

CONDITION OF ENGLAND.

While every thing is still on this side the water, with scarce a matter to interest us but the state of our currency; it would be as well to look abroad for amusement. The first thing that strikes us on this excursion, is the state of England—England, who has reached the pinnacle of glory, only to look down upon the gulph that yawns beneath her—whose successes upon the continent are equalled only by the distresses which she finds at home.

The picture is not ideal. It is now confessed to be true on all hands, by the Ins as well as the Opposition; by the Ins as well as the friends of Parliamentary Reform; from the writer of a two-penny pamphlet up to the Noble Peer, who shines in Westminster Hall. Innumerable proofs of this sentiment are strewn in the English prints, which lie before us—proofs which would almost make our hearts to yearn with pity, if it were not checked by the recollection that this load of debt and taxes had been accumulated in the impious attempt upon the liberties of man; that the war against the French Revolution was now recoiling upon the heads of its authors; and that the English people have themselves to blame for the meanness with which they have submitted to their kings, their ministers, and their corrupt Parliamentary Representatives.

In vain has just been lately attempted to be thrown into the eyes of the people—In vain did the Speech from the throne congratulate them upon the prosperity of their revenue, manufactures and commerce; the whole charm is now dissolved. No sooner did the Chancellor of the Exchequer appear with the budget lumbering at his back, than the scales fell from every eye.—What! support in the midst of peace, a standing army of 99,000 men, for the benefit of Great Britain and her colonies? What! continue the Income-tax, which even in the time of Henry the 4th was so obnoxious that its very authors directed every record of it to be destroyed. "that it might not serve as a precedent to future ages?" Continue the Income-tax, which Ministers had solemnly pledged themselves to the nation to terminate with the war? Thus violate their plighted faith; thus to add the unfortunate subject by continued exactions? And was this the mighty boon for which Englishmen have been fighting? Was this the reward of all their toils, their sufferings, and their glories? Was it for this, that the plains of Waterloo had been watered with blood? When all the objects of the war had been attained, when the Jacobins were put down, and the Bourbons put up; when Bonaparte was again a captive upon a rock in the ocean; when they were dreaming of peace and all its Arcadian pleasures, of the vines and the fig-trees, under whose foliage they and their children, and their children's children, were so cheerfully to repose; is it at this time that 99,000 troops are to be maintained, and the detested Income tax is again to be fastened around their necks?

Their prints, and pamphlets and parliamentary debates, teem with such reflections. And to fill up the picture, they present us the most distressing view of the condition of nearly all classes of people.

"It was a distress (says the Duke of Bedford on the 12th March in the House of Peers) pervading every class of the community. Landlords could obtain no rent; tenants no profit; labourers no work. The goals were crowded to overflow with farmers imprisoned for debt, and labourers who had resorted to poaching, robbing farm-yards, and other depredations. Land was continually throwing out of cultivation, because it not only could not be cultivated with a profit, but must be cultivated with a positive loss. Beneficed clergymen, (not one sign do we hear for these privileged gentry!) could get no money for their tithes or their farms; and the Right Reverend Bench of Bishops knew full well the distress to which many of this class of persons were reduced. Yet in such a situation, with distress pervading every class of the community, and borne down as they were with the pressure of taxation, was it proposed by Ministers to continue the tax call-

ed the Property tax, in defiance of the sense of the country, declared as it was by numerous and continually accumulating petitions to the House of Commons against this measure. It had been observed on a former evening, that the expense of our establishments, with the addition of the interest of the National Debt, amounted to more than the whole rental of the Kingdom; and it might be added, that if the whole land of the Kingdom were now to be sold at a fair valuation, the amount would not be sufficient to pay the existing national debt. Blessed condition indeed!

In the same Debate, the Earl of Bathurst "was far from underrating the agricultural distresses, but contended that similar distresses had always occurred at the termination of a war."

The Earl of Carrington declared, that what were called "agricultural distresses, were in fact general distresses, pervading every class and description of the community."

The debates in both houses abound in such representations; but one of the strongest we have seen is from the pen of a Mr. Preston, a member of Parliament, and withal a most loyal admirer of Mr. Pitt, an advocate of the war, and one of those ministerial gentlemen who toss up their caps with the loudest plaudits to the glory of Old England. Observe some of the features of this glory, fresh from the hands of her warmest admirer. Whoever looks around him at the present moment, and views the distresses in which the country is involved, from the inability of a large part of the population to answer the demands of government;—whoever examines the great change which has taken place in the condition of a large part of the community hurried from wealth to poverty; from affluence to distress; whoever enquires into the fact, and finds that taxes are levied from a considerable part of the people by means of legal process; or whoever finds, as the fact is, the poor are increasing daily in number, while the ability of the persons, who are by law bound to contribute to their maintenance, is diminished—whenever shall know, as the fact is, that a large part of the community are in want of employment though willing to labor, and that their former employers are unable to afford to pay their wages; that even 50 men are to be met with in different parishes asking for employment, and urging it to be the interest of the farmer, rather to pay them for actual labour than to pay them in a state of idleness from the poor rate; while the farmer, though convinced of the justice of the appeal, is totally unable to meet this appeal to his interest; further, that a large portion of that industrious part of the community, the little farmers, (the favorites of the ancient system) with their large families, (the best hope of the state, and most virtuous part of the community) are ceasing to be farmers from necessity, and becoming pensioners to the poor rate, while in some townships, the persons who formerly contributed to the poor, are appealing for relief on the ground of their own poverty; and numbers of them obliged to abandon the cultivation of their farms, are become burdens on those parts of the parish, which alone are cultivated, thus taxing the industry of their neighbors, and hastening them to the same extremity of ultimate indigence—must admit that there is something wrong in the system, and that necessity, and not the spirit of complaint and dissatisfaction, imposes the duty of examining into these evils, that they may be understood and fairly met. The person who supposes this picture to be overcharged, will find himself mistaken.

"In some places, (says the same writer) the lands are actually deserted, and growing no other crop than weeds."

"By the destruction of the circulating medium, a total inability to purchase exists, and a value depreciated by the reduction of the rental, is still further depreciated by the competition to sell. And who is benefitted by this sudden, extraordinary and unexpected change? no one besides the capitalist, who can realize his money; and how few are they?"

The present unfortunate state of the country presents the lamentable history of Government using executions for taxes, and for balances in the hands of receivers, &c. Bankers, many of them deposits with them; they again call on

their debtors; and the receivers are using the harsh process of extents in aid; Mortgagees are enforcing their securities from the difficulty of obtaining interest; and, as to bankers, from the necessity of having ready money, and needy or improvident landlords, are levying their rents by distresses!!! What a wretched and melancholy picture!"

If such be the general condition of the Empire, how much more deplorable is that of Ireland! That gallant and generous country has ever been treated as a conquered nation.—Three fifths of her people are denied the right of worshipping their God according to the dictates of their own consciences, or compelled to contribute to the maintenance of the pampered and privileged priesthood of another sect. Ireland is not to be conciliated by concessions, which she has a right to demand, but compelled to obey the requisitions of an imperious task-master. Twenty-five thousand troops are to be stationed on her fields, to keep her sons in subjection, and to gather the fruits of their industry in tithes and in taxes. Is it any wonder, that her high-minded sons are fleeing from those green fields to a land of liberty?

We shall get, however, a better view of the state of the Empire, by narrowing down our enquiries to the single point; it is the one which now engrosses all her own attention—We mean, her taxes.

In one of the former Nos. of this paper, we expatiated on this topic, attempting to shew the embarrassments to which her revenue was reduced.—Our calculations were in reality more favorable than the fact; because the expenses of the government were put down at only 18 or 20 millions; whereas her army, navy and other annual expenditures are estimated at 29,000,000

The expenses of her debt are	44,000,000
	73,000,000

Her permanent or peace-taxes would raise no more than 40 millions, even admitting the people in their present distress, to consume as many of the taxable articles as they formerly did. Here, then, is a deficit of more than 30 millions—6 of these, as we are told are to be borrowed from the Bank—2 or 3 are left as the arrears of unexpended loans. How, then, is the deficit to be made up? How are Ministers to raise the wind to the tune of 20 millions of dollars? It was foreseen, that several alternatives were before them, but not one which was not liable to serious objections. They might either reduce the rate of the public interest, dip their hands into the sinking-fund, as was proposed by the Edinburgh Reviewers; contract new loans to pay up the interest on old ones; or continue those war taxes, to whose extinction they stood pledged at the end of the war. Ministers, it seems, preferred the last expedient. They brought forward a continuation of the property tax, as a part of the ways & means of the year.

But in vain they urged it forward. In vain did they roll the stone of Sisyphus up the hill; it only rebounded upon themselves. In vain did they plead the poverty of the treasury; the people urged their own, in more imperative terms.—In vain did Mr. Vansittart, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, declare, that if the tax was rejected, the "poor must be losers, as taxes of a more immediate pressure on them must be levied in its stead.—He was aware that either such new imposts must be levied, or the expense of the country could not be defrayed."

In vain did Lord Castlereagh denounce Mr. Brougham, for claiming "the reduction of all the war-taxes, amounting to 20 millions, in performance of the pledge to the country" that "this measure would only involve the country in ruin."—The people took the alarm; meetings were convened; the tables of the Commons groaned with petitions; the one alone from Westminster contained 20,000 signatures; the voice of the people in such a case was irresistible. When the question came to issue, the ministry were cast into a minority of 37—after losing the property tax, they, with as good a grace as possible, gave up the malt-tax of two millions.

And now, when this victory has been achieved what are the fruits of it? in what situation are the finances of England?

Are the expenses cut down to a level with their incomes? If they were so the pence-taxes would only be sufficient to pay off the annual expenses of their mountain of debt—they would still want some of their war-taxes to defray the most common expenses of the government.—But their expenses are not cut down. Retrenchment is not yet the order of the day. The navy and army are to be maintained, on the scale of the estimates proposed. Their debauched Regent is not to sacrifice a single mistress, or a solitary enjoyment. Pavilions and Palaces are rising like mushrooms. And to crown the ridiculous farce of monarchy, a stranger is imported to marry a young woman, who is the legitimate heir of the throne; and to fit them out, the distressed people of England are to pour in their contributions—60,000l. a year for a suitable establishment; an out-fit of a year's salary to be paid in advance; 40,000l. for the various expenses of state carriages, wine, &c. 10,000l. for an addition to her Royal Highness's jewels; besides a palace, &c. &c.

Retrenchments then out of the question, the most obvious resource in lieu of the property tax, is new loans.—Lord Castlereagh must go into the money market, and borrow money to pay the interest of the old debt.—Thus England is like the extravagant prodigal, who makes one debt to pay another.—To this complexion has she come at last!

It would be well for the ministry themselves, if they do not fall along with their project.

But the Distresses of England will not terminate with them.—It is not the abolition of the income tax, nor the removal of Castlereagh, which will relieve them. A more efficient remedy will be found in the abolition of that corrupt system of representation, which in most cases degrades Parliament into a tool of the Crown. It is a remarkable trait of the times, that the spirit, which seeks parliamentary reform, is once more awake. Major Cartwright and Sir Francis Burdett will not suffer it to sleep. In the Westminster Meeting, held on the 23d of February, Burdett avowed his sentiments without reserve. "He trusted that the moment had now arrived when the people of England would with one accord unite, proceeding upon the broad principle of the Constitution, with a firm determination, after this war of delusion, which had most unexpectedly, and not less rashly than fortunately terminated, of maintaining their rights and liberties. Without any more of this bugbear being held up of foreign aggression, he trusted all the evils would now be corrected, and that the people would now contend against the greatest of all enormities—a corrupt House of Commons, and corrupt ministers at home—evils much more dangerous than any foreign enemies."

They might go one step farther.—It would be a more radical reform, to sweep off the King, Lords and Clergy at once, purge the British Constitution of its aristocratical features, and give a free government to the Empire. May it not be, though certainly not very probable, that this derangement of the finances may give a powerful shock to the British Constitution?—The French Revolution emanated directly from financial embarrassment—why should the British be exempt from similar shocks?

MONARCHY.

Mr. Fox says of Hume, that he has almost an old-womanish veneration for kings. If this folly is seen in Mr. Hume, it is not surprising to see it in so many fools who bask in the Courts of Europe. Such insanity would be inexcusable in an American—in an European courtier, it is a matter of course.

Monarchy is the most common of all forms of Government; and yet it is the most ridiculous. Of all the solemn farces, which have been played off upon man, that of hereditary kings is the most silly. Nothing could disguise its absurdity, but the pomp which surrounds it. So true was the expression of Bonaparte, that a throne is but a piece of wood, covered with velvet—or, that of Dr. Beattie, that strip Majesty of its externals, and it is nothing but a jest.

All Europe has lately rung with the

cry of legitimate Princes. The same folly has crossed the Atlantic—and Gouverneur Morris was once silly enough to address an American assembly in these memorable words—"The long agony is over, and France reposes in the arms of her legitimate sovereigns."

Now, if kings were even the creatures of our choice, what would they be? You pick a man out, like yourself, to reign over thousands. Nature has not marked him out, like a queen bee, for any thing like superiority. He is born with no reins in his hand, nor any spur upon his heel. He is but a man, with the same organs, the same appetites, the same propensities as your own. You place a sceptre in his hand, mount him upon a throne, and hail him as a King. The treasures, wrung from his people are lavished at his feet; powers and dignities flow from his hand. A set of men are placed around to give eclat and splendor to his power, under the name of Nobles. One thing more, & the charn is complete; a privileged clergy, who profess to draw from another world the right to pamper their own appetites, and direct the consciences of their fellow subjects. Thus clothed with power, and supported by his satellites, behold here is a king!—in how many instances, the spoilt child of fortune, the victim of caprice; the slave of appetite, and the scourge of his people. For, though you may have chosen him at first from some regard to his own merit, it is a hundred to one but his head becomes turned by the pinnacle on which he is placed, & all his feelings are corrupted by power.

But when the monarch dies, for even kings, in spite of the flatteries of their parasites, are not immortal, who succeeds him? The legitimate prince, certainly; the next in order of succession; perhaps a baby, it may be an idiot, or a silly woman, in whose hands are entrusted the lives and prosperity of thousands; a being, who, perhaps, without one atom of merit, is destined to rule over thousands better than himself; without one atom of industry, to sip the sweat from other's brows, and riot on the spoils of the poor. Is this consistent with nature? Is it agreeable to justice, or even to common sense?—And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king, which ye shall have chosen you, and the Lord will not hear you in that day."

We have not "angels in the shape of men" to govern the world—for, cast your eyes upon the Princes who sway the sceptre of Europe.—

The Queen of Portugal—was a lunatic.

The King of Spain is a fanatic; the slave of priests, the murderer or jailor of the very patriots, who restored him to his throne.

The King of France is notorious for his imbecility.—An English Bishop once painted him as a man fit only to cook his own capons. But the Bishop was unjust—Louis has certainly some taste for the classics; but he was never stamped for a great man.

In Austria, we have a King, who never did a remarkable act in his life.—He has been driven more than once from a throne, which he had neither the energy to keep or to conquer.

The same of his brother of Prussia; one of those weak men, whom the neighing of a horse, or the prejudice of legitimacy, only could have made a king. The maxim, *ex quois ligno non fit Mercurius*, may be true in itself; but not of kings.

The King of Naples, much less a monk than his kinsman of Spain, is more of a debauchee. For the picture of a Neapolitan Court, see the Letters of Trowbridge, or the life of Nelson.

The Emperor Alexander is an exception to the rule we have mentioned. He has some merit of his own, mixed up with his infirmities.

The King of Sweden is an idiot; & the Prince of Orange has nothing remarkable in his escutcheon.

In England, the King is a lunatic; the Prince Regent is bloated with debauchery—his brothers, rioters upon a people's generosity. The Princess Charlotte is about to fasten an establishment upon the nation, whose splendor is only to be equalled by their distresses!

Such is the brief sketch of the chiefs, who preside over the destinies of Europe; and but one green spot in the waste of idiotism, fanaticism, and debauchery!