday the privateer schooner Ranger, captain Mackenny, returned here from a cruise to windward.

On the 23d of November, after a chase of 12 hours, the Ranger brought to and captured a French schooner Packet, called the Dispatch, bound from Aux-Cayes to Baltimore, under cover of American papers, and loaded with coffee, sugar, &c. She had also on board a quantity of specie and cannon and ammunition in the hold. There were likewise on board dispatches for the national convention, cased in leaden covers, well soldered, and fixed with iron rings; one of these was secured, the others had been thrown overboard. Dispatches from Mr. Hammond to Gen. Williamson at St. Domingo were also found on board, supposed to be taken with a French officer in our service, and were going to M. Adet, the French Minister at Philadelphia. There were likewise dispatches from Gen. Rigaud to M. Adet, under the care of citizen Blanche, colonel by Brevet, and Lieutenant-colonel of the legion Egalite, (Rigaud's own corps.)

In the gale of wind, on the 25th, carrying a press of sail to get into a harbour the prize very unfortunately overfet, and by the weight of the cannon far aft was carried down stern foremost in a few minutes.

The Ranger found on shore at Marygnara, a schooner bilged, without any person on board. At Picheagna she found an American ship, bound from New-York for Jamaica, on shore, got her off, and enabled her to proceed on her voyage.

December 18.

Yesterday 18 Frenchmen were brought to here in three harbour Island vessels from Abaco. They were the crew of the Parisienne, a French privateer schooner from Charleston, which was cast away about a fortnight since near the Whale Key. The crew say they had their guns and other military stores in the hold, and were going to Cuba for more hands.

December 25.

The brig Telegraph, Mariner from Savannah for Philadelphia, was driven ashore in a gale of wind, at 5 o'clock A. M. on Monday the 14th instant on Sandy Key Reef. The masts were immediately cut away to secure the vessel, then bearing head on the Reef. All the people got safe ashore on the key, with some provisions, baggage, and also about 40,000 dollars. On Tuesday the 15th, the sloop Jane, from North-Carolina, fell in with them, and brought intelligence of their situation to this place; upon which several vessels went off to their assistance. On Monday last, the Ranger, Mackenny, got to them, and took the people with what they had secured on board, and returned here yesterday.