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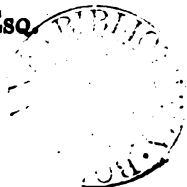
413.

**THE
BELGIC REVOLUTION.**

THE
BELGIC REVOLUTION

OF
1830.

BY
CHARLES WHITE, Esq.



"The surest way to prevent seditions (if the times do bear it) is to take away the matter of them; for if there be fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the spark shall come that shall set it on fire."—BACON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
WHITTAKER AND CO., AVE-MARIA LANE.

1835.

413,

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DEDICATION.

TO

MRS. CHARLES WHITE.

It is the ordinary practice of historical and political writers to send forth their productions under the patronage of the great and powerful. I deviate from this custom—not from over-weening confidence in a work which requires the utmost protection and indulgence, but from a knowledge that its defects would have been still greater had they remained unchastened by your judicious criticism and reflections.

Accept, then, the Dedication as a feeble proof of my gratitude and affection.

THE AUTHOR.

ERRATA.

Page	Line
29	2, <i>for</i> Friedland, <i>read</i> Friesland.
29	5, <i>for</i> Eme, <i>read</i> Elb.
29	6, <i>for</i> Enes, <i>read</i> Ems.
31	21, <i>for</i> some, <i>read</i> none.
73	17, <i>for</i> hours, <i>read</i> years.
75	27, <i>for</i> Maanen, <i>read</i> Meenen.
79	2, <i>for</i> persecution, <i>read</i> prosecution.
79	2, <i>for</i> d'Ellougue, <i>read</i> d'Elhougue.
82	29, <i>for</i> intra, <i>read</i> extra.
102	6, <i>for</i> movements, <i>read</i> movement.
105	1, <i>for</i> conciliating, <i>read</i> conciliatory.
110	Note, <i>for</i> fundamentale, <i>read</i> fondamentale.
126	12, <i>for</i> tyrants, <i>read</i> tyrans.
128	5, <i>for</i> double, <i>read</i> durable.
202	27, <i>for</i> containg, <i>read</i> containing.
208	15, <i>for</i> 19th, <i>read</i> 9th.
264	34, <i>for</i> Maanen, <i>read</i> Meenen.
270	33, <i>for</i> in, <i>read</i> into.
276	14, <i>for</i> Meens, <i>read</i> Meeus.
292	35, <i>for</i> private, <i>read</i> privates.
311	Contents, <i>for</i> provincial, <i>read</i> provisional.
317	8, <i>for</i> the Hannibræ, <i>read</i> Hannibal.
320	10, <i>for</i> Sylvian, <i>read</i> Sylvain.
337	24, <i>for</i> left, <i>read</i> right.
11	27, <i>for</i> right, <i>read</i> left.
353	33, <i>for</i> provincial, <i>read</i> provisional.

P R E F A C E.

IN giving the following volumes to the public, it is a duty I owe myself to offer a few prefatory observations that will, I trust, not only account for many deficiencies, but avert other accusations that might be levelled against me. When I state that I have resided more than four years in Belgium; that I have attentively watched the various phases of the revolution since its outbreking in August 1830, and lived on terms of amicable intercourse with many of the most eminent personages that have figured on the political horizon; that I have had access to a vast mass of oral and documentary testimony, and have made the subject not only a matter of constant meditation, but of occasional publication;* when I state this, the reader

* The narrative of the Siege of Antwerp, in the *United Service Journal*, No. 52, with divers other articles on the Belgian question, in that and other reviews and public journals.—NOTE OF EDITOR.

will naturally feel himself entitled to expect much at my hands, and to observe that such a position was the most advantageous a foreigner could desire for obtaining accurate and luminous information.

But, whilst I frankly point out this combination of circumstances, apparently so highly favourable for the purposes of *composition*, it is important for me to show the reverse of the picture, and to declare that many of these very circumstances enhance, rather than obviate, the difficulties of *publication*. For it is as impossible to allude to events in which I may perchance have borne a trifling share, without incurring the imputation of egotism, as it is to give publicity to many details in my possession, without betraying the trust of those who have honoured me with their confidence. It is as difficult to draw aside the veil from various recent occurrences without prematurely exposing names and raking up dormant passions, as it is to speak frankly or impartially of men's conduct without giving umbrage to persons to whom I am indebted, not only for proofs of kindness, but for the very information on which my strictures may be grounded. In short, it is as embarrassing to censure public acts without wounding private feelings, as to mete

out deserved praise without being accused of prejudice, or perhaps something worse.

It was at first my desire to compose, not an ephemeral production, got up for the sole purpose of gratifying party feelings, or serving a specific political purpose, but a history that might have been deemed worthy of outliving the feverish interest of the day : a history at once impartial, accurate, and comprehensive. But I have been deterred from so doing, not only by the foregoing considerations, but by the conviction that events were still too recent to admit of putting forth any serious historical work, as well as by other difficulties, some of which I shall enumerate.

In the first place, whether in Holland or Belgium, men's feelings are still too much excited, and their opinions and prejudices too much biassed, to render it easy to arrive at any dispassionate or impartial conclusion. In Brussels, for instance, King William is held up as a fiscal tyrant, whose reign was a continued series of infractions of the fundamental law ; and his ministers are looked on as greedy oppressors, whose only aim was to reduce Belgium to a state of bondage, and to monopolize her wealth and resources for the sole benefit of Holland. At the Hague, King Leopold is designated as an

usurper, and his people as ungrateful rebels, who had not the slightest pretext for throwing off the paternal government of the Nassaus, and who were alone prevented from igniting all Europe in one general jacobinical conflagration, by the firmness of the Dutch monarch, and the devoted loyalty of the old Netherlands. Thus, if a querist attempt to elicit authorities from the Dutch, he will be submerged in a sea of invective, not only levelled against their adversaries, but against the advocates of those liberal principles that are steadily and irresistibly gaining ground throughout all Western Europe ; whilst, on the other hand, if a writer consult public opinion in Belgium, he will find himself borne away by a torrent of abuse, not only aimed against the Dutch, but against all those who venture to question the extent of the Belgian grievances, or to express an opinion that during *a certain period*, the selection of the Prince of Orange was not incompatible with the interests, welfare, and independence of the nation.

Secondly,—The negotiations being still incomplete, and the issue of the question still undecided, it is impossible to obtain various official documents necessary for the explanation of past occurrences, and, above all, to the completion of a regular connected history. Nay, even

admitting that access may be had to such documents, their publication at the present moment would be premature, and could not obtain the sanction of the diplomatists engaged in the negotiation, unless they were printed in a mutilated state.

These, then, and other circumstances of a personal nature, have determined me to abandon the project of compiling a history; but being unwilling to throw away the labour and research of many months, I have resolved to confine myself to a cursory narrative of general events.

Fully alive to the delicacy of my position, it has been my earnest study to maintain moderation and impartiality. At the same time, I have not hesitated to advance my opinions with freedom, and to laud and censure without regard to party or country. To those whom my praise of men or measures may appear exaggerated or ill-founded, I have only to say that, although erroneous, they proceed from *conviction*. To those who may cavil at my strictures, I have only to observe, that I utterly disclaim all intention of *personality*, and have levelled my remarks against such proceedings only, as may be considered public property, or falling within the immediate domain of history.

Some there are, who will doubtless be of-

fended with my criticism, and others dissatisfied with my praise. For this I can offer no remedy, and must consequently submit to the fate that awaits all contemporaneous writers, especially such as undertake to discuss men's conduct during civil commotions. For, as Cowley in one of his essays justly observes,—“ In all civil wars, men are so far from stating the quarrel against their country, that they do it against a person or party which they really believe or pretend to be pernicious to it.”

Such appears to have been the spirit that has presided at the composition of almost all the pamphlets or works that have been published by both parties, on the subject of the revolution. For, if one excepts the valuable productions of Mr. Nothomb, Count Hooggendorp, and Baron de Keverberg, with those attributed to Mr. Van de Weyer, and one or two others of minor note, the pages of the rest are but a tissue of personalities and scurrilous diatribes, directed against men and not against measures, tending to obscure rather than enlighten, and being, in fact, mere vehicles for venting individual animosities, and gratifying national or party hatreds.

THE BELGIC REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I.

BELGIUM—ITS NAME AND NATIONALITY EFFACED BY SUCCESSIVE CONQUERORS—ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND STRUGGLES FOR LIBERTY AND INDEPENDENCE—ITS PROSPERITY UNDER MARIA THERESA—JOSEPH II. ATTEMPTS TO INTRODUCE TOLERANCE AND REFORM IN CHURCH AND STATE—DISCONTENT OF CLERGY AND LAITY—RIOTS EXCITED BY VANDERNOOT'S MEMOIR—THE AUSTRIANS DRIVEN FROM BELGIUM—THE INDEPENDENCE OF BRABANT PROCLAIMED—JOSEPH DEPOSED—HIS DEATH—ACCESSION OF LEOPOLD—BELGIANS DEFEATED—CONVENTION OF THE HAGUE—RESTORATION OF AUSTRIAN DOMINION—DEATH OF LEOPOLD—ACCESSION OF FRANCIS I.—GENERAL WAR—THE FRENCH DEFEAT THE ALLIES, OVERRUN BELGIUM, AND ANNEX IT TO THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

ALTHOUGH the name of Belgium is coeval with the most interesting period of Roman history, and connected with some of the most glorious achievements of the imperial legions, the various political mutations and subdivisions to which that country was subjected, its frequent passage from the dominion of one ruler to another, its continued yet ever-varying state of vassalage during eighteen centuries, from the time of Cæsar to the moment of its last revolution, not only annihilated its independence as a nation, but went far to rob it of a name, whose remote antiquity merges in the night of time.

Indeed, from the period of its passing under the sway of the house of Austria, to that of its conquest by the French republic, and subsequent incorporation with Holland, every effort appears to have been employed, not only to destroy all vestiges of nationality, but even to avoid all recurrence to its ancient appellation. Thus, on referring to the various treaties concluded during its subjection to Austria or Spain, even to that entitled the "*joyeuse entrée*," we find it constantly denominated as the Low Countries, Spanish, or Austrian Netherlands.* Again, during its junction with France, it was only known as forming an integral part of the French empire; whilst, from the period of its union with Holland, it was confounded with the old Netherlands, and designated, both in the fundamental law, and in all public acts, as "the Southern Provinces."†

In short, it seems to have been the study of its successive masters not only to enfeeble that unity of spirit and homogeneity of character which constitute the great mainsprings of patriotism, but to obliterate that which, next to a man's domestic hearth, must be ever dearest to his feelings—his country's name. To such extremes was this system carried by the Dutch government, that an attempt was made by them even to impose their language on the Belgians, and thus to compel the majority to abandon the prevalent idiom of their country, and to

* The "*joyeuse entrée*" consisted of a collection of fifty-nine articles, some dating as early as the thirteenth century, and guaranteeing certain privileges which the Austrian monarchs swore to maintain at the moment of their inauguration. These articles were renewed and accorded to the states of Brabant and Limbourg by Maria Theresa, and sworn to by the Duke Charles of Lorraine, then Governor of the Low Countries, on the 20th April, 1744.

† The "fundamental law," often recurred to in the course of this work, was the constitution or charter of the kingdom of the Netherlands, consisting of 234 articles, with three additional.

adopt the dialect of the minority, to whom they had been forcibly wedded, but with whom they were not susceptible of cordial political union, and still less of vernacular amalgamation. But, with all this, "Spain never could succeed in rendering the Belgians Spanish, nor could Austria convert them into Austrians, nor France metamorphose them into French, nor Holland transform them into Dutch."* History has shown them revolting against Spain, rebelling against Austria, rejoicing in their liberation from the iron rule of Napoleon, and emancipating themselves from their subjection to Holland. It may be affirmed that, from the period of their union with the kingdom of Lorraine down to that of their incorporation with Holland, each mutation has but added to their antipathies, and estranged them still further from foreign dominion.

The result of this perpetual obliteration of the Belgian name, was, that at length the Belgians were not only confounded with their rulers, but, of late years, their origin and history were lost sight of; so that, when the revolution burst forth, men were inclined to ask who were the Belgians? and to demand what were their titles, not only to nationality and independence, but even to a distinct appellation. It was argued, as they had never constituted an independent power, that they had no pretence to political existence, or to attempt to regain that freedom and individuality which had been the dowry of their forefathers—a dowry only wrested from them by the superior military science and discipline of the Roman cohorts. It was asserted, as they had been divided under the kings of France and Lorraine, the Dukes of Burgundy and Brabant, the Counts of Flanders, Namur, and Louvain: now tributary to

* *Essai, Historique et Politique, sur la Revolution Belgé.* Par Nothomb. Brussels, 1833.

Austria, and now to Spain; then incorporated with the French empire, and then united to Holland, that they had forfeited all title to reassume that independent existence, which overwhelming force, as well as the mediterranean character of their geographical position, alone prevented their seizing and maintaining at an earlier period. In short, the annals of Belgium present a remarkable feature; for, "the first historical notice one meets with of this people, is the relation of their downfall; it was, in fact, from their conquerors that they received a political existence."*

Ancient Belgium, according to Cæsar, was composed of twenty-four powerful and warlike nations, occupying the whole of the countries, situated between the North-Sea, and the rivers Seine and Marne, and forming a third part of Gaul.† Its surface was covered with dense and extensive forests, of which those of Soignes, the Ardennes, and the woody portions of the Flanders are remnants. The population composing the different tribes or nations were principally of Trans-Rhenan origin, and were fragments of those northern hordes that, at different periods, overrun all western Europe, carrying with them their language, constitutions, and customs.‡ They were remarkable, according to old historians, for the qualities that characterized the Teutonic race, being chaste, hospitable, and valiant; indeed so distinguished were they for their valour, as to elicit from Cæsar the following panegyric: "*Horum omnium (the Gauls) fortissimi sunt Belgæ.*" The Batavian cavalry was also cited by Tacitus as remarkable for its courage, and, like the Swiss of later times, formed during several centuries the body-guard of the Roman

* Schiller, *Geschichte des abfalls der vereinigten, Niederländen.*

† Cæsar, *de Bell. Gall.* Lib. I.

‡ Tacitus, *de Mori "Germ."* Lib. IV.

emperors. Lucan and other authors make honourable mention of the military prowess of the Belgian troops in Greece, Egypt, Spain, and Italy; and, according to Florus, the victory gained by Cæsar at Pharsalia was in a great measure attributed to the distinguished conduct of six Belgian cohorts. This reputation for personal courage was subsequently most honourably sustained by the Wallons in the Spanish service; by the splendid cavalry known, under the Duke of Alba, as the "*Milice d'Ordonnance*;" by the Flemings, in the pay of the Italian States; and by the Belgian conscripts, embodied in Napoleon's armies, where they were not considered inferior to the French soldiers.

On the other hand, they are reported, by the same authorities, to have possessed many of the vices peculiar to their progenitors, being addicted to drinking, gambling, broils, and party feuds. Indeed their history, for a lapse of ages, presents such a continual series of intestine turmoils and rebellions, especially in the Flanders, as prove this accusation of a jealous and troublesome spirit to have been well founded. But, before we brand a people with a taint of this nature, it is proper to look into their internal condition, and the conduct of their governments: if this be done, our reprobation of the constant outbreakings of the Belgians will be much diminished. They were the first people who struggled to burst asunder the bonds of vassalage and feudal degradation in which they were held by their rulers; the first to raise the banner of liberty against the infamous exactions and oppression of Spain and the Inquisition; in short, the first who drew the sword to reconquer that freedom, the seeds of which had been planted on their soil prior to their submission to the Roman yoke.

The history of the Netherlands, embodying that of

the Belgic provinces, has been so often and so ably treated, as to render it unnecessary to retrace the beaten track. We shall, therefore, take our point of departure from the reign of Joseph II., under whose government the craving of the Belgians for independence and nationality first demonstrated itself by an overt outbreaking, which may be considered as the elder sister of the recent revolution, and consequently immediately connected with our subject.

On the 28th of October, 1740, the Emperor Charles VI., last male heir of the house of Austria, died at Vienna; leaving his crown to his eldest daughter, the Archduchess Maria Theresa, who ascended the throne in virtue of the famous pragmatic sanction of 1713.* But the Elector of Bavaria having enlisted Prussia and France in his favour, laid claim to the imperial diadem, as nearest male heir, and was elected emperor in 1742, under the style of Charles VII.

Scarcely had the young empress assumed the reins of government ere she was assailed by a host of foes, who, under the pretext of supporting the Elector of Bavaria, attacked the Austrian possessions on every side. This prince, driven from his hereditary states, and possessing nothing of an empire but the empty title, died in 1745, overwhelmed with grief and disappointment. Upon his demise, his son Maximilian renounced all pretensions to the imperial succession; and Maria Theresa, therefore, placed the sceptre in the

* "The pragmatic sanction," was the celebrated convention promulgated by Charles VI. at Vienna on the 19th of April, 1713. Its principal feature was the stipulation that, in default of male issue, the succession of the house of Austria should devolve on the females and their descendants, according to the right of primogeniture. This convention was ratified and guaranteed by the different powers of Europe.—*Mém. Hist. et Pol. des Pays Bas.*

hands of her husband, who was elected emperor, under the name of Francis the First.

Charles of Lorraine having espoused the Archduchess Mary Anne, was associated with her in the government of the Belgic provinces, where they were inaugurated in 1744; but war breaking out immediately after, he was called to the command of the imperial troops in Germany. Hostilities commenced in May, and the French having thrown a body of nearly 100,000 men into the Flanders; in a short time, Menin, Ypres, Furnes, and other barrier fortresses, fell into the hands of Louis XV.; whilst the allied armies, composed of English, Dutch, and Austrians, commanded by Marshal Feuillade, the Duke of Aremberg, and Count Nassau, gave way on all sides, and fell back into a position between Ghent and Audenarde.

The further progress of the French was, however, speedily arrested by a skilful, stratagetical movement of the Duke of Lorraine, who, rapidly advancing on the Rhine, crossed that river, and penetrated into Alsace; thus compelling Marshal Saxe to withdraw the greater part of his forces from the Low Countries. The allied armies being reinforced by 20,000 men, now commenced offensive operations, and advancing into French Flanders, menaced Lille; but the want of cordiality and skill among the allied generals reduced their movements to mere demonstrations.

The campaigns of 1745 and the following year were by no means favourable to the Empress's arms. The latter was rendered memorable by the battle of Fontenoy, by which the whole of the Flanders, and the greater part of Hainault and Brabant, with the city of Brussels, fell into the hands of the French; and Louis XV, who nominally commanded in person, pursued his successes to the gates of Antwerp, which, with

the citadel, shortly yielded to his arms. At length, after a succession of campaigns, alike advantageous to France and glorious to Marshal Saxe, a peace was signed by the eight belligerent powers at Aix-la-Chapelle, on the 18th of October, 1748; and thus terminated that famous war, which, during seven years, had desolated the greater part of continental Europe.

The leading conditions of the treaty of Westphalia, as well as of all other most important treaties concluded since 1648, were again renewed, and the whole of the Belgic provinces restored to the empress; but without ameliorating their condition, or obviating any of the obnoxious clauses as regarded Holland. At the same time, the different contracting powers again guaranteed the pragmatic sanction, and thus formally recognized the immutable rights of Maria Theresa.

From this period, to the death of that princess in 1780, Belgium enjoyed a state of profound repose. Agriculture revived and prospered; commerce, though crippled by the Munster and barrier treaties, was regenerated, industry protected, and the arts and sciences warmly encouraged; whilst the resources and internal economy of the country presented a picture of great prosperity. In short, to adopt the language of an historian, "their condition at this period might be resumed in a few words—they were happy and contented."

But this fortunate calm was troubled soon after the accession of Joseph II, one of the first acts of whose reign, however, was the exaction from Holland of the evacuation of all the barrier towns, and a fruitless endeavour to obtain the opening of the Scheldt. This monarch, who had made the theory of government his principal study, had long been convinced of the evils arising from the intolerance of the church, from the want of union in the system of administration, from the multiplicity of

monasteries and church festivals, and the diversity of provincial laws and local privileges—all tending to create abuses, and to destroy that unity and vigour of action, so essential to the legislative welfare of a state.

The constitution of Charles V., remodelled by Philip of Anjou, had been again amended by the Emperor Charles VI. But the alterations introduced by the latter were a mere revival of the old constitution, with a few modifications rendered necessary by the gradual progress of civilization. This constitution, religiously observed during the reign of Maria Theresa, had long been considered extremely defective by Joseph II., and, although upon his accession he swore to the "*joyeuse entrée*," and pledged himself to maintain the ancient forms of administration, he secretly resolved to adopt various reforms, and to establish a more uniform and connected system of internal economy. The principles upon which Joseph acted were, doubtless, philosophic and enlightened; but the error he committed was in attacking, too suddenly, a host of abuses that had not become rotten, but petrified by age, and, consequently, required gradually softening, rather than being rent asunder by any sudden or despotic effort.

Being tolerant himself, and willing to promote tolerance throughout his dominions, being impressed with the abuses existing in the over-numerous monasteries, and the disadvantages of an excess of religious festivals and processions, Joseph II. attempted to propagate the one, to suppress some of the second, and to diminish the numbers of the third; especially the parochial feasts called "*Kermesses*, or *Dedicases*,"* which were prolonged several days, engendering idleness, drunkenness and pro-

* *Kermesses*, from Kirk-messe: *Dedicases*, from its being dedicated to the patron saint.

fligacy ; and, by greatly curtailing the time of labour, thus deprived the families of the labouring classes of at least one-fourth of their annual means of support.

Several edicts, tending to effect this object, were successively promulgated, and caused universal discontent, especially amongst the Catholic hierarchy. Indeed, when the Archduchess Maria Christina and Duke Albert (governors-general) addressed a rescript to the university of Louvain, enjoining the admission of Protestants to civil functions, and declaring that, “ although the emperor was firmly resolved to maintain and protect the Catholic religion, his majesty, nevertheless, deemed it consistent with Christian charity to extend civil tolerance to the Protestants, whom he could consider in no other light than that of citizens, without regard to their faith,” the following curious answer was returned :— “ Tolerance would be the source of dissensions, hatreds, and interminable discord ; *because the Catholic religion regards all heretics, without distinction, as victims devoted to eternal perdition.*—This is the maxim, that the Catholic religion impresses on her children, as an essential dogma, and invariable article of their faith.”*

These, and other proposed reforms, were promulgated by two diplomas, emanating from Vienna in January, 1787, and are highly interesting, since they caused that general sedition, which, gradually ripening into overt revolt, passed through all the various phases of revolution, even to the deposition of the sovereign ; until, at last, after a few months of unprofitable rebellion, disgraced by the most violent and wanton excesses, it terminated in submission and restoration.

The most striking features of the proposed innovations were, first, the abolition of the three “ collateral” councils,

* Dewez, *Histoire Générale de la Belgique*.

and their consolidation in one council of state, presided by the first minister ;* secondly, the division of the provinces into nine circles ; each governed by an intendant, and subdivided into districts ; each having its commissary charged with the political and civil administration ; thirdly, the abrogation of all petty, seigneurial, and ecclesiastical tribunals, and the establishment of a court of justice or assize for each province, with one central or high court of appeal at Brussels ; fourthly, the abrogation of the torture, and the submission of the secular and regular ecclesiastics to the ordinary judges ; fifthly, the suppression of some of the convents, and the foundation of a general seminary for the uniform education of the clergy.

It is difficult to discover any thing in these propositions that might not have been hailed with satisfaction by an enlightened people, or a clergy less jealous of its overwhelming influence ; but the effect produced on the public mind was diametrically opposed both to the views of the sovereign and to common reason.

The celebrated Vandernoot now first appeared on the political horizon, and rendered himself conspicuous by the publication of a memoir, setting forth the rights and privileges of the Belgic people, and denouncing as "*traitors to their country*" the intendants, and all such persons as accepted office under the new mode of administration. This famous memoir, approved of by the States, produced an extraordinary sensation throughout the country, and probably led to those popular commotions and outrages which immediately ensued at Namur and other towns.

The government, acting on a vacillating system of

* These "collateral" councils were established by Charles V., and were so designated from the counsellors being *ad latus principis*.

policy, devoid of consistency or energy, attempted to temporize; and, by suspending the execution of some reforms, hoped to obtain the recognition of others. But their expectations were deceived; for the malcontents, finding they had obtained these concessions, were determined to exact the repeal of all the imperial edicts, and the re-establishment of the ancient form of administration, in strict conformity with the constitution of 1531, and the "*joyeuse entrée*."

The governors-general, finding all remonstrance vain, and hoping to avert the gathering storm, judged it most prudent to submit. They, therefore, not only consented to the restoration of the constitution to its ancient form, but to the dismissal from their councils of all persons obnoxious to, or even *suspected* by, the people. This intelligence was published at Brussels on the 31st of May, 1787, and was celebrated with the most extravagant manifestation of public joy.

But the seeds of disaffection having once borne fruit, were not to be eradicated even by this triumph. Secret meetings were held, associations were formed, and the national cockade was openly worn. Volunteers enrolled themselves, and banners were carried through the streets, inscribed with inflammatory devices; whilst the name of Royalist or Intendant, adopted to denote such persons as were attached to the emperor, was a sufficient motive for proscription, and subjected the unfortunate individual so designated to insult, pillage, and even loss of life. In short, it was evident, although the States, clergy, and authorities, openly professed their inviolable attachment to the emperor, that it was their secret intention to endeavour to throw off the Austrian yoke.

It was not so much the real infractions made by the emperor in the constitution that irritated the people, as the malignant and exaggerated reports spread abroad by

designing persons. The vast mass of citizens, especially those of the lower orders in every country, are, generally speaking, indifferent to the form of government by which they are ruled, and of which they neither comprehend the meaning or object. They only judge of its purity or efficacy by the degree of personal liberty they enjoy, or from the immediate action of such taxes as press on the necessities and conveniencies of life. Such was the case in Belgium; where the people, naturally sluggish and quietly-disposed, required more than ordinary excitement to arouse them. The leaders were, therefore, obliged to have recourse to the falsest insinuations to stimulate the masses, and to inflame the public mind. Thus, the emperor was represented as a tyrant, whose intention it was to introduce military conscription, to charge all commercial, industrial, and agricultural produce with a tax of 40. per cent.; to abolish the ordinary tribunals, and substitute in their place the despotic jurisdiction of the Intendants; to introduce heterodox doctrines into the church, in order to sap the foundation of the true faith; and, lastly, it was affirmed that an army of 50,000 Austrians was preparing to pour into the country to support these odious measures.

These sinister reports, artfully concocted by the laics, were industriously circulated by the clergy, who did not scruple to accuse Joseph of heresy as well as despotism. Such was the skill of the intriguers, that at length *church* and *liberty*, *religion* and *constitution* were blended together in men's minds as synonymous terms, and all attempts at reforming the one were looked upon as sacrilegious attacks upon the other. A dispatch, addressed by the emperor to Prince Kaunitz, who had replaced Maria Christina and Albert in the government, put the finishing stroke to the rebellion. This document, repelling the concessions made to the people, and peremp-

torily ordering the immediate execution of the edicts, produced a serious riot. On the 22d Jan., 1788, Count d'Alton, who had been named general-in-chief, having found it necessary to call out the military, the soldiers were insulted and maltreated by the populace, and being compelled to repel force by force, for the first time shed civic blood.

Vandernoot, who was one of the most prominent actors in all recent events, and had obtained universal popularity, was ordered to be arrested; but he made his escape to England, where he was deluded with hopes of assistance. Thence passing into Holland, under the title of "Agent Plenipotentiary of the Brabant Nation," he was received by the Princess of Orange, who amused him with similar assurances. From the Hague, Vandernoot proceeded to Berlin, where, on the recommendation of the Princess of Orange, he obtained an audience of the prime-minister, who, on this occasion, is reported to have made a remark extremely applicable to more than one of those persons who have borne a prominent share in the late revolution. "Vandernoot," said the minister, "is a man who is evidently impelled by a spirit of vengeance rather than by the love of good. The primary impulse with him is ambition, not patriotism; and he is infinitely better versed in the chicanery of the laws than in the mysteries of politics."

In the mean while Vandernoot's colleagues, Vonck, Van Eupen, and others, aided by the abbés of Tongerlo, St. Bernard, and the principal clergy, had established a secret society, termed "*pro aris et focis*," the object of which was to found a regular revolutionary committee; a section of which should retire into Holland, and there organize an army, composed of emigrants and volunteers. This army, of which Colonel

Vandermersch was appointed commander, was assembled on the frontier early in October 1789, and commenced active operations on the 24th of that month, a day rendered memorable by the publication of the celebrated manifesto, by which Joseph II. was declared deposed from the Brabant sovereignty.

The patriot troops, not exceeding 2,500 effectives, with six guns, were divided into two columns; the one under Vandermersch, and the other under Colonel Lorangeois, entered Belgium by Groot Zundert, and Hoogstraaten. And such was the weakness of the government, the feebleness of the Austrian garrisons, the want of skill of the commanders, and the discouragement of the troops, that in less than two months Ghent, Bruges, Ostend, and Antwerp opened their gates to the patriots, the imperial authorities and forces were driven from Brussels, and the Brabançon independence proclaimed.

The liberation of Brabant was followed by that of Flanders, Hainault, Gueldres, and Limbourg. On the 7th of January, 1790, deputies from the states of these provinces assembled at Brussels, and there signed a federative treaty, consisting of twelve articles, declaring, 1st, the constitution of a confederation, under the title of the "*United Belgic Provinces*;" 2d, the establishment of a national federative congress, empowered to appoint ministers, to declare peace or war, and to coin money; in short, resuming all the powers of a constitutional government. At the same time, each province preserved its local administration, rights, privileges, and independence, in all matters not immediately concerning the general welfare.

But the fallacy of this Utopian system was not long in discovering itself. Discords, jealousies, and dissensions broke out between the provinces and the revolutionary leaders. The political ignorance and inexpe-

rience of the members of government was only equalled by the want of skill of the commanders. The avowed democratic principles of some alarmed others, and the want of unity in every branch of the state paralyzed the march of government, and neutralized the successes of the patriots in the field. Anarchy was rife throughout the land; distrust and confusion reigned in every department; whilst the vilest scenes of outrage were perpetrated in all the principal towns, without the authorities having the power, or even the will, to control the multitude. This state of affairs continued up to the death of Joseph II., on the 20th of February. 1790.

The accession of Leopold II. was followed by an ineffectual attempt at reconciliation on the part of the cabinet of Vienna; but the successes gained by the Austrian troops over the Belgian general, Schoenfeld; the want of accord between Vandernoot, Vaneupen, and Vonck; the secession of the Dukes of Ursel, d'Ahremberg, the Count de la Mark, and other distinguished noblemen from the patriot cause, combined with the pressing mediation of England, Holland, and Prussia, at length induced the States to listen to terms of accommodation. The negociation at first proceeded slowly; but the three mediating powers having addressed a second energetic and menacing note, attended by the publication of an imperial manifesto, and Marshal Binder having reduced Namur, Louvain, Brussels, Malines, and Antwerp, the States dispatched deputies to the Hague, and on the 1st of December a convention was signed, by which Belgium obtained a restoration of her constitution and "*joyeuse entrée*", and once more submitted to Austrian dominion.

Thus terminated a revolution that may be said to have been devoid of all the characteristics that could ennoble a popular struggle; for it is not too much to

affirm that it had its foundation, not in the violation of the constitution, not in the oppression of the government, but in the interested ambition of a few pseudo patriots, and the intolerance of a jealous priesthood. Its primary object was not to insure national independence, the reform of evils, and the extension of liberty to the lower orders, but to secure the confirmation of a mass of local laws, traditional privileges, and ecclesiastical abuses, the barbarous fruits of the middle ages.

Under the pretext of being carried on "*pro aris et focis*," it was opposed to all those liberal principles which are now become a necessary and inherent portion of man's existence. It presented the remarkable anomaly of a philosophic yet absolute emperor endeavouring to inculcate tolerance, to introduce reforms, to purify the march of government, to simplify the process of justice, and to give strength and unity to the machinery of the state; whilst his people, led on by designing men, were spilling their blood in order to perpetuate those civil and religious abuses that are now scoffed at by their more enlightened descendants. It may be affirmed that were the offer now made to restore Belgium to its pristine state, as under Maria Theresa, the whole country would rise in arms, and even the very priests would vote against it.

One inference may, however, be drawn from this struggle; namely, that the subsequent reunion with France was *anti-national*. For is it possible that the same men who drew the sword in 1790 for the restitution of secular privileges and church abuses, should, three years later, have ardently desired a measure that went to annihilate all that they then sought so jealously to maintain? If, as it has been generally admitted, this revolution was exclusively of a religious character, it is too paradoxical to argue that the union with the

French republic was accordant to the general views of the people. No! the annexation to France was as coercive as that with Holland.

It has been attempted to assimilate the revolution of 1789 with that of 1830; that is, to attribute both to the same religious jealousies. There can be no doubt that religion, or, in other words, Catholicism, formed an essential ingredient in both; but its operations were nevertheless essentially different. In the one, the clergy, utterly regardless of popular liberties, urged on the people to rebellion in order to maintain a multitude of ecclesiastical abuses; whilst, in the other, they have been amongst the foremost to support liberal principles without being altogether unmindful of their own interests.

Joseph II. found that religion had so completely invaded the state, that it was high time the latter should make an effort to retaliate on the church, and in this he judged rightly; for, unless it be in Mahomedan countries, the state is not in religion, but religion in the state. Invasion—and there certainly was encroachment—proved aggression; and this merited repulse, if not reprisal. He may have erred in the application of the remedy, but he was right in the principle. The Emperor was accused of carrying his philosophic principles to the extremes of heterodoxy. But his most active detractors were the ministers of the church, who declared tolerance to be anti-doctrinal, and who could support no competitors in that monopoly which they deprecated in others, though they ardently sought to maintain it for themselves.

The great misfortune attending the projects of Joseph II. was that this enlightened and philosophic monarch lived half a century too soon. Had his reign followed, instead of preceded, that of Napoleon, it is

more than probable that Austria would now rank amongst constitutional monarchies.

In the revolution of 1830, the position of the two parties was completely reversed, for the encroachments were entirely on the side of the state. The philosophy of the government was Gomerian rather than Voltarian ; it was proselytizing instead of tolerant. It tended to restrict, not to emancipate ; and this was rendered still more obnoxious, since it emanated from those who professed a different creed.

Had the Belgians of 1830 no fairer grounds for their rebellion than those of 1789, the disfavour cast upon them, and the prejudices excited against their cause, would have been justly merited.

Independent of a general amnesty, the re-establishment of the three "collateral" councils, and the ancient system of provincial and judicial administration, one of Leopold's first acts was the revocation of all edicts of his predecessor that trenched on the immunities of the church. But the flames of sedition and disaffection, doubtless combined with a partial craving after independence and nationality, still smouldered beneath an appearance of submission, and, during the short reign of this monarch, were perpetually breaking out in remonstrances and tumults, which frequently required the most energetic repressive measures on the part of the government.

But that awful tempest which was about to pour down upon devoted Europe, soon burst forth, and developed itself in a manner little anticipated either by the Austrian monarch, or the Belgian people.

The Emperor Leopold II., dying on the 1st of March, 1792, was succeeded by his son, Francis II., then in his twenty-ninth year ; who had scarcely assumed the reins of government, ere he was hurried into war with France.

The famous decree of the National Assembly of the 20th of April, being followed by immediate hostilities, two French columns, debouching from Lille and Valenciennes, penetrated, the one into Flanders, under Luckner, and the other into Hainault, under Dumourier. After gaining the victory of Jemappe, the latter pushed forward upon Liege, where he entered triumphantly on the 28th; whilst a detachment under Miranda, rapidly traversing Brussels and Malines, invested the citadel of Antwerp, which capitulated, after a few hours open trenches. Namur likewise surrendered to General Valence; and thus, in the space of a few days, the Flanders, Brabant, Hainault, and the provinces of Namur and Liege submitted to the French arms.

Scarcely had the Austrian troops retired, ere the animosity of the people to that nation openly manifested itself. Assemblies were convoked in all the principal towns, and deputies were dispatched to the convention, declaring that they had renounced all allegiance to Austria, and beseeching the Republic not to treat with any of the European powers, until the latter had recognized the independence of Belgium. But the conquest of that country, and its annexion to France, not its liberation, formed the secret basis of French policy. The deputies were therefore cajoled with specious assurances of fraternity and protection, whilst the convention were drawing up their famous decree of the 15th December, which declared the powers of the French republic to be "*revolutionary, coactive, and coercitive.*"

This celebrated document was no sooner promulgated, than the eyes of the sane part of the Belgian nation were opened to the fate that awaited them, and other deputations were instantly sent to Paris, charged to remonstrate against the extension of the decree to their country. But the convention could not be diverted from its

views of conquest, and in lieu of complying with the reclamations of the deputies, the Belgian provinces were divided into arrondissements, to each of which French commissaires were appointed, with injunctions to prepare the people for the immediate union of Belgium with France.

This measure was ostensibly grounded on the demand of a few popular or revolutionary societies, established in each of the large towns, under the auspices of French agents. These societies, acting against the wishes of the great majority of the nation, sent deputations to the convention to demand the union; and, in the sitting of the 31st of January, 1793, Danton artfully availing himself of the presence of a deputation from Liege, exclaimed, "I do not trust to mere enthusiasm, all my confidence reposes in *reason*. It is not in my name, but in that of the whole Belgian people, that I demand their reunion with France."

In order to captivate the good will of the lower orders, and further to inflame the public mind, it was decreed in the same sitting, that, wherever the French arms had penetrated, the people should assemble to determine *freely* upon the form of government they chose to adopt. This farce had the desired effect; for the inhabitants of the different towns having met either in the churches or town-halls, the union was voted under the terror of bands of Jacobins, who openly menaced all those who ventured to oppose the measure. The *procès verbaux*, or reports of these resolutions were then forwarded to the convention, which successively decreed the reunion of each town to France, "in conformity," as it was declared, "with the ardent vows of the Belgian people." Some idea may be formed of the truth of this averment by Dumourier's letter to the convention, dated 12th of March, 1793, in which he boldly states "that

the mass of the nation was opposed to a union, and that these 'vows' were only to be torn from them at the point of the sword."

But ere this project could be consummated, the Austrian troops, under the Prince of Cobourg, being strongly reinforced, resumed the offensive, and having gained the battle of Nerwinde, drove the French from Louvain, Namur, Antwerp, Ghent, and Mons. On the 23rd of March, Count Metternich arrived at Brussels, and was reinstated minister; and on the 28th, the Archduke Charles made his solemn entry as governor-general. In the meanwhile the French armies being beaten at all points, once more evacuated the whole Belgic territory, and the Austrian authority was again re-established.

The disastrous campaign of 1793 and 1794, the conduct of which, on the part of the allies, is clouded by a mystery that can only be accounted for by an utter want of ability and unity between some of the commanders, and an absence of integrity in others, soon reversed all their successes, and turned the scale of victory in favour of France. With the view of animating his army, and conciliating the Belgians, the emperor had hastened to Brussels, and taken the field in person; but the allied forces under Clerfayt and the Duke of York, having met with a succession of disasters, and lost the sanguinary battle of Tournay, where Francis II. eminently distinguished himself by his undaunted courage, his Imperial Majesty quitted the head-quarters, and returned to Vienna.

Filled with ardour and enthusiasm, the French rapidly followed up their successes, and, having concentrated their masses, gained the signal victory of Fleurus. Then sweeping like a torrent through the country, they drove the allies from the Netherlands, and in a few days, planted their victorious banners upon all the Belgian cities.

These conquests produced the establishment of revolutionary committees in all the towns, on the basis of the Jacobinical associations of Paris, which, acting under the immediate influence of the French, were not long in pronouncing the "solemn desire" of being united to the republic. Commissaires were therefore immediately sent from Paris, instructed, as a preliminary measure, to divide the provinces into quarters, districts, and cantons; to introduce the French forms of municipal and judicial administration, and to establish trial by jury. These preparatory measures were followed, in July, by the declaration of the liberty of the Scheldt, which had been closed since the treaty of Munster, in 1648, and on the 14th Fructidor (September), Belgium received its new general organization, and was divided into nine departments, assimilated in every respect, as to their internal economy, to those of France.

These arrangements being concluded, the republican government entirely threw off the mask, and the question of definitive union was formally laid before the convention, on the 8th Vendémiaire (October), An. 4. After two days' discussion, in which Armand, Lesage, and other members, warmly opposed the measure, as fraught with every disadvantage to Belgium, and contrary to the views and sentiments of all the sane part of the nation—whilst Carnot, and Merlin of Douai, argued in its favour—it was at length carried affirmatively by a large majority, and was promulgated by a decree, dated 30th September, 1793. From this hour to the commencement of 1814, Belgium continued to form an integral portion of the French empire.

Thus Austria was irrevocably despoiled of that brilliant portion of her splendid empire, whose preservation, during upwards of eighty years, had cost her so much

blood and treasure. Thus the Belgian people, who had rushed into rebellion against the mild rule of a just and tolerant prince, saw themselves plunged from comparative freedom into the most insignificant state of vassalage. Their religious institutions were destroyed, their cherished privileges annihilated, and all those rights and immunities, for which they had manfully struggled during many centuries, were trodden under foot. Their independence was erased ; their commerce and industry sacrificed to the political jealousies of their conquerors ; their clergy was debased, and their youth carried off to perish, by thousands, in distant climes. Poverty reigned in their cities ; want in their villages ; and their once splendid capital was converted into a mere provincial town ; its palaces deserted, and the grass growing in its streets.

Such were the fruits of the union of Belgium to France ; and such, in all probability, in despite of the industry of her people, and the surprising richness of her soil, would again have been her fate, had not the project of the French unionists of 1830 been defeated by the more politic and patriotic exertions of the majority of their fellow-countrymen. Then, indeed, even supposing the union to have been acquiesced in without a general war, we should have seen England, Holland, and all the European powers advocating the closure of the Scheldt, and the revival of that barrier system which the conference of London, and more especially the English cabinet, had determined to prevent.

CHAPTER II.

BELGIUM RECONQUERED BY THE ALLIES—RENOUNCED BY AUSTRIA—PROPOSITION OF THE PRINCE-SOVEREIGN TO ERECT A MARITIME KINGDOM, &c—UNION OF BELGIUM AND HOLLAND—FUNDAMENTAL LAW—VICES OF REPRESENTATION—IMPOLICY OF THE NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENT.

FROM the peace of Campo Formio to the spring of 1814, the Belgic departments continued enchained to the destinies of the French empire. In the meanwhile, the old Netherlanders had already thrown off the French yoke, and having still fresh in their memories the disadvantages of an oligarchic government, recalled from exile the descendant of their ancient stadtholders, whom they raised to the dignity of prince-sovereign.* Belgium, though unable to follow their example, fervently prayed for emancipation; so that, when the numerous hosts of the Holy Alliance poured across the Rhine, and drove back the shattered remnants of Napoleon's valiant armies, the Belgic people hailed with joy the dissolution of an anti-national union, and eagerly looked forward to the foundation of that independence, and the regeneration of those ancient rights and liberties, promised to them and all other nations by the treaties of Reichenbach and

* So devoid of funds were Barons Fagel and Perponcher, deputed to England for this purpose, that the British government was obliged to advance the Prince-Sovereign the sum of £100,000, out of the army extraordinaries, in order to enable him to leave London.

Chaumont, as well as by the various proclamations of the victorious powers.*

The first measures of the allies upon reconquering Belgium, was the establishment of a provisional government, under the direction of the Austrian general, Vincent, who preserved the judicial and administrative forms instituted by France.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that, had the assurances held out by the treaties and proclamations of the allies been acted upon to the letter, Belgium would have been restored to the dominion of Austria, and to all the antiquated privileges and incongruities of the "joyeuse entrée" and the Caroline constitution; a restoration incompatible with the interests of European peace and the real welfare of the Belgic provinces. But the ultimate destinies of this country, and its incorporation with Holland, had already formed the subject of secret negotiation at the conference of Chaumont, where the ground-work of the treaties of London, Paris, and Vienna, as regarded the Netherlands, was discussed and determined. All that remained was to obtain the adhesion of the prince-sovereign of the Netherlands.

The renunciation of the Emperor Francis to his ancient Belgic domains was easily obtained, and compensated for by territorial acquisition in Italy. Indeed, the Austrian monarch was no ways loth to abandon a possession, which had been a sanguinary and costly jewel in the hands of his predecessors; and which, by again bringing him into immediate contact with France,

† The first article of the Convention of Reichenbach, signed on the 14th of June, 1813, runs thus:—"The object of the present war is to re-establish the independence of the countries oppressed by France; the high contracting powers (England and Prussia) have consequently bound themselves to direct all their efforts to this object." The treaty of Chaumont, of the 1st of March, 1814, contains stipulations to the same effect.

subjected the whole Austrian empire to be forced into hostilities upon the first dissension that might arise, not only between France and herself, but between the former and any other European power. To this renunciation on the part of Austria, may, in some measure, be attributed the preservation of European peace in 1830; for, supposing Belgium to have belonged to that country at the period of the July revolution, it is not probable that a similar sympathetic movement would have been averted; and as Austria could not have avoided taking up arms to maintain her authority, the result must have been war.

To have united it with Prussia would have given too great a preponderance to that power, and embittered those rankling jealousies and animosities existing between the French and the Prussians—jealousies, that scarcely admit of their coming into juxtaposition. It would, moreover, have subjected Prussia to the same hazards of war, that were objected to on the part of Austria, and would have caused the utmost discontent among the Belgic people, who entertained the most exaggerated and unjust notions of Prussian despotism and oppression, and who secretly sighed after nationality, or at least after constitutional institutions.

To divide the Belgic provinces between the neighbouring powers, by giving a part of the Flanders, Antwerp, and Limbourg to Holland; Liege, part of Brabant, Namur and Luxembourg to Prussia, with Hainault and the remainder to France, was incompatible with the assurances of the allied sovereigns, and utterly opposed to the policy of Great Britain, who could not, or ought not at least, to consent to a partition which would bring France to the gates of Antwerp, and terminate in throwing not only all Belgium, but the Rhenish provinces into the arms of that power. If such

partition was dangerous at that time, it would be ten thousand times more perilous at present. For it is indisputable that the dislocation of a part would produce the loss of the whole, and would forthwith realize the project of those French politicians who consider the natural boundaries of France to be the Rhine on the one side, and the ocean on the other.

Europe, moreover, required a barrier against the encroachments of France ; and to have restored Belgium to Austria, or to any great power, whose seat of government was far distant, would have neutralized the main object of such barrier, and would have augmented those sources of weakness that are unfortunately inherent to its geographical position.

Nothing, therefore, remained but to erect Belgium into an independent and neutral state, under the sceptre of the Archduke Charles, or of one of the princes of the central houses of Germany, or to unite her with Holland. The first of these plans was found infeasible ; the last was therefore adopted.

The theory on which this latter plan was based was eminently politic, and accordant with the safety and interests of Europe ; but the execution was clogged with a multitude of difficulties, and was pregnant with many vices and ultimate dangers. Indeed, the prince to whom the Netherlands throne was offered, as if withheld by the presentiment of future evils, is said to have long wavered ere he would accept the Herculean task. In reply to the overtures of the commissioners sent to propose this measure, he presented a counter-project for the erection of Holland into a powerful maritime kingdom, by the means of certain territorial arrangements, admirably advantageous to the Dutch, but utterly inconsistent with the interests of the allies.

This proposition consisted in the cession to Holland

of the left bank of the Scheldt, including Liefkenshoek on the west ; of East Friedland, with the duchies of Bremen, and Oldenbourg, and part of Hanover, on the east, and with all the littoral contained between the Scheldt and Eme ; thus including the confluences of the Meuse, Rhine, Enes and Weser, and all the great outlets into the ocean, between the French and Danish frontier, and thus subjecting the monopoly of the whole transit commerce of Germany to Holland.

This project scarcely met with a moment's consideration ; for the object of the allies, in deviating from their promise "to restore all nations to their former condition," *was not to aggrandize Holland, and still less any particular dynasty.* The reunion of the Netherlands of Charles V. into one kingdom, was a measure strictly and essentially European. A barrier was required ; and that barrier could only be obtained by giving such extent and strength to the Netherlands as would convert them into a *tête-de-pont*, sufficiently powerful to resist the first shocks of French ambition. It was for this motive, and this alone, that the British cabinet consented to the advance of those large sums devoted to the erection of the frontier fortresses.*

* By a convention signed on the 13th of August, 1814, Sweden consented to restore Gaudaloupe to France, on condition that, in the event of a union of Holland and Belgium, the former should indemnify her by the sum of one million sterling, to be guaranteed to her by Great Britain. By a second convention, of the same date, between England and the United Provinces, the former restored to the latter Java and all the colonies taken from the Dutch, with the exception of the Cape, Ceylon, and the islands of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice. As an equivalent for the three latter, Great Britain undertook to pay the million due from Holland to Sweden ; and further to advance two millions sterling, intended to be expended in strengthening the defences of the Netherlands. The total sum to be expended by great Britain was not to exceed three millions sterling.—*Parliamentary Reports.*

The 6th article of the treaty of Paris, of the 30th of May, 1814, if taken in the letter, certainly states that Holland "shall receive an augmentation of territory." This was evidently a vice in the wording of the treaty. It never could be the intention of the Allies, to transfer Belgium to Holland, as *a simple addition*. The whole tenor of the treaty of London and the "act of acceptance" sufficiently prove, that their design was to unite and amalgamate the two countries so as to place them on a footing of absolute equality.

The real object of the great powers has been too much lost sight of in the polemics that have been carried on, especially by those who consider the treaty of the twenty-four articles, of which notice will be taken hereafter, as a direct spoliation of the Dutch, and a violation of the legitimate rights of the Nassau dynasty.

In the first place, the Dutch have not a shadow of pretension to any part of Belgium beyond the few *enclaves*, on the left bank of the Meuse. For these they are offered an equivalent, in nearly the whole of the right bank, and the tongue of land running up between north Brabant and the Meuse on the left. The population of these *enclaves*, known as the "Pays de Généralités," and consisting of 54 townships or villages, did not altogether exceed 58,861 souls; whilst that of the portion of Limbourg ceded by the treaty, including Maesricht, amounts to 175,000. No one then can attempt to assert, that this is not a fair equivalent, or still less that the Dutch can be permitted to revive the barrier system, or to obstruct the Scheldt navigation.

Secondly, it is notorious that the prince-sovereign was not selected, in any way for himself, that is, *quoad* a member of the Nassau family; but because he chanced to be the ruler of the country, to which the allies had resolved to unite Belgium. His acknowledged qualifi-

cations as an able statesman and equitable man, weighed little in the balance ; and although there was a strong feeling of regard entertained in England towards his son, the valiant prince who had so nobly distinguished himself beneath the British banner, and whom the English nation already considered as their future king consort, this sentiment did not influence the choice.

It is therefore as erroneous to talk of despoiling the Dutch, as of violating the rights of the king ; for his Majesty had no rights either prescriptive, hereditary, or legitimate, save those founded on the treaties that made him king. And what are treaties, but conventions that are only binding so long as they accord with the general welfare ? They are certainly not irrevocable either as regards persons or possessions ; they are the offspring of necessity, and are for the most part dictated by force ; they are subservient to circumstances, and are mutable at the will of those who framed them. The sword carves out a treaty, and the pen merely ratifies it. The history of diplomacy furnishes a thousand proofs of this cancelling and remodelling of treaties, and some more striking than those immediately connected with the Netherlands.

The rights, or rather advantages, derived by the king and his dynasty from the will of the allies, resulted from the force of events ; and it is by the counteraction of the same impulses that they have been deprived of a portion of these benefits. The foundation of the Netherlands throne was unhappily of sand. The materials which formed the superstructure were as heterogeneous as those composing the statue of Nebuchadnezzar. Nay, even the very architects that laboured at its construction eventually discovered its vices, and were constrained to sanction its demolition. In short, king William was elevated solely in favour of

European interests, and he has been sacrificed to the same stern necessity.

Certainly, this has not taken place without causing deep regrets. It is not with a willing heart and ready hand that the legislators or people of Europe have sanctioned the infliction of losses on a benevolent monarch, justly beloved by his countrymen and generally respected throughout the world—a king, proverbial for his domestic and public virtues, and so renowned for his equity and intimate knowledge of international law, that distant nations selected him as the arbiter of their differences; and who, whatever may have been the defects of his system, had most indisputably elevated Belgium to a rare degree of commercial splendour and prosperity. Most assuredly it is not in Prussia, Russia, Austria, and still less in England, that either the government or people rejoice at that irresistible combination of events, that have deprived the Prince of Orange of a noble succession, and subjected him to all the penalties resulting from the fatal policy of his father's ministers. But the safety of the great European family demanded the sacrifice, and between an apparent hardship to one dynasty, and the probable destruction of several others, there could be no hesitation.

This hardship, however, has been much exaggerated; it is an hundred-fold less severe than that which has befallen other royal houses. Look to the elder branch of the Bourbons, and above all to the ex-king of Sweden. There, indeed, will be found most affecting examples of human vicissitudes, and the instability of royal grandeur. In the latter, we see the descendant of a long line of kings roaming about the world an almost pennyless outcast; whilst a fortunate soldier of plebeian birth, who rendered very equivocal services to the allies who confirmed his elevation, and who was ostensibly false to

his native country, has obtained tranquil possession of that sceptre, which once struck terror into the hearts of all Europe, when wielded by the great Gustavus and the undaunted Charles.* Nay, more, the king of the Netherlands was compelled to refuse his daughter's hand to the son of this exiled monarch, lest the alliance should give umbrage to Sweden, and clash with the views of other powers.

But to return to the ill-assorted union of Belgium and Holland. The treaty of London, confirmed by those of Vienna and Paris, stipulated that the "*fusion* of the two countries should be intimate and complete;" and the first article of the "act of acceptance of the protocol of the London conference," signed at the Hague on the 21st July, 1814, reproduced this sentence, adding, "so that the two countries should only form one and the same State, to be governed by the constitution already established in Holland, to be modified by common accord." Had this "*complete and intimate fusion*" been possible, then the projectors would have accomplished an admirable work, offering the surest guarantees for the maintenance of European peace, and the durability of their own fabric. But, unfortunately, the conception was utopian, or at all events, attended by obstacles almost insuperable.

Independent of the allies disdaining to consult the feelings of the Belgic people, they appeared to have lost sight of the moral history of the Netherlands, and to have forgotten those deep-rooted hatreds, jealousies, and dissensions, both religious and political, that had divided the two people, since the time of Philip II. In their

* The equivocal conduct of the Prince Royal of Sweden (from the battle of Leipsig down to the moment of the entrance of the allies into Paris, in 1814, when he hoped to be called to the throne of France) is well known to all public men.

eagerness to consummate their work, they overlooked all the discordant elements and jarring interests of which it was framed, and proclaimed "fusion,"—as if national fusions were to be obtained by the mere diplomatic transfer of one people to the dominion of another.

"It is well," says a Dutch author, "for the Almighty to say 'let there be light;' but when men attempt to ape the language of the divinity, they expose themselves to produce the blackest darkness where they hoped to shed floods of light."

Only one of two things could have produced this desirable fusion; that is, that either one or other of the two nations should have renounced its principles and prejudices to embrace those of the other; or, that both, forgetting those commercial rivalries, differences of religion, habits, interests, traditions, and language, which render them absolute antipodes, should have met half way, and endeavoured to bury all individuality in their mutual exertions for the general good.

But this concession could not be expected from Holland; for, independent of the tenacity of her national character, the treaty of Paris literally asserted that Belgium was given to her as "an extension of territory." This phrase was apparently acted upon in many instances by the government, as if the many had been made over in fee to the few, and as if Belgium was intended to serve as a mere corollary to Holland. On the other hand, who is there, who had studied the Belgian characteristics, and considered the preponderating influence of the clergy, the bigotry of the people, the jealous pride of the aristocracy, or the numerical superiority of the population, that could await concession from them without sufficient guarantees being given in return? And, without concessions on one side or the other, all prospect of fusion, or even co-existence was utterly hopeless. In this mat-

ter, the numerical disproportion was an invincible obstacle; for history may offer various instances of the gradual amalgamation of inferior with superior bodies, but it is against all reason and precedent to anticipate success when the proportions are reversed. This disproportion produced another evil that will be shown presently.

It is not, therefore, too much to affirm that the allies founded their conclusions on false premises—that being impelled by an over-eagerness to re-establish the equilibrium of Europe, and to erect a barrier, they placed too great confidence in the wisdom and influence of the king of the Netherlands; in the security of the restored dynasty in France; in the reciprocal pliancy of the people whom they were resolved to unite; and in the philanthropic but deceptive hope that time, mutual conciliation, and prudent government would soften the long-existing differences that separated the two nations, and so temper down their animosities as to guarantee the security of an edifice, which the framers looked upon as a model of diplomatic skill.

But the germs of national and individual separation were implanted in the structure from the first outset. The union could only exist by a complete similarity of interests, rights, and privileges; by the strictest impartiality in the distribution of employments, and an equality of representation. But the first and last of these essentials were impracticable. The fundamental law, the passing of which is not altogether without taint, went far to secure to both countries most of these vital requisites. At the same time it was distinguished by one or two vices of a striking nature: the one was its not having made any provision for the ministerial responsibility; and the other, its omitting to grant the sovereign the power of dissolving the chambers—de-

fects which, it will be seen hereafter, led to grievous consequences.*

This code, infinitely better adapted to Holland than Belgium, also established, at first starting, a system of representation fraught with disastrous results. Here, in fact, was the rock on which the vessel split on being first launched. It was an easy matter, indeed a matter of sound policy, to proportion all civil and military employments to the numerical strength of the respective populations and contingents; but to have given equal representation—that is, a representation proportioned to the relative amount of population—would at once have thrown a large majority into the hands of the Belgians, and thus placed Dutch interests utterly at the mercy of the former. For, taking the then population of Belgium at 3,337,000 and that of Holland at 2,046,000, the just proportion of deputies would have been 68 for the former, and 42 for the latter. Here was a difficulty for which the skill of the profoundest legislators failed to discover an effective remedy. All that remained, therefore, was to divide the number of representatives in exact proportions. Consequently, Holland, whose population

* The fundamental law, entitled "*Grondwet voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*," was drawn up by a commission of twenty-four members, half Dutch and half Belgians, and was, in fact, a mere modification of the fundamental law of the United Provinces. It was presented for the king's sanction on the 13th of July, 1815, and was promulgated by royal proclamation on the 24th of August following. The notables of Holland, who had been assembled to discuss the original project, voted for it unanimously: but in Belgium, out of 1323 voters, there were 796 noes, and 527 ayes. But as 126 of the former declared that their negative votes related only to such articles as regarded religious matters, these votes were held to be affirmative as concerned the other points; and as about one-sixth of the Belgic notables had not voted, their absence was also looked on as affirmative; and the whole passed into law, but not without creating general clamour.

was upwards of one-third less than Belgium, obtained an equal number of legislative guardians ; and thus, at one blow, the basis of national representation was vitiated, and a lasting grievance established. The following are the motives for this disposition, as they were laid down in the report prefixed to the fundamental law :—

“ The number of deputies which each province returns to the States-General could not be unanimously regulated.

“ Several members opined that the basis at once the most just, the most simple, and the most certain, was the respective population of each : plausible reasons and numerous examples were not wanting to support this opinion. These arguments were, however, combatted, and the justice of the application of these examples to the union of our provinces was contested. It was stated that the colonies that recognized the northern provinces as their mother country, the importance of their commerce, and several millions of inhabitants who acknowledge its bye-laws, would not permit the adoption of this basis ; that the only means of establishing perfectly, and for ever, a sincere and intimate union between the two countries, was to give both to one and the other an equal representation. The majority adopted this opinion.”

It is imperative, however, to observe that the defect of this distribution was utterly independent of the will of the king or his counsellors. It must be attributed to statistical causes that defied all other mode of arrangement. Its evils were aggravated, however, by the selfish egotism of many Dutch deputies, as well as the inexorable diversity of interests, and religious tenets, existing in the chambers. The mere fact of half the States-General being Protestant and the other half Catholic, and of a moiety employing a language that was

scarcely understood by the other, was in itself sufficient to produce an invincible schism.*

The bad fruits of this system soon betrayed themselves. On referring to the official debates and votes of the second chamber of the States-General, it results that almost every legislative or financial project injurious to Belgian interests, that passed the house, was carried by majorities almost exclusively Dutch, whilst all those of a similar nature that were thrown out were supported by Dutch minorities. Again, all propositions tending to benefit Belgium, fell through the influence of Dutch majorities, or, in passing, were strenuously opposed by minorities of the same nation. On the other hand, in every project immediately benefitting Holland at the expense of Belgium, the whole of the Dutch clung together, and, allowing for the influence of the court and government over some few Belgian functionaries, majorities were thus generally secured both to the Dutch and ministry. Thus some of the most oppressive and obnoxious taxes and projects passed into law, and thus were engendered many of those grievances, the first effect of which was universal and immediate discontent.†

* The second chamber of States-General was composed of 110 deputies; 55 for Holland, and the same number for Belgium. The respective proportions for each country was one for 37,000 souls in the former, and one for 61,000 in the latter. The mean average was one for 50,000—the maximum being one for 34,000 in Groningen, and the minimum one for 82,000 in Namur.

† The following extracts from some tables published by Dr. Friedlander, will shew more distinctly the nature of these votes:—

“ Sitting 30th June, 1831.—Discussion on the *mouture* and *abbatage* tax: for—Dutch 53, Belgian 2.

“ Sitting 20th Dec. 1822.—Sinking-fund syndicate: for—Dutch 46, Belgian 20.

“ Sitting 28th April, 1827.—Annual budget: for—Dutch 49, Belgian 4.

Independent of this defect in the mode of representation, the fundamental code consecrated a financial abuse utterly at variance with the usages and privileges of all constitutional institutions ; this was the mode of voting the ordinary estimates for ten years, by which the deputies were deprived of all possibility of scrutinizing the expenditure, or of demanding the slightest amendments or economies during a lapse of time, which naturally must have produced a necessity for revision, or at least examination. It is true, the budget was divided into two sections, the one decennial or ordinary, the other annual or extraordinary. But the most important items, those, in short, that require the most jealous attention, and are the subject of the liveliest annual discussions, in every other legislative body—such, for instance, as the civil list, war, navy, colonial, foreign, home, and finance department estimates—were included in the first ; so that, this budget having once passed the house, it was screened from all further scrutiny for *ten years*. The second section, forming about a fourth of the whole, comprised such extraordinaries as may be said to arise from casual circumstances, including, however, nearly the whole expenditure of the department of justice.*

“ Sitting 18th Dec. 1829.—Second decennial budget : for—Dutch 48, Belgian 13,” &c. &c.—*Abfall der Niederländer. Hambourg, 1833.*

• The decennial budget, voted on the 27th of April, 1820, amounted to.....	59,875,054 f.
The ways and means.....	47,979,113
Deficit.....	11,895,939
The annual budget for 1820 was.....	22,314,481 f.
The ways and means.....	17,754,390
Deficit.....	4,560,091
Total of both budgets.....	82,189,536 f.
Total deficit.....	16,456,030

The vices of this decennial arrangement were so flagrant, that it is a matter of surprise that twenty-four men could have been found in Holland and Belgium to propose it as a part of the fundamental law, or that the States-General should not unanimously have availed themselves of the 229th article of that code, in order to modify a system so pregnant with abuses; abuses, which were they attempted to be introduced or defended in the English Commons, would be sufficient to produce a general conflagration throughout Great Britain. Another striking fault in the mode of voting the budgets was consecrated by the standing orders of the chambers, which forbad all amendments. Thus the budget was to be carried or rejected *in toto*!

Having pointed out some of the inherent defects of the union and fundamental law, and the utter hopelessness of all fusion, the next step is to detail some of those grievances that were gradually undermining the throne and government, and which produced results, that appeared to be anticipated by all but the public authorities. "When a mine is charged," says Count Charles Van Hoggendorp, in one of his able publications, "a spark suffices to cause its explosion. Such was the situation of affairs in Belgium, where this explosion was looked for during many years, and an approaching revolution publicly talked of in the streets of Brussels." Whence, then, arose the blindness of the cabinet, the supineness of the authorities, and the indifference of those who ought to have been aware that the volcano was raging beneath their feet? A blindness still more inexcusable, since the July revolution had broken forth, and warned them of their danger.

It has often been observed, and not without justice, that, if the government were imprudently opposed to all concession, why were the ambassadors of foreign powers

so utterly indifferent to the signs of the times? It is affirmed that some of them were cautioned and implored to obtain the mediation of their courts, in order to induce the Netherlands government to adopt such measures as were calculated to avert the storm. It is evident, by the result, that they either neglected this advice, and thereby committed a most reprehensible error, or, if they did act upon it, it is a further proof of the fatal tenacity and want of foresight of those at the helm of the state. For it is indisputable that, almost every one of the grievances complained of might have been modified and removed; and, although their removal never could have produced "intimate fusion," still it might have destroyed all just pretext for disunion, and stamped any attempt at revolution as an act of wanton and unjustifiable rebellion. Without absolutely applying to the Netherlands government the trite aphorism of "*quos Deus vult perdere prius dementat*," it is certain that a film overspread their eyes, and that they abandoned themselves to a degree of false security that was the very reverse of what was expected from the politic character of the monarch.

CHAPTER III.

ABOLITION OF TRIAL BY JURY—ENUMERATION OF GRIEVANCES—
SINKING FUND SYNDICATE—MILLION OF INDUSTRY—‘MOUTURE’
AND ‘ABBATAGE’ TAXES—COMPLAINTS OF THE CATHOLICS—AT-
TEMPT TO PROTESTANTIZE THE COUNTRY—THE BELGIAN
YOUTH NOT PERMITTED TO BE EDUCATED OUT OF THE KING-
DOM.

WITHOUT enumerating a multitude of minor vexations, for the most part extremely frivolous, and amply compensated for by other advantages, it will be sufficient to point out those of a graver character, which are signalized as the causes that gradually led to the explosion. “The difference of national character,” says the writer previously cited, “had engendered grievances, and these grievances had excited universal discontent and national animosity. The division between the two countries existed *de facto*. In lieu of a fusion, all the means employed to amalgamate the two people had only served to disunite them still further. This discontent was not the birth of a day ; it dates from the first union of the two states.”*

This admission is highly important, not only from its source, but because it is a striking refutation of that doctrine which would go to prove that the Belgians had no grievances, and that their revolution was a sud-

* “*Separation de la Hollande et de la Belgique*, Oct. 1830. Amsterdam. By Count Charles von Hoggendorp.” This enlightened politician and publicist, one of the most honourable and disinterested members of the Dutch Chambers, died lately in the prime of life.

den and wanton act, the mere extemporary result of the events of July. Had these events not occurred, had the fatal ordonnances of Prince Polignac never been issued, it is probable the Belgian revolution would not have exploded in 1830.—But it is against the universal opinion of all impartial persons to affirm that the two countries could have long hung together without the most thorough reforms and changes in the mode of government, and the abolition of some of the most obnoxious grievances. “Some persons have pretended,” adds Count Hoggendorp, “that the example of the French revolution, and the sanguinary struggle within the heart of Paris, inflamed the public mind in Belgium, as well as throughout all Europe. But this event did not *produce* the inflammable matter. Without the *pre-existence* of discontent arising from grievances, not even the French revolution would have overturned Belgium. Thus it is, that superficial persons who have not allowed themselves time to investigate the subject, have mistaken the *accessary* for the *principal*; the efforts of a few influential men, only served to set fire to the mine. Without previous discontent, a whole furnace would not have caused an explosion.”

Before entering upon these grievances, it is necessary to observe that, previous to the accession of the Prince-Sovereign, sundry modifications were made by him, in the administration of justice that it would have been more prudent either to have deferred or avoided altogether. The king of Prussia, in order to avoid the effects of any sudden transition in his newly-acquired Rhenan Provinces, had maintained the trial by jury and publicity of examination established by the French. Less prudent than this enlightened monarch, the Prince-Sovereign directed the abolition of these institutions, not by the vote of the chambers, but by a simple edict

issued on the 6th Nov. 1814 ; thus, at the very outset, awakening the fears and jealousies of the legal profession, and indeed of the whole nation, which, though perhaps unable fully to appreciate all the virtues of that inestimable institution, looked on its abrogation as a restriction of their liberties, and perhaps, for the first time, felt all the value of the blessing they had lost. This was followed by other changes in the judicial system, intended to place it nearly on the footing of that of Holland—a measure, which, however well adapted to the habits and traditions of the latter, was totally dissonant with the ancient customs or modern usages of the Belgians, especially since their submission to France.

In addition to the defects in the representative system, the mode of voting the ways and means, and the abolition of the trial by jury, the Belgians complained of the following grievances:

1st. The imposition of the Dutch language upon all functionaries, whether civil or military.

2d. The extreme partiality shown in the distribution of all places and employments.

3d. A financial system that pressed heavily and unjustly on Belgium, which was made to contribute to the payment of debts incurred by Holland long prior to the union, and the imposition of sundry oppressive taxes repugnant to the habits and usages of the people.

4th. The establishment of the supreme court of justice (*haute cour*) and all other great public institutions in the north.

5th. The indisposition of the government towards the Catholics, and a real or supposed desire to “Protestantize” the people ; the establishment of a philosophic college at Louvain, the monopoly of education, and the suppression of the episcopal and other national colleges and free schools.

The first of these measures was ordained by an edict, dated 15th September, 1819. Of the utility of a unity of idiom in all transactions connected with the internal economy of a state, there can be no question; but nothing could be more impolitic, or pregnant with dangerous consequences, than its arbitrary enforcement, especially as it operated on a majority who already entertained sentiments of hostility towards the minority. Its evil effects were immediate. It diffused discontent amongst the numerous and influential classes, who aspired to the various branches of the legal profession, or indeed to employments of any kind, and was in fact one of the great predisposing causes that led to the revolution.

The affinity between the Dutch and Flemish idioms, which spring from a common root, might have palliated the experiment, as *a mere experiment*, in the Flanders and vicinity of Antwerp; but to inflict, as a *sine quâ non*, upon the Wallons, South Brabanters and inhabitants of Hainault, a language so diametrically opposed to that universally employed by the middling and upper classes, was an exclusive and vexatious measure, that was sorely felt by every father of a family throughout the country.

Upon the rising generation, the hardships may have been less severe; for, by force of study from early youth, a certain degree of proficiency might be acquired in the Dutch idiom. But every philologist is aware of the difficulty, indeed impracticability, of ever obtaining that absolute and intimate knowledge of a foreign language that can enable a man to cope successfully in abstruse argument with a native professor of another country. Still more so, when he is required to elucidate the subtleties and chicaneries of the law, or to combat fine-drawn definitions and technicalities, the success of which so often depends on the just application or

force of a word, and, above all, on the avoidance of any expression that may tend to throw ridicule on the speaker.

Take, for example, a Russian barrister; let him enter a French court, and there argue against M. Dupin, or any of the great French lawyers; what chance of success would he have, however great his talent, or his knowledge of French jurisprudence? and yet the Russians are supposed to be as conversant with French as with their own idiom. Again, let a German *not* educated all his life in England, where he may have adopted the vernacular as a second nature, but brought up—mark the difference—in the bosom of his own family, or at an university where German was the language of common intercourse, and English that of mere scholastic labour. Let this German propose to plead in Westminster Hall; who would give him a brief?

If, therefore, the measure fell heavily on the youth of the country, what must have been its effects on men of riper years, who, having devoted their whole existence to cultivate the language of their country, were thus suddenly required either to adopt the Dutch idiom, or to renounce for ever the fruits of twenty or thirty years' labour? Many examples could be cited of distinguished practitioners, who were thus either entirely lost to their profession, or who sunk from pre-eminence into comparative obscurity. Thus, their ambition and fortunes being marred, their prospects blighted, and their hearts filled with bitterness, they turned their pens and their talent against the government, and devoted themselves to the subversion of institutions that they looked on as destructive to their interests and liberties. This hostility was of no trifling import, for it may safely be affirmed that the explosion was almost entirely the work of this class of citizens.

It has been attempted to defend this measure, not

only on the ground of the importance of establishing a unity of idiom in the courts and public offices, but on that of precedent. No one can deny, that the introduction of a general idiom tended to facilitate the despatch of business, and was even advantageous to the ends of justice. But, admitting the utility, let it be asked, why were the majority selected as the victims? Why were nearly *four* millions of Belgians to adopt the dialect of *two* millions of Dutch? Especially, as it is a notorious fact that the cases brought into court were as six to one in favour of Belgium, and consequently the whole of the evidence and necessary documents were first drawn up in French or Flemish. If the Dutch, from their habits and antipathies, could never have been induced to submit to the compulsory introduction of a foreign language, was it just or politic to expect greater pliancy on the part of their more numerous fellow-subjects?

As to precedent, it is true the Romans made a similar attempt, and enforced it under the penalty of death. But the imposition of their classic language, however arbitrary, had its benefits. It was the means of propagating civilization, learning, and Christianity. Besides, Rome was the universal conqueror and dictator—the fountain of science and the arts; whilst other European nations were comparative barbarians, and their idioms mere local jargons. But for a small nation like the Dutch to attempt to banish from a country a polished universal language, the vehicle of common parlance, correspondence, commerce, diplomacy, and the theatres, and to replace it by one that was unknown beyond their own frontier—unknown both in literature, jurisprudence, legislation or diplomacy—was a measure of unrivalled boldness. Even Prussia, who, with regard to the population of the Duchy of Posen, had an immense majority, never evinced such a pretension. On the contrary, the

Polish language was maintained in the courts of law, and all acts of government published in the two languages.

The fundamental code never contemplated such a proceeding; and had the allies been consulted, they would either have been ignorant of the commonest workings of human nature, or they would have desecrated the attempt, not only as dangerous and impolitic, but in opposition to the treaties of the union, which declared "*that no obstacle or restriction should be imposed on one province to the benefit of another.*"

The second grievance—one that was most severely felt by every individual in Belgium, no matter what his rank or station in life—was the marked preference evinced by the government in the distribution of all civil and military employments; a partiality not resting on vague report, but borne out by indisputable proofs.

It has been often argued in defence of this proceeding, that the government was justified from the want of talent in the people of the southern provinces, who had neither the sound education, application, knowledge or experience that characterize the Dutch. It is certainly no easy matter to establish a comparative scale between the merits of the two people in regard to the two first qualifications, but it is fair to demand how were they to obtain knowledge or experience without practice; and how could they acquire practice, if they were excluded from employment? It has been farther attempted to substantiate this accusation of inaptitude by the results of the revolution, which, it is affirmed, has not produced a single man of pre-eminent talent, either as a statesman or legislator, and that so great has been the dearth of military capacity, that the nation has been obliged to have recourse to the officers of a neighbouring state, in order to place her army on an efficient footing.

That the revolution has not produced any of those

superior minds which, in times of popular commotion, often flash like fiery meteors across the political horizon, is true ; and most fortunately so for the repose of Europe. For, had such a spirit sprung up ; had such a commanding genius risen from the boiling cauldron, it would have been no difficult matter for him to have attained supreme power ; and at a moment when revolution and democracy were rife throughout Europe, who can calculate the miseries and convulsions that might have ensued ere a check had been placed on his ambition ? Fortunately, however, these evils have been averted by the discretion and moderation of more prudent and less ambitious men, who, if they did not display transcendent capacity, possessed the greatest of all desideratums—sound sterling sense, and a perfect knowledge of what best suited their country and the general repose of Europe.

But, although Belgium has not produced its Cromwell or Napoleon, and although no extraordinary talent has shown itself, is this any excuse for the impolicy of Dutch partiality ? Was this partiality calculated to promote “fusion” or attachment to the government ? Could the monarch, with whom rested the revision of all nominations, expect to reign in the hearts of a people, whose fathers, brothers, and husbands were mere stepping-stones for their Dutch brethren ? Could the dynasty expect assistance in the hour of need from the middling classes, or common fidelity from the Belgian troops, who being in the proportion of three to one more numerous than the Dutch, saw themselves almost exclusively commanded by officers of that nation ? Could the soldiers or non-commissioned officers have any attachment to a banner which was to them the symbol of injustice ; or could they evince any devotion to foreign officers who, on almost every occasion, exercised the most marked

preference in promoting their own countrymen? Was this fulfilling the noble mandate with which the king of the Netherlands had been entrusted by the allies; or securing that moral barrier against France, the grand object of the union—an object ten thousand times more important than the costly fortresses or the bayonets of the Netherlands army?

In extenuation, the position of the government is declared to have been extremely embarrassing. On account of the asserted dearth of talent, it was placed between the necessity of employing inferior capacities, or of committing acts of apparent partiality by preferring Dutch. But even admitting this, by way of hypothesis, what was the result? Not only were the great majority deprived of employment and advancement, and thus materially and physically injured, but the motive of rejection was a proof of contempt; a moral insult most galling to a people, who are certainly not without their full share of self-love, pride, and jealousy.

In a proceeding of this nature, the cause matters little; one must look to effects, and these were most pernicious. Discontent and disgust not only found its way into the palaces of the nobility and the abodes of the middling classes, but was carried by the young militiamen into the cottages of their parents. This may be looked on as one of the principal causes, why, at the breaking out of the revolution, the soldiers deserted their colours by whole battalions, and having trampled under foot the Orange cockade, gladly hastened to enrol themselves under their national standard. It is not meant to say that seduction was not employed to induce the men to abandon their ranks; but this seduction was more easily effected from the pre-existence of discontent.

Exact data are wanting to show the relative number

of civilians of each nation, who were employed ; it will suffice to observe, that of the seven cabinet ministers, there were only two Belgians ; of the forty-five privy councillors, twenty-seven were Dutch, eighteen Belgian ; of thirty-nine diplomatists, nine only were Belgian ; of the referendaries first class, eight Dutch, five Belgian ; of fourteen directors-general, only one Belgian ; of the nine directors of the great military establishments, not one Belgian ; of the 117 persons employed in the home department, eleven Belgian ; of fifty-nine in that of finance, five Belgian ; and of 102 in that of war, ninety-nine Dutch, and only three Belgian.

But the most striking example of all is to be found in the Netherlands official army-list for 1830, where the immense preponderance of Dutch over Belgian officers is scarcely credible, being in the proportion of twelve and ten to one in some branches, and about six to one upon the whole.* It is not, therefore, to be mar-

	Dutch.	Belgians.
• Generals	5 ..	0
Lieutenant-generals	21 ..	2
Major-generals	50 ..	5
Staff	43 ..	8
Colonels (infantry)	25 ..	3
Lieutenant-colonels	19 ..	5
Majors	78 ..	10
Captains	400 ..	122
Lieutenants	538 ..	70
Second-lieutenants	394 ..	49
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,454 ..	254
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Colonels of cavalry	7 ..	3
Lieutenant-colonels	12 ..	3
Majors	17 ..	8
Captains	81 ..	24
Lieutenants	199 ..	46
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	316 ..	84
	<hr/>	<hr/>

velled at, that there was a deficit of superior officers, especially in the staff, artillery, and engineers, where fair promotion was denied to them; for of forty-three staff-officers, only eight were Belgian; of forty-three field-officers of artillery, only one Belgian, and of twenty-three field-officers of engineers, not one Belgian; and yet many of the captains had served with honour and distinction under Napoleon;* nor can it be a matter of surprise, that there was an utter want of cordiality between the soldiers of the two nations, and a general disgust for the Dutch service, in no way recompensed by the elevated rate of pay. It is said that it was not the fault of the government, if there were not more Belgians in the two scientific departments of the army; as the rule of the service required that they should be recruited from the military school, and the Belgian parents declined sending their children to this school. True, they were so disinclined, but it must be

	Dutch.	Belgians,
Colonels of artillery.....	6 ..	0
Lieutenants-colonels.....	13 ..	0
Majors.....	24 ..	1
Captains	79 ..	8
Lieutenants.....	238 ..	24
	<hr/> 360 ..	<hr/> 33
Colonels of engineers	5 ..	0
Lieutenant-colonels	8 ..	0
Majors.....	10 ..	0
Captains	42 ..	5
Lieutenants.....	63 ..	4
	<hr/> 128 ..	<hr/> 9

—*Jaarboekje voor het Koninklijke Leger der Nederlanden*, 1830.

* Captain (now General) Goblet, for instance, who signalized himself in the defence of St. Sebastian, where, after all his superiors were put *hors de combat*, he was intrusted with the command.

observed in reply, that the governor, officers, and professors, as well as the mode of instruction, were Dutch, the academy was in a Dutch garrison, and the chief tendency of the establishment anti-Catholic ; and moreover, that upon every examination or passing of students, the Dutch cadets were promoted over the heads of the Belgians.

The next point is that of finance. It is not intended to discuss the general merits of the system, but merely such portions as are directly connected with the question of grievances. It results from official statements, that, notwithstanding upwards of fifteen years' uninterrupted repose and boasted commercial prosperity, no diminution was effected in the taxes, no decrease in the public burthens. On the contrary, the united budgets augmented from 54,000,000 of florins in 1814, to 73,200,000 fl. in 1819, and 85,076,000 fl. in 1829, had not been reduced below 80,000,000 fl. in 1830. This was accompanied by constant deficits requiring a succession of heavy loans ; for, although the average wants of the state amounted to about 82,000,000 fl., the revenue, in the most favourable years, never exceeded 75,000,000 fl., thus presenting an average annual excess of expenditure, over receipts of about 7,000,000 fl.*

It is true, that the Netherlands government commenced its career under very great financial disadvantages. For, on one hand, no country in Europe had suffered more severely than Holland from forced loans, contributions, and the pressure of ancient debts ; while, on the other, the French authorities in Belgium had carried off all the public treasure, and left the finances in a state of such utter exhaustion and confusion, that

* " *Exposé Historique des Finances du Royaume des Pays Bas.*" Bruxelles, 1829.

the new government found little more than £12,000 in its coffers ; and as the budget of 1814 amounted to 54,000,000 fl., and the receipts could only be calculated at 38,000,000 fl., the new financial existence commenced with a deficit of nearly 16,000,000 fl. Scarcely had the young kingdom time to breathe, ere the return of Napoleon from Elba demanded new sacrifices ; so that, in 1815, there was an excess of expense over receipts of upwards of 40,000,000 fl., causing an unavoidable deficit in the two first years of more than four millions and a half sterling. The treaty of London of 13th of August 1814, having imposed on the king the necessity of contributing to the construction of the fortresses, 45,000,000 fl. were required for this service, so that the very infancy of the state was oppressed by a necessity of raising loans to the amount of 101,000,000 florins.

The earliest financial grievance complained of by the Belgians, was the saddling them with the quote part payment of the interests of the resuscitated debt of Holland, called "*dette différée*," the capital of which amounted to 1,200,000,000 of florins, which, together with 800,000,000 fl. of active debt, gave a total capital of 2,000,000,000 florins *exclusively Dutch*. It has been argued by many able writers, that the resuscitation of the first of these debts, two-thirds of which had been annulled by the French, was not called for by circumstances ; that the evil was past and forgotten, that the kingdom was not in a situation to admit of increased burthens, and that, as the interest in this stock had past from the hands of its original purchasers into those of mere stock-jobbers, who had bought it at a low price, the latter would reap all the advantages of its revival, whilst the original proprietors and their heirs would derive no benefit. But surely such an argument cannot hold good for a moment ; for admitting the

feeble condition of the exchequer, it never can be too late to perform an act of justice, or too soon to redress an act of spoliation; and although the original holders had disposed of their stock, those who purchased it tendered them an equivalent, incurred all risks, and became *bonâ fide* proprietors, justly entitled to any turn of good fortune that might ensue. It might as well be argued that, in the event of national bankruptcy, the purchaser should have a claim on the original holder for reimbursement of his losses.

Besides, the revival of that debt was not only eminently politic, as regarded the credit of the new government, which thus gave a striking proof to Europe of the sentiments of good faith and integrity with which it was animated, but it was highly favourable to the new dynasty by inspiring confidence in the equity of the monarch.

Were the arguments employed against the revival of this debt applied to other transactions of similar nature, it might lead to the most fatal consequences, and the foulest acts of dishonesty and breaches of faith on the part of governments resolved to defraud the public creditor; for there is no very wide distinction between refusing to pay a just debt, and declining to revive one that has been cancelled, not by national will, but by foreign conquest. Therefore, if the Dutch government had not acted as they did, they would have sanctioned or confirmed an act of spoliation, that must be reprobated by every honest man as the last act of tyranny, or the direst misfortune that can overwhelm a nation.*

Admitting the policy and equity of the revival of the

* These observations, applicable to the Spanish finance system of 1834, were written many months before that act of spoliation was thought of.—ED.

"deferred debt," it is not possible to deny the hardship of imposing on the Belgian people a tax in which they had not the slightest interest, either past or present; not even that of national honour. For thus from a trifling burthen, known as the Austro-Belgian debt, not exceeding 32,000,000 florins capital, they were suddenly called upon to contribute their share in the discharge of the enormous dead weight which had been contracted by the people with whom they were forcibly united. Thus, when the peace of 1815 finally settled the destinies of the Netherlands, instead of bringing a diminution of taxation to the Belgians, the whole of their principal imposts were doubled, and this without the slightest prospect of ultimate decrease. If there be a single point in political economy that is comprehended by the people in general, it is taxation, or rather its effects, for this comes directly home to their pockets. It cannot be a matter of astonishment then, that universal discontent was created amongst them, on finding that the taxgatherer's demands were two-fold those of preceding years, and that their condition under the new government was more burthensome than it had been during their junction with France.

In order to meet the periodical deficits that accompanied the presentation of the annual budget, it was found necessary, not only to augment the customs and excise duties, and to act on a system utterly opposed to the acknowledged principles of political economy, but to have recourse to extraordinary modes of taxation. Thence arose the imposition of the odious taxes known as the *"mouture"* and *"abbatage."*

The first of these was a per centage exacted at the mill on ground corn, or on meal introduced into the city. The annual produce of this tax, one of the most grievous that could be inflicted on a people whose chief

sustenance was bread, amounted to about 5,500,000 florins, and was the more impolitic, since it principally affected the lower classes, by whom this augmentation in the price of the great staple commodity of existence was felt with bitter poignancy. In Holland, where the consumption of bread is infinitely less, and where potatoes and other vegetables form the principal article of subsistence, the grievance was the more endurable; but it was utterly repugnant to the habits and customs of the southern provinces, and excited popular dissatisfaction to the highest pitch.

The second of these taxes, producing about 2,500 000 florins, was a wholesale poundage levied at the slaughter-house on all carcasses, and this also after the municipal duties (*octroi*) had been paid on the live animal at the city-gates. But its pressure falling more directly on the affluent classes created less outcry, and might probably have been maintained had it not been promulgated and linked in public opinion with the odious "*mouture*." These obnoxious imposts passed the chambers on the 21st July, 1821. Some idea may be formed of their extreme unpopularity in Belgium, by referring to the division, which on that occasion stood thus; majority 55—minority 51; of the former, *two* only were Belgians, and of the latter, *not one* was Dutch. Thus out of fifty-three Belgians, two only could be found to vote against the interests of their constituents: the remaining two, who were accidentally absent, openly expressed their dissent. It would be impossible to advance a stronger proof of national feeling, or of the impolicy of the government in persisting in a measure of this kind in defiance of the opinions and votes of a whole people. But, unfortunately, the ministers were satisfied with majorities, no matter how obtained, or no matter how injurious the consequences to themselves

and the country. Fatal and blind policy ! to be explained on no other grounds than that they entertained an overweening opinion of their own strength, and considered themselves better acquainted with the state of public feeling in Belgium than the representatives of the people themselves. For it would be too grave an accusation to assert that they actually disregarded public opinion, or that they were resolved to sacrifice the interests of the southern provinces to those of the north.

Notwithstanding the most urgent petitions and remonstrances, it was not until 1829 that these imposts were withdrawn ; but, although this abolition caused a momentary reaction, the mischief was too deeply engrafted to be effaced by a concession that was only wrung from the government, after it had been twice obliged to withdraw its project for the decennial budget of 1830-40.

The repeal of these taxes having caused a falling-off of more than eight millions in the revenue, without there being any corresponding reduction of expenditure, it was necessary to make up the deficiency by the introduction of other imposts. The first was, therefore, replaced by a duty on horses, horned cattle and sheep ; and the second by an augmentation in the excise ; namely, fifty per cent. on foreign, and thirty per cent. on native wines and spirits ; twenty-five per cent. on salt, beer, and vinegar, and ten florins per cwt. on sugar. Thus, although the unpopular taxes were repealed, the burthens of the country were not alleviated ; so that, when the first burst of joy had passed over, public dissatisfaction returned to its former level. Besides, from shifting the onus from the consumer to the producer, a check was given to the multiplication of primary matter ; and by augmenting the duties on foreign wines and spirits, consumption was diminished, smuggling pro-

moted, and the revenue deteriorated ; evils generally attendant upon the prohibitive system, which formed the grand basis of the Netherlands commercial policy.

The embarrassments in which the government had already involved itself, as early as the year 1822, had obtained such a height that it became necessary to raise a further loan of fifty millions of florins. But this assistance was of little avail. Each succeeding budget was marked by a large deficit, until at length the distress of the exchequer became so imminent, that, after several schemes, a plan was suggested which produced the celebrated institution entitled the "*Amortisatie Syndikaat*," or sinking fund syndicate ; which, after a protracted debate, passed into law on the 30th December, 1822.

The intricacy and obscurity of this institution were such as to baffle the penetration of all those who were not absolutely initiated into its innermost arcana. Indeed, so profound was the mystery maintained as to its operations, that, although the commission was composed of seven members, all sworn to secrecy, its private transactions were said to be concealed from all save the president and his secretary.

The bill legalizing the establishment of this institution, though carried by a large majority, few of whom comprehended the details, or could ever obtain a clear insight into its complicated machinery, was warmly combatted both in and out of doors. It was argued that its principal object was to elude the vigilance of the deputies, by removing a certain portion of the public expenditure from the control and scrutiny of the states, to the custody of a secret commission, over whom they could exercise no authority—a commission, who were irresponsible, and whose accounts, according to the 49th Art. of the Statutes, were only to be laid before the

public once in ten years, and this not until 1829 ; seven years after its foundation. It was also objected to, as augmenting the dead weight, without diminishing annual taxation or deficits ; whilst the sale of the national domains, of which it became inspector, and by which it reaped enormous profits, was compared to the conduct of a spendthrift who lives on his capital, regardless of the corresponding diminution of his income. It was declared to be in opposition to the 101st article of the fundamental law, since it ventured to execute public works in defiance of the dissent of the chambers.*

In short, it was looked on as a mysterious *imperium in imperio*, having at its command the disposal of mines, domains, the tolls on land and water communications, and other sources of revenue, inconsistent with the attributes of a private company ; and that it acted upon principles utterly opposed to that system of frank and undisguised publicity, which ought to be the guide of all constitutional governments.

Whatever may have been the merits or defects of this institution, it is certain that it constantly afforded great assistance to the government ; for during the first seven years of its foundation, from 1823 to 1829 inclusive, it furnished 58,885,543 florins towards covering the annual deficits.

Another financial grievance loudly complained of was the sum of one million of florins, borne in the extraordinary budget under the head of "*unforeseen exigencies*," and commonly denominated the "*million of industry*." This item was inscribed in the estimates as an absolute global outgoing, without any return or per contra, and was thus at variance with the primitive ob-

* Those, for instance, intended to connect the island of Marken, in the Zuyderzee, with the main land.

ject of the parliamentary vote, which intended that it should be expended in loans to distressed manufacturers, or in aiding speculators in establishing mines, factories, or other commercial undertakings.

But not only was the distribution of this sum kept a profound secret from the chambers, but, though put out at high interest and in part reimbursed, neither interest or capital was subsequently carried to the public credit. Indeed, large sums were declared to have been devoted to political uses and the payment of secret services. Amongst the latter there appeared upwards of 100,000 florins to the celebrated and obnoxious M. Libry Bagnano, editor of the *National*.

Whether or not the whole of these accusations were founded on facts, it is difficult to state; but whatever may have been the case, it is certain that the manufacturing interests derived great benefits from this assistance; it was the means of promoting speculations which gradually rose from insignificance to comparative affluence. It gave an impulse to the employment of small capital in useful undertakings. It enabled young manufacturers to make head against the difficulties attending a first establishment, and aided old houses to resist the sudden pressure of misfortune. In fact, it laid the foundation of that commercial prosperity which apparently existed in Belgium at the moment of the revolution.

It is considered a false principle in political economy for governments to lend direct assistance to the manufacturing interests, which, even in periods of most pressing distress, ought to be left to the development of their own resources, and solely guided in their enterprises by the demands of the market. This may be extremely politic in old countries like England, where there is an immense floating capital, and where the

bankruptcy of one individual serves but to stimulate another to greater exertions. But in a youthful state like the Netherlands, where capital was limited, where the spirit of speculation was confined, and where a long exclusion from the benefits of general commerce had rendered the people apathetic and timid, the encouragement afforded by the government was highly advantageous. Had it not been for this assistance, and the marked protection of the crown, it is probable that the splendid establishment of Mr. Cockerell, at Seraing, near Liege, and many others of lesser note at Ghent, Tournay, Mons, and Brussels, would never have arrived at that surprising degree of perfection, which rendered the former an object of admiration even to Englishmen.*

Great as the financial grievances complained of by the Belgians may have been, the main error of the Netherlands government was not so much the impolitic imposition of the *mouture and abbatage*, the diverting from its proper channel the "million of industry," the institution of the *syndicate*, or the refusal to put high duties on coffee, tea, and tobacco, lest they should interfere with Dutch commerce, whilst they taxed the distilleries and other branches of industry that were injurious to Belgium, as the pertinacity with which they maintained their expenditure year after year, at a height far beyond their ways and means; thus utterly forgetting that, "when the resources of a state cannot be raised to a level with its expenditure, it is essential to reduce the expenditure to a level with the receipts." By neglecting this simple precept, deficit after deficit

* In virtue of a contract with the Belgic government, Mr. Cockerell has become sole proprietor of this establishment, the half of which previously belonged to the ex-government.

ensued, and in despite of the occult assistance of the syndicate, the public debt was augmented by upwards of 272 millions of florins, and with it the necessity for a corresponding increase of taxation ; a fact the more remarkable, since the nation had enjoyed profound peace during sixteen years, and her commerce, industry, and agriculture were declared by government to be in a condition not of apparent, but absolute prosperity.

We now come to the fourth grievance, and perhaps no event ever created more intense dissatisfaction than that of the establishment of the supreme court of justice (*haute cour*) at the Hague. The adoption of this obnoxious measure, promulgated by a cabinet order of the 21st of June, 1830, called forth universal clamour ; for whilst it threatened ruin to the Brussels and Liege bar, it was looked on as more pernicious in its general effects, than any previous measure imposed on Belgium by former conquerors. It entailed immense additional expense on litigants, and thence affected the whole body of citizens, by compelling them to quit their homes and carry their trials of appeal to a distant country, where the inhabitants spoke a different idiom, and where the necessities of life were infinitely dearer. It compelled the Belgian advocates to remove their domiciles into Holland, or to abandon the greater part of their practice, and as the vast majority were naturally repugnant to such removal, it threw the monopoly into the hands of the Dutch lawyers,

This monopoly was particularly dreaded in regard to prosecutions against the press ; for, however just and honourable the Dutch lawyers, it would be difficult to prevent the influence of the court and government from acting on the minds of judges who might be dismissed at the will of the crown, and who were already imbued with a strong bias unfavourable to their

Belgian brethren. The interests of the Belgian bar and public would thus be totally unrepresented, except perhaps by a few young barristers whom necessity might drive to the Hague, a grievance rendered still more severe by the want of a jury. The hardship of the case, independent of all its moral and political influences, may be brought more directly home to the reader's understanding, by his supposing that in all motions for new trials or appeals, the whole of the Irish, Scotch, and indeed ordinary circuit cases, were removed into the court of chancery, and that barristers, solicitors, clients, and witnesses were compelled to repair to London, and there remain during the tedious process of investigation and trial. That which rendered the case still more alarming was the dependent position of the judges, for although the fundamental law established the principle of life appointment, the clause was evaded, and this vital and essential accessory to the free dispensation of justice was thus converted into an instrument of despotism.

The grievances of the Catholics remain to be spoken of. We will attempt to describe them as concisely as possible.

Ever since the revolution in the sixteenth century, the legislation of Holland had been exclusively Protestant, whilst that of Belgium was no less exclusively Catholic. When the congress of Vienna decreed the arbitrary union of the two countries, their religious physiognomy had been little modified; for, although the French republic and empire had exercised some slight temporary influence over the general mind, both parties continued faithful to their prejudices and traditions. Thus, when the king of the Netherlands ascended the throne, he found himself in the presence of a large Catholic majority, consisting of two-thirds of the

population ; and, as neither party evinced the slightest disposition to abandon its laws and usages, they watched each other with the jealous disquietude of two hostile armies, separated by a momentary truce. At first sight the position of the government appeared fraught with embarrassments ; but, as the Catholics asserted that they sought for liberty for themselves, not for dominion over others, nothing could be more easy than the remedy. All the king had to do was to restrict his administration within a civil circle, and to abandon the different creeds to their own action. The spirit of the age seemed to dictate this prudent policy ; for liberty of conscience, religious tolerance, and the respect for the faith of others had become the symbol of European civilization, the absolute essence of social order.

The United Provinces having long allowed themselves to bend to the will of the stadtholderate, the king could safely calculate on the subserviency of his Protestant subjects ; the latitude and quiescence of whose religious doctrines rendered them as it were indifferent to interference. But this was not the case in Belgium. There, in despite of successive conquests and political mutations, the Catholics had succeeded in preserving intact all their religious rights and immunities, and had renounced nothing of their doctrinal individuality. Each renewed aggression served but to render them more firm, more united, and more jealous of encroachment. By a skilful tactic the clergy had also avoided separating religious from national questions ; so that in times of need, each party derived strength and assistance from the other. Of this, striking examples occurred during the short-lived revolution under Joseph. In his conduct towards the church, the

king would have done well to have imitated the example of the sovereigns of England, who, although they are the constitutional heads and defenders of the established faith, abstain from all direct interference in ecclesiastical matters, wisely abandoning them to the jurisdiction of the bishops. Without being invested with the same powers *de jure*, king William assumed them *de facto*; thereby irritating the uncompromising susceptibilities, and placing himself in direct hostility with the paramount principles of the Catholic church.

The opposition of this body, therefore, commenced with the earliest infancy of the ill-assorted union. The moment the projected constitution was submitted for acceptance to the notables, the bishops raised their voices against it; stigmatizing some clauses as dangerous, and others as being directly opposed to the Catholic faith. They declared at once, if the fundamental law should pass without modification, that it could not be sworn to by the Catholics without violating their consciences and sacrificing the interests of their religion. Notwithstanding these remonstrances, and its absolute rejection by a large majority of Belgic notables, the law was promulgated. From that hour opposition appeared a matter of duty and conscience, as sacred as that of the Irish Catholics to the disabilities from which they were relieved by the act of emancipation.

The fundamental articles especially objected to as dangerous, were those relating to the liberty of the press, the public profession of all faiths, and the restrictions placed on the exercise of the Catholic religion. The clauses designated as contrary to the Roman creed, were the submission of public and private instruction to the direct control of government, the provisional maintenance of the French republican and imperial legislation,

and the exaction of the constitutional oath.* The repugnance of the Catholics to some of these articles was doubtless justifiable, but their opposition to those which gave equal protection to all religious persuasions, betrayed a jealousy and want of tolerance, strongly contrasting with their liberal professions.† A reference to the note will shew that the articles in question were drawn up in a spirit of perfect equity and tolerance, and if strictly adhered to, were essentially calculated to satisfy all parties. They might have been deemed dangerous, and perhaps in opposition to the doctrines of a creed that admits of no competition, and which holds up the ministers of all other faiths as the mercenary organs of a damnable heresy. But the Catholics were surely not entitled to claim unrestricted liberty for themselves, and to deny the same boon to others, that is, in the hypothesis of equal protection being impartially afforded to all.

But herein lay the grievance. For the Catholics declared, that the observance would be the portion of the Protestants; the infraction, the heritage of the Catholics. In order, however, to calm the alarms of the latter, the government asserted that the dispositions complained of ought to be viewed in a civil light, and as measures only of public order: consequently, that the

* The objectionable part of this oath was—"I swear to observe and maintain the fundamental law of the kingdom, and that I will not deviate nor allow any deviation from it."

† The following are the articles of the fundamental law concerning religion:—

§ 190. "Liberty of religious opinions is guaranteed to all.

§ 191. "Equal protection is accorded to all religious communions that exist in the kingdom.

§ 192. "All the king's subjects, without distinction of religious belief, enjoy the same civil and political rights, and are eligible to all dignities, &c.

§ 193. "The public exercise of all religions is permitted, unless it shall trouble public order and tranquillity."

Roman religion could not be endangered. But this produced no effect. The Catholics asserted that they had studied the history of the Dutch government, which had at all times evinced a marked hostility to their faith, and that, as both the stadtholders and privileged families had risen to power through the medium of Protestantism, they would naturally endeavour to maintain themselves through the same ascendancy. Here again we find, on the part of the Catholics, jealous suspicions resulting from ~~past~~ prejudices, rather than a tolerant desire to follow the path of fraternal co-operation, and to admit others upon a level with themselves. They justify this, however, by saying, that they foresaw that the supreme administration would fall a prey to Dutch monopoly; that without a jury, and with judges removeable at the will of the crown, the liberty of the press would be illusory, or that it would be converted into an instrument to serve the anti-Catholic prejudices and antipathies of the government; and finally, that all the articles of the constitution, susceptible of an arbitrary or hostile interpretation, would be turned against them, especially since the national representation was composed of half Dutch.

The apprehensions of the Catholics appear to have been too often realized; for many of the journals under the influence of government spoke of the Catholics in terms the most injurious, and treated the clergy with bitter indignity; and when the latter retorted, ministerial persecution was the general result. Thus, upon the most frivolous pretexts, several priests were brought before tribunals that offered no equitable guarantees; for not only were the judges revocable at the king's will, but their sentences were uncontrolled by the verdict of a jury; so that these tribunals were little better than prevotal courts or star-chambers. On one instance

a priest was tried and condemned to imprisonment, for an alledged libel, by a special extraordinary court;* a remnant of Napoleon's despotism, still maintained in defiance of the constitution. To these acts of severity the government added no small impolicy in the selection of the objects of their wrath; the accused being, for the most part, men of high character and great popularity. Thus, when the prince-bishop of Ghent fell beneath the lash of the tribunals, his sentence was scarcely pronounced, ere it was annulled by public opinion, amidst the universal clamours of the country. Not content with this, the government directly interfered even in the attributes of the bishops and inferior clergy. The Prince De Broglie and his vicars-general, for instance, were declared to be absolved from the spiritual jurisdiction; some curates were dismissed and others refused induction, whilst their cures were left vacant during many months.

Independent of these vexations, the government adopted other measures essentially calculated to realize the apprehensions of the Catholics. Catholic instruction was obstructed, and in some measure prohibited in the schools;† books of a philosophic, or, as it was considered, of a deistical tendency were employed as standard works, and in some instances others were introduced, containing strictures on the discipline and questioning the authority of the Romish church. For a certain time a Protestant was placed at the head of public instruction; the Catholic schools and small

* The Abbé de Foere, superintendent of the religious community of the English ladies at Bruges, now member of the representative chambers, and one of the ablest and most liberal theological and metaphysical writers in Belgium.

† Of the sixty-eight inspectors of public schools in Holland, where one-third of the population is Catholic, not one was of that religion.

seminaries were suppressed, and the Catholic clergy were as far as possible debarred access to those under the control of government. The religious festivals and processions were curtailed under pretext of preserving public order,* and the national schools were erected in the style of architecture usually employed in reformed temples.† Finally, the youth of the country were restricted by an order in council from being educated out of the Netherlands territory, under the penalty of subsequent inadmissibility to all public functions, which was tantamount to the loss of civil rights.

But that which set the seal to the general exasperation, and confirmed the clergy in the idea that it was the intention of government gradually to Protestantize the country, was the establishment of the philosophic college at Louvain; attendance at which was first declared to be compulsory, but, owing to the general clamours of the nation, was subsequently made optional or facultative. Here, as the term implies, the system of education was essentially philosophic, and under the immediate superintendence of Protestant superiors and professors; and although the course of education embraced the ecclesiastical history, which comprehends the canon law, the bishops and their vicars were excluded from all jurisdiction or power of interpretation. This was held to be a grievous hardship; for the ecclesiastical history being nothing more than that of

* The grand object of the government in suppressing some of these festivals, was not to injure the Catholic religion, but to benefit the Catholic people by curtailing the number of days that are devoted to idleness and drunkenness.

† This may appear a ridiculous cause of alarm; but so great was the jealousy and apprehension of the Catholics, that even this trifle added to their fears.

the dogma, and the canon law being merely the form or vehicle under which the dogma is publicly professed, it was argued that, if the government rendered itself master of the form, it also obtained command over the dogma. These, and other theological subtleties, were discussed with extraordinary acumen by the clergy; the whole system of the government was declared to be a perpetual encroachment on the rights of the Catholics, and a direct violation of the constitution—fully justifying all their anterior apprehensions and subsequent opposition.

CHAPTER IV.

ARRÊTÉS RELATING TO THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS—EXTRAORDINARY COURTS OF JUSTICE—SUPPRESSION OF CATHOLIC SEMINARIES—THE ASSOCIATION CALLED "THE UNION"—CONDUCT OF THE CATHOLICS—PERSECUTION OF THE PRESS—BELGIAN JOURNALS—THEIR CONTRIBUTORS—PROSECUTION OF THE ABBÉ DE FOERE, DE POTTER, AND OTHERS—BRUSSELS THE RENDEZVOUS OF DISCONTENTED FOREIGNERS.

HAVING enumerated the most oppressive grievances—grievances for the most part opposed in spirit to the treaties of the union and fundamental law—it is necessary to point out other collateral vexations which operated most powerfully on the public mind.

It has been shown, that the ministry was enabled to obtain majorities in the States-General upon many questions, which they considered essential to the prosperity and security of the whole monarchy, but which the Belgians regarded as solely intended to favour the Dutch, and as essentially injurious to themselves. Had the cabinet persisted in this plan, no matter what the means employed to secure such majorities; no matter what the inherent vices of the representative system; still it would have acted constitutionally, and, by sheltering itself behind the votes of the house, might have thrown the onus of any given measure on the national representatives. For the chambers being supposed to consist of an agglomerated body, the ministry had plausible grounds for taking the voice of the majority, as

that of the nation in general, without regard to province or party.

But this plan was too often abandoned, and a succession of *arrêtés*, or simple cabinet orders, substituted in its place; almost all of which were stigmatized as despotic acts, tending to enchain the liberty of the subject. Amongst these were the *arrêtés* of the 6th of November, 1814, abolishing the trial by jury and circumscribing the publicity of judicial proceedings; and that of the 20th of April, 1815, restricting the liberty of the press. Some idea of the severity of the latter may be formed from its enacting that all persons declared guilty of certain offences therein detailed should be punished, according to the gravity of the case, either with "exposure in the pillory from one to six hours," "civic degradation," "branding," or "imprisonment from one to six hours, and a fine of from 100 to 10,000 francs."

The action of this rigorous edict, founded on an organic law of Napoleon, was intended to be limited to one year, and ought to have been annulled on the promulgation of the fundamental code, with which it was at direct variance. Besides, the punishments it awarded were not inflicted by a jury, but by the sentence of nine judges composing an "*extraordinary special court*." This tribunal was subsequently abolished, but the *arrêté* was maintained and its penalties enforced by the fiat of a judge and four councillors, who were liable to be dismissed from office at the will of the minister; for, up to the latest hour, the government had postponed the fulfilment of the 186th article of the charter, which guaranteed the independence and life appointment of all judges.

But this was not all; a simple *arrêté* of the 15th of September, 1819, imposed the use of the Dutch language; another of the 25th of June, 1825, established

the *compulsory* philosophic college; and two others of the 14th of June and 14th of August of the same year, suppressed the Catholic seminaries, forbade the Netherlands youth to seek instruction out of the country, and placed other vexatious trammels on public and private instruction. To these might be added several others of minor importance; which, however innocent in their individual character, were linked in public desecration with those of a more odious nature; and thus, whilst they enfeebled the connecting link between the people and the throne, they more firmly cemented that formidable alliance between the liberals and Catholics, to which may be ascribed the success of the revolution.

A word as to the origin and composition of this association, known under the title of "*the union*," may not be uninteresting. Up to the year 1828, the opposition, both in and out of the States-General, was composed of two distinct bodies; differing, however, more in individual religious opinions than in general political principles. Both struggled to obtain the same end—that is to say, civil and religious emancipation; but both pursued a different path, so that for a length of time the heterogeneous nature of their composition rendered them nearly as hostile one to the other as they were to the government. The distinction between them was not, however, so great, as to render fusion impracticable. The first of these parties was composed of the high Catholics, secular and spiritual, whose enmity to government proceeded less from any immediate repugnance to the general system of Netherlands administration, than from their aversion to certain partial measures that tended to curtail the free exercise and study of the Roman creed; to place the ministers of that church in a state of comparative vassalage, and, as they

feared, to give an anti-Catholic bias to all the institutions of the state.

The other party was composed of liberals of all denominations, whose grand object was to secure a strict execution of the fundamental law, and an abridgment of Dutch preponderance. It is important, however, not to confound the *liberals* with the *ultra-liberals*, a mistake often fallen into by strangers—the latter having, in fact, no more affinity with the former than exists in England between radicals and moderate Whigs.

Notwithstanding the jealousy and difference of opinion existing between the liberals and Catholics, the government saw that a coalition was not impracticable; it, therefore, exerted every effort to widen the schism; knowing that so long as the parties continued at variance, there could be no danger from either. But the plan utterly failed; the leaders on both sides perceiving the danger with which they were menaced, gradually drew towards each other, and proposed to bury all individualities, and to unite for the general safety. Although the fruits of the *union* were not brought to maturity until 1828, the germs of its formation may be traced back as early as 1818, and principally ascribed to the writers of two opposition journals, the *Spectator* and *Observer*: the one edited by the Abbé de Foere, an erudite and able controversialist; and the other by Messrs. Van Maanen, D'Ellougue, and Donker, three distinguished jurisconsults. The theoretical principles of the union were advocated during several years with unremitting zeal by these writers, in despite of the attacks and sarcasms of the liberal press, and the prosecutions and menaces of the government. At length the public mind being fully impregnated with the principles of the union, and the number of the proselytes being augmented by all the influential men of both

parties, a dinner was given at the house of Baron Secus; and it was there resolved that the union should throw off all secrecy, and openly pronounce itself an operative and active body. From this moment it rapidly increased in strength and importance, and, eventually, bearing down all opposition, enlisted in its cause the whole of the liberal press, which had hitherto shown little sympathy towards it.

When De Potter first returned from Rome in 1825, whither he had accompanied the Count de Celles on his mission respecting the concordat, his sentiments were essentially anti-Catholic; sentiments encouraged by the advice and opinions of his friend, the minister Van Gobelschroy, who was eager to enlist De Potter against the union. But ere many weeks the logic of De Foere and Van Meenen succeeded in winning him over to their cause; and whatever he might have been at heart, he outwardly declared himself a staunch and zealous supporter of the coalition, and soon became one of its most influential leaders.

It is erroneous, however, to suppose that the primary object of the union was the subversion of government. Such an idea might have lurked in the minds of one or two theorists, whose political principles were essentially democratic, but such purpose was alien to the general intent. The all-engrossing object was the redress of grievances, and an extension of civil liberty and religious tolerance. It cannot be too often repeated, that if the Prince of Orange had been authorized by his father to promise his consent to the removal of these grievances, the revolution would have died a natural death. The motives for sedition having disappeared, even administrative separation would not have been demanded.

As to the fate of the union at some subsequent

period, there is much difference of opinion. That it still exists, and will perhaps continue so to do until all external questions are settled, seems to be generally admitted ; but it is evident that it has already lost much of its intensity, and that the greater part of the extreme opposition, and liberal press, are totally opposed to the Catholic majority in all principles of foreign policy and internal government. Indeed, it is hardly possible to suppose that elements so divergent should long be cemented in the same bond. Having specific objects in view, both liberals and Catholics sought each other's aid. But the ultra-liberals, without whose co-operation there could have been no union, now declare themselves to have been duped, and that, come what may, all future reamalgamation is impossible. Such is the outline of an association, not less important in its workings than the famous " compromise," established at Breda by the patriots of 1565.

Whilst speaking of the Catholic party, it would be most unjust not to acknowledge the services that body has rendered to its country and Europe ; at all events, since the exclusion of the Nassau family, and the impracticability of bringing back the Prince of Orange, rendered it necessary for the great powers to adopt a different line of policy in regard to Belgium.

Not only did the Catholics strenuously exert themselves to stem the tide of republicanism, that was dreaded by the sane part of the nation, but it was they who principally opposed the union of Belgium to France, and who most devotedly laboured to establish the independence and nationality of their country. Without their firm and honourable co-operation, all the later efforts made by Mr. Lebeau to maintain the peace of Europe, and to bring his well-digested combination to a successful issue, must have fallen to the ground ; and when

that combination reached maturity, it was the Catholics, both spiritual and secular, who were the warmest supporters of the throne and administration ; an instance of tolerance more remarkable, from the fact of King Leopold being the only Protestant prince in Europe, ruling over a people *exclusively* Catholic.

It is also worthy of record that, however predominant the influence of the Catholics may have been, either with the people, government, or court, on no occasion have they exerted that influence against the rational liberties of the country. On the contrary, every measure tending to enlighten or to extend civil franchises, has been supported by them with talent and disinterestedness. The conduct of King Leopold, in leaning towards this powerful portion of his people, has been eminently politic. And, after all, in what does this preference or leaning consist ? why, in non-interference, and allowing them to regulate their own affairs in whatever manner they consider best suited to the maintainance of their faith ; a policy too much neglected by his predecessor ; for it is incontestable, that the revolution was generated and brought to maturity by the union, and that without the cordial support of the Catholic portion of the union, no government would be possible.

But to return to the press : this puissant agent had now assumed a most hostile and menacing attitude. Many of the most able Belgic pens were energetically and fearlessly engaged in exposing the grievances, and asserting the rights of the people. The acts of government were canvassed with a degree of acuteness and boldness often bordering on temerity, and not less often tinged with the bitterest acrimony. Indeed, its errors were frequently exaggerated, its intentions misrepresented, and it was criticised with a degree of systematic virulence, not only calculated to produce

extreme personal exasperation, but of such a nature as would have led to ex-officio persecution in almost any country, and subjected the authors to severe punishments at the hands of any impartial judge. That restrictive measures were sometimes urgently called for, and that the government was fully justified in exercising such means of repression as the law placed at its disposal, does not admit of a moment's doubt.

But was the penal code insufficient? Was it absolutely necessary to recur to extra-judicial measures that are only employed by prudent governments during periods of open sedition? Was it politic to have recourse to an edict, which had been promulgated prior to the adoption of the fundamental law, and which could only have been defended, even in 1815, on the ground that the return of Napoleon from Elba menaced all Europe with convulsion, and required the utmost vigilance in a country which had so recently been dissevered from France, and which had become the rendezvous of many turbulent spirits, ardently attached to the cause of the emperor? "To give moderate liberty for griefs and discontents to evaporate (so it be without too great insolence or bravery), is a safe way; for he that turneth the humours back, and maketh the wounds bleed inwards, endangereth malign ulcers and pernicious imposthumations." Surely it would have been better had the Netherlands government acted more largely on this maxim of our great philosopher, than to have adopted a system, the impolicy of which is sufficiently denoted by its baneful results.

It will be asked, what were the results? Why, in lieu of intimidation, it produced contumacy; in lieu of submission, it created redoubled activity; instead of discouragement, it engendered perseverance; and in the place of ruin to the parties, it brought the most ample pecu-

niary assistance : so that, in defiance of edicts and prosecutions, the press augmented its temerity, and assumed a tone which tended to place the government and country in a state of implacable hostility. The principal organs of public opinion were, 1st, the *Courier des Pays Bas*, in which Messrs. Claes, Ducpetiaux, Lesbroussart, Van de Weyer, Nothomb, and other able writers, maintained a series of vigorous and most harassing assaults on the government. Indeed, this journal may be considered as the fountain that furnished the most constant nourishment to the general discontent, and from the force and pungency of its polemic, became an object of extreme disquietude to the ministry. Its influence was extreme ; instead of following public opinion, or preceding it at an almost imperceptible distance, it boldly stood forward, and became the beacon which pointed out the road that the chambers and people should follow. It may, in fact, be said to have concentrated the revolution in its columns. 2d. The *Spéctateur* and *Observateur*. 3d. The *Politique*, a well-conducted Liege paper, to which Messrs. Lebeau, Devaux, Rogier, and other lawyers, contributed articles of remarkable logical force ; and 4th, the *Belge*, principally edited by Messrs. Levae, De Potter, and Gendebien, and written in a style peculiarly adapted for the lower classes. To these may be added the *Courier de la Meuse* and *Catholique*, the latter edited by Bartels, a republican ; with one or two minor journals published in the Flemish language.

Independent of the diurnal press, numerous pamphlets and political letters made their appearance, all contributing to inflame the public mind by exposing the fallacies and unconstitutionality of the government.

A passage from one of these (the letter of Demophile, by De Potter, to the minister of the interior, M. Van

Gobelachroy) merits attention from its prophetic character. It runs thus:—"The foundation of an era of liberty and justice in Belgium is now assured, or, to speak the language of office, is *inevitable!* don't forget this, Sir, for one moment. The opposition to the ancient march of government, no matter into what hands this opposition falls, or what are its organs, must henceforth be invincible, in despite of every obstacle you may oppose to it. Sir, this opposition will be found constantly backed up by the profound, indelible sentiment of violated national rights and general discontent. This discontent, and the salutary mistrust to which it has given rise, guarantee to us the object of our vows, the sole aim of all our sacrifices, of all our efforts—*liberty!*" Thus wrote M. de Potter on the 15th Nov. 1829; and here we have a further proof that the revolution was not the mere sudden reflection of that of July, but the result of long pre-existing discontent.

In the meanwhile the government had two modes of combatting these attacks. The one, by the counteraction of a well-organized ministerial press, and the other by prosecution. Both were put into force, but unfortunately, the method of their development augmented rather than diminished the evil it sought to abate. The first of these methods was the establishment of a ministerial journal, entitled the *National*, under the direction of M. Libry Bagnano, an Italian of undoubted capacity, but of equivocal antecedents. But the polemic carried on by this publicist was of a nature so hostile to the popular opinions, the doctrines he advocated were so contrary to the views of the church and nation, the language he employed was so cynical and personal, and the servility he showed to the minister Van Maanen, of whom he was the avowed organ, was so grovelling,

that both editor and journal, soon became objects of the utmost public execration.

Independent of the unpopular doctrines defended by the *National*, it appeared that upwards of 85,000 florins had been subtracted from the "million of industry," and paid at different epochs to the editor. Thus, in lieu of affording support to the government, both this journal, and another called the *Sentinelle*, contributed largely to its overthrow; for such was the violent prejudice against the minister Van Maanen and M. Bagnano, that the ablest articles, the most logical conclusions, and the most veracious assertions, produced no other effect than to increase the general aversion for the editor, as well as for the unconstitutional means by which he was supported.

The repressive system adopted by the government, however justifiable in the spirit, was also most unfortunate in the form. From being grounded on the obnoxious edict of 1815, and other acts of a similar character, the prosecutions themselves were not only in the highest degree anti-national, but the very principles on which they were founded were considered unconstitutional and arbitrary, and gave rise to the most violent protestations. It is true the position of the government was singularly embarrassing. It was placed between the necessity of permitting accusations, often of a most dangerous and subversive tendency, to be propagated with impunity; or to have recourse to intra-judicial measures. The alternatives were both critical; but, on the whole, it would have been more politic, if, in lieu of adopting the system of prosecution, it had opened its eyes to the abyss that was yawning before it. Instead of trusting to its own power, and the stability and co-operation of neighbouring governments, it would

have done well had it continued that system of concession which it had wisely commenced, by modifying the *arrêtés* touching the philosophic college, and by removing the restrictions on the use of the French language. In 1829 there was yet ample time. Indeed in August, 1830, the monarchy might still have been saved. Even at a much later period, after the attack on Brussels, it only required some portion of tact and energy on the part of the Prince of Orange to have secured to himself the diadem that had been wrested from the brow of his father.

But unfortunately that brilliant star, which had shone so resplendently upon the Orange dynasty during nearly three centuries, rendering their names the most popular and illustrious amidst those of all European princes, appeared to be obscured by some fatal cloud. Whether from the incontrovertible force of events, from the original and insuperable vices of the union, or from the errors of the king's advisers, a spell seemed to be drawing the monarch and his house to their own destruction. That the king, as well as every member of his august family, was ardently devoted to the welfare of the whole kingdom, if not from reasons of inclination and equity, at least from cogent motives of self-interest, is incontestable. But kings are not exempt from the weaknesses of human nature. However wise, prudent, and well-disposed, they are not infallible; and unfortunately in the present instance, the King of the Netherlands seems to have displayed less forethought and political sagacity, and more of obstinate tenacity and personal prejudice, than it was possible to expect in a sovereign, whose name ranked pre-eminent throughout the world for circumspection and profound knowledge of constitutional policy.

The evil being accomplished, it is almost superero-

gatory to trace the moral causes that produced them. But, whatever these may have been, it is evident that no government could have been more blinded as to results, or more apparently bent on adopting every measure the most calculated to undermine its own influence, and to alienate the confidence of the people.

Political events sometimes occur that certainly baffle all human sagacity and provision. But the dissolution of the Netherlands kingdom was not one of those sudden catastrophes, the fearful offspring of one tremendous popular convulsion. The throes of the state had been long and painful. The government had been repeatedly warned, and had more than ample time for preparation. It saw, or ought to have seen, the gathering breakers, and been prepared to avoid the dangerous shoal. But it rushed heedlessly onwards, and the goodly vessel was thus cast away in broad day-light, by the sheer obstinacy or want of skill in its pilots.

There were occasions certainly when the dignity of the crown, and even the safety of the state, imperatively demanded example. But these prosecutions, however justifiable, were productive of pernicious results. De Potter, Tielemans, Bartels, Ducpetiaux, the Abbé de Foere, and many others, fell beneath the lash of the law. But such was the fever of the public mind, that the defendants were invariably looked on as martyrs to the cause of liberty, and the prosecutors as tyrants, whose only aim was to enchain the press, and humiliate the nation. The libels or subversive doctrines that formed the groundwork of the accusation, were ably defended in court, reproduced out of doors, and spread through all parts of the country by the journals. Subscriptions were raised to cover the expenses of fine and trial, and a multitude of young and ardent minds sprung up, eager to offer their gratuitous talent to the accused, as well

as to imitate their example. So that each judicial triumph gained by the government might well have been compared to a disaster, when considered as to its consequences; for there can be little doubt that these prosecutions were amongst the immediate causes that produced the explosion.

The charges brought against De Potter, Tielemans, and others, were doubtless of such a nature as would have led to their condemnation by any impartial jury in Europe or America. Indeed the trial of M. Tielemans presented certain features that seemed to legitimize the severest reprisals on the part of the government.* But the remedy in these cases was worse than the evil; for it did but increase the sedition it sought to stifle, and disseminate more widely the doctrines it strove to curb.

The government had in some measure to thank itself for another evil that occurred. In its earnest desire to realize its assertion of the Netherlands being the "classic soil of liberty," as well as with a view of attracting foreign skill and industry, the utmost encouragement was offered to strangers of all classes to settle on its hospitable and fertile soil. Thus Brussels became the rendezvous, the representative assembly, of all the discontented spirits in Europe. Regicide conventionalists, exiled Napoleonists, proscribed constitutionalists, persecuted Carbonari, oppressed Poles, disgraced Russians, radical English, and visionary German students, indiscriminately flocked to the metropolis of Brabant. There, allying themselves with such as might be regarded as the most disaffected portion of society, they not only

* Procès contre S. Tielemans et autres, accusés d'avoir excité directement à un complot ou attentat, ayant pour but de changer ou de détruire le gouvernement du royaume des Pays Bas. Bruxelles, 1829.

gave full scope to their animadversions on their own governments, but largely contributed to inflame and excite the imagination of the natives against that of the Netherlands. Of these strangers, many were conscientious, enlightened, and honourable men, victims of the most cruel acts of despotism. But amongst the number there were not a few individuals of broken fortune and desperate character—men whose sole element was commotion and civil discord; who had nothing to lose, but every thing to gain, by convulsion, and who were utterly reckless of the miseries that such convulsions entail on the majority. More dangerous guests could not be harboured in the bosom of any country.

This was a canker for which there was no remedy, except by adopting arbitrary measures of police, or by obtaining the sanction of the chambers to an alien law, that might give more extensive power to the government.* Besides, whatever may have been the proceedings of the latter in regard to three or four strangers, it may be safely affirmed, that it was utterly repugnant to the king's feelings to persecute men, who had no other spot on the continent where they might lay down their exiled heads in safety, or where they could enjoy more uninterrupted freedom, so long as they abstained from any overt act against the state. But, if the exiles had strong claims on the humanity and protection of the government, had the government no claims on the exiles? Were the latter not bound to respect the laws that afforded them

* The Republican law of Vendémiaire, anno IV., had not been abrogated, and had been acted upon in the cases of Messrs. Fontaine, Bellet, and Jador, who were expelled the country. But their expulsion created great dissatisfaction, and was held to be an infraction of the fourth section of the fundamental law, which guaranteed equal security both to foreigners and natives. The law of Vendémiaire was put in force, however, by the Belgic Government after the April riots in 1834,

protection, no matter how despotic ? Was it not their duty to remain passive spectators of all civil discussions, and to abstain from interfering with the legislative proceedings of a country where they had voluntarily sought shelter, and from whence they were at liberty to remove whenever they thought proper ? Was nothing due from them to the rights of hospitality and the calls of gratitude ? Their residence was not compulsory, but their inaction was obligatory.

Another concomitant evil remains to be pointed out. In order to give greater extension to the book trade, and to promote the various branches of industry dependent on this kind of commerce, foreign and native booksellers were encouraged to establish themselves in Brussels ; and a system of literary piracy was carried on to an immense extent. Cheap editions of almost every work prohibited in France and elsewhere were reprinted, and thus a multitude of pamphlets were disseminated through the country, containing doctrines most hostile to neighbouring governments, and essentially calculated to prejudice the public against the ruling administration. Here again the ministry were under the necessity of permitting the existence of this evil, or of placing restrictions on a trade which shed lustre on the metropolis, and added to the general commercial prosperity of the state.

CHAPTER V.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL SITUATION OF THE NETHERLANDS
—THE “MILLION OF INDUSTRY”—ITS EFFECTS—ORANGEISTS
OF GHENT AND ANTWERP.

No subject has given rise to greater diversity of opinion than the industrial and commercial condition of the Netherlands, during the two last years previous to the revolution. On the one hand, it has been represented as not only solidly flourishing and progressively improving, but as having attained such an extraordinary degree of perfection and activity as to render it an object of jealousy to Great Britain, with whom it was enabled to compete, and whom it could undersell in the foreign and colonial markets. Indeed, there are those who do not hesitate to attribute the line of policy adopted by Great Britain, in regard to the Belgic question, as solely dictated by the Machiavelic desire to ruin the growing Netherlands industry, which menaced British commercial monopoly.

On the other hand, a large body of political economists declare, that the manufacturing prosperity was not real; that it was supported by artificial means, that the produce infinitely exceeded the demand, and that a catastrophe must shortly have ensued. It was also said that, from the extensive encouragement given by government to industrial speculation, a hectic demand for labour was created, by which vast numbers of agricul-

tural hands were attracted to the towns, where they were subjected to the vicissitudes of commercial risks, and rendered partakers in that general lassitude and depression that prevailed all mercantile Europe during the two or three years preceding 1830.

Without going to the extreme lengths of either party, as regards the condition of Netherlands industry, it must be observed, that, whilst there is a certain degree of foundation for the assertion of both, the balance inclines to those who argue in favour of the prosperity of the country. For, there can be no doubt, that its average condition was prosperous and progressively improving; and yet not so solid as to enable it to proceed altogether without extraneous assistance. The collieries of Hainault and the Lower Meuse were in a state of full activity, with a constant demand from Holland and France. The armourers of Liege, and the clothiers of Verriers, were no less busily employed with extensive orders for the Levant, Germany, and South America. The mines and forges of Luxembourg, the cutleries of Namur, the silk weavers of Tournay and Brussels, the paper manufactories of the Upper Meuse, the refineries and cotton mills of Ghent, the linen trade of Courtray and Saint Nicholas, were all at work. Each succeeding day witnessed the erection of buildings, destined for manufacturing purposes, or was marked by the formation of new associations, for the exploitation of various novel sources of industry, either above or below ground.

But, although many of these establishments worked upon their own capital, were the *bonâ fide* property of their owners, and regulated their produce by the ordinary barometer of demand that ought to guide all prudent traders, yet there were great numbers that were unable to commence operations, or to continue business,

without the aid of government loans, and who, in lieu of gain, found great difficulty in refunding the annual instalments, which they were bound by contract to repay to government.* Thus, although the whole manufacturing body appeared, to a superficial observer, to be in a condition of unrivalled splendour, a portion was, in fact, bordering on bankruptcy, and must have discharged a third of their hands, and diminished their produce, had not the Society of Commerce stepped forward and purchased their goods; and this, with the conviction of being obliged to resell them at a certain loss; a measure which, though it relieved the individual, and thus enabled him to keep his workmen employed, of course saddled the difference on the country at large.

The great vice of the system of the "million of industry" was, that at least one-third of the manufacturers were thereby encouraged to push their produce beyond the demand or even possibility of immediate consumption; and as the government generally intervened, and purchased the excess, this led to a further glut in the market. Admitting, however, that the extreme anxiety of government to force produce, so as to bring it into competition with that of England, gave rise to many evils, and that it was highly impolitic to impose heavy prohibitive duties on commerce, in order where-withal to subsidize manufactures, still the system was productive of some benefits; for, an extraordinary

* The totality of the sums lent to various individuals, under the head of "industriels," amounted to 10,459,900 francs, at three per cent., the capital to be reimbursed at various periods between 1830 and 1850. Of the above sum only 856,592 francs had been repaid at the epoch of the revolution. The establishment of Seraing, of which the king was co-partner, figures on the list for 2,523,000 francs, or a fifth of the whole; of which 12,500 francs only had been repaid.

spirit of industry and speculative emulation was aroused throughout the country. A mass of capital that would otherwise have lain dormant, was lavishly employed, and vast sums were expended in the purchase of primary matter, in the construction of factories, and in the consumption of innumerable articles of indigenous produce. Employment was given to a large portion of the population, the demand for fuel was augmented, and the value of the collieries and forests increased ; a question of immense importance to Luxembourg and Liege, whose principal wealth is derived from the sale of wood, coal, and mineral productions.

It is generally admitted, by practical men, that the southern provinces had reason to be satisfied with the measures adopted by the king, as regarded the general industry of the kingdom. Some of the beneficial effects of that system are found to operate favourably at the present hour. For, although many of the minor establishments which existed solely by artificial means, have ceased to work, or now declare themselves to be in a languid state ; such was the impulse given to industry, so great the spirit of speculation and exertion, that, notwithstanding the general produce is reduced about one-third, the remainder is gradually returning to that wholesome level, on which it ought to stand, and would have stood, had it been left to the unassisted development of its own powers. All that is wanting to restore it to its full state of vigour is, a few months of positive peace, good commercial treaties, and a judicious but not unlimited system of free trade. It would then maintain a condition, proportionate to its resources and population, producing every possible internal benefit, without awakening external jealousy.

On the whole, the system adopted by the king, must only be looked on as less politic, in a commercial, than

in a monarchical point of view ; for, by means of the "million of industry,"—that is, either by lending assistance to distressed speculators, or by aiding others to commence business, and becoming as it were joint proprietors in many of the manufactories and industrial establishments—the crown created for itself a large body of devoted adherents, and of that class also which was the most calculated to counterbalance the spiritual influence of the Catholic clergy.

Thence it was, that Ghent and Antwerp continued loyal to the old government up to the latest moment, and thence it is that the whole Orangism of the country, may be said to be concentrated in these two cities.

There was another motive of policy connected with this system which deserves attention.* "Subjected by its traditions, its customs, and by the backward state of intelligence to the double influence of nobles and priests, Belgium not only preserved that habitual passive obedience to the clergy, which formed part of its moral habits, but that profound respect for the aristocracy, which taught the peasant to consider the nobility and extensive landed proprietors as their superiors before the law. Obedient by habit to the seigneurial lord or priest, even though both law and civilization had done every thing to detach him from them, the Belgian could only be abstracted from this double thralldom by two means intended to raise him to a level with the classes that oppressed him. By the diffusion of instruction and intelligence, it was possible to rescue the mass from clerical servitude ; and by means of commerce and industry, it was equally possible to raise plebeian fortunes to a level with those of the aristocracy : it was

* "Dix Jours de Campagne. Par Charles Durand." Amsterdam, 1832.

therefore upon public education and industry that William founded his hopes of the material and moral emancipation of his people, *who nevertheless could not comprehend either his views or benevolent intentions.*"

No one will attempt to deny, if these conclusions were correct, that the project was founded on good sense and would have been highly advantageous, could it have been carried into effect ; but, unfortunately for the king's government, the Belgians, whilst they acknowledged the benefits arising to the country from the development of commerce and industry, comprehended too clearly the views of the ministry, as regarded public instruction. Both nobility and clergy plainly saw that it was the intention to diminish their influence and to give such a turn to the mind of the youth of the country as tended to abstract them, not only from the religion of their forefathers, but from the control of those who had every right to consider themselves as the natural guardians of the rising generation. Thence arose the unbounded clamours of the chambers, press, and people against the trammels placed on public instruction, which they considered as an outrageous act of tyranny and oppression, far opposed to those benevolent intentions that were attributed to the government. It must, however, be remarked that the outcry against the "million of industry" was not so much raised against its use, as against the abuse of the sums voted under that head ; the more so, since not a single fraction of the reimbursements or interests was ever placed to the credit of the country, and therefore this million might be considered as an addition to the civil list, or secret service-money.

As to what is termed the high commerce of Belgium, there could be but one opinion. The liberty of the Scheldt had restored Antwerp to a degree of splendour

not exceeded in the days of Charles V., and it was not without just cause that the Dutch merchants looked on it with infinite jealousy ; for it appears that Antwerp did more business in every article of colonial produce, except tobacco, than Amsterdam and Rotterdam united. Upon this score, therefore, there could not have been a shadow of complaint in the southern provinces. Indeed the prohibitive duties, and restrictions to the liberty of free trade, so urgently demanded by the Belgians, and so energetically opposed by the Dutch, were grievances that fell entirely on the latter, who, for ages, had acted upon those principles of commercial liberty, that are now becoming more popular amongst all the most enlightened political economists throughout Europe, and are gaining ground even in Belgium.

Possessing a most fertile soil, extensive forests, and abundant mines, Belgium had devoted itself, from the moment that the treaty of Munster gave a death-blow to its commerce, to agriculture, and manufactures, and thus, during the reign of Maria-Theresa, and in despite of the continental system enforced by Napoleon, it enjoyed extreme prosperity ; and having no maritime commerce, cherished the prohibitive system as the source of all its wealth.

On the other hand, Holland, possessing vast colonies, an extensive littoral, and a population more addicted to commerce than industry, drew its principal subsistence from foreign trade and navigation. Thence arose that direct conflict between the interests and views of the north and south. The one called for free trade ; the other for prohibitive duties. The one turned its eyes to the ocean, where its numerous vessels navigated on a level with those of the most favoured nations ; and the other looked inland, where its productions were placed on the same footing as those of France. The struggle that

took place in the States-General between the northern and southern deputies, upon every subject regarding taxation or commerce, sufficiently proved the utter dissidence of interests between the two parts of the kingdom ; and as the prohibitive duties were maintained to the detriment of Holland, in this case at least the government could not be accused of partiality. Indeed the loudest outcries were uttered in Holland against a system which seriously affected their commerce, and gave just cause to affirm that, even supposing the desire for separation had not arisen in Belgium, the Dutch ere long would have been forced to call for this divorce, in order to save Amsterdam and Rotterdam from ruin.

The experience of fifteen years had proved that the congress of Vienna had closed the book of history, and, solely intent upon the projected wedlock, was utterly indifferent whether the two people about to be united were susceptible or not of amalgamation. Had the diplomatists of that day opened this book, had they for a moment considered the diversity of character, interests, habits, language, feelings, and religion, they would have seen that "fusion" was impracticable, and that the sentence of divorce was written in sympathetic ink between the lines of the marriage-contract. This ought to be well considered by the historian, for it clearly demonstrates that the task imposed on the king of the Netherlands was almost beyond the power of human strength, and that, however impolitic some of the measures adopted by his government, they did but inance the vices inherent in a union, which, under almost any circumstances, could not have continued to exist beyond a few years.

As to the accusation brought against Great Britain, that is easily answered ; for it is indisputable that the manufacturing prosperity of the Netherlands caused

little disquietude either at Birmingham, Manchester, or Glasgow. The British trader was well aware that, owing to the immense development of capital and machinery, the rapidity of communication, the abundance of fuel, the excellence of primary matter, and other concomitant causes in England, the Netherlands could not undersell him unless in certain articles of inferior quality; and this only with the assistance of the government. For the English manufacturer was enabled to deliver particular goods—cottons for instance—at 50 cents per yard, whilst the Ghenters could not afford to dispose of the same article under 60; consequently, in order to enable the trader to compete with England, the government, or society of commerce, was obliged to make up to him the difference between his prime cost and that of his British rivals; a ruinous process, sufficiently proving that Manchester had nothing to fear from the rivalry of Ghent.

Indeed it stands to reason that a national industry that cannot exist without a large subsidy from government, is a direct burthen, and not a source of immediate benefit to a kingdom. Thus the Dutch, who were a commercial and not a manufacturing people, had every right to complain of a system solely calculated to benefit Belgium.

Whatever might have been the flattering impression in the Netherlands, no well-informed Englishman ever supposed that such a nation as Great Britain with her immense wealth, her prodigious capital, her unparalleled enterprize, and boundless colonies, should dread the competition of a small country like the Netherlands; in which the germs of disunion were already so deeply implanted—a country whose colonies were as a mere grain of sand to those of Great Britain; whose merchants laboured under greater disadvantages of insurance

and freight, than affected those of England; whose manufacturers were subject to the same restrictive duties, as regarded France, Germany, and the Baltic, as those of Manchester and Glasgow, and who were obliged to receive their silks, wools, cottons, indigos, and other supplies of primary matter, from the sources whence England derived hers;—a country where, from peculiar geological causes and the necessity of employing wood in all mining constructions, the price of fuel at the pit-mouth was fully as expensive, and not always of as fine a quality, as that of England; and where the produce was certainly great, but where the issues were limited, and where, from fiscal pressure and other local causes, goods could not be brought into the market as cheap as in England.

But even admitting the durability of the union, and the possibility of successful rivalry at some subsequent period; what does that prove? Why, that the Netherlands were progressively improving, but not that the British government was actuated by the selfish and Machiavelic motives attributed to it by some of the exasperated partisans of the house of Nassau. No; the conduct of England was based on principles of much more elevated policy; a policy, adapted to the then inflamed and precarious position of Europe, and to her own moral and financial condition. Though, in a great measure, unprepared for the Belgic revolution, and still more so for the impolicy of the Netherlands statesmen, the want of energy and military skill of its generals, and the absence of decision subsequently evinced by the heir to the throne, and, above all, for the opposition of the king to the elevation of his son; still the British ministry, then under the Duke of Wellington, warmly sympathized with that government, and

deplored the issue the more deeply, since the union was, in a great measure, the child of its own creation.

Fortunately, however, for Great Britain and the peace of Europe, the Duke of Wellington was fully alive to the inflammatory gravity of the times, and the danger of forcibly attempting to resist the revolutionary torrent which then menaced all Europe. His object was to avert the horrors of war from England and Europe, and he saw that there existed every probability of gaining, by temporisation and negotiation, that desirable issue which could not possibly be attained by resistance. Profoundly versed in the history of his country, he was fully impressed with a sense of that fatal policy of preceding administrations, who, utterly regardless of the distress and misery entailed on posterity, had heedlessly urged Great Britain into that series of gratuitous conflicts, that have swollen her taxes to their present fearful amount, and crippled both the industry and energy of her people. Had it been otherwise—had his Grace been inclined to forget this, there was the national debt, like a monstrous *memento mori*, to warn him of the danger of plunging his country into further wars of intervention.

No! the Duke of Wellington saw that the time was gone by when a minister could venture down to the House of Commons, and there ask the country for supplies to foment continental wars no way concerning the honour or interests of Great Britain; or to prop up crumbling monarchies, whose impolitic sovereigns had wilfully torn down the royal banner that waved above their thrones;—monarchs who, having possessed, could not maintain; who, having grasped, could not hold; and who, however great their claims to sympathy as individuals, had not a shadow of title to one penny of British gold, as rulers of a foreign people. No! the

era was passed when an English minister, upon the first signal of civil commotion or continental contention, felt himself bound to interfere, and with Quixotic ardour squander the blood and treasure of Great Britain by intervening between sovereigns and their people, and this without the slightest chance of ultimate benefit to his own country.

The ideal grandeur of nations may depend on the triumphs of war, but the real foundation of all national splendour is essentially based on the maintenance of peace. The Duke of Wellington may be immortalized as a conqueror, but the most glorious achievements in his escutcheon are, firstly, the concessions made to the Catholics—concessions that the King of the Netherlands would have done well to imitate; and, secondly, that fine stroke of policy that prompted him to recognize the France of July, and thereby to save all Europe from a war, the bloodiest and most subversive that could be undertaken—a war of opinions. This system of non-intervention, or rather the substitution of diplomatic interference for that of the sword, forms a new feature in British policy, the beneficial results of which have been immense; and when party passion shall have softened down, and the historians can calmly and impartially refer to the records of the day, the Duke of Wellington will not reap less praise from having been the founder, or, at least, the first practical patron of this passive system, than for his mighty actions in the field of battle.

The recognition of Louis Philippe, and the refusal to interfere by force of arms in the Belgic question—a refusal peremptorily made by Lord Aberdeen in the early stage of the revolution—must not be taken so much as an acknowledgment of what is termed “the sacred right of popular insurrection,” as an avowal that insular

England is not authorized to meddle in the intestine broils of continental Europe ; or, although she may have been authorized, as was the case in September, 1830, by an appeal from the then legitimate government, that the policy and interests of the British people forbid her to employ any other weapons than the pens of her diplomatists. "Select what form of government you think proper," said the Duke of Wellington to the Belgian deputation, dispatched to England by the provisional government, "or whatever chief you may consider best calculated to effect the objects you have in view ; providing you do not embroil yourself with Europe, we shall not interfere." Such was the system laid down by the Duke of Wellington and his administration in July and September, 1830, both in regard to France and Belgium ; and it is this system that has been followed up by Lord Grey, and has constantly formed the basis of his policy.

It was the maintenance of European peace, and not the destruction of Netherlands industry, that formed the main-spring of English policy, and constituted the sole land-mark to which the efforts of the government and its diplomatic agents were invariably directed.

The issue has fully proved the wisdom and success of their endeavours ; for, although they were surrounded by a thousand difficulties, although they were environed by the most contradictory interests and conflicting elements, and although nearly half a million of armed men stood with lighted matches and banners unfurled, panting for the onset, peace has been maintained—revolutionary passions have been calmed—the sword has returned bloodless to the scabbard—and, if changes have taken place, it has been in the representatives of monarchy, not in the monarchical system.

It was, doubtless, the earnest desire of Carlists and

Orangists, that Great Britain should have stood forward as the champion of legitimacy, both in Holland and France. It was immaterial to them whether public debts or private burthens should be increased in England, provided the British people consented to furnish subsidies of men, arms, and money; and thus added to that general agricultural and industrial depression which has opened the field of competition to other kingdoms. But, even supposing that they had found a willing instrument in a British ministry, or a people sufficiently blind to their own interests, to consent to saddle themselves with fresh privations in favour of any particular continental dynasty or doctrine, a moment's consideration must have shown that this could not be effected without the co-operation of the other great powers, and a renewal of the Holy Alliance.

But what was the then condition both of England and Europe? Great Britain, struggling for reform, was less inclined than ever to co-operate with foreign powers in a crusade against liberal institutions. Indeed, the government had no light task to stem that flow of radicalism and insubordination that manifested itself throughout the country, and caused so much uneasiness for Ireland. Austria had its hands fully occupied with Italy. Russia could not spare a man from Poland. Prussia was uncertain of its Rhenan provinces, and not altogether at ease respecting Silesia and the duchy of Posen. Hanover was disturbed by internal seditions, which required all the energy of government and the unbounded popularity of its prudent viceroy to quench; and the Rhenan states, bordering on France, were in a state of fermentation and disloyalty that demanded augmented garrisons and the severest measures of police. In fine, in the then moral condition of Europe, England might have furnished

money, but it is highly questionable if a single European state could have ventured to march an army across its frontiers without risking internal commotion, or drawing upon them the whole fury of united France, then in a state of effervescence and craving after movements little inferior to its military fever in the most brilliant days of the republic.

By firmly adhering to a prudent and pacific line of policy, Great Britain has indisputably stemmed the tide of democracy, and aided in strengthening constitutional monarchy. But this could not be effected without entailing upon her the odium of ultra-legitimists and ultra-liberals. The former eagerly demanded armed intervention, hoping that war would produce restoration, not so much for the sake of the dynasty as for the subsidies they received from the king's government. For the organs of Orangism may be said to be confined to a certain class of merchants, and to a few of the nobility, some of whom, strange to say, were conspicuous for their opposition to the king, and, to the present hour, look back to the days of the empire as the most prosperous for Belgium. But it is true their wives were ladies of honour to the empress, and they themselves were permitted to bask in the sunshine of the Tuileries. The latter—that is the ultra-liberals—cry aloud for vigorous measures, and sigh for further convulsion, because they gained nothing by the last revolution. With the majority of such men, country, national dignity, liberty, and patriotism are but mere empty words, destined to blind their tools—the people. The people! those deluded proletaries, who, on such occasions, serve but as mere instruments to the aggrandizement of ambitious and designing men, and who have little prospect of gaining any thing by overt revolution save a change of masters.

CHAPTER VI.

SYSTEM OF PETITIONS RESORTED TO IN THE FLANDERS—ANIMOSITY OF THE GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE PETITIONERS—LAW RESTRICTING LIBERTY OF THE PRESS—MESSAGE OF 11TH DECEMBER—ORDER OF INFAMY—STATES GENERAL—UNION OF CATHOLICS AND LIBERALS IN THE CHAMBERS.—CONDUCT OF OPPOSITION—DE POTTER AND COLLEAGUES CONDEMNED TO BANISHMENT.

IN despite of the general discontent that prevailed throughout the Belgic provinces, the people, up to the year 1828, had but sparingly availed themselves of the right of petition, accorded by the 161st section of the fundamental law. But the leaders of the "union" at length bethought themselves of employing this powerful and constitutional agent in its most extensive sense. It was in the wealthy and fruitful Flanders, which form nearly a third of the whole Belgic population, that the objects of the "union" had first been promulgated, under the auspices of De Potter and the Abbé de Foere. It was there also that the system of general petitions was first developed by Messrs. Bartels, Rodenbach, the Abbé de Haerne, and other influential persons who were most directly opposed to the government, and were, perhaps, the most hostile to the dynasty.

Meetings were held for this purpose in almost all the towns and villages. Petitions were drawn up, and left for signature at the newspaper offices, at the clubs, coffee-rooms, and other places of public resort. Every effort was made to obtain signatures by the laics, and

the clergy even exhorted their flocks from the pulpit to unite in the general cause. From the Flanders, the thirst for petitioning spread to Brabant and Hainault, and from thence to Namur, Liège, and the other provinces. The Prince Auguste d'Arenberg, the early friend and correspondent of Mirabeau, the Prince de Ligne, who had been educated under the influence of the jesuits, the duke D'Ursel, the Counts Robiano, De Mérode, D'Aerschot, Villain XIV., the barons Secus, Stassart, and many others of the nobility, either openly coalesced with, or indirectly encouraged, the petitioners. In a short time the steps of the throne and the tables of the States-General groaned beneath a load of petitions, containing nearly 500,000 signatures, equivalent to about one-eight of the whole Belgic population.

It is true that many of these petitions were the result of intrigue, and were tainted by those anomalies and abuses that are so often remarked and exposed, under similar circumstances in the British senate. But still the great majority of the signatures were of great respectability, and although few commercial names were affixed, they indisputably spoke the sentiments of the vast body of the most enlightened and influential citizens. It must still be remarked, that the spirit of the petitions was no ways directed against the throne, but against its *irresponsible* advisers, especially M. Van Maanen, who was universally branded as the evil genius of the country. Whatever diversity of opinion may have existed upon other points, upon this there was the utmost unanimity. It is the more lamentable that the sovereign should have turned a deaf ear to the public voice, however prejudiced, however unjust, since all parties now concur in stating that, if his Netherlands majesty could have made up his mind to remove this able, but unpopular minister from his councils, and

then forthwith have adopted a more conciliating system, as if the past had been entirely the work of the disgraced favourite, it would have been a fine stroke of policy, that would have augmented his own popularity, and most probably have averted all the evils that ensued.

From the impossibility of obtaining either the annual or decennial supplies for 1830, so long as the *mouture* and *abattage* taxes formed a part of the ways and means, the finance minister, after two repulses, had been induced to repeal these imposts towards the end of 1829, and even then was only enabled to pass his budget by a majority of one voice. But with the exception of the repeal of the above obnoxious taxes, and the compulsory use of the Dutch idiom, as well as a trifling modification of the edicts respecting the philosophic college, no further concessions could be obtained. Indeed, in lieu of receiving the petitions with outward demonstrations of good will, and thus making a virtue of necessity, the government displayed considerable irritation against the petitioners, and forthwith adopted the strongest repressive measures.

Finding the pre-existing laws and *arrêtés* insufficient to curb the license of the press, which pursued all the measures of the government, step by step, with harassing vigilance; being unable to silence the universal outcries that were conveyed to the foot of the throne, or to the States-General, in the shape of petitions, the ministers thought it expedient to propose a new project of law. But this was of a nature so vague and arbitrary, as to give it all the appearance of the most despotic gagging-bill, amply fulfilling the views of a ministerial writer, who had recently recommended that "the malcontents should be muzzled, and then scourged like mad dogs."

This projected law set forth that all "*moderate*

(*bescheidene*) judgments" of the press would be permitted but "that any person, no matter in what manner, or by what means, who attacked the royal prerogative, or shewed contempt for the royal edicts, or aversion for the royal family, should be punished with imprisonment from two to five years. This bill, subsequently amended, passed into law on the 21st May, 1830, only six out of fifty-five Belgians having voted for it in its original form. The presentation of this project was accompanied by the celebrated message of the 11th December, 1829, which declared in substance that the constitution was an act of condescension on the part of the throne; that the King had restrained, rather than carried to excess, the rights of his house; that the press had been guilty of sowing discord and confusion throughout the state; and that the opposition was but the fanatic working of a few misguided men, who, forgetting the benefits they enjoyed, had risen up in an alarming and scandalous manner against a paternal government.

With this exception, the general tenor of the message contained nothing that could give umbrage to the nation; but, as it served as an introduction to the obnoxious project; as it set forth that the rights of the crown were superior to the fundamental law, from whence, according to the treaty of London, those rights were derived; as it stigmatized the opposition and petitioners as scandalous and ungrateful fanatics, and declared the press to be the advocate of disunion, religious hatred, and factious revolt, the most unbounded clamours rose on every side. From this moment, the opposition, which had been hitherto exclusively ministerial, assumed a more dangerous tendency—a tendency never publicly avowed, but which certainly rankled at the bottom of the hearts of some of the leading deputies.

The project and message were accompanied by a ministerial circular of the 12th December, and a cabinet order of the 8th January, 1830, which set the seal to public indignation. The first enjoined all persons holding any place or office under government to declare, within twenty-four hours, whether they adhered to the tenor of the message of the 11th December, and announced that all such as dissented from that message would be immediately dismissed. The second announced the destitution of several functionaries who had been connected with the petitioners, and declared the determination of the government to adopt the same rigorous measures against all others who should in any way co-operate with them in future. At the same time, circulars and secret instructions were issued to the governors of provinces, commissaires of districts, mayors, and other authorities, to institute the strictest investigation into the conduct of their subordinates, and to oppose, by every means in their power, the petitionary contagion. The result of these combined measures was not only the dismissal of several functionaries, but an increase in the number of prosecutions against the press.

The conduct of the government, in adopting these harsh measures, produced the utmost possible fermentation both in and out of the chambers ; it was declared to be a direct violation of the right of petition and the liberty of the subject ; and whilst Messrs. de Brouckère, Surlet de Chokier, and de Gerlache raised their voices against it in the states, the liberal press fulminated forth a succession of articles that aroused the indignation of the whole nation against their rulers.

But surely it was not intended by the framers of the fundamental law, or any other constitution, that government functionaries should be allowed to rise up with impunity against their employers, or be permitted to com-

bine against the very administration to whom they are indebted for whatever local influence they might possess.

Were such a system admitted, no minister could hold himself responsible for the march of his department. It would place the chief at the will of the subordinate, and utterly reverse the hierarchy of administration. However discordant or harsh such doctrines may sound to those who hold man, no matter what his position, to be a free agent, it is certain that if government had no check, no control over those beneath their orders, there would be an end to all administration. It is well to talk of liberty, but such a system of insubordination never could be tolerated in any state, no matter whether it were republican or monarchical, despotic or constitutional.

It may be a grievous hardship thus to enchain individual opinions; but it is an unavoidable necessity, a necessity acted upon under the convention, the consulate, the empire, the restoration, and government of Louis Philippe in France, and under every successive ministry in England since the revolution. Nay, the most enlightened and liberal English journals have urgently called on Lord Grey's administration, not only to dismiss all such persons as voted or acted against them, but those even who passively differed in politics. This anathema has been demanded, not only against all persons holding high functions, but even against those filling subordinate situations. The Netherlands government might have granted the concessions so earnestly prayed for by the petitioners, and this would have been the wisest course; but to permit itself to be bearded by its own agents, and to remain passive, whilst these agents overtly coalesced with its adversaries, would have been inconsistent with the duty it owed itself and the crown.

If the measures of any given administration be op-

posed to the principles or conscience of a functionary ; if he consider the ministry under whom he holds place as unworthy of confidence, and acting hostilely to the interests of the people, let him resign. But it is contrary to all reason, and utterly at variance with all order and unity of administration, for governments to allow their agents to exert the influence they may derive from their official functions, in counteracting the measures of the ministry, and thus, as it were, turning their own weapons against themselves.

Another circumstance of considerable interest, connected with the petitions, occurred during the year 1829. With a view of rallying public opinion, and sounding the loyalty of the people in the provinces, who were far from being hostile to the royal family, it was considered advisable for the king to make a tour through the country ; on which occasion, he was generally received with the most satisfactory demonstrations of devotion and respect. However, during the royal sojourn at Liege, an incident took place which bore the strongest analogy to the occurrence that gave rise to the foundation of the celebrated confederation of the *beggars* * in 1566. It appears that, in despite of the efforts of the authorities, who, if not sincerely devoted to the government, were eager to show every possible mark of respect to the monarch, his majesty was met, at almost every step, by individual or collective petitions, some of which were as unreasonable in their demands, as unguarded in their language. Being irritated at the contents of one of these documents, the monarch, for a moment, lost that self-possession for which he was so remarkable, and

* It is almost superfluous to remind the reader, that the great confederacy of the *Gueux* is said to have owed its origin to the petitioners having been likened to a parcel of beggars by the courtiers of the Regent.

casting from him the paper, is said to have exclaimed—"It is infamous!" This hasty exclamation was instantly caught up by some of the bystanders; and thus an expression, intended to be applied to one isolated fact, was converted into a purposed insult against the whole body of petitioners.

This expression, repeated from mouth to mouth, and propagated by the journals, soon found its way into the Flanders, which provinces felt themselves singularly aggrieved, since they had been the birthplace of the petitionary system. Consequently, some of the most influential and enterprising "unionists," who were not entirely exempt from personal and interested motives, in the animosity they entertained against the king, and who were warmly excited by the celebrity attached to the memory of the founders of the mendicant confederacy, proposed to imitate the conduct of Bréderode, and to establish an association to be styled the *Order of Infamy*. This singular proposition being well received, a committee was appointed with powers to draw up the statutes, and to take steps for secretly obtaining proselytes. In a few days the number of members that enrolled themselves in the Flanders exceeded 100, and when the revolution broke out the order had extensive ramifications in different parts of the country.*

Independent of the secret meetings of the "order of Infamy," assemblies were held, and banquets given in different parts of the country, the avowed object of which was either to recompense such public men as were con-

* The insignia consisted of a silver medal in the form of an open book, intended to represent the fundamental law. On one leaf was inscribed the word "*Lex*," and underneath "*Fideles jusqu'à l'infamie*;" on the other "*Rex*," with "*infamia nobilitat*." On the upper part was engraved "*Loi fondamentale, A. 151—161*," alluding to those two articles guaranteeing the right of petition.

sidered victims of ministerial oppression, or to raise subscriptions for such publicists as had been condemned to fine or imprisonment. Although these subscriptions rarely attained the sum required, it was arranged by the committee to publish a statement, by which the amount of patriotic offers was declared to exceed the maximum of the fine. Upon all occasions of meeting, speeches were delivered, verses sung, and toasts uttered, expressive of the popular antipathy to the ministry. But precautions were taken to prevent any extreme act of indiscretion, since it was an established rule that all toasts, speeches, and couplets should be previously submitted to a commission, who were authorized to revise or reject such as were calculated to embroil the parties directly with the government, or subject them to prosecution.

One of the most remarkable of these banquets occurred at Bruges, on the 9th of July, 1829, in honour of Count Villain XIV. and M. de Meulenaere; the one a wealthy and popular nobleman of the high Catholic party, the other an eminent jurisconsult, universally esteemed by his countrymen in the Flanders. Both had distinguished themselves by their opposition in the States-General, and having thus excited the animosity of the government, a successful effort was made to throw them out of the representation at the elections of 1829.

The avowed purport of the Bruges banquet was to present the unsuccessful candidates with a medal, expressive of the esteem of their constituents, but the real object was to obtain increased subscriptions for the confederation, and to afford an opportunity to the subscribers of proclaiming their aversion to the administration, and of combining to promote its overthrow. "At this banquet," says a Flemish publicist, "were engendered those projects that were to be executed at a later period;

there also were firmly cemented those principles of union that were destined to produce the triumph of liberty."

It must again be observed, notwithstanding the establishment of the "order of Infamy," and the incessant means adopted by the chiefs of the union and their agents, to depopularize the king, that few voices were raised against him or his dynasty. Indeed, it is as impossible to reconcile the loyalty of the toasts, songs, and speeches uttered at the different banquets, with the implacable hostility evinced for the Nassau dynasty at a later period, as it is to reflect on the then popularity of the sovereign and not to feel convinced that nothing but a series of fatalities, and a succession of the most injudicious conduct, could have alienated from him the esteem and loyalty of the vast mass of the nation.

A dispassionate investigation of all the circumstances preceding and even attendant on the revolution, up to the very attack on Brussels, must convince any impartial person that the war of opposition was not so much against the dynasty as against the obnoxious measures pursued by its agents, and that the loyalty felt for the Nassau family must have been much more deeply engrafted throughout the nation, than is now admitted in Belgium. For had it been otherwise, the king could not have retained the slightest portion of the popularity he enjoyed even to the spring of 1830, after sanctioning a succession of ministerial acts that rendered the government odious to the country, and which were in truth sufficient to have alienated the affections of the people, even though his dynasty had been as long established, and had as many claims to popular affection in Belgium as it had in the old Netherlands.

"Give the labouring classes bread," says an eminent Dutch political economist, "and no intrigues will se-

duce them from their allegiance." This maxim furnishes a solution for the peaceable and loyal conduct of the lower orders up to a late moment; for, in consequence of the immense impulse given to the manufactories, and the purchases made by the society of commerce, the great mass of the industrial population found constant occupation; and this upon average wages that exceeded by nearly *two-thirds* the absolute individual wants of the labourer. It is true the statistical returns of the period present, at first sight, a large proportion of indigent persons receiving relief from the various benevolent institutions. But, although the cypher of poor amounted to nearly 690,000, or about one-ninth of the population, it must be borne in mind, that there were not more than 46,000 absolute paupers, including prisoners, foundlings, and lunatics. The remainder, including the charity schools, were only partially assisted at their own abodes; the average relief to each individual not exceeding the trifling sum of five florins annually, including medicine and other assistance in kind. *

It is not, however, attempted to deny the existence of considerable distress at this epoch, for the Netherlands were not exempt from that commercial lassitude that oppressed all Europe. But it may be safely affirmed, on examining the average condition of the labouring classes, that no state in Europe presented a more flattering picture of comfort, ease, and general prosperity. It is true the working population were taxed highly, but they were paid in proportion, and were consequently contented. Passionate and prejudiced men may attempt to ascribe this comparatively happy state of affairs to the

* "Recherches sur la Population, &c. &c. des Pays Bas. Quetelet." Brussels, 1829.

fertility of the soil, to the frugal and laborious habits of the people, and to other natural advantages, with which providence has blessed this beautiful country. But impartial persons cannot refuse to the government its due meed of praise for the impulse and development it gave to the various branches of industry and agriculture; without which impulse, neither the surprising fruitfulness of the land, nor the industry of the people, could have produced any beneficial result.*

The real fact is, that the focus of discontent lay not with the people, who were paid beyond their absolute necessities, but with the Catholics and legal profession. For, notwithstanding the ardent workings of the press; in despite of the intrigues and machinations of those who thirsted for convulsion, and of those few who were leagued with the Parisian propaganda; and in defiance of the odious and insupportable nature of some of the grievances, "the union" found the utmost difficulty in exciting the lower orders: nor was it until the execution of the ill-advised and worse-conducted attack on Brussels that any serious impression could be produced on the masses. It is not less true, however, that, when once excited, the flame spread with astounding rapidity. The surface of the ground teemed with infuriated thousands; the very bowels of the earth sent forth their legions, and in proportion as the hatred to the dynasty was

* The total value of the establishments then devoted to the fabrication of cotton goods in Belgium is estimated at 62,677,300 francs, including the buildings, machinery, &c. These establishments employ annually about seventeen millions of pounds of raw cotton, estimated at nearly 18,000,000 francs. This produces upwards of fifteen millions of pounds of cotton twist, which is converted into 1,194,333 pieces of diverse tissues. The remainder is absorbed by other trades. The value of this cotton thus manufactured is estimated at from seventy to eighty millions of francs, say three millions sterling. The number of individuals directly employed averages 221,866.

sudden, so was the conflagration the more inextinguishable and overwhelming.

Having traced the march of events out of doors, it may not be uninteresting to offer a rapid outline of the proceedings of the representatives of the people in the States-General. Unaccustomed to that systematic perseverance, that unity of action, that unremitting vigilance which forms the basis of party tactic in England; being unpractised in that extemporary eloquence, or that promptitude of explanation and reply, which constitutes the essence of debate, and which is so essential to parliamentary success; divided amongst themselves, not only in matters of religion, but upon many important points of internal administration and political economy; having in view local interests rather than general benefits; being representatives of special doctrines and provincial exigencies, rather than of enlarged systems and national necessities; being desirous also to succeed by remonstrance and expostulation, rather than by violent resistance and agitation,—the Belgic portion of the States-General offered no concentrated or regular opposition to government during the first four or five sessions, except in one or two peculiar cases; such, for instance, as the debates on the *mouture*, on the game-laws, and on a few other questions that directly interested the whole of the southern provinces. Isolated cases of continued resistance here and there occurred; but there was no unity, no connexity of efforts; and the jealousy existing between the liberals and Catholics—a jealousy fomented by a portion of the press, and artfully encouraged by the government—caused a constant dissonance of views, amounting to a schism between the two fractions of the opposition, and thus rendered them both innoxious to the ministry.

On the other hand, the Dutch moiety, though not

better versed in extempore eloquence, or in parliamentary tactic, were more united in purpose, and more instinctively systematic in their coalition. Cool, calm, and methodical, they discarded all theories, and based their demands and arguments on practical principles, sanctioned by long experience and an intimate knowledge of what was necessary for the interests of their fellow-citizens. Invariably clinging together, on no occasion did they make a single concession of those interests, or appear inclined to sacrifice the welfare of a part for that of the whole. They seemed never to lose sight of their individuality, or to forget that they were no longer Dutchmen, but Netherlanders. With the exception of three or four extraordinary cases of liberality, they formed a compact phalanx that rarely failed to aid the minister in carrying into effect any proposed measure; and it was thus, that the government was enabled to pass many of those laws which were the cause of such unbounded discontent in Belgium.

It is not intended to insinuate that the Dutch deputies were animated with a malevolent desire to undermine the prosperity of the southern provinces, or that their object in voting in favour of certain measures was the result of any preconcerted plan to oppress their fellow-countrymen. For, on minutely examining the nature and action of any given measure, it will be seen that their votes were perfectly in unison with the views and interests of the north, though perhaps utterly opposed to those of the south. Being placed between the necessity of sacrificing the interests, or of voting against the popular voice of one party or another, it is unnatural to suppose that the Dutch would hesitate between the choice of the two alternatives, or that they should refrain from leaning towards their own countrymen.

But here we have a further proof, not of malevolence on the part of the Dutch, but of the false position in which the king and government were placed in regard to the nation, and this not so much from any error of their own as from the force of events, and the inherent vices in the union. It is a further demonstration of the difficulty of ruling two people so diametrically opposed to each other in interests, habits and religion, by the same code; and of the fallacy of attempting to unite them under the same legislative or administrative system.

It was not until the year 1828 that the Belgic opposition commenced to assume a definite character in the second chamber; that of the first, whose members were named by the king for life, and whose sittings were not public, was of little comparative importance; for, with the exception of the Marquis of Trazegnies, the Count d'Aerschot, and one or two others, the whole body were devoted to the will of the crown, voted as the government directed, and might be considered as a mere chamber of record.

Until the "union" was effected, the opposition had been divided into two distinct categories—liberal and Catholic; the one occupying itself principally with theories of general liberty, the other with questions more directly concerning the Catholic faith, and the immediate interests of the clergy. The former were represented by M. Charles de Brouckère, a man of rare abilities, but of exalted mind. With him were united M. Lehon, Surlet de Chokier, De Stassart, De Meulenaere, Fallon, and others of minor note. The Catholic party was headed by M. de Gerlache, an eminent jurisconsult, remarkable for the ability with which he advocated the cause of the church, of which he was a most zealous and devoted defender.

This party counted in its ranks the venerable Baron Secus, and others, who, though not the most distinguished for their talents or eloquence, possessed greater influence with the public than the collateral fraction. The correspondence of De Potter and Tielemans sufficiently shews the importance attached to the power and weight of these deputies, especially Baron Secus, by what may be termed the revolutionary party.

No sooner were the principles of the "union" adopted by the opposite portions of the Belgic representatives, than their opposition assumed a much more formidable aspect ; and, although not always devoid of exaggeration, or pre-eminent for the soundness of its political views, it became extremely harassing and dangerous to the government from the systematic concert with which it pursued its object. Having, moreover, combined with the press and the great body of the petitioners, the opposition threw off the mask, and unhesitatingly declared its determination to overthrow the ministry, to wrest from government the concessions called for by the people, or to refuse the supplies. Thus, the budget of 1830 was twice rejected, and eventually only passed by a majority of one voice, which voice was declared to have been obtained by a manœuvre of government.

The session of 1829-1830 being held at the Hague, the Belgian deputies adopted the parliamentary tactic in use in England ; they marshalled their forces, appointed leaders, and distributed to each member his peculiar station, according to the nature of his talent, or the especial interests he was bound to defend. A constant correspondence was also maintained with Brussels and other parts of Belgium, by which the deputies—some of whom contributed to the journals—were informed of the march of public opinion,

and instructed to touch on such points as were best calculated to produce effect, and to arouse the sympathies of the public.

Although the acrimony and ardour of the opposition daily displayed itself during the spring session of 1830, still this opposition was exclusively anti-ministerial, and not directed against the dynasty. There were here and there certain members who, from motives of personal pique, or from religious fanaticism, bore direct ill-will to the king; but, nevertheless, on every occasion, the utmost reserve was maintained in speaking of the crown, although the acts under discussion—such, for instance, as the message of the 11th of December—were known to emanate from the royal will. It had, however, been arranged by the leading unionists, in and out of the chambers, that a popular movement should be got up at Brussels in the month of October; but this again was intended rather with the view of intimidating the Dutch deputies, who would then be assembled for the ordinary session, and thus urging them to join in voting for a redress of certain grievances, than with any view of expressing hostility to the dynasty.

It was in this frame of mind that the Belgian deputies quitted the Hague in June, but not without seeing their efforts, and those of the petitioners crowned with a certain degree of success; for a cabinet order, dated the 4th of June, entirely restored the liberty of the idiom, and another of the 27th of May annulled some of the restrictions on public education. But these concessions were regarded as signs of weakness rather than of generosity; and the benefits they conferred were not sufficient to efface the trace of the evils they had inflicted on the public during a course of so many years. “Singular contradiction!” says a writer in the *Courrier des Pays*

Bas, in publishing these edicts ; “the government, whilst it declares our grievances to be *pretended*, and our opposition factious, has thus acknowledged the reality of these grievances by redressing them, and has confirmed the justice of the cause of the *faction* by yielding to its legitimate complaints. It has given the lie to itself, in thus repairing *to-day* the evil whose existence it refused to admit *yesterday*. It is thus that the *mouture* tax has disappeared from the budget, that a tax on coffee announces a system less unfavourable to the agricultural interests of the southern provinces, and that a cabinet order has struck the first blow to the monopoly of education, which was yesterday declared to be a prerogative or regal right of the crown.”

The good effect likely to be derived from these concessions was completely counterbalanced by the activity and frequency of the press prosecutions. *De Potter*, *Tielemans*, *Bartels*, and *De Neve*, were condemned to eight years' banishment ; and, however just their sentence, their punishment excited universal sympathy, and was made use of by the “union” as a further instrument of excitement. In lieu of *De Potter* being considered as a factious democrat, whose secret object was, undoubtedly, to overthrow the throne and government, and to raise himself to supreme power ; instead of *Tielemans's* conduct being judged with that just severity which his ingratitude to his benefactor so richly merited ; in lieu of *Bartels* and *De Neve* being condemned as exaggerated enthusiasts, whose mission was to preach subversion and a hatred to all but republican institutions,—all were held up as holy and disinterested martyrs—victims to the liberties of their country. Thus, subscriptions, amounting to several thousand francs, poured in from the different provinces, and many

families declared their intention of contributing annual sums for the relief of the exiles ; and thus fresh combustible matter was daily added to that dangerous mine that was soon destined to rend the two nations asunder, and to produce one of the most complete social and political revolutions which stand recorded in the pages of history.

CHAPTER VII.

CHARACTER OF THE KING OF THE NETHERLANDS—PRINCE OF ORANGE—PRINCE FREDERIC—ROBBERY OF THE PRINCESS OF ORANGE'S JEWELS—SOCIAL POSITION OF THE INHABITANTS OF BRUSSELS—THEIR CONDUCT TO STRANGERS.

IT is a bold measure to touch upon a subject of such extreme delicacy as the character and conduct of contemporary sovereigns or their families. But, in the present instance, it is important to shew what may be considered the prevailing opinion of the vast majority of the Belgic people; and the more so, since the private conduct of the king and his family are intimately connected with, and most materially influenced by, the events preceding and subsequent to the revolution. It was, for instance, the admirable private conduct of the king that counterbalanced much of the impolicy of his public acts; whilst, on the other hand, the sinister rumours that were spread about the Prince of Orange, during the latter period of the union, augmented the difficulties that were thrown in the way of his partisans at a later period.

Besides, in venturing to speak of princes, it may be said that they are public property, without privacy or retirement. Their whole existence is one series of exposure and exhibition. They are scarcely permitted a moment which they may call their own; it is one of the

miseries attendant on their exalted position. But the public is not content with following them step by step through all the movements of official life, but is constantly intent on scrutinizing their private acts, or interpreting, at least suits its own views, their most insignificant utterances, and, pursuing them into the recesses of their domestic privacy, would even tear from them their very thoughts. Bacon says, that "of all men, God is the least beholden to kings, for he doth most for them, and they is ordinarily the least for him." One might add, on the other side, at least as far as regards constitutional monarchs, that of all sorts of men, they are the least beholden to the people; for in free countries they are the only persons that are enslaved, and that have neither the liberty to act, think, or decide for themselves: having it fast in other will than that which emanates from the popular voice. It is true, they have a nominal power, and are surrounded by a halo of artificial splendour. They likewise exist upon, what is termed, the sweat of the people; that is, each individual contributes a few pence—and it is but a few pence—to the maintenance, not of the physical king, but of his moral crown. But the contributor is a thousand times more at ease than the receiver, "for even as the latter is of the highest estate, so is he subject to the greatest cares, and made the absolute servant of his people." But our business is not to write a treatise on the vexations of the kingly office, but to sketch the conduct and character of the Netherlands sovereign, and thence to show the grounds on which were founded the popularity enjoyed by himself and family.

Convinced that the power and grandeur of nations depend in a great measure on the extent of their commercial and industrial activity, and taking as his model "that people of shopkeepers," whose colossal influence

is mainly derived from this source, King William devoted the entire energies of his mind to the formation and impulsion of trade, manufactures, and commerce in all their diverse and most extensive branches. The leading object of his ambition—an ambition founded on the most wholesome principles of political economy—was to render the Netherlands as distinguished for its artificial productions, as its soil is pre-eminent for its fertility and the abundance of its natural produce. There was no labour, no expense, no care, no experiment left unemployed, to give life and excitement to this grand object. Project succeeded project, speculation followed speculation with surprising rapidity; and if many of these plans terminated in failure, enough has been already said to prove that two out of three were crowned with success, or promised beneficial results.

The favourite theories and meditations of the royal mind being, as it were, concentrated upon commercial pursuits and the employment of capital, he was said to display less of elevated sentiments and political grandeur, than of that arithmetical positiveness which is the general result of a constant devotion to the study of the practical branches of political economy. One engrossing topic was uppermost in his mind, which was compared to a vast "price-current," the barometer of which was solely influenced by the rise and fall of colonial and indigenous produce, or the fluctuations of the public funds. The inventions of Watt and Bolton stood higher in his estimation than the achievements of Frederick or Napoleon; and the most insignificant writer on subjects of political economy or practical philosophy, was infinitely more worthy of attention than Byron or Chateaubriand. He protected the arts, not so much from admiration as policy; and he countenanced literature, not from any devotion to letters, but because it created a demand for cer-

tain articles of commerce. The rattling, dinning sounds of a Ghent cotton-factory, or the monotonous vibrations of a Luxembourg forge-hammer, was sweeter music to his ears than the most melodious strains of Rossini or Beethoven. The gaunt chimneys vomiting forth clouds of dark smoke above some graceless refinery, were fairer objects of architecture to his sight than the splendid columns of the Parthenon or the dome of St. Peter's. In short, there was nothing classic, inspiring, or chivalrous in his bearing; all was material, positive, and mathematical.

Business was his element, his recreation. Amusements were but a loss, a kind of robbery of that time which he thought he ought to devote entirely to his people. Thus, whether at the festive board, or in the drawing-room, he was always absorbed by one object—seeking out those who could most ably converse with him on his favourite topics—he either communicated or received information on points of national interest. For this reason, he loved to surround himself by practical men, and gained the good will of all the great commercial and financial aristocracy, by the attention he paid to them individually and collectively.

Early in his hours, sober and simple in his habits, an enemy to extravagance and ostentation, punctual in his engagements, and minutely exact in the distribution of his time, he was enabled to perform such a mass of business as would appear incredible to persons who were not witnesses to the amount and diversity of his daily occupations. There was scarcely an affair of the most trifling nature, any way connected with foreign affairs or internal administration, of which he did not take cognizance, and in most cases determine according to his own views. This application was not, however, more remarkable than his intimate acquaintance with

the most minute fractions composing the machinery of state, or his perfect familiarity with international law, and the various sources whence other nations derived the sum of their strength and prosperity. His facility of access, the promptitude of his answers, his blunt frankness, and his irreproachable domestic qualities, are admitted by all; except such liberals as M. de Potter, who thus declares his opinion, not so much of King William as of all sovereigns. "I participated," says he in his 53d letter, produced on his trial, "with all people past, present, and future, in the most profound aversion for the *tyrants à pretension* (i. e. sovereigns), under whom the laws *have* condemned, *do* condemn, and *will* ever condemn them to live."*

But although few persons could go the length of M. de Potter (who with much modesty also declared, "that he thought he was of equal value as the king, and *un poco mas*; that there was more honour and conscience in himself than in all kings and their valets united; that he only saw in kings the *born enemies* of all human dignity, and in short of every thing, save the vile slaves who prostitute themselves to their caprices, and alone reap their favours and prodigalities, or what they call their honours);" still his majesty was generally accused of a phlegmatic coldness of manner, of an overweening fondness for money, of never being able to forget that he was a Dutchman and a Protestant—in fact, of identifying in his own person all the prejudices of his country and faith. Added to this, he evinced a tenacity of opinion, bordering upon obstinacy; so, that having once adopted any system—and he was not prone to decide impetuously—no argument could shake his resolution. Another most striking

* "Procès de De Potter, Tielemans," &c. Vol. i., page 125. Brussels, 1830.

defect in the royal character was his *unconscionable* employment of energetic measures. The development of force was said with him to be *constant as a scintillation*. This has been verified in a striking manner, during the different phases of the revolution, from the night of the 26th August, 1830, to the burning of the arsenal and entrepôt of Antwerp; and from the invasion of Belgium in 1831, to the retention of Lillo and Liekebaixen in 1833. The latter has, indeed, been an *inconceivable* stroke of policy, desired by and *evidently* advantageous to his adversaries. The fact certainly is, that when energetic measures, promptly and *vigilantly* applied, might have produced *incalculable results*, *nothing* was had to temporization; and again, when the development of force was but a vain waste of *blood and treasure*, it was then that negotiation was *abandoned*.

It is incontestible, however, that if the happiness and welfare of a nation had depended on the *intensive exertions* and unremitting devotion of the sovereign to state affairs, then Belgium ought to have been as *contented* as it was prosperous, and its monarch the most popular sovereign in Europe; more especially, as so long could be more fortunately seconded than he was by his queen and her family.

The Prince of Orange, whose chivalrous valour in the field could only be surpassed by his courteous affability and gaiety in social intercourse, was for a length of time a general favourite throughout the southern provinces, until a succession of painful fatalities tended to lower him in public estimation. Loving the country and the people, whose gay manners were more suited to his age and buoyant character than the graver phlegm of his Dutch countrymen; preferring his lovely palace at Brussels, his beautiful residence at Terveuren, and the gaieties of the Belgian metropolis to the monotonous

formalities that distinguish the court at the Hague ; being moreover anxious, from inclination and policy, to captivate the good will of people whom he was destined to reign over, and without whose good will there could be no double reunion, no solidity for the barrier throne, his royal highness showed a decided predilection for the south, and this to such a degree as to excite the jealousy of the Dutch, who were not backward in criticising his conduct.

Fond of the diversions natural to youth, he was always eager to promote amusements, and to render the city of Brussels a point of pleasing attraction to strangers, as well as a place of agreeable residence to the aristocracy of the country. By this means he obtained the regard of the Belgian youth ; and as he spent his money liberally, he was idolized by the tradespeople and admired by the lower orders, who were pleased at hearing of the brilliancy of his fêtes, and witnessing the beauty of his horses and equipages. Too frank to disguise his preference for the Belgians, or his dissidence from the system pursued by his father's ministers. he was said to have strongly remonstrated with the king on these subjects ; and thence arose a coolness between them, that more than once degenerated into open rupture. Indeed, on one occasion, report stated that this had been carried so far, that the prince, having vainly opposed the adoption of some measure connected with the war department, of which he was then minister, and having declared that he would not hold himself responsible for what he considered to be an act of injustice, he broke out into terms of violent reproach, and losing all command over himself, burst from the royal presence, and tearing the epaulettes from his shoulders, resigned his office. This anecdote, whether true or unfounded, was publicly credited, and served to endear him still stronger to the

army and to the people. His royal highness was, moreover, a liberal and enlightened protector of the arts; the exquisite specimens of the great masters that adorned his fairy palace at Brussels were sufficient proofs that a noble liberality, tempered by consummate judgment, guided him in his selection.

At the same time, the Princess of Orange, though possessing much of that reserved dignity, the natural result of the imperial education of St. Petersburg, was pre-eminent for her grace, mildness and benevolence—for her irreproachable virtue, her cultivated and accomplished mind, her abstinence from all court intrigues, and her devoted attention to her duties as wife and mother, and the prudence she displayed on many trying and critical occasions. Indeed it may be said of the whole of the female branches of the royal family, that they presented a model of all that could be honoured in princesses, and respected in women. The queen, a woman of sound judgment, extensive literary attainments, and numerous accomplishments, bore a strong affinity in manner and character to her august brother, the sage and prudent sovereign of Prussia. The proverbial virtues of that monarch's deceased consort, the lamented Lousia Augusta of Strelitz, were revived in his daughter, the Princess Frederick; whilst the young and joyous Princess Mariane, who had been educated with the most devoted attention by the Countess Bentinck, under the eye of the queen, was all that a king could desire in a child, or a prince in his bride.* Such at least was the portrait drawn by every impartial person, and this was a concession torn even from those most opposed to the government; for these

* The princess Louisa Augusta of Prussia, married to prince Frederick of the Netherlands. The princess Mariane, married to prince Albrecht of Prussia.

illustrious ladies being chaste, benevolent, and pious, and essentially devoted to the fulfilment of their domestic duties, literally "conquered" public admiration. There is every ground for presuming that this description is no ways exaggerated, since not even the most violent Catholics or ultra-liberals have ever ventured to utter one word of calumny against them; no, not even amidst the most furious excitement of the revolution, nor at the moment when Prince Frederick occupied the heart of the city, and was vainly wasting the blood of his own soldiers and imprudently spilling that of the citizens.

Unfortunately, however, the Prince of Orange was not always restricted within the limits of that prudence which became his exalted position and future prospects, as expectant sovereign of a jealous and discontented nation, differing from him and his dynasty in religion. The extreme affability of his manner was well suited perhaps to a people like the English, who are accustomed to see the princes of the blood royal moving amongst them without ostentation or pageantry; now placing themselves in the midst of the citizens at public meetings, now putting themselves on a level with their brother peers in the legislature, and now living on terms of courteous intercourse, devoid of familiarity, with persons of ordinary rank in society. But this affability was ill-adapted to the usages and antecedents of the Belgians; who, though clamorous for liberty, and jealous of a jealous arisocracy, had known nothing of the Imperial Family whilst they were under the dominion of the house of Austria, than through the medium of the arch-duchesses, governors-general, who maintained all the rigid etiquette usually attendant on vice-royal courts; or, whilst under the sceptre of Napoleon, combined all their ideas of sovereignty with the thundering of cannon, the

glittering of Mamaluke sabres, and the grim looks of those valiant guards who had carried their victorious eagles into all the principal capitals of continental Europe. To such persons the condescending greeting of a prince of the blood was incomprehensible ; and, therefore, the frank, open-hearted affability of the Prince of Orange appeared to degenerate into familiarity, and to be inconsistent with the dignity of his elevated rank.

It was also affirmed that his royal highness was not always guided by the soundest discretion in the choice of his favourites, and that he had admitted to his confidence men who were neither of that rank, character, or station in life that befitted the intimate companions of the heir to the crown. Rumours likewise found their way into public, of domestic dissensions between the prince and his consort ; the regularity of his conduct was questioned, and reports of an injurious and indecorous nature were created abroad. These reports were eagerly seized on by the leaders of the " union" and opposition press, and were propagated by some of the aristocracy, who, being out of favour at Court, eagerly supported and sympathized with the prince on all occasions when he acted in opposition to the government. Some, nevertheless, gladly availed themselves of the most trifling occasions to vilify him in the public opinion ; for there were a few amongst them who, from personal or religious motives, entertained a direct and invincible antipathy against the whole dynasty. Thus, while some persons were shocked at his reported indiscretions, others blamed his lavish extravagance ; and others again, mistaking the natural buoyancy of his character for inveterate frivolity, and his aversion to the ministerial system for a disinclination to business, accused him of a want of application, laxity of character, and a general levity and instability of purpose and con-

duct that did not augur well for their future king. But, as he was said to be on indifferent terms with his father, and as this schism had arisen from his defending the popular cause; as he appeared to be purposely excluded from participating in state affairs, and as his predilection for the southern provinces was undiminished, the mass of the people, especially those of the capital, attributed much of the unfavourable reports to malevolence, and always preferred him to the Prince Frederick.

This prince, who differed considerably in manner and character from his elder brother, was supposed never to interfere in external politics, or internal state questions that were not immediately connected with the war department, of which he was director. He was said to be not less remarkable for his attention to business, his punctuality, and regular habits, than his father, of whom he was a decided favourite, and whose leading characteristics for economy, prudence, and phlegmatic reserve, he appeared to inherit. Devoting himself exclusively to his official duties, and being one of those who appear to attach greater value to the multiplication than the simplification of labour; who judge of merit not so much by the matter as by the mass of business performed in their offices, the prince created for himself and his subordinates an infinity of labour that might often have been dispensed with, and thus scarcely allowed himself time for healthful relaxation, or that leisure which he was otherwise desirous to pass in the bosom of his family, or in the domestic circle of the queen. His royal highness was retired, shy, pre-occupied, and as cold and formal in his manner as his brother was light, graceful, and unaffected; but he had a benevolent heart, and was praised by the officers of the army for his assiduous devotion to his duties, for the promptitude of his answers to their applications,

and for the patience with which he listened to their requests.

Aided by the chief of the staff, General Constant de Rebeque, who had served with the British army in Spain, as aide-de-camp to the Prince of Orange, and who, though an inferior stratagist, was looked on as an officer well versed in the official routine of military administration, the prince had succeeded in placing the Netherlands army on a footing of great apparent efficiency. He introduced a wholesome and economical system of discipline and internal distribution, as far as regarded the general organization and mode of recruitment, which was modelled on that of the Prussian landwehr system; that is, as far as the constitutional and moral habits of the people would admit. But the prince's principal merit consisted in his minute attention to office details and general administration, for he evinced neither elevated military genius nor pre-eminent strategical dispositions. He was highly respectable as a disciplinarian and drill tactician; but all those who were conversant with his attainments denied him the qualities essential to a great commander, or any innate disposition for the science of war on a grand scale. The unfortunate expedition to Brussels of 1830 realized these previsions in a manner most injurious to his reputation as a soldier, and most fatal to the interests of his family.

It is, however, highly necessary to remark, that Prince Frederick was universally lauded for his morality and integrity; his aversion to ostentation and extravagance, and the possession of all those virtues which constitute an amiable and worthy man, and are sufficient for a prince destined to fill a negative or secondary position in a state. Had not the impolicy of the king, and his own fatal confidence urged him to take the command of the columns that advanced on Brussels, his

name would have been still respected by the people, and he might still have maintained that negative military reputation which he has now entirely forfeited.

A mysterious and unhappy event took place towards the end of 1829, which contributed in the highest degree to injure the Prince of Orange in public opinion. This was the daring abstraction of the princess's jewels; a robbery which, in its pernicious results, bore the strongest affinity to the notorious history of the diamond necklace and the unfortunate Marie Antoinette. This was the more distressing, as it was impossible to adopt any judicial steps to dissipate the mystery, or to relieve the prince from the odious and improbable imputations so virulently cast upon him by his enemies, and so confidently believed by the credulous public.

But away with such atrocious and improbable calumnies! Even if the apprehension and condemnation of the burglar *Polari* were not sufficient to disprove all that has been said, what reasonable man could place his hand on his heart, and say that he ever credited one particle of the foul accusation. The perpetrator of this act, a Swiss named Carrara, *alias* Polari, was traced to America, where he was apprehended, and brought back to Holland after some delay, and there tried, found guilty, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment. The greater part of the jewels were recovered. That His Royal Highness may have been extravagant; that he may have been injudicious in the selection of some of his private and confidential friends; that his domestic happiness may now and then have been clouded, may be true; but to suppose, for one moment, that he directly or indirectly participated in a burglarious attack on his own palace, or in the plunder of his own wife, was a monstrous supposition that every generous heart ought to have spurned with indignation. That this

robbery was adroitly executed, that the size of the foot-marks in the garden, and other coincidences, unfortunately cast strong suspicions on an innocent, but unpopular individual, known to enjoy the prince's favour, is possible ; but the antecedents of the prince's life, his position, his future prospects, and his facility for procuring funds, had he stood in urgent want of pecuniary relief, were sufficient guarantees that he was an utter stranger to the whole business. Since all persons were permitted to indulge in the field of speculation, it would have been equally just to have asserted that the robbery was effected by some of the persons connected with that projected revolution which Count Hoggendorp declares to have been so long anticipated.

Be this as it may, the effect produced on the public mind was most injurious to the prince's interests, and seems to have been predestined as an addition to that mass of fatalities which subsequently placed an insurmountable barrier between the Nassau dynasty and the Belgian nation. At the first breaking out of the revolution ; at the moment when the prince so gallantly, so nobly threw himself on the generosity of the Brussels population ; during the time that the expulsion of the Nassau family was under discussion in congress, and at a later period, when overtures were made to the provisional government, and movements were attempted in the prince's favour, this vile accusation was reproduced, and employed as a counter-stimulus to excite the people. Indeed, it was not only bandied about from tongue to tongue, but even traced in large characters and gross terms upon the very walls of the prince's own palace.

Such was the general opinion relative to the reigning dynasty. The high moral character of the royal family could not fail to produce the most beneficent effect in a country where the population is devout, where domestic

virtues are not only appreciated, but practised more generally, perhaps, than in any other state in Europe, and where the anti-religious theories of Voltarian philosophy had committed but trifling ravages amongst the middling classes. It was this reputation for benevolence and morality that served to bridle the multitude, to attach them to the court, and thus to render the efforts of the leading revolutionists infinitely more difficult ; for, the example of the royal family, if not immediately before the public eye, was brought almost immediately home to their senses. The benefits derived from them by the tradespeople, working classes, and poor were direct ; whilst, on the other hand, the evils wrought by the political conduct of the king were, in some measure, reflective, and were moreover attributed to the agency of an obnoxious minister, who, though greatly praised in Holland for his intellectual powers and private worth, may be said to have resumed the whole grievances of the nation, the whole revolution, in his own person ; a minister, to whom, in a great measure, may be attributed the dissolution of the kingdom, and the destruction of the dynasty ; who, had he been alive to the signs of the times, and gifted with that foresight, that perspicuity, and patriotism ascribed to him by his panegyrists, would have resigned office, and thus compelled his too prejudiced master to adopt a measure called for by the unanimous voice of the people ; a measure that, according to universal opinion, would, in all human probability, have anticipated all the mischief that ensued.

Having thus attempted to trace the characters of the royal family, it may not be uninteresting to offer a cursory sketch of the social position of the higher classes at Brussels prior to the revolution. In order to prevent jealousies and to equalize the profits arising from

the expenditure of the civil list, as well as to balance the inconvenience and expense accruing to members by the removal of the legislative sessions, these, according to the 98th article of the fundamental law, were held alternately at Brussels and the Hague. The royal family, consequently removed from one city to the other about the commencement of October of each year, in order that the sovereign might be ready for the opening of the Chambers, which ceremony always took place on the third Monday of that month. Either from motives of economy or convenience, the diplomatic corps rarely followed the Court into Holland; that is, with the exception of the Danish minister and British ambassador, which latter received on this account a considerable augmentation to his already overgrown appointments—thus enjoying a salary nearly three times higher than was necessary for his maintenance on the most liberal footing. An unnecessary and useless waste of the public money, heedlessly granted to lord Clancarty at the period that the marriage of the prince of Orange to the princess Charlotte was under negotiation, and when that diplomatist was supposed to be accredited to a family embassy, but which ought to have been diminished at a subsequent period; for there was not a single plausible motive for Great Britain maintaining an ambassador of the first class at the enormous salary of £14,000 sterling per annum, when France, Austria, Russia, Prussia, and every other power in Europe was enabled to transact business with ministers plenipotentiary of the first, second, and third class, upon salaries averaging the third of the amount paid to the representative of Great Britain.*

* The salary was subsequently reduced to 12,000*l.*, still double what it ought to have been.

In addition to that numerous body of political refugees to whom allusion has been made in a former chapter, foreigners of all nations flocked to Brussels, attracted by the beauty and centrality of its position, by its vicinity to Great Britain, by the abundance of its markets, the cheapness of the necessities and luxuries of life, the salubrity of its climate, and the advantages it offered for education. The whole of the upper portions bordering on the park and adjacent ramparts were inhabited almost exclusively by respectable and affluent persons, mostly English, who formed a colony amounting altogether to nearly 5,000 persons of all classes, whose average expenditure being taken at about 10 francs per day, formed an annual disbursement of upwards of £770,000. The greater part of this sum being expended in purchasing the necessities of life or objects of primary want, it naturally contributed to the enrichment of small traders, workmen, and the surrounding market people. This, of course, formed a prominent item in the budget of municipal ways and means, by adding about one-fifteenth to the gross consumption of the city. Indeed the diffusion of this sum, which is far from being overrated, was a source of more than common profit and advantage to a numerous class of retail dealers, who compelled the strangers to pay at least ten per cent. more for all marketable objects than they could obtain from the natives.

Although every encouragement was given by the Court to foreigners, and every thing was done to contribute to their amusement and comfort, as far at least as was consistent with etiquette and the retired habits of all the royal family, except the Prince of Orange ; still there never existed any cordiality or semblance of amalgamation between strangers and natives. The

male portion, especially the younger branches of the Belgian youth, were rejoiced at being invited to English houses, where the frank hospitality of the hosts and the fascinations of the female members of the family, offered puissant attractions, always accepted, though perhaps not always duly appreciated. But the law of reciprocity, and indeed of gratitude, was not often adhered to; for no sooner did one of these persons marry and establish himself, than all recollection of past kindness, and indeed of persons, apparently merged. So far was this carried in some instances, that in the event of English women being united to natives, the former were immediately weaned from the society of their own country-people, and if they did perchance accept civilities at their hands, it was only with the trembling dread of the talion law. The same observation might be applied to almost all the Belgian families, who, with the exception of the members of the diplomatic corps, and here and there some distinguished casual visitor, rarely admitted foreigners into their society. It is true there were clubs where a sort of approachment took place, but this entailed neither expense or trouble, beyond the common courtesies of salutation. Thus, though the males partook freely of English hospitality, the females rarely or ever met, save at public reunions, where both purchased their privileges of admission; and even there the line was as distantly marked as that which distinguishes the waters of the Rhine and Moselle on their first encountering each other between the same banks.

The most wealthy and influential houses, whether noble, commercial, or financial—such, for example, as the Dukes of Aremberg and Ursel, the Princes de Ligne, Chimay, and Gavre, the Marquises of Trazegnies, Assche, and Lallaing, the Counts Mérode, d'Aerschot,

Villain XIV, d'Outrelmont, and Mercy d'Argenteau, the Barons Secus and Stassart, the Englers, Meeus, Coghens, and Mertens—all of them possessing princely incomes, noble mansions, and all the requisites for reception—rarely or ever opened their doors to the English residents. It was not, therefore, without some degree of justice that they were accused of a want of that hospitality and sociability which respectable foreigners so generally encounter in other continental states, especially those beyond the Rhine.*

The natives defended themselves from this accusation of inhospitality, at least as far as related to the English, by citing the overwhelming numbers of the colonists, the impossibility of receiving all, and the difficulty of drawing a line, where the whole were supposed to be equally respectable. They said, “we cannot be introduced to one family without entailing upon ourselves the acquaintance of the mass, and thus falling into the incomprehensible English system of filling our houses to suffocation. Besides, the English, essentially and exclusively English, wherever they chance to wander, invariably carry with them their customs, prejudices, hours, and peculiarities; which, however well adapted to the climate and usages of Great Britain, are at variance with those of continental nations, and render any approach to intimacy nearly impossible.” Although there was certainly some justice in these observations, still there was much exaggeration, and the excuse hardly holds good, since the cordiality of the natives was not more expansive to strangers of other nations.

But this want of cordiality was not confined to foreigners, but was even observed in the relations of natives among themselves. Their society was divided

* There were, however, some notable exceptions; amongst others, the noble families of D'Hoogvorst, Duval, and Bethune.

into various coteries and factions, which, if not immediately hostile to, were evidently jealous of, each other. Thus the more ancient aristocracy suffered, rather than amalgamated, with those of an inferior grade. The latter held themselves aloof from the high commerce, finance, and public functionaries. These associated little with the bar and learned professions, who also kept themselves distinct from the general class of respectable citizens. The military, with the exception of some young men of family, or a few officers of rank, were rarely seen in society of any kind.

Although almost all the noble families possessed considerable wealth, and had all the means and appurtenances necessary for the ample enjoyment of social life, they lived with little display or splendour, and appeared to be more intent on economising and increasing their fortunes, than in expending it in generous interchanges of hospitality. It is true that ever and anon their doors were thrown open, banquets were given, a refulgence of light was seen streaming through their windows, and sounds of merriment were heard to echo from their halls. But these were chiefly ceremonious efforts, sacrifices to pride, forced contributions to civility, got up as painful obligations rather than as spontaneous festivals, destined to promote conviviality and recreation.

The want of cordiality existing between certain classes of society, became more marked in proportion as the doctrines of the "union" gained ground. So that during the carnival and spring immediately preceding the revolution, an absolute schism may be said to have arisen between the Catholic aristocracy and that part that was less exaggerated in its religious or political tenets.

The line of demarcation that separated these parties

has not been drawn closer even at the present hour ; for with the exception of the Duke d'Arenberg, the greater portion of whose vast estates lay in Germany, and who was always ostensibly neutral in politics, the great aristocratical houses—such, for instance, as those of De Ligne, Chimay, Gavres, Ursel, Trazegnies, Mercy d'Argentaumont, Assche, D'Outrelmont, and others of equal high blood and fortune—have kept themselves entirely aloof from the Mérodes, D'Aerschots, Villain XIV., D'Hoogvorsts, Chastelers, Duvals de Beaulieu, and Stassarts, who form the nucleus of the present court party.

The schism that existed and still exists between the two branches of the aristocracy, is pregnant however with considerable embarrassment to King Leopold. That estrangement which before the revolution was but a mere coolness, has now ripened into absolute antipathy ; not, perhaps, entirely devoid of jealousy on the part of those, who, though spontaneously avoiding the Court, in some measure consider all courtly places and distinctions as their natural dowry ; whilst those who are in actual possession, cannot look forward without anxiety to the time when the present dissentients shall come forward, and demand their share of the good things that are now their own exclusive property. Each succeeding day serves to widen this breach, and to diminish the prospect of future amalgamation. At the present hour the two parties can scarcely be induced to meet under the same roof, and as both are equally tenacious, and disinclined to surrender their respective pretensions, it is probable that the one must ultimately remain excluded, or the other abandon its position. Union between two such conflicting elements is almost hopeless. But it is time to return to the political situation of the country, immediately preceding the French revolution.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EFFICACY OF CONCESSION—OPINIONS OF THE JOURNALS—
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SUPREME COURT OF JUSTICE AT THE
HAGUE—APPOINTMENT OF VAN MAANEN TO THE PRESIDENCY—
FRESH PROSECUTIONS OF THE PRESS—INTELLIGENCE OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION REACHES BRUSSELS—ITS EFFECTS ON
THE PUBLIC MIND—SUPINENESS OF THE GOVERNMENT—UNPO-
PULARITY OF M. LIBRY BAGNANO—EXCITED STATE OF THE
CAPITAL, AND SYMPTOMS OF AN APPROACHING CHANGE.

THE concessions made by the government in the months of May and June, 1830, and the removal of some of the grievances most loudly complained of, did more to reduce the petitionary fever, and to calm the virulence of the press, than all the repressive measures hitherto adopted. Not that the repressive system was any way mitigated; for scarcely a day passed without the arrest or interrogation of some popular writer, or without some new prosecution being announced.

Some idea of the state of public opinion in the month of June, may be derived from the following article, extracted from the *Courrier des Pays Bas*.—After dwelling on the extreme hardship of sacrificing the interests of the southern provinces to those of the north, the writer proceeds thus :—“ It is not at a moment when the government has commenced to repair the injustice complained of by the Belgians, that we shall stand forward as partisans of an exaggerated or outrageous opposition, or attempt to stir up the fire of hatred and discord. - Our attacks against the government have been constant, energetic, and, if you will, impassioned.

But with whom rested the fault? A revolting partiality oppressed Belgium;—ought we to have approved of it, or to have remained silent? Freedom of speech and instruction was torn from us;—ought we to have applauded this spoliation? Public institutions and employments had become the exclusive patrimony of the north. Men, as egotistical as they were imprudent, ventured to maintain that Belgium having been united to Holland, the former were, in some sort, a mere conquered people, who might be cut up and dealt with as best suited the will of the latter;—ought we to have pleaded guilty, and tranquilly bent our heads to the stroke? When, in the midst of an animated polemic, the most unheard-of rigours were put in force against ourselves and our friends, ought we, like enervated slaves, to have basely cringed to our persecutors? Could we degraded Belgians submit to the domination of another country, and permit our names to be again effaced from the list of nations?—Certainly, our patience could not be expected to extend so far.

“Though the crisis had been fermenting for ten years, it did not manifest itself in 1828. The causes that led to it are known to the whole world. It would be superfluous to reproduce them. All that the Belgians demanded, to enable them to live in peace, was that they should not be oppressed. An equal distribution of rights would have anticipated all those internal schisms which distracted the country, and would have prevented all irritation in the public mind.

“But ought we to complain of what has taken place? Is it a misfortune for the country that the mass of the nation should have deviated a moment from the calm into which it will hasten to return so soon as it can do so without shame or feebleness? The Belgians were always firmly attached to their privileges and national

individualities; and those who are in any way acquainted with our history are well aware that no one ever infringed those privileges with impunity.—What has taken place is a further historical lesson that will, we hope, be profitable both to rulers and people.”

The article terminates by admitting the revival of internal calm—a convincing proof of the good effects that might have been produced by further concession. Indeed, had the ministry sedulously occupied itself after the session of 1829, in framing a project of law for the repeal of the remaining grievances; and, upon the first intelligence of the Parisian revolution, had the court hastened to Brussels, and there called an extraordinary meeting of the States-General, and boldly come forward with this conciliatory bill, taking, at the same time, proper precautions, military and civil, to maintain the public peace, there is every reason for affirming that the catastrophe might have been averted. But, unfortunately, the interests of Holland—so incompatible with those of Belgium—acted like a clog to all the good dispositions of the crown. It would have been almost impossible to have given way to the views of the south without flying directly in the face of those of the north, and thus transplanting the focus of discontent from Brussels and Liege to Rotterdam and Amsterdam.

In the excess of prejudice and national irritation, this radical difficulty in the king's position has not been sufficiently taken into account. Many errors laid to his charge have been declared to emanate solely from partiality or malice prepense, when, in fact, they were inevitable—being the natural consequences of the insuperable incompatibility of the two people. The allies ordained the union of the two countries, without sufficiently considering this point, for they gave Belgium—a rich and blooming bride, but of a jealous and impatient

temper—into the arms of Holland, a cold, phlegmatic, self-interested bridegroom, who was determined not only to debar its partner from the co-enjoyment of the marriage rights, and from a community of goods, but to behave to her as a tyrannical master towards a young captive. The king was, doubtless, desirous to act up to the views of the allies, and to maintain the union in all its vigour ; but, in undertaking the task, he must have shut his eyes to the history, and forgotten the opposite character, of the two people. Had he not done so, he must have felt convinced not only that “fusion” was impracticable, but that co-existence, under the same laws, was almost impossible.

Both the allies and the king—for the king was, of course, the principal founder of the administrative basis on which he intended to rule the kingdom—committed the same fault that is remarked of Philip II. by the president Nenny, who, in speaking of that monarch, says, “An inexcusable error that characterized the whole state policy of Philip, was, that he never could be induced to adapt his form of government to the genius or habits of the different nations composing his empire, nor to vary his system according to the ancient laws of each, as justice and prudence required. According to his principle, all his subjects, whether American, Spanish, Italian, Sicilian, or Belgian, ought to be governed by the same forms.” This system of uniformity, which Montaine says “is one of those impracticable theories that sometimes mislead great minds, and invariably preoccupy limited intellects,” was looked on as a sheet-anchor by the allies, and was, unfortunately, adopted by the king. Here, in fact, was the shoal on which the vessel instantly grounded. Uniform constitution, legislation, and representation was to be the sovereign remedy for every evil ;—a remedy that was destined to counterbalance the extremest dissonance of habits, traditions, language, and religion, that ever

existed between two neighbouring people ;—a remedy that was to soften down the rancour of centuries, and to induce two nations, first to forget all those individualities that rendered them antipodal to each other, and then to unite for the maintenance of that barrier throne in whose preservation one party had no leading interest.

The contrast between the sagacious and politic conduct of the king of Prussia, towards the Rhenan provinces, and that of the Dutch government with regard to Belgium, merits observation, more especially as those provinces were ceded to the former as a *bonâ fide* augmentation of territory, obtained by conquest, and to be incorporated with old Prussia, or dealt with at the discretion of the king. It was natural to suppose, that an absolute monarch would have forthwith imposed his own laws on his trans-Rhenan acquisitions, and thus have compelled the minority, which was in the proportion of *one to ten*, to adopt the system of the majority. But the king was too wise to introduce any abrupt change amongst a people who, during nearly twenty years, had been ruled by a code to which they were attached, more perhaps from custom than inclination.

The jury, French penal code, and judicial organization were consequently maintained, and only such alterations introduced in the local administration as were rendered necessary by the adoption of the Prussian financial and military system. With few exceptions also, the whole of the public functionaries of the left bank were selected from the natives of those provinces ; so that the pride, interests, and prejudices of the Rhinelanders were flattered, and that attachment to France, which at one time certainly did exist, was gradually converted into a sincere regard for the equity and paternal intentions of the Prussian monarch. Thus the popular movement which menaced the tranquillity of Aix-la-Chapelle in the

autumn of 1830, was instantly suppressed by the spontaneous loyalty of the citizens themselves.

The position of the kings of Prussia and the Netherlands, with regard to their territorial acquisitions, was in some measure similar. The Rhenan provinces and Belgium demanded the maintenance of the jury and French code; whilst Prussia and Holland would not hear of one or the other, but were satisfied with the old Roman and German laws. The Rhenan provinces wished for a constitution, whilst the old Prussians, contented with their provincial states (*Land Stände*) and the administrative system by which they had been ruled since the time of the Electors of Brandenburg, had little desire for a constitution or national representation. In short, the interests and views of the Prussian subjects on the right and left banks of the Rhine, were almost as distinct as those of the Netherlands on the opposite sides of the Moerdyck.

Much clamour has been raised against the King of Prussia, for not granting to his people a general constitution. But those who have well studied the disposition of that people, and have watched the march of events in the Netherlands, are of opinion that the monarch acted most prudently in postponing this measure; until a general desire for more liberal institutions should have diffused itself through the old provinces, and until those of the left Rhine bank should have lost all remembrance of the link that once connected them with France; in short, until the whole Prussian nation should be so completely identified in moral and material interests, as to admit of their being governed by an uniform constitution, and uniform judicial system.*

* It may be observed that the desire formerly expressed for a constitution has diminished rather than increased, especially in old Prussia.

To panegyryze the King of Prussia for withholding from his subjects a constitution, may be highly unpopular, especially in an age when there exists so general a mania for forcing nations to adopt liberal constitutions ; without considering whether they are ripe for such institutions ; or if ripe, whether the majority of the people are desirous of such a boon. But, without questioning the policy or impolicy of such efforts, it may be permitted to state that, in this instance, the King of Prussia acted wisely. Had he granted the constitution demanded by a portion of his subjects in 1815, and had a national representation been established, there is every reason to believe that it would have eventually given rise to extreme discontent in the Rhenan provinces. Unity of representation must have entailed unity of legislation and administration. The welfare of the Rhinelanders would have been left entirely at the mercy of the deputies of the north. The interests of the minority would have been at the disposal of a jealous majority ; the jury and French code would infallibly have been abolished ; and ere long, a complete schism would have sprung up from the very means adopted to produce fusion. It was, therefore, surely more politic to deny a bond of *apparent* union concealing the germs of *real* discord, and thus to preserve the integrity of the whole, than to have granted that which would have acted as a dissolvent, and produced results similar to those that caused the rupture in Belgium.

Many of the ablest political economists both in Belgium and Holland are now of opinion that the imposition of a uniform constitution was the real alkali that produced all subsequent fermentation, and that co-existence under one and the same laws was impracticable. On the other hand, there are others who question the possibility of governing the two kingdoms under a distinct administrative system, with no other connecting link than

that of the dynasty. "Nature," says Mr. Nothomb, in his essay "sometimes astounds us by creating double beings, living by the same vivifying impulse, though inhabiting distinct bodies; but neither art or politics have as yet been able to imitate this phenomena." If, then, an existence like to that of the Siamese youth was a political monstrosity, and the union of the two bodies with only one head equally unnatural, it is evident that the junction of the two kingdoms as ordained by the allies was, what M. Libry Bagnano entitles, "a mere political romance."*

But to continue: scarcely had the popular irritation and petitionary fever somewhat subsided, or the journals commenced to assume a milder tone, ere the definitive establishment of the supreme court of justice (*haute cour*) at the Hague at once destroyed all the good effects of the recent concessions.†

The best friends of the government looked with anxiety at a measure whose unpopularity was aggra-

* "La Ville Rebelle, ou les Belges au Tribunal de l'Europe," p. 260.

† The following comparative return of appeal trials, during a space of ten years, will afford a convincing proof of the injustice and partiality of a measure that forced the southern litigants to remove their causes to the Hague:—

List of civil and commercial appeal cases brought before the high court from 1820 to 1830—

Brussels.....	6,352
Liege	3,082
	<hr/> 9,434
Hague.....	1,940
	<hr/> Differance..... 7,494

The proportion, therefore, was nearly five to one in favour of Belgium; and, indeed, on a nearer examination of the same returns, it appears that the single province of South Brabant produced 1,608 civil cases, whilst those of all Holland amounted only to 1,633.

vated by the projected appointment of the obnoxious minister, Van Maanen, to the presidency. It was considered the more impolitic to irritate the masses at a moment when there existed a strong fermentation in France, and when the agents of the Propaganda were actively and artfully seeking to disseminate their doctrines in Germany, Poland, Italy, and especially in Belgium. The burst of indignation, which universally assailed the government, was further increased by the multiplied prosecutions of the press, and the alleged vexatious system adopted in regard to De Potter and his colleagues. These apostles of republicanism, who had been most unnecessarily detained for Prussian and Hessian passports at Vaals, a small frontier village near Aix-la-Chapelle, were spoken of by the papers with a sort of religious veneration. Their names were constantly brought before the public with every mark of respect and admiration. Each succeeding day's detention served but to augment their ill-merited popularity, and to detract from the loyalty of the people towards the government.

It is no easy matter to decide whether destiny or impolicy had the greatest share in thus luring on the government to its own destruction, for the testimony is as conflicting as the conduct of the cabinet was incomprehensible. It is impossible, however, that those murmuring thunders, which announced an approaching tempest in France, could have passed unheeded by the Netherlands ministry; or that, in the then excited state of men's minds, they could hope that Belgium would escape the contagious reaction of any popular movement in the former country. To plead ignorance of the state of public feeling, either at home or abroad, would be an admission that would brand the ministry and their diplomatic agents with an indelible stigma. It is true,

perhaps, that neither they nor any human being could have imagined that Prince Polignac would venture to advise that fatal measure which hurled his aged sovereign from the throne; or—and here was the most remarkable phenomenon—that Great Britain would abjure her system of subsidiary or armed intervention, and wisely leave continental nations to settle their internal affairs as best suited their own interests.

If the Netherlands government deemed it inexpedient to make further concessions, lest this giving way at the eleventh hour should be looked on as an additional proof of that weakness with which it had been taunted, surely it was most imprudent to adopt aggravating measures, that were essentially calculated to add fuel to the flame of sedition. At all events, if such a system was determined on, it was the maximum of folly not to take vigorous steps to guard against the consequences. But, as it has been already observed, the energy of the cabinet was never demonstrated in proper season: it was invariably tardy or premature. The prosecutions against the press, of which upwards of thirty were on the roll of the attorney-general in July, cannot be taken into account; for the general crusade against the journals, attended by vexatious measures of domestic search, interrogation, seizure of papers, and promiscuous arrest of publishers, authors, compositors, and printers, did but augment the general animosity to M. Van Maanen, without diminishing the virulence of the evil.

The minister seemed to forget that unless actions against the press are imperatively called for by law, and unless these laws are devoid of all arbitrary tendency, and are founded on general necessity and unquestionable equity, they only serve as firebrands, which every prudent government ought to avoid casting amongst the people, especially at a moment of popular

excitement, such as universally prevailed during the month of August.

This memorable epoch, pregnant with the fate of two dynasties, found the Belgian capital busily absorbed in celebrating the first triennial exhibition of national industry. This interesting solemnity, accompanied by a series of fêtes, concerts, horse-races, and a variety of other public amusements calculated to divert the immense concourse of strangers attracted to the metropolis, was intended to close with a brilliant illumination and pyrotechnical display on the 24th of August, on which day the king entered his fifty-ninth year. Never did Brussels present a gayer or more animated aspect—so much private amusement was never blended with so much public utility. The hotels were crowded to such excess that even the King of Wurtemberg found it difficult to procure a lodging as he passed on his way homewards. The theatres, public walks, gardens, and drives were thronged with spectators, equipages, and pedestrians, from France, England, and the Rhenan provinces. All was apparent happiness and content: it was impossible for a stranger to discover the slightest symptom of that awful storm that was destined ere long to convert this scene of rejoicing and harmonious rivalry into a theatre of bloody contention and civil strife. Still less could one suppose that the monarch whose fostering hand had contributed so largely to this display of prosperity and wealth, and whose natal day it was proposed to celebrate with so much pomp, should ere long be driven from his dominions, and that a name venerated during centuries as the type of liberty and enlightened wisdom, should suddenly be converted into a symbol of tyranny and oppression.

It was in the midst of these rejoicings that intelligence of the Polignac ordonnances, and the sanguinary

struggle at Paris reached Brussels. The effect produced on the public mind was electrical. The account of the successful efforts of the Parisian people was read with enthusiastic avidity in the journals, which were obliged to multiply their editions by thousands. These accounts being reprinted in the form of pamphlets in the Flemish language, were diffused through the country, causing universal excitement, and finding sympathy in every heart. With the exception of the official journals, which were silent, and one or two others that deprecated the revolution, the remaining papers extolled the conduct of the French people in terms that awakened expectations of vengeance in the hearts of some; whilst it excited hopes in others, less hostilely disposed, that the government would take warning, and frankly enter into that conciliatory system which could alone avert a similar catastrophe from the Netherlands.

But nothing was done. The government seemed plunged in a most profound lethargy, and was apparently indifferent to the moral effect produced by the events of the "*three days*." Overweeningly confident in its strength and the efficacy of its repressive system, the ministry continued its crusade against the press, and multiplied those vexations, every one of which, to employ a trite simile, was an additional nail driven into their own bier. Nay, so extreme was this blind confidence, that when one of the ministers was urged by a judicious friend to place the editorship of the *National* in other hands, since that journal evidently injured the cause it was intended to defend, he is said to have replied,—"*What matters it? our acts are sufficient to defend themselves.*"

Yet never did any government adopt more ill-advised measures to counterbalance the influence of the press. That mighty power, which, more formidable than the lever of Archimedes, may be said to move the whole

world ; a power that holds Great Britain, France, Belgium, and America at its disposal—that is not without immense influence in Germany—that, setting at defiance police, prisons, fines, and bayonets, is the terror of tyrants, and the noblest bulwark of human liberty ; a power that some men affect to despise, but no man dares offend with impunity ; a power, that can raise the most abject to eminence, and drag down the most exalted to a level with the most debased !

“ A fact, now evident to every human being, but which no government seems to admit,” says a French publicist, long in the pay of the Dutch government, “ is, that there is infinitely more force and vigour in journalism than in any other system of political economy. If, then, it be true that the press be too powerful—that is, in comparison with the strength of governments—the latter have only to choose between two alternatives ; namely, either to endeavour to weaken the press by restoring to public force that repressive action, without which it can have no restrictive power ; or by leaning for support on journalism, thus to render it an auxiliary of the government !

“ But, is it possible now-a-days to enfeeble the press ? Has this power not become an inevitable necessity in every state ? Is it not considered as the first, the most solid, guarantee of popular liberties ? Who is there, in fact, who can avoid being struck by the forcible expression of M. de Châteaubriand, who certainly cannot be accused of jacobinism, and who exclaims, ‘ I would rather have the liberty of the press without the charter, than the charter without the liberty of the press ! ’

“ If any attempt to weaken, silence, or enchain the press be a work of infinite difficulty in actual times, is it not possible to form an alliance with this redoubtable foe ? If it cannot be conquered by force, is it not possible to neutralize it by fraternization ? This is a mea-

sure to which governments have hitherto devoted little attention.”*

It was by neglecting these truths, or rather from pursuing an erroneous system, as regarded both the hostile and friendly press, that the Netherlands government paved the way to that overwhelming catastrophe, which a more prudent course might have averted. Up to the last moment, it held itself superior to that power which is eventually destined to vanquish all opposition, and to place itself on a par with thrones.

“Under the safeguard of institutions that guaranteed the security of our persons and property, and the maintenance of our liberty,” said the official Netherlands journal of the 1st of August, “we may contemplate, without alarm, but not without sorrow, the miseries that afflict other people.” Yet, at the moment these lines were being printed, the mine of sedition was charged with inflammatory matter to the very match, and the breast of every well-wisher to the throne was filled with intense anxiety, lest some burning ember should be borne into the country, and cause that conflagration for which the materials had been so long prepared.

As to the pre-existence of this combustible matter, not only Count Hoggendorp, but many other well-informed persons, are agreed, and amongst these a publicist who, certes, cannot be accused of hostility to Holland.

The *Ville Rebelle*, a work attributed to M. Libry Bagnano, and written in a style of the most bitter, but perhaps not unnatural vindictiveness towards Belgium, contains the following passage :†—

* “Dix Jours de Campagne, ou la Hollande en 1831, par Ch. Durand.” Amsterdam, 1832.

† “La Ville Rebelle, ou les Belges au Tribunal de l’Europe.” La Haye, 1831.

"The Baron Verstoelk Van Soelen stated in the sitting of the States-General of the 20th January, 1831, 'that a hostile spirit towards government had only commenced manifesting itself about two years and a half previous.' Now it is evident that his excellency chose his point of departure from the union of the priests and jacobins, and that he has condescended to forgive all the subversive intrigues constantly, but separately, employed by each party, especially the former, long previous to that epoch. The fact is, the king's government met with opposition to its measures, and resistance to its acts, from the first foundation of the kingdom. This opposition manifested itself, in the first instance, amongst the clergy and aristocracy; for the liberals would willingly have coalesced with the government, from their aversion to the priests, if the administration had taken greater care to watch over and direct the various wheels of state machinery. But, by a deplorable fatality, that which was effected by one minister *was instantly undone by his colleague or successor.* The machinery of government *only moved by starts: sometimes advancing, sometimes retrograding;* so that the factious party invariably obtained possession of the ground that was lost by the *oscillatory and vacillating march of the cabinet.*"

The justice of this severe criticism is borne out by the proceedings of the administration at the period of the July revolution. Although no overt demonstration took place in the capital or provinces for many days subsequent to this event, still there existed a vague and gloomy ebullition, a craving after movement and change, a sinister murmuring and heaving of the public mind, and an indefinable irritation that foreboded approaching convulsion. The acts of government were canvassed with undisguised acrimony both by old and young; the

words country, liberty, and oppression were repeated by the very children in the streets. De Potter and his companions were held up as demi-gods, and Van Maanen and his colleagues as odious tyrants. The press, both provincial and metropolitan, redoubled its vigilance; and the *Courrier des Pays Bas*, the great organ of the revolution, redoubled its efforts, and launched forth a series of daring articles, that even astounded the most liberal readers.

Hitherto, however, nothing had been published which could be considered hostile to the king or his dynasty, save here and there some vague innuendoes of domestic dissensions between the Prince and Princess of Orange, and a report of the departure of the latter for St. Petersburg. The whole weight of popular animosity was levelled against the ministry, or was rather concentrated against the master-key, M. Van Maanen. His dismissal was not only loudly called for, but openly declared to be the only means of pacifying the nation. His name was in every mouth, and ignominiously scored on every wall. So great was the popular prejudice against him, that even Alba, in the days of his fiercest terror, was not a greater object of hatred. But the monarch turned a deaf ear to these reclamations, and with fatal generosity clung to a public servant, of whose talents and devotion he was assured, but to whose councils, it may safely be affirmed, he in a great measure was indebted for the dismemberment of his kingdom.

The person next in aversion to M. Van Maanen was his reputed organ, the editor of the *National*, between whom and the liberal press there existed a mortal feud. His sarcastic and venomous pen energetically defended the government, and attacked the liberal writers with a degree of acumen, that the latter were not always enabled to parry by mere dialectic; so that in the end the

polemic between the parties degenerated into a series of the most bitter personalities. Felon! forger! branded convict! were the epithets which daily assailed the ministerial writer, who retorted on his adversaries with rebels! liars! beggars! anarchists! and ungrateful traitors! But if the opposition writers had not always the advantage, either in argument or invective, they obtained an immense superiority by the influence and credit they gained with the public. Thus, at last, the name of M. Libry Bagnano became the emblem of all that was vile and degraded, and every accusation brought against him, no matter how terrible or false, was admitted without a moment's hesitation.

The object of these attacks was not, however, so much directed against the individual as against his journal. Though far from possessing the influence it might have had, if conducted by other hands, still it had considerable weight both at home and abroad. It was important, therefore, to weaken and counterbalance its effects, and perhaps no more certain method could be found than by attacking the antecedents of M. Libry Bagnano, and by exposing an unfortunate and damning portion of his previous life. Consequently, an article appeared in the *Courrier des Pays Bas* of the 14th August, affirming that he had been found guilty of forgery at the assizes of the Rhône, and condemned in 1816 to ten years' hard labour and the mark. The judicial record of the sentence was quoted, and no one stopped to question the causes or motives of condemnation. All humanity, all consideration for the man, merged in the hatred felt for the editor. Such being the public impression, it is not possible to adduce a stronger proof of the impolicy of the government, than its persisting to employ, as the principal advocate of its cause, an individual against whom there existed such terrible prepossessions.

Whilst the flame of sedition was rapidly diffusing itself through the provinces, the social condition of Brussels underwent a considerable change. The celebrated Abbé Seyes, with Barère, Merlin (of Douay), Thebeaudeau, and about twenty other conventionalists, who had found an asylum in the Netherlands since the Bourbon restoration, had returned to France. But the places of these gray-headed patriarchs of democracy was supplied by a host of young and ardent emissaries of the Propaganda—actors in the scenes of July; who, assuming to themselves all the honour of the recent popular triumph, looked upon themselves as greater heroes than the veterans of Austerlitz or the Pyramids. Inflamed by the July struggle—disappointed, perhaps, at its tranquil issue, they eagerly sought to excite universal war. Assiduously labouring to propagate the doctrines of the movement party, these firebrands not only poured into Belgium, but endeavoured to penetrate into the Rhenish provinces, which they looked on as the patrimony and natural boundary of France.

They were seen affectedly displaying the tri-coloured cockade in the streets and public places; they talked loudly at the theatres and coffee-rooms of regenerated liberty and the rights of man; they dwelt with enthusiasm on the glories of the republic and the empire, and of the noble destinies of “young France.” They sung the Marseilles’ and Parisian hymns in chorus with the impassioned groups, which joined them at that moment rather in meretricious devotion to the tri-coloured banner of France than with any patriotic or latent admiration for the triple standard of Brabant. They fraternized with the Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese refugees, who, with a natural longing for home, ardently hoped that the reflection of the French revolution would be carried into the uttermost corners of Europe. The

maxim of "help thyself, and heaven will support thee," and every other allusion to liberty, was hailed with enthusiasm. In short, it was evident that many days could not elapse ere the swelling torrent would overflow its dykes, unless the government skilfully threw open the flood-gates of concession, or strengthened the embankments, by employing measures of redoubled energy.

At the moment of the July revolution, De Potter and his brother exiles, who were on the road from Mayence to Switzerland, changed their route, and entering France by Strasbourg, proceeded direct to Paris. Their arrival in the French capital was a species of ovation. They were received with exaggerated demonstrations of sympathy and fraternization, the natural offspring of the excited state of public feeling at that moment. They were complimented with banquets, speeches, and toasts, and greeted with a degree of deference not always accorded to men of the most eminent merit in less feverish times.

This histrionic display of amity on the part of La Fayette and others, though the mere result of the tinsel policy of the hour, was mistaken for sterling coin by the Belgian exiles. As unaccustomed, as they were perhaps undeserving, of the extraordinary respect shown them both at home and abroad, their vanity was inflated beyond all measure, and they consequently attributed to their own particular virtues that incense which was but the mere ephemeral exhalation of the times. They little dreamed that the triumphant epoch, for which they so ardently sighed, would be the signal for their political discomfiture, and that the tide of popularity, after bearing them up on its stormy billows for a few short-lived hours, would as suddenly ebb, and leave them stranded and forgotten. In the meanwhile they leagued themselves with the most exaggerated spirits in France,

and openly avowed their republican principles, through the medium of the *Tribune*, a French paper devoted to the movement party. They also availed themselves of their temporary popularity at home to increase the exasperation of their countrymen. In short, had it depended on their will, Belgium would have risen in mass, and France would have thrown an army of occupation into that country; a war of conquest, under the pretext of giving liberal institutions, would have been declared; and those rich and fertile lands, where agriculture, industry, commerce, and the arts are now rapidly recovering their former splendour, would have been converted into a theatre of devastation and the most abject vassalage. But what were the miseries or thralldom of their country to men who had personal hatreds to revenge, and who would probably have been richly rewarded for their labour? Fortunately, however, the good genius of Europe stood between the apostles of destruction and the people whom they would have sacrificed to their reckless ambition.

Whilst this was passing at Paris, the most influential unionists who desired to proceed constitutionally, were busy concerting plans for a vigorous parliamentary campaign. All were bent on a systematic opposition to the government, and on employing every possible stratagem to induce the Dutch members to unite with them in demanding redress of grievances, and a more liberal system of government; but considerable difference of opinion existed as to ultimate proceedings.

The whole desired reform and change; but few were actuated with direct hostility to the dynasty. Some there were, however, who inwardly sighed to cast off the Dutch yoke, and eagerly turned their eyes to France.

Considering the independence of their country as chimerical as its union with Holland, and actuated by

motives not altogether devoid of self-interest, they longed for a rejunction with that nation, under whose powerful ægis Belgium had already lived secure.

Under the plea of curiosity or business, some of them, therefore, hastened to Paris, where they held consultations with the most distinguished men in and out of office, and eagerly sounded the opinion of the government as to its external policy. Nor were arguments wanting to induce it to accept the reunion in the event of a dissolution of the Netherlands monarchy. More confident than politic, more ambitious than patriotic, and more intent on the object of that ambition than on the interests of their country, they not only mistook the line of policy best suited to France, but were as much mystified by the evasive replies of the French ministry as they were deceived as to the strength of the movement party.

Maturer consideration, and a more profound knowledge of general politics, would have shown them that the consolidation of Louis Philippe's government mainly depended on its maintaining amicable relations with other nations, and, above all, with Great Britain; that the latter never would consent to Belgium, or any portion of Belgium, again becoming an integral part of France; that French statesmen, however much they might covet the goodly fruit, were not so utterly blind to their own interests, as to balance between general peace and an alliance with England, or general war and a union with Belgium. They forgot that the immense majority, especially of manufacturing and agricultural France, was adverse to all renewed attempts at territorial aggrandizement; which, if successful, could merely serve to admit the improved industry of Belgium and the Rhine to equal competition with their own produce; and that, during fifteen years of peace, an immense social

revolution had taken place. The aristocracy of property, which is founded on conservative principles, having superseded the aristocracy of chivalry, which is based on destruction.

It is true, that the promises of the movement leaders, who over-rated their own influence at home, as much as they were deceived as to the real wishes of the majority of the Belgian people, were calculated to mislead the re-unionists ; but the latter ought to have had sufficient perspicuity to discover that there was no prospect of France entering into their views unless the war party obtained a complete ascendancy. The experiment could only be made under the penalty of a general European conflagration ; an attempt the less likely, since the majority of the French chambers supported the dynasty ; since it was the interest of that dynasty to preserve peace abroad, in order to gain strength at home ; and since the prudent conduct of the British cabinet and its allies had removed all pretext for drawing the sword.

The sentiments of European nations must not, however, be mistaken. On the one hand, any renewed holy alliance or invasive coalition against France, would have been as unpopular on the Continent as in Great Britain ; whilst it would have knit the whole French people in one terrible phalanx, whose repulsive reaction might have brought destruction on every crowned head from the Rhine to the Neva. On the other hand, however much the people of Europe may have applauded the effort made by those of France to assert their liberties at home, had a French army approached the Meuse, though under the pretext of propagating liberal opinions, the first clang of their advancing trumpets would have rallied against them the whole trans-Rhenan population, and would have regenerated all those antipathies that twice brought the allies to the gates of Paris.

CHAPTER IX.

INCENDIARY AND SEDITIOUS PLACARDS—WANT OF ENERGY OF THE AUTHORITIES—GARRISON OF BRUSSELS—ILLUMINATIONS FOR THE KING'S BIRTH-DAY POSTPONED—RIOTS IN THE PARK ON THE 24TH—DISTURBANCES AT THE THEATRE ON THE 25TH—THE OFFICE OF THE "NATIONAL" ATTACKED—LIBRY BAGNANO'S HOUSE AND MANY OTHERS PILLAGED AND BURNED—ROYAL INSIGNIA REMOVED—PUSILLANIMITY OF THE DUTCH GENERALS—THE CITY GIVEN UP TO THE BURGHERS—FIRST FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL GUARD—THEY FIRE ON THE PEOPLE—TERROR OF THE BRITISH INHABITANTS.

IN proportion as the elements of commotion gathered more densely around, every well-wisher of the government earnestly prayed that the monarch, boldly repudiating the system pursued by the ministry, would instantly step forward and sacrifice his own convictions and prejudices to the urgent necessities of the times. The dismissal of M. Van Maanen and the transfer of the *National* into other hands, were looked for with extreme anxiety. It was hoped that the Court would have removed to Brussels, where the presence of the king and princes could not fail to produce a favourable effect; that the removal of the high court to the Hague would have been repealed; and that a proposal would be brought forward in the ensuing session to amend the fundamental law, as far as regarded ministerial responsibility. At all events, it was expected that the most energetic orders would be issued to maintain public peace.

But these hopes were daily frustrated. The king and princes did, it is true, come to Brussels, but returned forthwith to the Hague; M. Van Maanen was said to

be in higher favour than ever; the obnoxious editor of the *National* continued his unpopular and virulent polemic. The irresponsibility of the ministry was even defended by the official organs; and, finally, the city was left to the care of men who had neither heart, talent, or energy to meet the eventful crisis that was so near at hand.

Even as the rustling of the forest-leaves, or the hollow swelling of the ocean portend the coming gale, so vague reports, for many days current amongst the public, foretold an approaching convulsion. "Seditious fames," those twin sisters of "seditious tumults," were rife throughout the land:

"————— Ille etiam cæcos instare tumultus
Sæpe monet, fraudesque et operta tumescere bella."

Groups were seen collecting in the streets; the representations at the theatres became noisy and tempestuous, and the slightest allusions to the French revolution were applauded with enthusiasm. The diligences, on their arrival in the provinces, were surrounded with anxious inquiries regarding the state of the capital. The journals, in despite of accumulated prosecutions, had become more virulent in their attacks, and were read with still greater avidity. The blank walls were defaced with "*Down with Van Maanen!*" "*Death to the Dutch!*" "*Away with the National!*" In fact, to such extremities were matters carried, that placards were posted up in various parts of the city containing the following laconic and daring announcement:—"Monday, fireworks! Tuesday, illumination! Wednesday, revolution!" It was bruited abroad that the first renewed representation of the *Muette de Portici* was selected for an outbreacking, and so generally had this idea gone abroad, that the Dutch journals

more than once reported that disturbances had taken place at the Brussels theatre, several days before the riot actually occurred. Not only were these projected tumults openly talked of and announced by placards, but the civil governor of the province, Baron Vanderfosse, and M. Knyff, the director of the police, were confidentially and officially informed of all that was passing.

It might be supposed, therefore, that these two functionaries, in concert with the military authorities, took instant measures to suppress any disturbance, at the first signal of outrage, and that every individual, both military and civil, was night and day at his post, ready to spring forward at a moment's notice. It might be imagined, if the garrison was insufficient to control so large a population, that secret orders had been issued by General Bylandt for the arrival of reinforcements, which, with little exertion, might have reached Brussels from Ghent or Antwerp in a few hours, and that a well-digested plan was drawn up for the disposition of the garrison, according to the nature of the ground, and the particular quarters on which it was expected disturbances would break out.

It will scarcely be credited, however, that where promptitude, order, and energy were essentially necessary, nought but the utmost languor, confusion, and pusillanimity were displayed, and that not a single anticipatory or preventive measure was put in force. It is true the illuminations and fireworks intended to celebrate the king's birth-day had been postponed, on the plea of unfavourable weather; but, beyond this most impolitic postponement, almost insulting to the king, nothing was done. It is, therefore, difficult to determine whether Baron Vanderfosse, the civil governor of Brabant, M. Knyff, the director of police, Lieutenant-

General Bylandt, military governor of the province, Major-general Aberson, colonel in chief of the *gensdarmierie*, or Major-general G. J. Wauthier, city commandant, displayed greater unfitness for the important functions committed to their charge.

Although vigilant precautions were certainly requisite, no extraordinary reinforcements were necessary, the garrison being amply sufficient for all the purposes, if judiciously employed, and this, perhaps, without the necessity of firing a single shot. The troops under the orders of General Bylandt consisted of the 3d battalion of grenadiers, and 2d of light infantry of the guard, commanded by Lieutenant-colonels Antingh and Everts; one battalion of the 3d, and the depots of the 1st line regiment; the corps of armed firemen (*sapeurs pompiers*), a detachment of municipal guard, one squadron of light dragoons, and another of *gensdarmes*, with two pieces of artillery, horsed, and four or five guns, reserved for the purpose of firing salutes on days of public rejoicing; making altogether a force of about 1800 infantry, 240 horse, and six field-pieces. Of these, two-thirds were chosen troops, devoted to the crown; and at that period, also, there was not a Belgian officer or private who was not ready to do his duty.

The populace was without arms, ammunition, leaders, or preconcerted plan—in short, a mere rabble; for it is an indisputable fact, that it never entered into the heads of the most sanguine or exalted liberals, that the public authorities would tamely look on and permit a mere theatre riot to assume all the features of open revolt, and to be converted into the first act of a national revolution.

It is true that the fermentation in the public mind was intense; that seditious menaces were openly placarded, and that a few young men connected with the

poor and learned professions, entertained a bitter animosity towards the government, and were resolved, if possible, to create a riot. But the placards, as well as this projected disturbance at the theatre, were the work of a very limited number of individuals, in which the leaders of the union, or the more influential and respectable Catholics and liberals, had no participation. It is also true that it was intended to break the windows of the *National*, the Palace of Justice, as well as those of one or two functionaries, as a preparatory demonstration of public animosity to M. Van Massen and others; but it never was imagined that the government, after all the warning it had received, would fold its arms, and permit the populace to destroy, burn, plunder, and commit the most disgraceful outrages with consummate impunity.

Every individual inhabiting a large city is well aware of the extreme facility with which, in our days, disturbances or riots are got up, especially at the theatres, and this with little previous concert. London affords constant examples; yet, upon the strictest investigation, it is generally found that no money has been expended—that the leaders, if there be any, rarely exceed four or five insignificant individuals; that of general mobs, one-fourth are merely excited by that love of mischief, unfortunately innate in man, whilst the remaining three-quarters, at first attracted by curiosity, eventually co-operate from the force of bad example; especially when the authorities take no measures to repress them.

Temporization on such occasions is a dangerous and even cruel policy. However great the repugnance of a government to shed the blood of its fellow-citizens, it must employ force sooner or later. Unless it wish to deliver up a city to anarchy and destruction, there is

but one course to be followed—excess must be opposed, and licence chastised. Promptitude in such cases is indispensable: the longer the delay, the greater the opposition and bloodshed; for if the victory rest with the people, the reaction is always the more dreadful, since it opens the door to the most terrible of all scourges—popular vengeance, and the tyranny of the multitude. Had a vigorous course been adopted at Brussels, the monarchy had been saved, at all events for the moment. To prevent its dissolution at a later period, would perhaps have been impossible; but the separation would then have been the act of the legislature, effected constitutionally, without outrage or bloodshed, and not the work of the populace, tainted at first starting by such revolting acts of incendiarism and violence as awakened those European prejudices against Belgium, which it will require years to eradicate.

It has been asserted that the events of August were the result of long preconcerted arrangements between the various chiefs of the union; that the Counts Villain XIV., de Mérode, the Barons Sécus and D'Hoogvorst, with Messrs. Charles de Brouckère, Van der Weyer, and others, were concealed behind the curtain, and not only stimulated subaltern agents to compromise the public peace, but furnished the necessary funds for inebriating and exciting the rabble. Nothing can be more devoid of truth than this accusation. The mere fact of an intended tumult being talked of during many days, upon the first representation of the *Muette*, was sufficient to attract immense crowds to the theatre. No other stimulus was required to bring an overflowing audience, or to fill the adjacent square and streets with mischievous idlers.

None of the leading unionists would probably have come forward to oppose any public demonstration, directed against an administration which it was their

backed by the eloquence of their representatives, and the puissant succour of the press. Besides, at that moment, the national opposition, though essentially and uniformly anti-ministerial, was only partially anti-dynastic. The great mass of the people, especially the tradesmen and inhabitants of Brussels, were far from being hostile to the court, from which they derived their principal means of existence; indeed, up to the 26th of August, there were not twenty persons in the capital, who dreamed of the possibility of ever affecting even an administrative separation between the two countries. Although thunderstruck at the facility of their triumph, they were still more astounded at the utter want of energy and foresight of the authorities, who had opened to them a vista of emancipation, that exceeded their most sanguine expectations, and thus transformed a vile mob riot, into a grand national movement that set at defiance the whole moral and physical power of Europe.

As the epoch of the king's anniversary approached, the universal rumours of intended disturbances assumed greater intensity, so that the authorities thought it prudent to adjourn the splendid illuminations destined to celebrate that event, and to limit the public rejoicings to the ordinary demonstrations usual on similar occasions. The candelabras, lamps, columns, and other ornamental preparations accumulated in the park were, however, left standing, and daily attracted numerous bodies of idlers, who, without proceeding to overt violence, repeatedly broke out into vociferations of contempt and hostility to the government. For this postponement of an illumination, intended to do honour to the sovereign, was considered as a tacit confession of want of confidence in the nation, and of weakness on the part of the authorities, and consequently served to augment the general exasperation.

These preparations ought, in fact, never to have been begun ; or, if commenced, to have been vigorously executed, even as the representation of the *Muette de Portici* ought to have been forbidden entirely, or so frequently repeated as to lessen the excitement of novelty, and to wear out the public by mere satiety. The motives that actuated the regency in endeavouring to avoid a pretext for outrage, especially in the vicinity of the palaces, would have been highly praiseworthy on ordinary occasions ; but, as uproar was inevitable, it was highly impolitic on their part, to remove the scene of action to a quarter of the town, where, from the nature of the ground, the public force would have greater difficulty in acting efficaciously against the rioters.

The morning of the 24th at length arrived, and was ushered in with the accustomed solemnities. As the afternoon advanced turbulent groups assembled in various parts of the town, or filled the taverns. Towards dusk, when the lights at the public edifices and private dwellings began to illumine the streets, crowds of pedestrians were seen moving to and fro, rending the air with patriotic songs, and vociferations of the most seditious nature. As the shades of night fell more densely on the city, these crowds augmented in force and riotous conduct, so that the shops were closed, doors barred, and anxious heads peeped from the windows apprehending that this violent fermentation could not subside without more dangerous tumults.

These expectations were not void of foundation. A large body of young men (many of whom, to judge by their attire, were of a better class), followed by a multitude of the lower orders, proceeded round the park ; having reached the hotel of Prince de Gavre, grand chamberlain of the queen's household, a cry of " Down with the Dutch !" was raised, and instantly a volley of

stones smashed the illuminated windows to a thousand atoms, amidst the deafening applause of the multitude, who then retired unmolested by the military or police. A similar demonstration also occurred at the abode of the mayor, Mr. Wellens, where the band of the "Grand Harmony" had assembled for the purpose of serenading that functionary. However, as the illuminations successively faded away, the crowds gradually dispersed without committing further excesses, and the night passed off tranquilly. These occurrences were, however, a mere rehearsal, a prelude to graver events ; for, as the riotous groups separated, they were heard significantly bidding each other to be prepared for the morrow.

On the following morning the playbills announced the long-expected signal for commotion. As the evening drew on, crowds infinitely more dense and turbulent than those that had collected on the previous day, congregated around the theatre and adjacent streets. Scarcely were the doors of the former opened, ere the house was invaded and filled to suffocation. Hundreds, being obliged to retire for lack of space, joined the multitude that occupied the square, or filled the neighbouring places of refreshment. Of this multitude, ninety-nine out of a hundred knew not why they had assembled ; all were, however, ripe for mischief, and ready to perpetrate any act of outrage ; they wanted nothing but a definite object and a positive impulse, and these stimulants were not long in being furnished. At this moment a battalion of steady troops, placed in column in the square, would have sufficed to intimidate these masses, and to control that fury which, in a few hours, succeeded in overwhelming the king's authority, and trampling the laws beneath their feet.

The numerous patriotic and revolutionary allusions which abound in the *Muette de Portici* were peculiarly

calculated to increase the feverish excitement of the turbulent spirits who came prepared for tumult, and who expressed by their outcries the unequivocal nature of their intentions. The rising of the curtain was hailed with bursts of approbation. Not a word escaped unnoticed; each political allusion, however trifling, was applauded; whilst those of a more pertinent nature were received with almost phrenzied acclamations. The exertions and ardour of the performers appeared to rise with the excitement of the audience. Between the acts, noisy groups filled the corridors and saloons, where they pledged each other in goblets of punch, and enthusiastically repeated the most striking passages of the play. Others were seen in animated converse in the vestibule, or communicating with such of their friends as lined the peristyle and external arcades.

As the representation advanced, the fever of the spectators increased. Shouts and vociferations of a seditious nature were constantly mingled with their plaudits, until at length the curtain fell amidst such confused and deafening uproars as even overwhelmed the loud echoes of the final explosion. In an instant, the excited audience rose up from their seats, and darting through the passage, poured into the open square, exclaiming, "to the office of the *National*!" This was answered by the mob, with shouts of "away! away!" The whole mass, as if moved by one impulse, now rushed towards the street in which was situated the establishment of the obnoxious journal. "In with the windows and doors!" was the signal of attack, and in a few seconds a volley of paving stones commenced the work of destruction.

Unobstructed by police or military, the rioters would not have been long in demolishing the whole building, had not a cry of "to his lodgings! to Libry Bagnano's! down with the felon!" directed their attention,

and turned their wrath into a new channel. The rabble, now augmented to a most formidable and overwhelming body, instantly obeyed this call, and rushed with maddening fury and the most outrageous shouts of "Down with Van Maanen !" "Long live De Potter !" towards the Polymathick Library, the residence of the detested editor. In less time than is requisite to write the words, locks, bolts, doors, and windows yielded to the assailants ; and the whole dwelling, from the garret to the cellar, was invaded by the multitude. Whilst some were occupied in devastating the property, others, in a furious state of excitement or inebriation, sought for Libby, whose life would inevitably have fallen a sacrifice to their fury, had he not fortunately made his escape, at the first signal of the approaching tumult.

It is superfluous to detail the scene that ensued ; suffice it to say that books, furniture, clothes, wines, and papers, every article, even to the very staircase, was pillaged or destroyed. Three times was this scene of plunder renewed, until not a vestige of the apartments remained save their damaged walls.

Excepting a few scattered gendarmes, and one or two feeble patrols of infantry, who were easily kept at bay by the rioters, not a man of the garrison appeared. Yet the nature of the street, a long and narrow defile, offered every facility for the successful employment of force. Had a rapid and well-concerted movement been made, and two half battalions in column been ordered to advance, at the charge from the opposite ends of the Madeleine, the disorganized unarmed rabble must have fled through the narrow passages on either side ; or, if they had offered resistance, must have been killed or captured. Had blood been shed, when the ruffians were engaged in the work of demolition, few would have regretted the fallen, or failed to have applauded the aven-

gers of the laws. For, at that moment, the outbreaking was but a vile act of plunder and misrule, a mere mob riot, unaccompanied by any of the characteristics that ennoble a popular revolution; it was a mere disgusting act of outrage, deplored and disavowed by every individual who has any respect for his own character. For who is there that will acknowledge that he was either the author or abettor of a scene that merited for its performers an eternal condemnation to those very galleys to which Libry Bagnano had been previously sentenced? The atrocities of that night must not, however, be confounded with their subsequent results, nor the causes with the effects. Still less must the vile actors be mistaken for those honourable men belonging to the chambers or press, who were the constitutional champions of their country's rights, and not the ruthless plunderers of their fellow-citizens.

In the meanwhile, every moment's delay on the part of the authorities added to the audacity of the populace, and gave a more decided and definite character to the riot. Encouraged by the apathy of the public force, the mob had already divided itself into several bands, nor were leaders wanting to guide them. The idea of attempting to resist the laws by force now first suggested itself. An attack was therefore made on the gunsmiths' shops, many of which were burst open and plundered, and the people having armed themselves with every species of weapon, hurried forth to commit still greater havoc. One body rushing towards the *Petit Sablon*, made a desperate and successful assault on the mansion of the minister of justice; whilst another either disarmed, or kept at bay, the small military guard at the neighbouring prison of the *Petits Carmes*.

The doors of the minister's house having been instantly forced, the rioters rushed with loud cries through

the apartments ; some breaking and demolishing every thing within their reach, whilst others cast out of the windows, or dragged every portable article to the centre of the square, where a pile was made, and the whole committed to the flames. A cry of " fire the tyrant's house !" having been raised, fifty excited wretches seized burning brands, and darting into the edifice, dense columns of smoke and a burst of flame soon announced to the city this successful act of incendiarism. Still the military authorities did not interfere. A few *gens-d'armes*, whose barracks were hard by, alone attempted to remonstrate ; but they were instantly driven back, and advised for their own sakes to remain neuter. The firemen from the town-hall likewise hastened with their engines to the spot ; but so intent was the populace on the work of destruction, that they prevented all attempts to quench the flames, and bade the firemen confine their efforts to the preservation of the neighbouring buildings.

In the meantime, another band, headed by a foreign adventurer, hurried to the abode of the police director, who appeared to be so little prepared for such an attack, that his wife and children were first aroused from their slumbers by the yells and thunders of the mob, as they assailed the house. Though no absolute violence was offered to the inmates, their terror may be imagined, for the work of devastation instantly commenced. Hangings, paintings, books, porcelaine, plate—in short every article of furniture, was torn down, or utterly demolished ; and, although the principal object of the people was certainly not to rob, jewellery and plate of considerable value were carried off. Finding nothing more within the building whereon to vent their rage, the rioters dragged the carriages to the grand square, and there committed them to the flames, under the very eyes of the

public authorities and military guard. But neither one or the other moved a hand to the rescue.

As the night advanced, the audacity of the rioters seemed to increase; their previous success had wetted their appetite for mischief. The hotel of the provincial governor was attacked, and suffered the same fate as that of the police director; several manufactories were also broken open and devastated. In short, the whole city presented a fearful and disgusting scene of anarchy and lawless riot. Fury, confusion, or terror were then visible in every countenance. No one knew where the scene of devastation would end. Even some of those who had applauded the tumult at the theatre were terrified at the result, and united with the peaceable citizens in urging the authorities to do their duty. But the generals appeared spell-bound, and only answered these appeals by sending forth weak detachments that were instantly disarmed or put to flight, after firing one or two shots over the heads of the rioters.

It was not until day-break; not until the populace had revelled during several hours in uncontrolled licentiousness, and had commenced tearing down the royal insignia; in short, not until the riot had assumed a positive revolutionary character, and the difficulty of restoring order had been considerable enhanced, that General Bylandt, and his coadjutor, General Wauthier, roused themselves from their lethargy, and commenced a tardy development of the force at their disposal. But even then, the measures adopted were as ill calculated in principle, as they were inefficacious in their results.

There was neither combination or promptitude in the operations of the men, nor decision and common prudence in that of the generals. It was not, indeed, to be expected that the former should do their duty, when

they had such pitiful examples before them of weakness and want of presence of mind in their superiors.

Thus it often occurred that they were obliged to remain passive spectators of excesses they eagerly desired to chastise, or with tears of rage and shame in their eyes, were compelled to submit to the grossest insults and maltreatment. To such extraordinary lengths was the forbearance of the superior officers carried in some instances, that General Wauthier permitted himself to be insulted in a manner worthy of record.

Whilst this officer was standing at the head of his troops, an individual stepped from the surrounding crowd, advanced towards him, and after applying epithets the most injurious, placed his hand on the general's coat, and audaciously tore away the cross of the Belgic lion, which decorated his bosom. And yet Wauthier's sword hung by his side!!! After such an example, it cannot be a matter of surprise that the military should be disheartened, and that the people should triumph.*

The non-commissioned and soldiers, many of whom were young militia men, soon saw the difficult nature of their own situation. They felt that to employ their weapons would be but a useless sacrifice of their own

The "Ville Rebelle" contains the following note (page 193) respecting another general (Aberson). "Whilst the general was amusing himself in braying after this fashion, the mob (*canaille*) who surrounded him, thought proper to take the sword that hung by his side (if the farce had been carried a little further, nothing prevented their taking his charger, and slipping into its place a wooden horse, as befel Sancho Panza). When the general discovered that he had lost his sword, he exclaimed—'This is too bad really; come, *my children*, give me back my sword—I cannot live without my sword.' 'Give it him back,' said one of the bystanders, 'you see it is not a sword that will hurt any of us.'" It must be remembered that this note is from the pen of a devoted partisan of the Dutch.

lives. The natural antipathy of man to shed the blood of his fellow-citizen, was augmented by the knowledge they had, that the measures adopted by the generals must inevitably lead to their own defeat and consequent destruction. "Can I depend on your men acting energetically?" said a commissary of police to an officer commanding one of the isolated detachments dispatched against the rioters; "will they employ their arms?"—"Not, if we are left without support," answered the other, "nor will I risk their lives or my own by giving the order!" This reply sufficiently proves the perfect knowledge the inferior officers had of the incapacity of their superiors, and of their own hopeless position.*

Here and there, especially in the front of M. Van Maanen's residence, some partial combats did take place, during the early part of the morning, and a few lives were lost on both sides. But all these efforts were isolated and ineffectual, and served but to augment the audacity of the people. Before ten o'clock on the 26th the guards and posts in the centre of the city had been overcome, or had tranquilly surrendered; and the troops having given way, either retreated to their barracks, or were withdrawn to the upper part of the city, where they piled arms in front of the king's palace, and

* It may not be irrelevant to cite a reply made under somewhat similar circumstances by an officer of horse artillery, who was stationed with two field-pieces in the stable-yard of Carlton-house during the corn-bill riots in London, ready to gallop forth at a moment's notice. One of the principal officers of the Regent's household coming to him said—"I am commanded to ask if you think your men will do their duty, and obey orders to fire, should such melancholy extremity be absolutely inevitable?"—"Fire, Sir!" rejoined the other, "you may tell his royal highness, with my humble duty, that if I command my people to fire on his royal highness's palace, there is no man can stop them but myself." The reader must excuse the anecdote in favour of its originality.

renounced all further attempt at suppressing the tumult.

Fortunately, for the ultimate safety of the city, which before mid-day was abandoned to the discretion of the people, several of the most wealthy and influential citizens, indignant at the weakness of the authorities, and dreading another night of anarchy, assembled at the barracks of the communal guards, and there, in concert with the officers of that force, immediately adopted measures for the organization of a burgher-guard. A public appeal was made to the zeal of the inhabitants, of whom great numbers instantly came forward, and having received arms, and formed themselves into companies, strong patrols were directed to circulate through the streets, whilst others took possession of the various posts that had been abandoned by the king's troops.

A council of notables also assembled at the town-hall, where it was decided to issue a proclamation, assuring the inhabitants that M. Van Maanen should be dismissed; that the responsibility of ministers should be established, and that the municipal "*mouture*" tax should be instantly abolished. Although this document contained promises entirely beyond the control or attributes of the local authorities, it was well calculated to appease the general irritation, and to produce a salutary effect amongst the lower orders, especially as it was followed by a second, of a nature still more precise and positive.*

These measures, combined with the zealous conduct of the citizens, who eagerly hastened to enrol themselves for the general security, produced the most beneficial results, the more so, since Count Felix de Mérode,

* See Appendix, No. 1.

Barons Vanderlinden d'Hoogvorst, Secus, and other persons of rank, wealth, and influence, were seen doing duty as private soldiers. The opposition journals also, though they did not stigmatize with sufficient severity the disgraceful outrages of the preceding night—for they themselves may be considered as accessaries before the fact—loudly called on the public to maintain order, and breathed sentiments of respect and obedience, not only to the king but to existing institutions. “We conjure all those inhabitants who possess any influence over the labouring population, to interfere promptly,” said the *Courrier des Pays Bas*. “Let instant occupation be given to the working classes, even though it be useless; all who do not now return to order are culpable.” Had this journal held similar laudable language on the preceding days, it would have been more opportune.

But who could have anticipated the extraordinary results of that night, or have dreamed that those persons intrusted with the maintenance of the laws should have contributed so largely to their subversion? Who could have predicted, that a mere theatre riot should have swollen into a popular revolt, which immediately paved the way to the dissolution of the monarchy; or that the outbreaking of a few hot-brained patriots should have formed the basis of that national emancipation, for which Belgium had vainly struggled during many centuries?

Towards the evening of the 26th, the revolt had assumed a more distinct and national character. The French tricolour, at first displayed as the symbol of liberty, gave way to the old red, black, and yellow banner of Brabant, which was seen waving from the windows of the town-hall. The cry of “*Vive la France!*” had yielded to that of “*Vive les Belges!*” The Orange cockade was proscribed as being an *individual* and not

a *national* emblem. The royal arms were likewise removed from the public and private edifices, more perhaps from terror on the part of the inmates of the latter than from any sentiment of hostility to the dynasty. Instances, it is true, were not wanting of the blackest ingratitude on the part of some individuals who were indebted for wealth and prosperity to the royal family ; but these were exceptions, on which it would be unjust to found a general accusation.

Whilst these scenes were passing within the city, the neighbouring villages of Foret, Uccle, and Anderlecht had been the theatre of the most wanton and atrocious acts of outrage. Three bands of drunken miscreants sallied forth from the city towards dark, and taking advantage of the confusion and disorder reigning within Brussels, made simultaneous attacks on the factories of Messrs. Rey, Ball, and Wilson, which, together with about twenty country houses, were pillaged or burned. The loss sustained by the proprietors was valued at upwards of one million of florins. The leader and instigator of these hordes of bandits, was a man in easy circumstances, named Fontaine, who, as it appeared on his subsequent trial, had no motives for his conduct, but an execrable spirit of vengeance for some real or supposed wrong received at the hands of Mr. Wilson.

The respectable inhabitants being resolved to prevent the renewal of those disgraceful scenes, upwards of three thousand joined the ranks of the burgher-guard ; and as various turbulent bodies of the lowest class were observed assembling towards dusk, whilst public rumour designated several houses as devoted to destruction, these armed citizens declared their firm intention of chastising the slightest act of aggression in the most summary manner. The companies having selected their own chiefs, established patrols, which scoured every part of

the city, dispersed the groups, and were generally preceded by a banner on which was inscribed "Liberty!" "Security!" or some other patriotic motto.

Although the shops remained closed, and all business was suspended, the market people assumed their usual stations, a multitude of curious persons traversed the streets to visit the various scenes of devastation, and at night the whole city was lighted up. The citizens having universally obeyed the municipal invitation to illuminate the fronts of their houses, the darkness caused by the destruction of the lamps was obviated by this measure; and as the burgher-guard had not for a moment relaxed its vigilance, the night passed off with perfect tranquillity.

In the meantime, the whole of the troops remained confined to their barracks, or bivouacked in front of the palace, in which Generals Bylandt, Wauthier, Aberson, and Aubremé had established their head-quarters. A verbal convention had been entered into between the first of these officers and the municipal authorities, by which it was stipulated that the military should remain perfectly passive until instructions should be received from the Hague. But a reinforcement of a regiment of hussars from Ghent, and two battalions of infantry, with eight field-pieces, were ordered to move on the capital with all possible despatch; a precaution that ought to have been taken several days previous, but which was utterly out of season when the first act of the revolution was consummated, and the authority of the government trampled under foot.

Notwithstanding this triumph of the people, and the removal of the royal insignia, there were no other symptoms of animosity, no overt outcry against the dynasty, nor even a talk of separation. The press and every other organ of public opinion, outwardly pro-

fessed a desire for the re-establishment of the government authority, accompanied by such concessions as were calculated to rally the nation round the throne. There was a party, an anti-national party, that had turned its eyes towards France from the instant of the "July days;" but they did not venture to declare their sentiments until a much later period.

The panacea universally called for was the removal of M. Van Maanen. "An unfortunate choice, dictated perhaps by generous affections," said the *Antwerp Journal*, "has long offended the nation. Let this man retire, and never again resume office amongst a magistracy that stands in eminent want of national confidence; but let us rely for this on the wisdom of the king."

The *Catholic*, a violent liberal journal of Ghent, thus expressed itself on the same subject:—"There is no salvation for the throne, but in an ample concession of our rights. The essential points to be accorded are, royal inviolability and ministerial responsibility; the dismissal of Van Maanen; uncontrolled liberty of education and the press; a diminution of taxation; equal protection to commerce, agriculture and industry, and a just distribution of places; in short, justice and liberty in all and for all, in strict conformity with the fundamental law."

The *Courrier des Pays Bas* also held language of a similar tenor. "The dismissal of M. Van Maanen must ever be the absolute condition of all pacification, the indispensable gage of a return to a better state of affairs. So long as he continues in office, the Belgians can have no confidence in the intentions of the government, nor slumber in deceitful security. We repeat that we are neither in a state of *insurrection nor revolution*; all we want is a mitigation of the grievances we have so long endured, and some guarantees for a better

future." There was surely nothing exaggerated in these demands, nothing that militated against the dignity or security of the throne, nothing that ought not to have been conceded long before, or that had not been enjoyed by every British subject for nearly two centuries.

If the monarchy could be saved by such concessions, it had been sound policy to try the experiment. Henry the Fourth thought Paris worth a mass; King William considered a minister of more value than a crown.

There may be some persons who may despise the verdict of the press, and sneer at the above citations as being the mere opinions of self-elected judges, and not those of a delegated body. But, in so doing, they will display little acquaintance with the march of events, or the formidable power of that engine in the Netherlands during the year 1830. At that period the Belgian press was eminently puissant; the numerous prosecutions levelled against it had strengthened its energies, awakened the sympathy of the great body of the nation, quadrupled its circulation, and gained for it a degree of attention and deference that it could not otherwise have attained. Skilfully availing itself of this influence, it gradually acquired a supremacy over men's minds, that may be looked on as the principal accessory to the revolution. As its influence was generally acknowledged by the public, and dreaded by the government, its judgments merit respect; not so much from their intrinsic logical worth, as from the thralldom in which they held the public mind, which blindly submitted to its guidance.

The action of the Belgian press during the latter months of the union, has been compared to the movement of the fore-limbs of a horse, which are instantly followed by, or rather forcibly attract, that of the posterior members; so that the direction of the one is considered utterly subservient on the impulse of the other.

In England, the position of the two are reversed : the journals, being for the most part pecuniary rather than political speculations, follow rather than direct public opinion, with such tact and rapidity, however, as to form a ray of the same light, rather than its shadow. But, on a minute investigation, and notwithstanding the consummate ability with which many are conducted, they may be said to go with, rather than before, the cause they advocate. Their arguments are consequences rather than causes ; they are not the pioneers, but the rear-guard of national will.

On the morning of the 27th, fresh symptoms of effervescence again manifested themselves. The thirst of the lower orders for mischief having been increased by the latitude they had enjoyed during the night of the 25th, could not be restrained from breaking out ; in despite of the efforts of the burgher-guard, which had been organized in sections, corresponding with the divisions of the city, and placed under the orders of Baron d'Hoogvorst, a vast body of the populace inundated the Place Royale and adjacent streets, and rushed into the park.

Here they instantly tore down the artificial preparations erected for the illuminations, destroyed the coloured lamps and ornaments, conveyed the wooden fragments to a central spot, and then setting fire to the pile, reduced the whole to ashes. At length, the burgher-guard having received reinforcements, the gardens were cleared, and tranquillity restored without further damage. The demoralizing effect of this scene on the regular troops, who were drawn up in column in front of the palace, may be better conceived than described. It would have been a thousand times better that they should have been removed altogether from the city, than that they should have been allowed to remain passive spectators of outrages so injurious to their loyalty and self-confidence.

Hitherto no positive collision had taken place between the burgher-guards and the people. But the latter being encouraged by the success of the morning, and their numbers being augmented by a multitude of idlers and vagabonds from the neighbouring villages, they evinced towards nightfall a decided inclination to commit the worst crimes. A body of these ruffians, whose avowed object was anarchy and pillage, threw themselves on a patrol on the Place Royale, and would perhaps have succeeded in paving the way to the most frightful disorders, had not the citizen commanding shown more presence of mind than had been displayed by the royal officers. Rapidly wheeling his party into line, he gave orders to repulse force by force, and a well-directed volley having stretched eight or ten of the rabble on the ground and wounded others, the rest dispersed. This prompt and unexpected measure produced the best results. It curbed the audacity of the populace, gave confidence to the burghers, and was the indisputable cause of the subsequent tranquillity. Had the barrier of public force once more been broken down--had the mob once more obtained the supremacy, the destruction of life and property would perhaps have been immense.

Intelligence having reached the city that the expected reinforcements were rapidly advancing, and that it was the intention of the generals to endeavour to re-install the military authority, to disarm the citizens, and to declare the town in a state of siege, the utmost excitement was created. The popular leaders openly announced their resolution to prevent the entry of these troops into the city. The two cannon abandoned by the Dutch general, were taken possession of by the people. It was resolved to erect barricades, and to hoist the standard of undisguised revolt, unless the advance of the reinforcements was instantly countermanded.

So great was the popular excitement, that it was deemed prudent by the notables and municipal authority to send a deputation to General Bylandt, urging him to anticipate the evils that must ensue from any forcible attempt on the part of the troops to enter the town; and without force, it was declared they should not be admitted. Not sorry to have a pretext for preventing any further collision between the military and people, the general assured the deputation that their request should be attended to; that the progress of the reinforcements should be immediately stayed; and that the troops forming the garrison should continue passive until the return of the deputation, which the citizens were about to dispatch to the Hague. On the other hand, the burghers solemnly engaged to respect the neutrality of the soldiers, and to maintain the security and peace of the city. Two proclamations announced the issue of this interview.*

On the same evening, the most influential citizens assembled at the town-hall, where it was unanimously resolved that an address to the king should be drawn up, containing a firm, but respectful exposure of their grievances, and that this document should be conveyed to the Hague by five persons, selected for their respectability and influence in different stations of life.†

In the meantime, the intelligence of the last four days' proceedings spread rapidly through the provinces, where it produced extraordinary excitement. Every friend of social order looked with disgust on the outrages committed on the first night, whilst they warmly applauded the measures adopted by the citizens to restore order, and to obtain that instant redress of grievances so earnestly and generally demanded. But with the ex-

* See Appendix, No. 2 and 3.

† See Appendix, No. 4.

ception of Liege and Verviers, where at that time a portion of the commercial interests earnestly desired a union with France, no appearance of disaffection was shown; and though all parties united in the call for concessions, not the slightest wish for separation, or any sentiments hostile to the dynasty, were publicly expressed.

Antwerp and Ghent remained perfectly tranquil. The season of the year being the most favourable for commerce, full employment was given to the population of the one, and immense orders from the society of commerce found ample occupation for the labouring classes at the other. Some symptoms of disorder had manifested themselves at Louvain, Mons, and other towns; but they were not attended by any decided acts of outrage. As the troops in the different garrisons were kept on the alert, and the governors of provinces issued proclamations calling together the communal guards, it was hoped that the return of the deputations from the Hague with a favourable reply to the addresses, would fully suffice to restore order, and to re-establish the supremacy of the government by removing all pretext for further discontent.

The terror and confusion of the British residents in Brussels during the first two or three days, exceed all description. Ignorant of the politics of the country, and utterly unprepared for the alarming scenes of the night of the 25th, or the confusion that subsequently ensued, some fled to Antwerp, others to France, and many deemed themselves scarcely secure when they passed the frontiers, or reached the British packets at Ostend or Rotterdam. Those who remained, armed themselves and servants, and mounted guard either in front or in the interior of their houses. Reports of the most frightful description passed from mouth to mouth, and were propagated with the wildest exaggeration by the fugi-

tives, or in letters from those who remained, to their correspondents in the provinces.

In addition to other inconveniencies, the unpleasant situation of those who had been unable to depart, or had courage to remain, was augmented at night by the report of fire-arms either discharged out of mere wantonness, or directed against marauders, who availed themselves of the occasion to commit acts of depredation. In the day-time, the insolent conduct of some of the armed burghers was an additional cause of annoyance; for, dreading the departure of the foreigners, they demanded the payment of their bills at the point of the sword, well knowing that from the banks being closed, no specie could be procured even by those who had unlimited credit.

The events of July and August in Paris and Brussels, have given rise to grave discussions as to the extent to which governments are warranted to proceed in maintaining existing institutions and asserting the supremacy of the laws. The condemnation of the minister Polignac would appear to resolve the question in favour of the people; but the most ardent defenders of the liberty of the subject will surely admit that it is the paramount duty of every government to crush riot and anticipate revolution, by the employment of all the repressive means at its disposal. In the one case, that is of riot, the only agent that can be employed is force; in the other, the question is removed to another and a higher ground, and demands more caution, but not less energy. But it is scarcely proper to draw conclusions from two cases, which, though they produced similar results, were totally different in their origin.

A spirited writer attempted to defend the French ministers for firing on the people, by saying, "that according to all accounts, the first popular movements

that took place in Paris to resist the execution of the royal ordonnances, were not composed of individuals who bore any share in the legislature, and who consequently could be looked on as legitimate representatives of national opinion. No peer, no deputy, no judicial or administrative functionary participated in it. Until then the rising was a mere riot, and would have been considered in no other light in England and America. At a subsequent period, some deputies did certainly attempt to negotiate with Marshal Marmont, and it would have been more prudent to have listened to their representations. But it is not less true that they acted of their own accord; that the chambers not being assembled, they could not make any legislative remonstrance. The peers also remained silent, and the magistracy followed their example. The movement was, therefore, devoid of all legal forms, or rather of all constitutionality or rationality. The ministry were justified in regarding it as a riot; and in firing, not on what is called the people, but on what the English designate as the mob, a term only to be rendered in French by *populace*.*

The reasoning is infinitely more applicable to the events of the 25th of August than those of the July days. For, admitting that it may be as difficult to draw the line of demarcation between mob riot, and popular revolt or revolution, as to distinguish two twin brothers at their first issuing into the world, yet the features of the Paris movement differed as essentially from those of the Belgian outbreking as two children of different sexes born of different parents. The one sprung at once into the world a very giant, against whom all opposition became an act of *lèse* nationality. It was stamped, at first

* "Trois Lettres au Duc de Broglie sur les Prisonniers de Vienne." Gand, 1830.

starting, with all the characteristics of undisguised revolution. It was levelled directly and immediately, not at the mere overthrow of a minister, or the withdrawal of obnoxious edicts, but at the subversion of a worn-out dynasty. It was essentially national and universally popular. Its object was clear and defined; it was promoted by the wealthy, applauded by the powerful, and executed by the middling classes and people. Excepting a portion of the aristocracy of the Fauxbourg St. Germain, and a few Vendean chiefs, who subsequently rallied round the Duchess of Berry, it met with no opposition, and was as complete and bloodless as the revolution of 1668 in England; and whilst it united almost every heart at home, it conquered the sympathies of all generous minds abroad, and quickly obtained the ratification of all foreign governments.

The other, on the contrary, was to all intents and purposes a mere mob riot, with scarce a symptom of nationality. It is true there was a cry of "Down with the Dutch!" and the royal arms and Orange emblems were removed; but the battle-cry at the outset was "*Vive la France.*" The French, and not the Belgian tri-colour, was hoisted as the rallying signal, and the rising at its birth was a mere rabble tumult, whose disgraceful character was calculated to injure the cause of liberty, and to cast as black a stain on the national character as the foul and atrocious conduct of the Bristol incendiaries on that of England. Beyond the dismissal of M. Van Maanen and the annihilation of M. Libry's presses, it appeared to have no definite object. In its earliest stage, it was deplored at home and deprecated abroad. It commenced in the dark, and the future was veiled in obscurity. Hazard and the force of events, rather than foresight and sound policy, were the only stars that lighted it. When an illustrious diplomatist answered that

the Belgic question would terminate "by hazard," his reply showed a much more consummate knowledge of the subject in all its bearings than the words seemed to import.

Had the troops, or rather the generals commanding, done their duty in the first instance, and had the monarch and his sons hastened to the capital, and made those anticipatory concessions that were pointed out by policy and sound sense, it is more than probable that the riot would never have assumed any other character. Helvetius says, "that the man the most guilty of treason to monarchy is he that advises his sovereign to press the weight of his authority too severely on the people." This maxim was essentially applicable to the advisers of King William up to the last day preceding the revolt. But if ever there was an occasion when it was necessary to treat riot as riot, and not as revolution, and to let loose the whole force of the law on the populace, it was during the night of the 25th of August.

"Nec Deus Intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit."

But when this god does appear, let him come forth armed with all the might and terror of offended justice and incensed majesty. In England, where riots are so frequent as to become a matter of trite occurrence, the destruction of a few panes of glass seems to be looked on as a mere letting of blood, a species of popular febrifuge. The police, on most occasions, arrives too late, the military only prepare to move, a few heads and windows are broken, and the parish pays the bill. But if the patient show further inflammatory symptoms, the riot act is read, the peace-breakers are outlawed, police and military do their duty with unblenching firmness, and if loss of life ensue, no reasonable man deploras the

fallen, or blames the public authorities. An inquest is held; an investigation, solemn, patient, and minute, takes place; and a jury of citizens, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, honourably acquit both government and its agents. Such would, most probably, have been the issue of the eventful 25th of August, had General Bylandt and the Regency done their duty.

The supineness of these authorities, coupled with other coincidences, excited strong suspicions that the riots of the 25th, though not absolutely provoked, were not altogether undesired by the government; and that, in lieu of resolving to apply preventive measures, they sought to hurry on the anticipated explosion, and thus create an opportunity for crushing the revolutionary hydra, ere it had reached more dangerous maturity. Such machiavelic policy can, however, be scarcely possible. For it is hardly to be imagined that men capable of concocting a stratagem of this flagitious nature, should indirectly connive at a popular movement without being well prepared to fall with overwhelming force on the rioters, and reap the fruits of their artifice by annihilating them at one blow.

But these are mere suspicions. An impenetrable mystery envelops the whole business; there are no proofs, oral or documentary. The surmises are based on one or two collateral circumstances, and not on direct testimony. One of these is the total silence maintained by two of the generals, Wauthier and Aberson, whose conduct was inculpated in terms the most damning to men of honour; whilst the third, General Bylandt, limited his defence to the publication of one or two pamphlets in the Dutch language.* These suspicions were ag-

* "Verhaal van het oproer te Brussel op den 25 Augustus, 1831." Gravenhaege, 1831.

gravated, by the government not having brought these three officers to public trial, and thus proving to all Europe, that, if the generals had failed in their duty, the ministry had faithfully executed theirs. This was the more extraordinary; for it appears, from the following dispatch of the minister of war to General Bylandt, that the latter had expressed some desire to exculpate himself.

“The Hague, 22d November, 1830.

“In conformity to the king's orders, I have the honour to inform you, in reply to your two letters, addressed the one to his majesty and the other to me, that H. M. thinks it reasonable in every point of view that you should desire to justify yourself from the blame that may attach to your conduct, as provincial commandant of S. Brabant, during the revolt that broke out at Brussels. The most regular manner of satisfying this desire, is by presenting yourself before the supreme military court, in conformity to the disposition of the 52d § of the provisional instructions for that court, in order to purify yourself from this accusation. As to the forms to be observed in the process, you must refer to the proceedings adopted by the ancient courts of Holland down to 1810, according to the 75th § of the said instruction.”

(Signed) “De EERENS.”

Although the above letter was inserted by order of the minister in the official journals, neither the general or government took any further steps. This silence was, therefore, regarded as evidence of collusion between both, and furnished matter for asserting, that the general could not justify himself without inculpating those in authority over him, and thereby unveiling that machiavelism laid to their charge.

It is asserted, in the next place, that M. Vanderfosse, civil governor of S. Brabant, had repeatedly warned

the ministers that a dangerous fermentation and most turbulent spirit existed throughout the whole province under his jurisdiction ; that a crisis was nigh at hand ; that it was highly important to avoid every measure that might afford pretext for any display of popular feeling ; that it would be prudent to keep the military in constant readiness for action ; and, if it was not considered politic to reinforce the garrison, that it would be proper to direct General Chassé and the Duke of Saxe Weimar, who commanded at Antwerp and Ghent, to hold a body of chosen troops in readiness, to march on the capital at a moment's notice.

He further urged with mistaken zeal the policy of postponing the fireworks and illuminations prepared for the birth-day, affirming that, in the event of riot, the vicinity of the park to the palace and public offices might endanger the safety of these edifices, and offer an additional stimulant to the malevolence of the people.

The only part of the governor's advice that appears to have been attended to, was that touching the illumination ; but, to his surprise, and to that of every friend of the crown, instead of avoiding exciting measures, the *Muette de Portici*, which had been forbidden during many months, was *peremptorily ordered* to be reproduced on the night of the 25th of August.

There is certainly matter for deep consideration and astonishment in this latter fact. But, after all, these are but vague surmises—proofs rather of a vacillating and incredulous policy, than of any malevolent intention.

CHAPTER X.

CABINET COUNCIL HELD AT THE HAGUE—OFFER OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE TO PROCEED TO BRUSSELS, REJECTED—HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS AND PRINCE FREDERICK DIRECTED TO PROCEED TO ANTWERP—ENTHUSIASM OF THE DUTCH PEOPLE—THE PRINCES ISSUE A PROCLAMATION, AND ADVANCE TO VILVORDE AT THE HEAD OF A SMALL CORPS—BRUSSELS BARRICADED—DEPUTATION OF PRINCE DE LIGNE AND OTHERS TO VILVORDE—THE PRINCE OF ORANGE ENTERS BRUSSELS—HIS CONDUCT ON THE OCCASION—HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS APPOINTS A COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE GRIEVANCES.

THE dispatches announcing the events of the 25th and 26th, reached the king at his palace of Loo, in the afternoon of the 27th. This intelligencé, as unexpected as it was overwhelming, is said to have affected the monarch even to tears. No sooner, however, had he recovered from the first painful emotions of grief and indignation, than he hastened to the Hague with his two sons. A cabinet council was instantly convoked, and attended by the Prince of Orange as president, and the whole of the ministers except M. Van Gobelschroy, who was then at Brussels. The tendered resignation of M. Van Maanen having been refused by the king, a most animated discussion took place between the prince-royal and the unpopular minister, to whom H. R. H. attributed all the tribulations that menaced the state. The latter, being supported by the king and several of his colleagues, strongly insisted on the adoption of rigorous measures. All concession to a city, in an open state of revolt, was deprecated as incompatible with the dignity and honour of the crown, and as a dangerous precedent, subversive of the principles of legitimate government.

All negotiation with rebels and traitors was looked on as calculated to strengthen their audacity, and as an indirect recognition of the right of popular insurrection. Submission was declared to be an essential preliminary to concession.

“The cause of the king,” said they, “is that of all crowned heads. The Netherlands kingdom has been placed by the allies as a constitutional dyke between democratic France and monarchical Europe. The eyes of all nations are on the barrier monarchy, which they have raised with so much care, watched over with so much jealousy, and certainly will not lightly abandon. Even were a Tory administration not in power, Great Britain never would renounce those principles that have formed the basis of her foreign policy during two centuries. The Dutch are her natural continental allies; the co-operation of an English fleet and army may be relied on in case of emergency. Let the rebels be first made sensible of their error, and then pardoned! Let them first acknowledge the omnipotence of the government, and then benefit by its clemency! But it is not for them to dictate terms to the throne, or to wrest by force that which they are only entitled to sue for as a boon. The feebleness of monarchs, oftener than the firmness of ministers, have led to the downfall of empires.”

More politic than his colleagues, the Prince of Orange is stated to have warmly contested these opinions. He not only most earnestly recommended conciliatory measures, but implored his father to accept the resignation of M. Van Maanen, and to listen in other matters to the supplications of his southern subjects. Whilst he reprobated the insult offered to the crown and his family, by the suppression of the royal insignia, and stigmatized the outrages committed by an infuriated populace, he justly attributed these acts to the sudden ebullition of

a few, and not to the premeditated workings of the many. "Grant them what they have a right to demand at our hands," exclaimed the prince; "satisfy the people by forthwith listening to their complaints; offer them some guarantees for the future—and these outward symbols of rebellion will soon be removed, and the moral wounds of the country instantly healed. Besides, is it worth while to sacrifice a kingdom for a colour, or to risk the safety of the monarchy for a question of precedence? If concession be necessary, let it be granted by, not torn from you. A few thousands will repair the injury done by the populace; millions cannot repurchase a lost crown! Trust not to our allies, or to Great Britain. In the present state of public feeling throughout Europe, it is neither the policy or interest of the one or other to interfere in our favour. If we throw down the glove, we must confide in our own good swords alone; for England, having acknowledged the revolution of July, will not risk a general war to put down that of August. Let precautionary measures be ordered. Let us show that we are determined to maintain the rights vested in us by the allies; but let us avoid all acts that may increase the evil we desire to suppress. Let us shun civil war, until this partial insurrection (for at present it is nothing more) shall have assumed such positive revolutionary character, as will leave us no other alternative, but to endeavour to preserve by the sword that which we cannot maintain by conciliatory measures."

Confident in the popularity he had so long enjoyed, and trusting to the loyalty of the Belgian people, his royal highness further offered to proceed alone to Brussels. He prayed to be intrusted with full powers to treat, and to be the bearer of those good tidings of concession and reconciliation which would be more efficacious in rallying all hearts round the throne than any

demonstration of force. Unfortunately, this prudent advice was overruled. It was determined that instant measures should be adopted to prove to *four* millions of Belgians that they were but the vassals of *two* millions of Dutch—an inferior people in a state of groundless revolt, and not a superior nation excited to a pitch of insurrectionary phrenzy by long endurance of oppressive grievances.

Strong and energetic language is stated to have passed on this occasion, not only between the prince and the minister, whom the king insisted on retaining in office, but between the monarch and his son. At length, being compelled to yield to the will of the majority, the latter received instructions to proceed, without loss of time, to Belgium, accompanied by his younger brother. The one being charged with the command of the troops, and the other with a negative, temporizing mission; from which it was evident no good results could ever arise. For although the Prince of Orange may have been invested with full powers, it is clear from the sequel, that these powers were to collect evidence, but not to pronounce verdicts.

Their royal highnesses reached Antwerp on the 29th, and on the following day their arrival in that city was announced to the southern provinces by a proclamation. This document was generally considered extremely vague and unsatisfactory, from its containing little allusion to the general question, and being principally devoted to the adoption of vigorous measures for the security of the fortress.*

In the meanwhile most active preparations were commenced in the war department. The two battalions of grenadiers, with all the disposable forces in the

* See Appendix, No. 5.

vicinity of the Hague, were marched to Rotterdam, whence they embarked for Antwerp. The troops of all arms, especially the cavalry and artillery—which, for the greater convenience and facility of procuring forage, were principally cantoned in the northern provinces—were directed to move with the utmost speed from Utrecht and Friesland on Belgium, or to concentrate, according to circumstances, on the head-quarters of their respective divisions. The whole of the reserves and supernumerary militia were ordered to rejoin their battalions, by virtue of the 209th section of the fundamental law, and the communal guards (*Schuttery*) were called out on permanent duty. Indeed, so great was the excitement and indignation awakened throughout the northern provinces at the intelligence from Brussels, that many of these sedentary corps offered to march against the “rebels,” whilst numerous companies of volunteers eagerly enrolled themselves for the same purpose.

The long-suppressed jealousies and hatred of the Dutch towards their southern brethren, which was by no means inferior to the animosity felt by the latter for the people of the north, now broke forth in the most unbounded expressions of vituperation and defiance. The universal cry of “*down with the rebels! up with Orange!*” arose from all corners of the Old Netherlands. Contempt and disgust at the insurrectionary daring of a people whom they had long despised, was universally felt by the descendants of those men who had burst asunder the chains of Philip, who had bid defiance to the terrible Alba, whose troops had often defeated the most valiant soldiers of Europe, and whose fleets had triumphantly swept the ocean and spread terror even in the capital of Great Britain. They imagined that they had little else to do than to proclaim their avenging arrival, and that the “rebel city” would

send forth its best citizens to renew the ignominious scene inflicted on Ghent by Charles V. But they miscalculated their own force, and the weakness of their adversaries, as much as they overrated the wisdom of their government, and undervalued the sentiments that animated the Belgians.

So prejudiced, so ignorant of the precise nature of the question at issue were people in general, that even the liberal press in England almost universally sympathized with the Netherlands government, and advocated the adoption of the most energetic repressive measures. Nor does the diplomatic corps appear to have been more enlightened than the public, as to the state of national feeling in Belgium, or as to the causes that gradually paved the road to the insurrection.

In lieu of exerting whatever influence it might have possessed with the crown or ministry, to warn them of the precipice on which they stood, more than one ambassador also joined in the outcry, and encouraged them to the charge. It may be said that it was not their duty to interfere with the national affairs of other states; but, in this instance, it was incumbent on them to come forwards: for the question was European, and essentially calculated to involve the tranquillity of all other nations. Seeing only the dark side of the picture, as regarded the contest of the Brussels rioters—being too confident in the strength of the Netherlands government—judging the outbreking to be the mere reflection of the French revolution, they confounded, in their indignation, the outrages committed by a vile populace with the firm resistance of the respectable citizens, and mistook the explosion produced by a denial of justice for a premeditated desire for a reunion with France.

Trembling for the further propagation of that republican spirit which, at a later period, found only fifteen

advocates out of 200 members in the congress, and few supporters out of doors ; as much deceived as to the purpose, as they were little acquainted with the true causes, that led to the insurrection, the foreign diplomatists and the courts they represented completely mistook the real position of the question. The Belgian grievances, which no one seemed to have studied, or if they had studied, no one would acknowledge, were weighed according to the value attached to them by the royal message of the 11th December, 1829, and not according to their real merits. They were reprobated as "pretended and trifling," and yet, as was pithily observed, by an able writer, "Suppose England had been governed by a Scotch king and family, in the same manner as Belgium was governed by the Dutch monarch, would the grievances of Englishmen have been deemed trifling?"*

Suppose, for instance, that English barristers, soldiers, sailors, diplomatists, or other public functionaries were compelled to plead, write, and speak in Gaelic ; that five commissions out of six in the British army were given to Scotchmen ; that English Protestant children were obliged to be educated in Scotch colleges, or under instructors appointed by a presbyterian Scotch king ; that the Courts of Chancery and King's Bench were removed to Edinburgh ; that a dying man could not make his will in any other tongue than Gaelic ; in short, suppose that any of the grievances, of which ample details have been furnished, were inflicted on England, would Englishmen have tranquilly submitted, or would any one have dared to stigmatize them as *pretended* ? And yet such was the opinion, and such it is at the present hour, with those who, either from preju-

* Examiner, No. 1184, p. 644.

dice or ignorance, will not stoop to examine the question in its proper bearings.

Though the fundamental law and the treaties that ordained the union had been violated in more than one instance, no sooner did the insurrection break loose than government recurred to the constitution as an excuse for avoiding immediate concession. "Charles X. has been hurled from his throne for violating the charter; let your majesty answer the eager cries of your people for instant redress, by adhering firmly to yours. Let the chambers be convoked, and thus, whilst you gain time, let the result rest with the representatives of the people. They complain of your system of *arrêtés*, show them now that you are resolved to adhere to the constitution." Such was the specious but fallacious advice given to the monarch by his own ministers, and supported by more than one foreign ambassador.

In conformity, therefore, with the powers vested in the throne by the 97th section of the fundamental law, an extraordinary assembly of the chambers was convoked at the Hague for the 12th of September, by a cabinet order of the 28th of August, a measure that excited the reclamations of most of the southern deputies, the majority of whom at first decided not to obey the royal mandate. As the ordinary legislative session would take place *de jure* at Brussels in October, it was asked why the extraordinary convocation could not have been held in the southern provinces, in lieu of forcing the Belgian deputies to proceed to the north, merely to give them the trouble of returning in a few days? If the meeting was urgent, why should a delay of fourteen days be announced, when it only required twenty-four hours to remove from one end of the country to the other?

It was further argued by the Belgians, and not with-

out just grounds, that as soon as a question of concession was agitated, the crown had jesuitically retrenched itself behind the fundamental law and States-General, and placed the matter in the hands of that representation, of which it knew it *commanded* a majority. On fifty preceding occasions, when obnoxious measures were to be adopted, the king had been less scrupulous. Then, he had not deigned to consult the voice of the nation, but had acted on that system of *arrêtés* which had caused such universal discontent. The trial by jury had been abolished by a simple *arrêt*; the liberty of the press and education had been shackled by *arrêtés*; and the supreme court had been transferred to the Hague by an *arrêt*; why then not remove all these grievances by the same prompt method, and afterwards introduce a law to solemnize the act. It was a mockery of man's intellect to refuse to grant concessions by any other organ than legislation, when an arbitrary system had so often been adopted to inflict penalties.

If the convocation of the chambers was necessary (and that it was so, is indubitable), it would have been infinitely more politic to have assembled them instantly at Antwerp, if not at Brussels. Such a measure might have been considered a dangerous condescension, and a bad compliment to the north; but the paramount object of the moment was not to flatter the vanity, or fortify the loyalty of one people, who, in fact, needed no such stimulant, but to captivate the good will and allay the fears of the other, who were wavering in their allegiance.

The presence of the sovereign could not fail to be beneficial in the southern provinces. It would have afforded him an excellent pretext for hastening to the scene of trouble, and for declaring by proclamation that he trusted fully to the loyalty of the people; that he

gave them the utmost possible proof of his confidence, by thus convoking the chambers in the south, and coming amongst them with no other safeguard than the rectitude of his intentions, the conviction of deserving their support, and the firm resolution of instantly adopting means to redress their grievances. But that unseasonable energy, that dim-sighted policy, which has been pursued down to the latest period, was the line determined upon from the first, and unfortunately adhered to, down to the last moment. Its pernicious fruits rapidly reached maturity.

Whilst matters were in this state in Holland, the princes removed their head-quarters on the 31st of August from Antwerp to Vilvorde, where three battalions of the 19th infantry, with two squadrons, and eight field-pieces, previously intended to reinforce the Brussels garrison, had halted since the 27th. The 6th hussars, with one battalion of the 5th infantry, and half a battery, echeloned between Ghent and Alost, were ordered to close on Assche, and to communicate by their left with Vilvorde. Posts were thrown out from the latter place to Laaken, and this small corps assumed the air of an advanced guard before an enemy. Scarcely had the royal brothers reached Vilvorde, ere Colonel H. de Cruquenbourg, aide-de-camp to the Prince of Orange, was directed to proceed to Brussels with despatches for General d'Hoogvorst, inviting the latter to present himself at the head-quarters, in order to concert measures for the pacification of the city, and the restoration of legitimate power into the hands of the king's generals.

On the arrival of Colonel Cruquenbourg, a meeting was instantly convened at the town-hall to deliberate on the royal propositions, and in the course of a few hours General d'Hoogvorst, attended by five of the most influential citizens, obeyed the prince's summons. This de-

putation was instructed to intreat their royal highnesses to prevent the further advance of the troops on Brussels ; to declare respectfully but firmly that the people would not admit a single soldier more within their walls, until M. Van Maanen was dismissed and their grievances were redressed ; and, finally, to implore the princes to visit the city, in order to witness the real state of affairs and to listen with their own ears to the complaints of the citizens. The deputation was further instructed to request, as a *sine qua non*, that their royal highnesses should come *alone*, or without other escort than their personal staff, and to trust to the loyalty and good faith of the people ; and not only to answer on their heads for the security of the princes, but to assure them that this mark of confidence would be hailed with enthusiasm by the whole population.

On the same day General Bylandt officially announced to the public the reception of despatches from the king, stating "that his Majesty had declared his readiness to receive the deputation sent to the Hague, and that, although he had been deeply affected by the deplorable events of the 25th and 26th, he had expressed his satisfaction and admiration at the conduct of the burgher-guards." This admission of the praiseworthy behaviour of the citizens was not unmerited, though it has not been duly appreciated by Europe in general. Through the inertness and incapacity of the authorities, the moral as well as physical supremacy of the government was as completely overthrown by mid-day on the 26th, as though it had never existed. The law had become a dead letter, for it was in the hands of the populace, who held the city at their mercy. They might have sacked, burned, and devastated to their heart's content, for the arm of power was paralyzed. Anarchy, rapine, and bloodshed might have reigned

paramount, had not Barons d'Hoogvorst and Secus, Count Mérode, Messrs. Van der Weyer, Van der Smissen, Rouppe, Engler, Palmaert, Méeus, and other citizens, instantly sprung forward, and, at their own risk and peril, stemmed the dangerous torrent.

The grossest misrepresentations having gone abroad as to the conduct of these citizens, it is indispensable to proclaim their honourable patriotism and devotion on this occasion; and to affirm that, whilst they ardently coalesced with their fellow-countrymen in a determination to resist oppression, they looked with tears of shame and regret on the excesses committed by the populace, and were unanimous in flying to arms to arrest the progress of an evil that tended to throw the foulest disgrace on the national cause. They advocated "freedom in everything and for every one," but they loathed popular tyranny. They went with the book of the constitution in their hands, and required no other concession than the full execution of the fundamental law. Whilst they deplored the excesses committed by the people, they were ready to defend their just reclamations. They were intimately acquainted with the temper and wants of the mass, and, had their councils been attended to—had the government frankly, unreservedly entered into the path of conciliation recommended by them, all subsequent misfortunes might have been avoided.

An administrative separation was perhaps inevitable, but the dynasty would have remained intact. For, those who pretend that there was a general desire for a reunion with France, or even a total separation from Holland, knew nothing of the state of public feeling at that period. Even the demand for administrative separation, though it certainly lurked in many minds from the first promulgation of the Catholic union, was little thought of publicly

until, on the avowal of the royal brothers at Vilvorde, it was found that the Prince of Orange was vested with powers to listen, but not to grant. It was then generally apprehended that the government was not only adverse to concession, but that it was merely temporizing, in order to afford time for concentrating such an overwhelming force as would render resistance hopeless. In this they did not err, for the mission of the prince was utterly infructuous; and had the force or half the force that surrounded Brussels at a later period been judiciously employed, the revolution had little prospect of success.

The absolute separation may be said to have been the sole offspring of the inconceivable military failure of September, and not the fruits of the French revolution. It was that ill-conducted attack, which raised an insuperable barrier to all further approachment. Prince Frederick battered down the throne; General Chassé reduced it to cinders. Upon this point, diplomacy as well as public opinion was long grievously deceived. Lord Ponsonby was the first person who penetrated the mystery, and saw a glimmering of light where all else was darkness.

A portion of diplomacy itself eagerly co-operated in concealing the truth, having cogent but opposite motives to induce the powers, especially England, to attribute greater influence to France than she actually possessed. On the one hand, the Netherlands diplomatists were desirous to awaken the fears of the allies, in order to induce them to coalesce in supporting their cause; whilst, on the other, the French artfully availed themselves of the arguments of the Dutch to induce other nations to listen to their demands, and in fact to play their game. "The grievances of the Belgic rebels," said the Dutch, "are but pretended; this cry for separation is but a mere pretext. The insurrection is the

whole and sole work of the Propagand. The dynasty of Louis-Philippe cannot resist the flow of jacobinism that is rife through all ranks in France; the movement party will ere long obtain the supremacy. The re-union with that country, long projected, is generally desired; unless you hasten to fill Belgium with bayonets, your barrier will be overturned, and the French will be masters of the Meuse and Rhine. It is for this purpose that De Brouckère, Le Hon, and Stassart, have visited Paris, and have leagued themselves with Lafayette, Maugin, Lamarque, and Odillon Barot. Our cause is that of monarchy throughout the world; let the contagion of democracy spread to Belgium, and you destroy the last safeguard of legitimacy."

On the other hand, the French artfully observed, "it is true, the general voice of the Belgian people is with us, they unanimously sigh to associate themselves with the destinies of 'young France.' Their manufactories, collieries, and agriculturists are anxious for the wide scope of our market. The ambition of their deputies looks to our chambers, and their barristers turn a wistful eye to our courts. A spirit of democracy certainly does pervade the youth of the country, and if a change takes place with us, the reaction will, we fear, be inevitably felt by our neighbours. We do not seek for aggrandizement, God knows; but it may be forced upon us. It is your policy to aid in making us strong and powerful, that we may bear up against republicanism. Strengthen our young monarchy, and we will answer for the consequences; but if the movement party once gain the ascendancy, the flower is there, and it will inevitably be cropped, and heaven knows in what direction the winds may bear its seeds." Fortunately for the material interests of Great Britain, the representations of

France prevailed over those of Holland, and peace was maintained.

Taking the question of a reunion with France abstractedly, it may be said to have been essentially anti-national, more especially at the first commencement of the Belgian disturbances. For the anti-Catholic spirit that had broken out in France had alarmed the Belgian clergy, who dreaded the propagation of Voltarian philosophy as much as they detested those of Gomar or the Josephites. It is true, that the clothiers of Verviers, the armourers of Liege, some of the colliers of Hainault, a portion of the Wallon barristers, and a few, very few, deputies, did turn their eyes to France; but Brabant, Limbourg, Antwerp, with the powerful and influential Flanders, were adverse to a measure that threatened them with grievous consequences. They had sufficient remembrance of the past, as well as political sagacity enough for the future, to see that such a step must lead to instant war, and regenerate those conflicting questions that had converted their fertile plains into a perpetual theatre of bloodshed and devastation during three centuries. They loved France as a friendly neighbour, but not as a mistress. They did not wish to see their capital converted into the chief town of a French department, their rivers closed by a revival of the barrier-system, their church reduced to insignificance, or their civil and military functions filled by an inundation of Frenchmen. They wished to rid themselves of Dutch monopoly, but not to exchange it for that of France. "My friends," said a little popular pamphlet, published early in 1831, "I love the French exceedingly—but I like them in their own homes, not in mine. I love them as neighbours, but not as masters. I do not want to see Belgium fall into the hands of a cloud of poor and meagre fellows, who will fatten and enrich them-

selves at our cost, by taking all the best places. I do not want to see the grass growing in the streets.”*

Such was the state of public feeling at the period the deputation of citizens quitted Brussels to wait on the princes at Vilvorde, where on their arrival they were received with the utmost affability, especially by the Prince of Orange. But their royal highnesses, being only invested with limited powers, and being unable to offer any guarantees, demanded, as a preliminary measure, the restoration of the royal insignia, and declared their intention not to separate themselves from their troops. D’Hoogvorst and his colleagues having vainly attempted to obtain some modification to these demands, declined the responsibility of consenting, and having taken leave returned to the city to consult their fellow-citizens. The conversation that passed on both sides, on this memorable occasion, was energetic and unconciliatory ; for Mr. Rouppe, one of the most respectable and esteemed citizens of Brussels, now mayor of that city, having been first admitted into the prince’s cabinet with D’Hoogvorst, his royal highness’s eye instantly fell upon the tri-coloured ribbon worn by them in their hats and button-holes.

“ Are you aware, Sirs,” said he. “ of the Penal Code ? Do you not know that you bear on your persons the emblems of revolt, and that were I to act strictly, according to the right that is vested in me, I might order you to be arrested ?” To this the others replied, “ We regret appearing before your royal highness in any way that may appear disrespectful ; such is not our intention. These are not the symbols of revolt, but of nationality and patriotism. They have been adopted, Sir, to prevent those of France being hoisted, as, has been already the

* “ Jean le Brabançon au bon peuple Belge.” Bruxelles, 1831. p.15.

case in many parts of the city, until we ordered them to be removed."

It would be superfluous to detail the conversation that ensued. Neither party would consent to withdraw its pretensions. At length the prince, having summoned the rest of the deputation to his presence, exclaimed,—“Gentlemen, I have already announced to your two colleagues my final resolution. However, in order that there may be no mistake, here is a written copy of my conditions. Communicate them to your fellow-citizens; and God grant,” added his royal highness, with much emotion, “that you and they may listen to the voice of reason.—I have done my duty.”

Scarcely had the deputation returned to Brussels, ere reports of the demands made by the princes rapidly spread through the city, where they produced an extraordinary degree of fermentation. Shouts of “To arms! Let us repulse force by force; long live our colours! and down with the Dutch!” resounded from every quarter. Imitating the example of the Parisians, the populace commenced digging retrenchments, tearing up the pavements and converting them into barricades. The trees on the Boulevards were felled, and stockades and chevaux-de-frise erected with their trunks. Carts, waggons, diligences, and carriages were seized and dragged across the streets, strengthened with tubs, ladders, and beams of timber. The gates, as well as all the issues of the town, were intrenched and blocked up, so as to prevent all egress or ingress. Stones and other missiles were conveyed to the summit of the houses and placed on the window-sills; and in parts of the city, females were seen actively employed in aiding the defensive operations. In short, such was the enthusiasm displayed by the population, that in a few hours the once calm and beautiful streets were torn up and intersected

with barricades and trenches, and the whole assumed the fearful aspect of a beleaguered city swarming with armed men.

Amidst the rattling of drums, the roars of the multitude, and the running to and fro of women and children, it was not a little striking to observe the regularity and steadiness of the armed citizens, who already moved with a degree of precision and military firmness that presaged well for the cause they had sworn to defend. On observing their martial appearance and resolute countenance at that moment, it was not easy to divine that, in less than a year after, the "*blouse*" should become the ridicule of all Europe; and that those soldier-citizens, after casting out the Dutch with ignominy from their city, should have been dispersed by the vanquished like chaff before the wind.

In the meantime, a council having been held at the town-hall, it was resolved to announce the result of the mission to Vilvorde by proclamation, as well as the determination adopted to dispatch a second deputation to that place, in order to gain some modifications to the proposed conditions, which were unanimously declared to be of a nature that precluded all possibility of negotiation.

The proclamation being read to the people from the balcony of the town-hall, that part alluding to the demanded removal of the national colours and entry of the troops produced the loudest outcries, and copies having been communicated to the different sections, they redoubled the activity of the people in throwing up barricades and strengthening their defensive preparations. A large supply of cartridges were made and distributed, the cannon abandoned by the king's troops were made ready, and it was evident either that the prince must consent to withdraw his demands, or that immediate civil war was inevitable.

During the sitting of the council, it was proposed that the Spanish and Austrian ambassadors, who with others of the diplomatic corps still remained in Brussels, should be requested to employ their official intervention with the princes; but M. Van de Weyer and Count Duval de Beaulieu having energetically opposed this measure, it was agreed, after considerable discussion, that the offer of these two diplomatists, to employ their voluntary and private good offices, should be accepted.

On the arrival of the second deputation, composed of the Prince de Ligne, Count Duval de Beaulieu, Baron Van der Smissen, and three others, they were ushered, after a short delay, into the presence of the princes, whom they found standing near a table placed near the centre of the room, whilst Lieutenant-general Constant and the rest of their suite were ranged behind them, in a manner evidently intended to impose. After a short pause, there arose a most animated discussion, during which their royal highnesses evinced little disposition to accede to the demands of the citizens, and indeed insisted, as a *sine quâ non*, upon the removal of the Brabant tri-colour, which they unhesitatingly stigmatized as an emblem of rebellion. And by what other epithet could it be designated?

It might, perhaps, have been adopted, in the first instance, to prevent the general assumption of that of France; but it was an absurd sophism to pretend that the substitution of a local colour in lieu of that recognized by law, was a mere proof of patriotism, and not a demonstration of sedition. The Orange cockade might have been the emblem of a family, but it had hitherto been acknowledged as that of the monarchy, and, together with the Dutch tri-colour, was the only standard recognized by foreign powers. Either from conviction of the truth of this fact, or from motives of courtesy,

the members of the deputation, on appearing before the princes, removed or concealed the obnoxious ribbons ; a concession not extremely judicious, since it was tantamount to an admission of its illegality. But their object was not to contest a point of etiquette, but to obtain the adherence of the princes to the demands of their fellow-citizens, without which all further negotiation would have been impracticable.

The questions of the national colours and entry of the troops was warmly contested on both sides. But finding the deputies equally resolute with themselves, the princes at length hinted at the painful necessity they should be reduced to of employing force, and treating as rebels those whom it was their desire to embrace as friends. Upon this both the Prince de Ligne and Count Duval, whose rank, wealth, and social antecedents certainly guaranteed them from all possible imputation of jacobinism—who might be considered as utterly disinterested, and who had, in fact, given hostages to monarchy and tranquillity—replied in terms of considerable energy.

The latter forcibly expatiated on the danger of driving to desperation a populace already excited to an alarming pitch, and the frightful consequences that might result from commencing a civil war. He gave a glowing description of the state of public feeling, both in the metropolis and provinces, and with prophetic voice declared that the first cannon-shot fired on Brussels would be the signal for a levy of bucklers, and the first citizen's grave the sepulchre of the dynasty.

The Prince de Ligne, a young man hitherto little known save from his noble fortune and the ultra Catholic servility in which he was said to have been educated, conducted himself on this occasion with considerable spirit, but with that courtesy which became his rank.

"If your royal highness persist in attempting to force your way into the city," said he, "the citizens will form barricades with their very bodies. As we issued from the city, they surrounded our carriage, and bade us say that they are resolved to perish rather than submit, and that, before penetrating into the town, the troops must make stepping-stones of their corpses. But I implore your royal highness," added de Ligne, "for your own sake, for that of the princes your sons, to pause ere you draw the sword. Should blood flow, the responsibility will fall on you, and your posterity will look back and point to your name as the destroyer of their heritage." Some haughty and intemperate remarks having been uttered by some of the royal suite, who, with the natural impetuosity of devoted soldiers, were indignant at the frank language of the deputies, Duval turned round, and with a firm voice exclaimed, "Sirs! it was by listening to the voice of such injudicious councillors as you are, that Charles X. lost his crown. Beware how you urge your royal master into a similar abyss!" To this Van der Smissen added, "That he warned them to be more guarded in their expressions, lest they should not only bring destruction on those they served, but severe personal chastisement on themselves."

It is not probable that menaces or intemperate observations would have produced any effect on a man so chivalrously valiant as the Prince of Orange; but as he had been adverse from the first moment to the employment of force, being convinced that conciliation was the surest path to success, and as the deputies eloquently appealed to his humanity, and whilst they spoke firmly, prudently abstained from any further expressions calculated to irritate his susceptibilities, his royal highness gradually relaxed, and tears frequently dimmed his eyes. After retiring to re-consult Mr. Van Gobelachroy,

who had arrived during the deliberation, a sort of compromise was suggested respecting the colours, which appeared calculated to suit both parties. This was, that the burgher-guard should wear both the Orange and Brabant cockade, and that his royal highness should adopt a similar plan on entering the city. After settling this point, and vanquishing other scruples of a personal nature, the prince reappeared, and bade the deputies return home, and announce to their fellow-citizens his determination to sacrifice all individual feelings for the public good, and that he should enter Brussels on the following morning without any other escort than his own staff.*

Rejoiced at the success of their mission, the deputation returned to the city, and by daybreak on the following morning, the 1st of September, a proclamation announced to the inhabitants the result of the Vilvorde conference. An order of the day was issued at the same time, calling on the chiefs of section to muster their battalions, in the square of the town-hall at 10 A. M., "to meet and escort the prince into the city." In the meanwhile, the proposition respecting the Orange colours having been communicated to and accepted by the burgher-guard officers and notables, every effort was made during the night to prepare a sufficient number of these cockades for the whole body, and before the appointed hour, several well-filled baskets were deposited in the town-hall. These were on the point of being distributed, when the arrival of Colonel Cruquembourg with a message from Vilvorde gave a new turn to affairs; a change having taken place in the plans of the Prince of Orange, who, yielding to the representations of his brother

* Prince Frederick declined separating himself from the troops of which he had been appointed commander.

and General Constant, had resolved to make the question of the removal of the Brabant tri-colour, a *sine qua non* to his entrance. This officer on seeing himself surrounded by Brabant colours, not only insisted on their immediate removal, but employed such irritating and impetuous language, that it was unanimously resolved by all persons present *not* to adopt the Orange cockade; and after a violent altercation, Colonel Cruquembourg was desired to return to Vilvorde, and to inform the Prince of Orange that the citizens would sooner perish than reject the one or assume the other.

In the course of two hours, Count Stirum, aide-de-camp to Prince Frederick, arrived on a similar errand; but, though more guarded and courteous in his manner, he was compelled to return without being able to overcome the resolution of the burghers. At length the Prince of Orange, finding that he could obtain no further concession, gave up the contest, and in despite of the advice of his attendants, announced his intention of immediately entering the city.

No time was lost by the armed citizens in obeying the summonses of their chiefs. Before eleven o'clock, the whole corps, amounting to nearly 5,000 men, drew up in the Grande Place. The major part of these were furnished with fire-arms; but the leading section, composed of men from the suburbs, and the company of butchers, had no other weapons than scythes, long knives, and pike-heads affixed to poles, with here and there a rusty musket, forming altogether a savage and picturesque group.

All preliminary arrangements being concluded, the order to march was given, and the whole body filed through the streets. On reaching the Laaken-gate the two leading sections continued their route along the Antwerp road, until they reached a spot called *La Perche*; but the remainder declared that they would not quit

the city, or expose themselves to be cut off and massacred by the Dutch. They consequently formed themselves into a line, that extended back nearly to the centre of the city, and thus awaited the prince's arrival.

Soon after mid-day, his royal highness was perceived approaching the Laaken-bridge, attended by four officers of his own suite and a small escort of light horse. It was an anxious moment for the prince and those around him ; some of whom, up to the last instant, had earnestly implored him to revoke his decision, and not to throw himself into the hands of men whose sole object was to ensnare and retain him as a hostage ; for they had received hints that such was the intention of the "rebels." "Besides," added they, "although the chiefs may guarantee your safety, how can they answer for the conduct of a rabble, who within the last few days have given such deplorable evidence of their reckless fury ? It requires but one parricidal hand to pull the trigger ; and *we*, your royal highness's faithful servants, and not the rebel chiefs, will be held responsible to the king and the nation."

"Fear not," rejoined the prince ; "that Providence which has often watched over me in the hour of peril, will not abandon me. That star, which through centuries has shone upon the house of Nassau will not now withdraw its light. I shall enter without mistrust, and implicitly confide on the loyalty of the citizens. They may be rebellious, but they are not cold-blooded assassins. I never wilfully wronged any man. I go there for the general welfare. They will not be ungrateful. The greater the peril, the more eminent the glory ; and were I to purchase the restoration of peace by the sacrifice of my life, my fall would not be less honourable than if I met with death on the field of battle."

As H. R. H. approached the bridge, he dismissed his

cavalry escort, and was respectfully received by the staff of the burgher-guards, to whom he addressed himself in an animated and conciliatory manner—the men presenting arms, and the drums beating the salute. As he rode down the line, a silence peculiarly impressive reigned around, for it had been wisely recommended to the burghers not to proffer any cries of loyalty, least this might give rise to opposition and call forth exclamations of an offensive nature. For, although the vast majority were well disposed, it was impossible to answer for the whole, and still less for the vast multitude of idle spectators that lined the roads and filled the adjoining plains.

Upon reaching the Laaken-gate, and perceiving the dense masses of armed men that filled the streets, a momentary paleness overspread the prince's countenance, and he betrayed symptoms of deep emotion, not unmingled with distrust. After a moment's pause, he turned to the persons near him, and expressed a desire to ascend the boulevards, and thus to proceed to his palace by the *rue Royale*. But this was objected to, because the line of burghers was drawn up in the direction of the theatre, and they, as well as the population, awaited his passage. Looking round, and finding himself completely in the power of the surrounding masses, H. R. H. suppressed his own feelings, and merely saying to Van der Smissen, Duval, Plaisant, and others who walked by his side, "Gentlemen, I confide in you!" he assented with a smile to their demands.

This proceeding on the part of the people was not without its object; fears being entertained by them, that if the prince was permitted to ascend the boulevards, that he would put spurs to his horse, and thus gain the palace, where the royal troops had been concentrated, before they could even reach the centre of the city. They well knew his ardour and intrepidity, and appre-

hended that he might harangue the soldiers, animate them by his example, and commence offensive operations within the walls, whilst the troops from Vilvorde and Assche, should advance on the Flanders and Schaerbeek-gates, and thus, taking the citizens between two fires, force them to submission or flight. It must be borne in mind, that at this time there was not the slightest symptom of disaffection amongst the military ; officers and men were prepared and anxious to do their duty, until the subsequent repulse from Brussels demoralized and disheartened the whole of the troops, both Dutch and Belgians.

Upon penetrating farther into the city, the prince was evidently astounded at the formidable preparations made to oppose any forcible entry. The streets, especially where they opened on the boulevards, were intersected with deep trenches, barricades, and chevaux-de-frise ; so as to render it nearly impossible to pass from one to the other without clambering over various obstacles, or passing through narrow intervals that scarcely admitted the passage of a horse. These defensive works, the result of one night's labour, showed what might be done were a longer time allowed for preparation. They were proofs of the danger of attempting to penetrate into a city thus fortified, especially with cavalry. The lesson was, however, thrown away.

As the cavalcade advanced, the same silence was maintained. There were no greetings, no hurrahs ! no symptoms of loyalty or devotion. There was a buzzing hum, a rushing to and fro, but no acclamations. No flowers were strewed in the streets, no handkerchiefs waved from the windows. Every eye, every countenance seemed to frown upon him.

—“ No man cried ‘ God save him !’
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home.”

Although his clenched jaw and expanded nostril more than once bespoke the intensity of his feeling, and a momentary tear did glitter in his eye, he suppressed the emotions of his heart; and maintaining a gallant bearing, stopped here and there to address persons of his acquaintance,—praising some for their good conduct, and assuring others that, if it depended on his exertions, their grievances should be speedily redressed.

On reaching the *Marché aux herbes*, his royal highness expressed a desire to proceed direct to his palace; but, independent of the immense crowds that filled the *rue de la Madeleine*, impassible barricades completely barred the passage. As some discussion took place as to the route to be followed, the populace became extremely clamorous, and with loud shouts exclaimed—"To the Palace of the People!—to the Hôtel de Ville!" whilst an athletic and fierce-looking man, armed with a pike, sprung forward, and brandishing his weapon above the head of the prince's horse, roared out—"Vive la liberté!—to the town-hall!" Turning to M. Plaisant, who stood at the prince's stirrup, his royal highness exclaimed—"Cursed liberty, that will not allow a man to go direct to his own house!" The multitude now becoming still more clamorous, and the persons near the prince feeling anxious for their illustrious charge, M. Plaisant whispered to him—"Quicken your pace, Sir, in God's name; it will be more prudent to proceed to the town-hall."

Upon reaching the front of this building, on the perystyle of which the regency was assembled, the prince reined in his horse, and the immense crowd having formed a circle around him, he harangued them in a strain of deep feeling and moderation. He appealed to their loyalty and love of order, and promised to devote

himself to their welfare. He told them, although there was no occasion for arming, the troops being come as brethren and not as enemies, that he himself, as colonel-general of the communal guards, was glad to see himself surrounded by the armed citizens. On concluding, he raised his hat, and shouted "*Vive le Roi!*" But these talismanic words, so effective in ordinary times, had lost their charm. They were either feebly re-echoed, or drowned by vociferous shouts of "*Vive la Liberté! A bas Van Maanen!*" whilst even the more popular cry of "*Vive le Prince!*" was accompanied by no enthusiastic marks of devotion.

It was here that an accident occurred that might have led to most unpleasant consequences. The horse rode by the prince, a beautiful but vicious animal, became frightened and irritated by the pressure of the crowd on his flanks. It had already bitten more than one person, and had kicked Baron Van der Smissen so severely, as to disable him from further duty. An individual having incautiously placed his hand on the fiery creature's crupper, it instantly lashed out, and struck him so severely as to awaken apprehensions for his life.

The populace, concluding the man to have been killed, broke forth into loud vociferations. Some cried, "bayonet the vicious brute! Alight! alight! and walk with us;" whilst others roared out, "On foot, on foot! we are not made to be trampled beneath Dutch hoofs." In the meanwhile, the prince called to his groom, sprung from the animal he rode to the back of that of his attendant, and said, "if the man is injured I will give him a pension of 500 florins; the horse shall be destroyed." But from the menacing attitude of the crowd, or from some sudden impulse, his royal highness had scarcely uttered these words, ere he put his horse into a trot, and having reached the narrow street leading from the Grande

Place to the Palace of Justice, broke into a gallop, followed by his staff and a few mounted burghers.

His progress was not unattended with peril. Being compelled to urge his charger over one of the barricades, neither his personal attendants or escort could follow, so that he arrived suddenly and alone in the square of the Palace of Justice. Here, from ignorance or malice, an armed burgher rushed at him with fixed bayonet, and the consequence might have been fatal, had not another citizen sprung forward and turned the weapon. Loud and insulting language was now uttered by some of the bystanding rabble; but being joined at length by his suite, and an opening being made in the barricades that barred every issue, the prince proceeded rapidly to his palace, where he arrived in no ordinary state of excitement and displeasure at what had passed.

Instantly turning round to the citizens that had followed him, he rebuked them in bitter terms for thus permitting him to be insulted. "As for you, Sir," said his royal highness to D'Hoogvorst, "you shall answer for this on your head. Are these your promises? Was it for this that you entrapped me, the son of your king, into your city? Is this your Belgic faith?" The persons present, who were deeply distressed at what had occurred, now stepped forward, and after a short but animated discussion, succeeded in appeasing the prince's wrath, so that he soon recovered his wonted equanimity of temper, and having summoned to his presence several of the most influential citizens, immediately proceeded to hold a conference, as to the best measures to be adopted for the restoration of tranquillity. In the course of the afternoon, a proclamation announced to the inhabitants the selection of a commission, charged with proposing measures for the re-establishment of a good understanding between the government and citizens;

thanking the latter for their laudable conduct, and assuring them that no troops should enter the city.*

Although some of the persons selected as members of this commission were extremely unpopular, the proclamation produced salutary effects. The night passed off tranquilly, and as the prince had dispatched a courier to the Hague, it was hoped that M. Van Maanen would be dismissed, and that conciliatory measures would be adopted.

If the policy or utility of the prince's entry into Brussels be subject to discussion, there can be but one opinion as to the gallantry and devotion of the abstract fact. Never was there an occasion when greater moral courage was requisite, or, if necessary, where it was more amply manifested. However replete the history of the Nassau family may be with episodes of an interesting nature, none can be recorded more striking, more chivalrous, than this. A situation more painful, more galling, could not well be imagined. There was no stimulus to excite him; all was cold, stagnant, and repulsive. The courage necessary on this occasion was essentially moral. There existed none of the hurried movement, the din, the clash, the feverish tumult of the battle-field, to warm his heart. There was none of the proud feeling that animates a commander at the sight of obedient and well-disciplined columns advancing, retreating, charging, or rallying at his word. There was none of that enthusiastic indescribable ardour that urges on a soldier, on the day of combat, to encounter the most perilous chances, reckless of destruction and opposing numbers.

There was danger without glory, and sacrifice without reward. Although surrounded by armed men, he

* See Appendix, No. 6.

rode powerless amongst them. He was there, alone, in the middle of a revolted population, the royal insignia of his house trampled under foot, the banner of sedition waving above his head, or fluttering in his very teeth. Certain that he was in the midst of foes, he was uncertain whether a single friendly arm would be stretched forth to arrest an assassin's hand, or a single voice be raised to protect him from insult. In lieu of loyal greetings, he was met by the silence of disaffection ; and he saw stern defiance and triumph depicted on those very countenances that a short time previous had bent with cringing smiles before him. In short, he appeared in the midst of the populace as a mere trophy intended to swell the pride of the conquerors, or as a hostage for the security of the revolted.

Thus much for the conduct of the prince, which, during the whole of his sojourn in the city, merited the warmest eulogium. His self-possession, frankness, affability, and gallant bearing, drew forth marks of admiration from every generous heart, and even the bitterest enemies of his house and religion united in the tribute of applause. Had the security of the monarchy depended on this act alone, the Netherlands throne had been saved.

As an act of policy, the question must be viewed in a totally different light. Considering the line of conduct the king's government had determined to pursue, it is highly questionable whether the prince acted wisely in yielding to the demands of the people, or whether his entry into Brussels under existing circumstances was not calculated to produce a pernicious reaction at some subsequent period. It was evident to a demonstration, notwithstanding the assertions and protestations of the deputations and press, that the capital was then in an open state of revolt, so nearly allied to flagrant revolu-

tion, that only one of two alternatives remained to be adopted. That is, the development of force with all its terrible accompaniments of bloodshed, civil war, prisons and scaffolds; or open, undisguised concession, with unreserved pardon and oblivion.

There could be no medium. It was evident that the government must yield to the people, or the people to the government; for the leaders of the people, those who had assumed the reins of power, had gone too far to retract. The penal code was there, and they had no choice between flight and chastisement, unless their safety without retrospect was solemnly guaranteed. Had the government been endowed with greater perspicuity, had it not been too deeply bent on re-establishing its lost preponderance, and too much deceived as to its own power, it would have done wisely to have considered the disgusting scenes of the 25th and 26th as a mere mob riot, and leaving the punishment of the inferior actors to the ordinary tribunals, instantly to have come forward, and satisfied the demands of more dangerous and puissant enemies.

If it was resolved to deny concession, and to trust the final arrangement to the "*ultima ratio regum*," half measures were futile. It was as absurd in Prince Frederick to draw the sword until the arm intended to wield it was firmly braced, as it was impolitic for the Prince of Orange to hold forth promises, without having the power to realize them. The true position of the case may be resumed in a few words.

The hatred to the Dutch was so intense, that the desire for separation, which had lurked in some men's minds, was becoming rapidly contagious. There was, however, no absolute hostility to the king further than that which arose from his being the representative of the Dutch monopoly. Had this system been modified,

and the balance restored between the two countries, all individual disloyalty would have vanished. For the exaggerated animosity of some few ultra-liberals and ultra-Catholics must not be confounded with the general voice of the nation.

Subsequent events have proved that the disaffection of the Catholico-liberal union was directed against general measures, and not individual creeds; for the very same party now composes that majority which constitutes the firmest support of the present *Protestant* monarch. The whole virus consisted in an utter abhorrence of Dutch supremacy. And herein lays the great distinction between the results of the French and Belgian revolution. From its first eruption, the one was directed against men, for the system of the government can scarcely be said to have been changed with the dynasty; whilst from the first instant that the other assumed a definite form, it may be said to have been levelled against measures. The attack on men was a consequence, not a cause; and a more absolute and radical change does not stand on record, for scarce a vestige of the old edifice remains.

When the Prince of Orange, made up his mind to exceed the letter of his instructions, and in despite of the refusal of his brother and the remonstrances of his suite, resolutely determined to trust himself in the midst of his father's revolted subjects, he should have prepared himself for bold and energetic measures. Knowing, as he must have known, the secret determination of the cabinet, the unbending firmness of the king's character, and the utter hopelessness of inducing him to retract; seeing and hearing that internal war was inevitable, and that in the then state of Europe external aid was improbable, and success consequently extremely problematical; he should have decided on

quitting the city the moment he had given to Europe and the Belgians so striking a proof of his devotion; or he should at once have declared himself for the popular cause, and then exclaimed:—

“Belgians! I will dispatch messengers to the Hague, I will join my prayers and link my destinies with yours. Will you have me for your advocate, your mediator, your chief? If so, I will remain amongst you. I see that you have been misrepresented. You are neither rebels or revolutionists; but men struggling for the redress of oppressive grievances, and those equal rights and liberties that were guaranteed to you by treaty and constitution. Fear not, I will place myself at your head, and will share your fate. If the troops advance against you, my arm shall carve the road to victory, or my blood shall flow with yours. We will live and die together.”

Such doctrines may be considered machiavelic and immoral. To preach filial disobedience, or to advocate the rebellion of a son against a father, would be odious in ordinary life, or in ordinary times; but when thrones are at stake, when an act of this nature may save a monarchy, all other considerations ought to give way. Without some such decisive act as this, the dynasty was irrevocably lost; with it, it might have been saved—saved, even without the necessity of a rupture between the father and son. For had the father been politic, he would have yielded to the demands of the son, then become the organ of the people. He might have appointed him his viceroy and have thus conciliated policy and reciprocal duty.

This was, perhaps, the only way of securing for one branch that which was likely to be lost to the main stem. Had the Prince of Orange boldly adopted this plan, had the British government urged him to do so,

the whole tide of popularity would have turned in his favour; he would have been raised on the bucklers of the people to the very clouds; hearts and hands would have gone with him, and by making himself the firm but respectful interpreter of national demands, by remaining with them until those demands were granted, he would probably have obtained for the Belgians all they wanted, without further anarchy or bloodshed, and would have secured for his dynasty that brilliant jewel, which has now irrevocably passed into other hands. Severe moralists would, perhaps, have raised outcries against such an act of filial disobedience. But Europe, which was eager to see Belgium preserved to the Nassaus, would have applauded a stroke of policy that would have settled the question without the necessity of foreign intervention. Providing there was no absolute restoration, France cared little whether the crown were placed on the head of a Nassau or of any other prince.

But that filial piety, that profound deference for his father, and that chivalrous sense of honour, for which the Prince of Orange is not less distinguished than for his personal courage, entirely prevailed, and the golden opportunity was lost for ever. The favourable impression made on the public mind by his proceedings on the 1st of September was utterly effaced amidst the subsequent carnage and conflagration.

CHAPTER XI.

CONDUCT OF THE DUTCH GENERALS COMMANDING THE PROVINCES—RIOTS AT VERVIERS, AND STATE OF FERMENTATION IN THE TOWNS—THE DEPUTATION RETURNS FROM THE HAGUE—THEIR REPORT—EXCITEMENT CREATED BY IT AT BRUSSELS—CALMED BY THE INTERFERENCE OF M. VAN DE WEYER—INTERVIEW OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE WITH MESSRS. GENDEBIEN, DE BROUCKERE, AND OTHERS—AUDIENCE GIVEN BY THE PRINCE TO THE COMMISSION AND CITIZENS—DIALOGUE AND INTERESTING SCENE THAT TOOK PLACE—HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS ISSUES A PROCLAMATION, QUITS THE CITY, AND WITHDRAWS THE TROOPS—BRUSSELS DELIVERED OVER TO THE BURGER-GUARD.

WHILST these events were passing in the metropolis, some of the commanding generals in the provinces took precautions to maintain the public peace, and, in the event of an outbreaking, to preserve the supremacy of the laws. General Van Gheen at Namur, and, above all, General Dibbetz at Maestricht, distinguished themselves by the firmness and ability of their conduct. But in general the measures adopted by the military commanders, were on a par with those of the commandant at Brussels; and wherever disturbances did take place, the troops either remained passive spectators, or were employed in such manner as insured defeat.

The demoralizing effects of the frightful scenes of the capital unfortunately extended to some portions of the provinces, where excesses of the vilest kind were committed, not apparently from any political motive, but from a sheer spirit of wantonness and revenge. The wealthy manufacturing town of Verviers, stretching over a large extent of hill and dale, unprovided with any garrison or sufficient local force, was a prey, during two or three days, to the greatest disorders. The la

bouring classes, animated with a reckless spirit of destruction, congregated in immense multitudes, and with the most frightful vociferations and cries of "*liberty*," committed the foulest acts of outrage. The houses of the collectors and receivers of taxes, and that of a wealthy notary, were plundered and devastated. The royal and municipal insignia were torn down, and the French tri-colour raised in their place. Several factories were broken open and the machinery destroyed. In short, until the more respectable citizens recovered from their first panic, and, having formed a committee of public safety, convoked the urban-guard, the finest establishments in the beautiful valley of the Vesdre and neighbouring uplands were menaced with destruction.

Although no positive acts of violence were committed at Liege, the revolutionary spirit was of a more definite and determined character. Its bold and adventurous inhabitants, many of whom sighed for a union with France, were prepared for the worst extremes, and no way belied that turbulent reputation which had been their characteristics during so many ages. More than once the splendid establishment at Seraing, a moiety of which was said to belong to the king, was threatened with destruction; nor would the unbounded charity and excellent character of its proprietor have saved it from destruction, had not the numerous workmen come forward and sworn to defend him to the last drop of their blood.*

At Bruges also, where, amidst a population of 39,000 souls, a large portion was composed of persons in a state of great misery, the utmost fermentation existed. Disgraceful outrages were there committed under the eyes of the military, and yet not a man moved. The prin-

* The whole establishment of Seraing was carried on under the firm of Mr. John Cockerill. It is situated on the right bank of the Meuse, and occupies the site of the abbey immortalized by Sir W. Scott, in his "*Quentin Durward*."

cial victim in this instance was M. Sandelin, president of the civil tribunal, and a member of the States-General, who had rendered himself obnoxious to his countrymen by his servility to the government, and for having, with few exceptions, supported all the most oppressive measures attributed to M. Van Maanen: his house was consequently pillaged, and burned to the foundation.

With the melancholy exception of Bruges, the remainder of the Flanders continued perfectly tranquil; a circumstance the more remarkable, when it is remembered that these two provinces were the first focus of the petitionary system, and that the influence of the union was greater there than perhaps in any other part of Belgium. The extensive and populous city of Ghent distinguished itself by its peaceable conduct; indeed its wealthy citizens and laborious population, who had shared more largely than any others in Belgium the favours of government, showed little sympathy for the proceedings of the Brussellers. This conduct excited no little jealousy and apprehension on the part of the latter; a jealousy increased by the injudicious violence of the Ghent journal, which had recommended the king to abandon the ungrateful metropolis, and to fix the seat of his court and government in the loyal capital of the Flanders.

Antwerp also preserved its calm. A slight movement had taken place, but it was instantly repressed. In a commercial city, whose whole welfare depended on tranquillity, whose merchants had risen to an admirable state of prosperity under the Netherlands government, and whose population had constant occupation and never-failing bread, disorder and anarchy were anticipated with horror. Consequently, the vast mass of its respectable inhabitants were eager to support the government, and maintain the supremacy of the laws.

In the meanwhile, though Liege, Mons, Namur, Ath,

Grammont, and other principal cities and towns continued free from absolute disorder, the fermentation and moral excitement was not less violent, and indeed of a more decidedly political character. Addresses similar in substance to those of Liege and Brussels were drawn up, and deputations selected to convey them to the foot of the throne. All united in demanding the same concessions, all unanimously called for the dismissal of Van Maanen; but though the language of some was more energetic than that of others, all expressed themselves with loyalty to the king, and implored him, as the arbiter of his own and their destinies, to step forward, and by timely concession to cement the bond that ought to link the people with the crown.

“Sire,” said one of the most immoderate of these documents, in its concluding paragraph, “the king who rejoices to call us his countrymen will know how to appreciate the frankness of our language, and will, doubtless, take measures to allay this fermentation which threatens to divide him from his people. If this be done, he will soon see them happy and contented, rallying around his throne.”

The deputation dispatched to the Hague having returned to Brussels on the night of the 1st of September, immediate measures were adopted to make known the result of their mission. A report, signed by the deputies was, therefore, drawn up and published; but from motives of prudence, and from apprehension of dangerous consequences, it was determined to soften down the stern and unflinching language of the sovereign, and to give to his replies a greater air of conciliation and moderation than their actual tenor or the severity of his manner justly admitted.

This document is of deep interest. It may be said to contain the protocol of his majesty's subsequent conduct, and to have formed the basis of all his future

operations. In it may be found the germs of all that was then projected and tenaciously adhered to at a later period. It was the prelude to that system of policy which has been acted upon to the present moment. It foretold that plan of procrastinating temporization and unseasonable energy that led to the loss of the Belgic sovereignty. It gave rise to surmises that the king was inclined to consider the question as one of dynasty and not of nationality, and thus to sacrifice the general interests of Belgium and Holland to those of his own family.

It is true, that it is stamped with an air of constitutionality and moderation, allied with dignified firmness, which under other auspices, or at an earlier period, might have produced the most beneficial results. But in the then state of disaffection and ferment, it was calculated to augment rather than allay popular irritation. Such, indeed, was the result ; for it was declared to be vague and indefinite in some points, peremptory and unbending in others. It held out prospects and hopes, but no certainty of concession, whilst it unequivocally declared that submission on the part of the people must be the forerunner of conciliation on that of the monarch.

It talked of referring the points at issue to the national representatives, as the only constitutional arbiters, without whose sanction no modification could be effected in the fundamental law. But the malcontents replied—"The government has repeatedly infringed our liberties and trenched on the constitution by the medium of *arrêtés*, emanating from the crown, without any ministerial countersign ; let it restore our rights by the same summary-process. Are arbitrary acts never to be indulged in, but for evil purposes ? Is the king's prerogative never to be employed in acts of grace ? Why procrastinate ? Let what is to be done, be done quickly ; our patience is exhausted."

No one will attempt to assert that there was not

infinite justice and good sense in the royal arguments, but at such a moment, in the midst of such a crisis, their justice is no evidence of their policy. "There are moments," says Montesquieu, "when it may be necessary for government to cast a shroud over the statue of Liberty;" and this might have been advisable had the government been convinced of being able to maintain its supremacy. But on this occasion, it would have been more prudent to have unveiled the goddess completely, and to have acted as did Lords Grey and Durham at a later period, when they even went beyond the demands of the people in some clauses of the Reform Bill. The king was either flagrantly deceived, or he must have known that the population, not only of the capital, but the provinces, were irritated, impatient, ripe for the worst extremes, and armed to the teeth; that Brussels was in the power of the citizens, who had triumphed over the physical supremacy of government, and had vanquished the moral resistance of the heir to the crown; that the royal authority lay prostrate at the feet of the people, or was rendered utterly null by the incapacity and pusillanimity of the generals and civil functionaries.

His majesty's knowledge of human nature and his conversancy with the history of popular revolutions, ought to have warned him of the danger of procrastination. They must have convinced him, that temporization or delay would inevitably add fuel to that fire, which threatened to envelop the whole of the southern provinces in one resistless flame, if it were not instantly quenched by force, or the removal of the combustible matter; in fine, he ought to have seen that the people, wound up to the extremest pitch of discontent and excitement, would brook no longer delay. If he was deceived as to the internal condition of Belgium, the fearful responsibility must rest with his ministers.

If it were his own act, the loss of a splendid kingdom is but a poor retribution. If he relied on support from abroad, he committed a grievous error. France and England were adverse to war, and if they coalesced for the maintenance of peace, what power in Europe would dare draw the sword. But let the most important passages of the report speak for themselves.

“ Having arrived at the Hague at one o'clock, on Monday (30th August),” says this document, “ we demanded an audience of his majesty, and before half an hour had elapsed, we received a favourable reply. At mid-day, on Tuesday, we repaired to the palace, and were courteously received by the king, who demanded our letters of credence, and did not reject the powers in virtue of which we appeared before him.

“ After listening to our written instruction, his majesty observed that he was gratified in having been able to anticipate our wishes, by having convoked the States-General for the 13th of September, which was the only legal and certain method of ascertaining and satisfying the vows of all parts of the kingdom ; of doing justice to our grievances, and of adopting means to redress them.

“ After a few general considerations, we laid before his majesty and discussed the different points which your council of the 28th had charged us to communicate verbally.

“ An argument then arose respecting the theory of ministerial responsibility, and the countersign (*contre-seign*). The king observed that our theories were at variance with the constitution ; that they might be just, and perhaps useful ; but that they could only be effected by a change in the fundamental law, and by the concurrence of the States-General, convoked in double numbers ;* that, an extraordinary session being convened

* Loi fondamentale. Art. 229, 230, 231.

for the 13th, these propositions, as well as all other matter deemed beneficial to the country, might then be discussed.

“As relates to the demand for the dismissal of some ministers, and particularly M. Van Maanen, his majesty said nothing favourable. He neither manifested ill-humour, nor attempted to refute the numerous complaints that we urged against them. He merely observed, that the fundamental law empowered him to select his ministers, and that he could come to no determination on this subject, so long as he seemed to labour under restraint; that he prized too dearly the honour of the royal dignity, even to appear to yield, like a man of whom a favour is asked with a pistol to his throat; but he admitted, both to us and the Liege deputation (received at the same moment), that he *might* take our demand into consideration.

“As regarded the supreme court, his majesty said, that it was not without mature consideration that the place of its establishment had been selected; but that he would pay attention to this intimation, and consider the means of conciliating all parties. His majesty appeared afflicted at our observations respecting the partial distribution of employments, as well as our remonstrances touching the public establishments. Without contesting the validity of facts, he said that it was extremely difficult to divide the administration, and still more difficult to please every one; but that he would consider the subject as soon as tranquillity should be restored; he, however, declared it to be an absolute preliminary that the princes, his sons, should enter Brussels at the head of the troops, and thus terminate that apparent state of obsession, to which he could not yield without giving a pernicious example to other towns of the kingdom.

“After our arguing at some length on the impolicy

and disastrous consequences of any forcible attempt on the part of the troops to enter the city, and the advantages of a convention or proclamation, stipulating that a part of the guards and posts might be occupied by the burgher-guards, his majesty expressed his earnest hope that everything would be quickly settled, and repeatedly assured us, with deep emotion, of his horror at the idea of any effusion of blood."

The effervescence produced by the publication of this report quickly spread through all parts of the city, and threatened the most serious consequences. The anger of the populace was augmented by a malicious and ungrounded rumour, that a bridge had been thrown across the ditch behind the prince's palace, and that the troops from Vilvorde and Assche were advancing, and only waited until nightfall to dash into the city, and to put the populace to the sword. Immense crowds consequently assembled before the Hôtel de Ville, and lined the adjacent streets; whilst a numerous and riotous band, with loud vociferations of, "*down with the traitors ! down with the Dutch !*" surrounded the prince's palace, where the members of the commission and other persons were at table.

The noise and purport of the rioters quickly reached the ears of the guests, and created considerable apprehensions lest an attack should be made on the palace. There were significative looks, whisperings, and more than one countenance that was blanched with terror; for the whole party dreaded being enveloped in the same proscription. Fortunately, M. Van de Weyer retained full possession of his presence of mind; rising from his seat, and demanding the prince's permission to quit the room, he assured him that he would answer for the immediate restoration of tranquillity; then requesting General d'Hoogvorst to accompany him, these two popular persons proceeded to the great square, where

the former harangued the multitude in terms calculated to produce the best effect. He explained the real object of the commission assembled at the prince's palace, expounded favourably those parts of the report that had given the greatest offence, ridiculed the idea of a bridge being constructed, and offered to accompany a deputation of their own selection to verify the latter fact. But the effect of his words were nearly defeated by the exertions of several agitators in the crowd; amongst the most conspicuous of whom was a foreigner, apparently a German: but Van de Weyer having seized this man by the collar, and rebuked the crowd for paying more attention to a stranger, "a Dutch spy perhaps!" than one of their own countrymen, whom they knew to be devoted to their cause, the current of popular opinion turned in his favour, and the people gradually dispersed without committing the slightest excess. At the same time, a proclamation was drawn up, and by its prudent language contributed to the maintenance of tranquillity.*

Whilst these events were passing out of doors, some of the prince's suite expressed considerable alarm for his personal safety; so much so, that it was urgently recommended that he should throw himself into the middle of the troops that occupied the royal palace, or furtively quit the city; but this advice was instantly rejected.—"Having once resolved to confide in the good faith of the citizens," said his royal highness, "it would be impolitic, and utterly inconsistent with my honour and dignity, not only to retire before I have accomplished my mission, but even to betray symptoms of distrust. However distressing, I must abide by the consequences. In your anxiety for my safety, you perhaps

* See Appendix, No. 7.

magnify the danger. But, whatever may be the real state of the case, you will do wisely to conceal your apprehensions; we must appear, at least, to place implicit reliance on the loyalty of those around us. The deliberations of the commission will terminate to-morrow, and then we can depart. Come what may, let us say with Francis the First—‘All is lost save our honour!’” Thus, when M. Van de Weyer returned to the palace to communicate the result of his efforts, he found the prince terminating his repast, without the slightest symptom of uneasiness.

The sequel proved the groundless nature of the fears that had been expressed on the prince’s account; for, although it is indisputable that more than one individual in the prince’s palace, and even in his presence, had spoken of him in terms the most coarse and disrespectful, and that it had been positively proposed to retain him as a hostage, the language of the first was repelled with indignation and energy by the person to whom it was addressed; whilst the proposition of the second was stigmatized as a profligate breach of faith, degrading to the national honour. On this, if not on every other occasion, the most efficient means were adopted by the burgher-guard to suppress the slightest attempt at outrage. Nobles, functionaries, and citizens of all classes, united for this laudable purpose. Many of the highest aristocracy were seen serving as simple soldiers, and performing the commonest fatigue duties. It was on this occasion that the Prince of Orange, issuing from his palace, perceived the Marquess of Chasteler* standing sentry at his gate. “What,” said his royal highness, smiling, “your here, marquess!”—“Yes, Sir,” replied the other, presenting arms; “when one’s

* Afterwards master of the horse to King Leopold.

country is in danger, there ought to be no other distinction amongst its citizens than that of struggling who shall be foremost in its defence."

When unoccupied in discussing the important points submitted to the deliberation of the commission, the prince employed himself either in granting audiences to such persons as were desirous to communicate their opinions, or in walking, almost unattended, through the streets, frankly and affably conversing with all whom chance threw in his way. But if his royal highness had no reason to be dissatisfied with the conduct of the people towards himself, the language of all those with whom he spoke, the aspect of the city, and the expression that beamed on men's countenances, must have convinced him that all half measures would be utterly inefficacious, and that the only means of preventing an irretrievable rupture was instant concession, or the most prompt and overwhelming development of force. On this subject there could not be a dissentient opinion; even his most devoted partisans, those who have since proved the sincerity of their attachment to his family, all concurred in forcibly expatiating on the dangers of temporization, and the urgent necessity of decided measures.

Indeed, so far were matters carried, so undisguised were the views and intentions of those who might be considered the chiefs of the movement, that, on the evening of the 2d, M. Gendebien waited on the prince, and after having forcibly and energetically developed the actual state of public feeling throughout the capital, he unhesitatingly announced the general desire for a separation between the two countries. Then inviting his royal highness to make common cause with the Belgians, he urged him to place himself at once at the head of the people, and to secure for himself the viceroyalty or crown; the one in case of mere administrative separa-

tion; the other, in that of total rupture; "an event not impossible," added he, "should the king persist in turning a deaf ear to the reclamations of the southern provinces."

But on this occasion every feeling of self-interest and personal aggrandizement gave way to a profound sentiment of filial respect, honourable in the highest extreme to the prince's heart, but most prejudicial to the very interests he sought to protect. Yes! this prince, whose calumniators have asserted that he was an undutiful son, a faithless husband, a bad father, a vile midnight robber—and God knows what else—unhesitatingly rejected an offer that would have then cost him little else than the mere effort of acceptance; an offer that would have suited the views of all Europe, and placed a crown on his head worthy of the ambition of the most illustrious princes.

"No, Sir," exclaimed his royal highness, "it cannot be! you are yourself a father, and renowned for your domestic qualities as a kind parent and dutiful son. What opinion would you entertain of me, were I to sacrifice the interests of *my* father to my own? What confidence could you repose in a man, who could cast off his allegiance to his king, and that king his father, merely to gratify his own ambition? Flattered as I am by your preference, I should be unworthy of the esteem and respect you profess to entertain for me, were I to accept your offer. I also am a father," added his royal highness, with deep emotion, "and am bound to show a proper example to my children. Posterity shall not revert to my name, and revile me as that disloyal Nassau, who tore the diadem from his father's brow to place it on his own."

Such were nearly the terms in which the Prince of Orange declined the rich, the tempting fruit that hung within his grasp; and in this mood he prepared himself

to meet the commission, who had announced their intention of terminating their labours early on the morning of the 3d.

In the forenoon of that memorable day, the last which was destined to see a member of the Orange family within the walls of that palace, which had been raised by the people in commemoration of the brilliant services of its royal proprietor, Mr. Charles de Brouckère, and other members of the States-General, waited upon the prince, confirming, in glowing terms, all those arguments that he had heard from other quarters. At ten, the commission having terminated its labours, and unanimously agreed to the demand for a separation, were ushered into the prince's presence, and through their president, the Duke d'Ursel, formally announced the general wish. But though his royal highness had assisted at their deliberations, he was unable to persuade himself of the unanimity of their desire; and, therefore, in order to satisfy himself more fully on the subject, immediately summoned to his palace all the members of the States-General then in Brussels, the deputies from Liege and other provincial towns, the chiefs of sections, the leading members of the bar—and, in short, all the most influential inhabitants.

No sooner were these persons assembled in the palace, than his royal highness again appeared amongst them, and with considerable emotion, exclaimed, "Gentlemen, I have sent for you to request that you will frankly state your opinion on the proposition of the commission. Am I to understand that the general voice tends to an administrative separation?" Scarcely were these words uttered, ere simultaneous shouts of "A separation! a separation!" intermingled with "*Vive le Prince!*" burst from all quarters of the hall,

and were even re-echoed by the crowds outside. As soon as the deafening tumult had somewhat subsided, the prince advanced towards the circle, and after conversing with two or three persons, addressed himself to Major Moyard, commandant of the 7th and 8th sections. Then took place that interesting dialogue, which, though incorrectly given by the journals of the day, made a deep sensation throughout the country.

Having expatiated on the nature of the national grievances, and the difficulty of conciliating the conflicting interests of the two countries, Major Moyard terminated by observing, "There is but one way, Sir, of satisfying all parties, and that is the method proposed by the commission, and re-echoed by us all. Yes, Sir! without an administrative separation, of course under the domination of the king, there is no power that can restore tranquillity. The fire may be quenched for a moment, but the smouldering flame will again burst forth on the first favourable occasion. We may be appeased for awhile, but not satisfied. We may be oppressed, but not conquered. The surface may be healed, but the gangrene will still corrode. It can only be eradicated by absolute amputation!"

These remarks appeared to affect the prince deeply; his whole manner betrayed his agitation. Startled at the boldness and frankness of observations, the full force of which he had not perhaps felt before, he remained awhile in consideration, and then said, "But what do you mean to imply by separation? Explain yourself!"—"Why, Sir," resumed the other, "I mean such a separation as exists between Sweden and Norway—between Austria and Hungary."—"Are you aware, Sir," rejoined the prince, "of the gravity of this demand? Do you not know that the king cannot consent to it, without violating the constitution, and the treaties,

by which he is bound? Do you imagine that the kingdom of the Netherlands was erected for the sole benefit of the House of Orange? (*Pour les beaux yeux de la maison d'Orange.*)—No, Sir, the question is not dynastic, but European; for Europe formed the kingdom for no other purpose than to act as a barrier against French encroachments.”—“Sir,” retorted the major, “the kingdom will not answer the purpose of a barrier less efficaciously, though French be spoken at Brussels, and Dutch at the Hague, and though Belgium be loyal and contented with a constitution of her own, instead of being dissatisfied and disloyal with a fundamental law, which is contrary to her interests and inclinations, however well it may be suited to those of Holland. Besides, Sir, there is a law which takes precedence of all treaties—the law of necessity; and we, Sir, at the present moment, are subject to its influence.” After a few moments’ consideration, his royal highness turned to the assembly, and with a firm and audible voice, exclaimed, “In the event of such separation being concluded, are you all prepared to swear fidelity to the dynasty?” Shouts of “Yes! yes!” re-echoed from every side, and these with every appearance of sincerity and enthusiasm. “If the French attempt to throw an army into the country, would you fraternize with them?” was the next question. “No! no!” was the general reply; “we want a separation from Holland, not a union with France.”—“If they attack us,” exclaimed the prince, whose countenance now sparkled with animation, “should they invade us—will you march with me to repulse them?”—“Yes! yes! we will! we will!” was the universal answer, whilst several voices added, “Yes! not only the French, but all other foreigners who may attempt to interfere in our internal affairs.”

A pause again took place ; the last phrase appeared to have made great impression on the prince, whilst some of his personal staff, and the Dutch generals present, whispered with each other, and betrayed symptoms of vexation and anger, plainly indicating that they well understood that the phrase had been levelled at them. Having quickly mastered the conflicting sentiments that agitated him, his royal highness advanced closer to the circle, and in a tone of peculiar dignity and feeling, exclaimed, " Gentlemen, you well know that I am not my own master ; I am but the first subject of the king. All I can do is to make your demands known to his majesty, and I shall do so with the firm conviction that every thing will be done that depends on him to satisfy your vows. But," added his royal highness, " will you not repeat with me, *Vive le Roi !*"—" Yes ! yes !" answered some few voices ; but this reply was drowned amidst shouts of " No ! no ! not until our prayers are heard and our grievances redressed. But *Vive le Prince ! Vive la Liberté ! Vive la Belgique !* Stay, prince—stay amongst us—be our chief, our king, our father !"

The most lively demonstrations of enthusiasm now burst forth from all sides. There was a general waving of hats and handkerchiefs. Some shook hands, others embraced their neighbours, whilst many burst into tears. The excitement was general, and had reached a pitch impossible to describe. The feeling was contagious, and communicated itself to the prince, who appeared deeply affected. A man more ambitious, more machiavelic—a man who wished to take advantage of the moment, would have sprung forward, and casting aside every other sentiment but self-interest, would have grasped the crown that courted his embrace ; but it was otherwise ordained. Recovering himself sud-

dealy, by one of those transitions for which he was remarkable, the prince's countenance assumed a grave and concentrated character. Placing his hand on his heart, and drawing up his figure with a degree of more than usual dignity, he said, "I thank you for these expressions of good will; but my *first* duty to my sovereign, as his *first* subject, is to shew an example of obedience. My heart, my wishes are with you. I never have, I never shall do any thing to forfeit your good opinion. Be patient, and all will yet go well. In a few days I hope to return as the harbinger of good tidings, and to see you once more happy and contented. Until then," and here his royal highness's voice again faltered, "until then, farewell!"

Then bowing to the crowd, he was about to withdraw, when Moyard, again advancing, said, "Sir, I have yet a prayer to make in the name of many of my fellow-citizens. We have the strongest grounds for apprehending that it is the intention of several intriguing persons to endeavour to excite the populace to assault the troops so soon as your royal highness shall have left us. Let me, therefore, implore you, Sir, to order them to evacuate the city. Their stay here, under existing circumstances, must be utterly useless; nay, even degrading to themselves, cooped up, imprisoned, as they are, within the palace. In the present state of popular excitement, it is important to avoid all cause of irritation. None of us, however well disposed, can answer for the consequences."—"I will consider the question immediately," rejoined the prince; "but will you then all answer for the safety of the palaces."—"On our heads," was the reply. Then putting his hand on the tri-coloured ribbon worn at the officer's button-hole, the prince added, "And are the concessions to be all on my side? Is there to be no reciprocity? When will this be removed?"—"In the name of heaven, Sir!"

answered his interlocutor, "do not trouble yourself with such trifles at the present moment. What is the colour of a ribbon in comparison with the safety of a kingdom? Be convinced, Sir, that unless instant measures are adopted to satisfy Belgium, you risk to lose her altogether."

The prince now retired to his cabinet, dissolved the commission, and after a short deliberation with the general officers, issued orders for the troops to quit the city. The meeting at the same time dispersed, having previously signed the following document, which was countersigned by his royal highness, and published in the form of a proclamation.

"INHABITANTS OF BRUSSELS !

"His royal highness the Prince of Orange has offered to proceed immediately to the Hague, in order to present our demands in person to his majesty. He will support them with all his influence, and he has every reason to hope they will be granted. The moment after his departure, the troops will evacuate Brussels. The burgher-guard engages, *on its honour*, not to suffer any change of dynasty, and to protect the town, and, above all, the palaces."

A circumstance occurred, before the departure of the prince, over which a veil of mystery has been cast, that renders it extremely difficult to ascertain the exact truth ; but although the subject has not been publicly alluded to, no doubt can be entertained of its authenticity.

M. Van de Weyer, Rouppe, and other persons, being desirous to obtain a last interview with the prince before he quitted the city, were admitted to his presence, and again depicted, in the most forcible and convincing language, the perilous condition of the country. After

re-enumerating the grievances, and stating their conviction that a return to the ancient order of things would be impracticable, they urged his royal highness by the duty he owed himself, his children, his father, and Europe, to impress with most energetic terms upon the king's mind the necessity of consenting to a separation, without which it would be impossible to maintain Belgium for the dynasty. Promptitude and decision were above all declared to be essential ; for the popular fermentation, both in the city and provinces, was so great, that little prospect existed of maintaining tranquillity beyond ten days or a fortnight, unless a definitive answer arrived within that period.

To this his royal highness replied, that " Although he was fully alive to the critical nature of the questions at issue, and was willing to admit in *strict confidence* that he coincided with them not only in their general views, but in the paramount necessity for a separation, yet he feared his assertions would have no great weight with his father. His majesty, who seemed very incredulous on these points, would probably suspect the fidelity of his conclusions, accuse him of exaggerating the danger, and perhaps attribute to him ambitious views, which God knew were furthest from his mind." He then added, " that he would certainly not fail to use every argument in his power ; but however forcible the language of his own conviction might be, he questioned its success, unless he was furnished with some document which would prove that no self-interested motives actuated his conduct ; that the picture he should draw was not over-coloured, and that, in advocating a separation, he did but yield to the overwhelming force of circumstances. Of course he should desire such document to be strictly *secret* and *confidential*, and that the persons affixing their names to it should bind themselves

on honour not to divulge its contents." A discussion then arose, not only as to the powers of any persons present to draw up or sign such document without consulting the general voice, but as to its form and tenor. These objections, however, were overruled, and a paper was drawn up, which, from its wording and context, may be considered as little more than an attestation of the good conduct and intimate knowledge of the real state of affairs displayed by the prince during his residence in the city, and the perfect conformity of his opinions with those of the Belgian people.

The solemn promise of secrecy that binds the persons signing this document, precludes the possibility of publishing a copy ; but that such a document exists, there can be no doubt. The history of revolutions scarcely furnishes a more singular paradox than that of the heir to the crown being under the necessity of applying to his father's revolted subjects, in order to obtain a certificate that might enable him to gain greater credence with that father, and exculpate him from all sinister intentions.

In less than an hour after this curious scene had passed, his royal highness mounted his horse, and returned to Vilvorde, escorted as far as Laaken by a detachment of burgher cavalry. In a short time he was followed by the troops, and Brussels was abandoned to the care of the citizens. Thus terminated this remarkable occurrence, which forms one of the most interesting passages in the history of the house of Nassau. Two proclamations announced the result of the day's operations to the people, and the most strenuous measures were adopted to complete the organization of the burgher-guard, and to maintain the tranquillity of the city.*

* See Appendix, Nos. 8 and 9.

While all persons agree in bestowing unreserved praise on the manly devotion of the Prince of Orange during these memorable days, it is difficult to understand how he could permit himself to be drawn into a conversation such as has been cited ; and still more so, how he could be induced to subjoin his signature to the proclamations issued on the day of his departure.

Having consented to enter the city and to listen to the grievances of the people, it was politic to offer to become their interpreter and mediator as far as regarded these grievances. But in promising to support their demands for a separation, the prince acted in contradiction to his avowed principles, and placed himself in direct opposition both to the fundamental law and the king, to whose opinions he was bound to pay undeviating respect, unless he was prepared to throw aside all scruples, and cast himself into the arms of the people. As it was, he certainly went too far for the reputed interests of the king, and not far enough for his own.

The question submitted by him to the assembly, could only lead to painful conclusions ; the groups before him, if not in an absolute state of revolution, were in overt, armed revolt against the government, whose authority they had set at defiance, and against the dynasty, whose insignia they had trampled under foot. To call the Brabant ribbon a mere " rallying sign," when that of the Orange family was proscribed ; to profess loyalty whilst the royal ensigns were torn down, and the ordinary homage refused to the king's name ; to disclaim revolution, when the royal troops commanded by the king's son were forbidden to enter the city, and those within were in danger of being assaulted by the populace, who held them prisoners ; in short, to attempt to argue that the movement had not assumed a definite revolutionary character, is a sophism

that might have answered the views of the moment, but cannot blind posterity. Besides, where was the object of denying the revolution? If it was not revolution, it was mere revolt, and then the king would have been justified in pursuing to the uttermost his system of exacting submission as the antecedent to concession.

Any affirmative replies to questions respecting the dynasty or France, could neither be binding or conclusive. The persons summoned to the palace had no individual or collective authority beyond that which they derived from the strength of revolt. Their mission was not only illegal on that ground, but, with the exception of M. Charles de Brouckère and a few of the members of the States-General, they were for the most part self-elected arbiters, unauthorized to act as organs or interpreters of national sentiments. If the prince suspected them of disloyalty to his dynasty, or of any latent intention of throwing themselves into the arms of France, it would have been more politic to have concealed his suspicions; especially at a moment when they professed not to be actuated by revolutionary intentions. It is evident, that if no benefit could be derived from affirmative answers, much mischief might have arisen from replies of an opposite character. No alternative would have been then left him, but to declare to their teeth that he looked on them as rebels and traitors, and thus to place himself in a state of open hostility to the whole nation.

In lieu of these questions, it would have been more prudent had he confined himself to a patient investigation of their grievances, and to a simple hearing of their demand for separation, and then to have addressed them in some such terms as these:—"Gentlemen, the grievances you have laid before me are well-founded. It is important that they should be redressed without

delay. Although no one can contest the king's indubitable and constitutional right to select his own ministers, he will not, I am sure, oppose your wishes on that score. I will exert all my influence to obtain the relief you seek ; but the question of separation is not of my competence. The States-General can alone take cognizance of a matter that tends directly to subvert that fundamental law, of which you yourselves demand the strict execution. A neighbouring monarch was hurled from his throne for having violated the charter? Is it just that you should urge your king to follow an example that might merit for him a similar fate? You have surely too much consideration for my position, to desire me to be the bearer of a demand, which, however just or well-founded your conclusions, I cannot support without violating my duty as a son and subject.

“ By my consent to appear amongst you—by the manner in which I have suppressed my own feelings in favour of your wishes—by my earnest attention to your opinions, individual and collective, I have afforded the strongest proofs of my solicitude for your welfare—of my earnest desire to co-operate in the restoration of order, as well as my perfect confidence in your loyalty and good faith. Whatever may be the result, you will, I am sure, rally round the dynasty, and unite with me in repelling any aggression on the part of France. Should the enemies of European peace urge the government of that country to interrupt the harmony now existing between her and other European states, you will, I am sure, prove yourselves worthy of your ancestors, and follow my banner to the field of honour. It will not be the first time, my friends, that I have led you to victory.

“ I will meet your wishes as regards the retreat of the troops, and shall quit you with undiminished confidence

in your loyalty, but with increased regret that my efforts to restore tranquillity have not produced those immediate results that I so ardently desire."

Although the sequel has proved that language of this nature might have been inefficacious, it would have been less impolitic than that actually attributed to the prince, which served but to increase the confidence of the people in their own strength, and to diminish that which they entertained for the heir to the throne. For he had to deal with men who made up for their political inexperience by no ordinary degree of tact and cunning. If they could not gain him as an absolute leader, or confederate, they artfully determined to employ him as an accessory, and in this they partly succeeded. But, if the questions propounded to the meeting at the palace were impolitic, how much more imprudent was it in his royal highness to sign a proclamation containing such a sentence as the following: "the burgher guard engages upon its *honour* not to *suffer* any change of dynasty!"

In the difficult and hazardous position in which he was placed—alone, in the heart of a revolted city, without councillors, and surrounded by men on whom he could place no reliance—he might have been drawn into a fruitless discussion. But, to set his seal to such a paper, was a direct acknowledgment of the weakness of the royal authority, as well as the omnipotence of those opposed to it, which, if he could not control, he ought not to have sanctioned. For what construction could be placed on the word "*suffer*," but that the dynasty existed by mere *sufferance*, and that it was in the power of the people who had risen in arms, in utter violation of the constitution and law, either to *tolerate* or depose the dynasty at their pleasure? What weight, what reliance, could be attached to a promise on "*honour*?" The very word was a mockery of the solemn forms

usually adopted towards chiefs of states. In times of utmost tranquillity, the most loyal subjects are required to enchain their allegiance by *oaths*. It was absurd, therefore, to suppose for one moment, that a people in a state of revolt, and fully acquainted with their own strength, should hold themselves bound by any declaration of fidelity "*on honour*."

The numerical strength of the people will always be employed in civil dissensions to counteract or overwhelm the moral force of government, and, if it be ably directed, must obtain the ascendancy: but, as long as princes possess a vestige of authority, there should be no avowal made by them of their own impuissance. The knowledge of their own force in the people is an admirable barrier against the encroachment of despotism, and ought to demonstrate to sovereigns, how cautious they should be in attempting to infringe the liberties of the subject. But when once monarchs publicly assent to the doctrine, that they merely hold their crowns by the capricious will of the people, it is not only inconsistent with the theory of hereditary sovereignty, and a dangerous recognition of the rights of popular insurrection, but it is tantamount to an incitation to the people to exercise their ejecting or elective power, whenever they may think fit to do so,—no matter how just or unjust the cause.

To deny the numerical or rather physical force of the mass, would be to question the mathematical certainty of two sides of an equilateral triangle being double its base; but nothing can be more dangerous than to teach the people to solve the problem: its simplicity does but add to the peril. It matters little whether a government be republican or monarchical; its position in regard to the multitude is nearly similar. Destroy its moral influence, and you destroy its whole force. Teach the

people that the strength of the government lays in the nation, and not the force of the nation in the government, and there will be an end to all power. For the moment the illusion of the strength of the latter ceases to exist, it cannot reckon upon an hour's security. Its existence must lay at the mercy of numbers.

The sentence in the proclamation alluded to contained a whole revolutionary apology, an absolute acknowledgment of the utter dependence of the dynasty. It gave the victory to the people, even before the question was put to the issue. For it must be borne in mind that the fact of revolution was sturdily denied up to a much later period ; and, beyond the suppression of the Orange cockade, no symptoms of hostility to any member of the royal family had been manifested, save such as were elicited by the questions or appeals of the prince himself.

CHAPTER XII.

REVOLT AT LOUVAIN—THE PEOPLE ATTACK THE TROOPS, AND DRIVE THEM FROM ITS WALLS—MAJOR GAILLARD ASSASSINATED—GENERAL TRIP ADVANCES ON THE TOWN—IS ORDERED TO RETIRE—RIOTS AT AIX-LA-CHAPELLE—HONOURABLE CONDUCT OF THE CITIZENS—THEY DEFEAT THE POPULACE—SEDITION DISSEMINATED THROUGH THE PROVINCES—WANT OF ENERGY OF THE GENERALS AND GOVERNORS—LIEGE FRATERNIZES WITH THE CAPITAL—M. ROGIER ASSEMBLES A BODY OF VOLUNTEERS AND MARCHES THEM TO BRUSSELS—LASSITUDE OF THE CITIZENS—THEIR DESIRE FOR THE RESTORATION OF TRANQUILITY—THE ROYAL FORCES CLOSE AROUND THE CAPITAL.

THE morning of the prince's departure from Brussels was signalized by an act of violence on the part of the people of Louvain, and a want of self-possession on that of the military, which afforded a striking illustration of the daring excitement of the one, and the incomprehensible pusillanimity that characterized all the operations of the other, from the night of the 25th of August down to the signature of the armistice in November. It is so intimately connected also with that terrible episode, which, at a latter period, created such universal horror throughout Europe, as to merit more than common observation.

Exaggerated reports having gone abroad of the advance of troops from Holland, and their intention not only to disarm but to chastise the burghers, the passions of the people were easily aroused, especially in a

town where the lower orders still retain much of the fierce and turbulent character that distinguished them at an earlier epoch, and where some of the most violent and exaggerated patriots possessed considerable influence.

As usual on all occasions of tumult, groups were seen collecting towards dusk. Ere long these groups united and formed a riotous multitude, who filling the air with yells and vociferations of, "Liberty for ever! death to the Dutch!" rushed towards the town-hall, demanding arms. An idea having gone abroad that a depôt of fire-locks was concealed at the barracks, Major Gaillard, the unfortunate Gaillard, commandant of the town came forward, and assured them on his honour that they were mistaken. Not satisfied with this assertion, the mob hastened to the barracks, forced open the gates, and penetrated into the building, where unfortunately they discovered a score or two of unserviceable fire-arms. Without waiting to examine the state of the locks or barrels, the multitude cast themselves on their prize, and with wild shouts of triumph and brutal menaces, swore that they had been betrayed. Emboldened by this success, they instantly demanded that the garrison should lay down its arms and quit the town.

Having but a small force, and this composed for the most part of young recruits, Gaillard deemed it prudent to consent. He, therefore, hastened to the scene of tumult, and assured the people on his honour, that, if they would remain tranquil and not molest his soldiers, he would adopt steps to evacuate the city as soon as the necessary preparations could be made.

But unfortunately, whilst these negotiations were going on, some of the most intemperate rioters audaciously rushed on the small barrack guard, and attempted to disarm it; upon which the latter, without waiting for

superior orders, fired on the populace. For an instant a scene of fearful confusion took place. The mob, excited to phrenzy by the sight of one or two of their wounded comrades, fell upon the soldiers, some of whom they overpowered and disarmed, whilst the rest fled across the fields, leaving the populace masters of the whole town.

Gaillard, although completely innocent of having directed the troops to fire, or who, if he had so done, would have been perfectly justified in repelling force by force, was accused of being the author of a "premeditated act of treachery." It was therefore deemed prudent for him to quit the city, and remove with his family to Antwerp. His return at a later period was marked by that frightful tragedy, whose horrid details, even divested of all exaggeration, stand almost unparalleled in the annals of barbarism; a tragedy without example—and, for the honour of Belgium, without imitation. For, although no language can be too energetic to stigmatize that odious crime; although no man can pass through Louvain, without feeling his blood curdle at the idea that its walls contained monsters capable of such inhuman depravity as the cold-blooded murder of that unfortunate man; it is but just to say, that there was scarcely a single heart in the country that did not rise with disgust and indignation, when the fact was published. This horrible act of atrocity, not only stood alone, but created such a sensation, as plainly showed the aversion of the people to crimes of a similar nature.* Indeed, with this accursed exception, the revolution has been bloodless. Not another human being has lost his life, either from popular or judicial persecution. There may have been a thirst for devastation; but, even in the most excited moments,

* Some of the assassins of the unfortunate Gaillard were subsequently brought to trial and condemned to divers punishments.

there was none for blood. The victims that have fallen on either side have been sacrificed to the god of battle, and not to the demon of assassination.

The intelligence of this affair had no sooner reached Prince Frederick's head-quarters, than orders were issued to General Trip to proceed without loss of time, at the head of a battalion of infantry and two squadrons, with four field pieces, to restore order and re-establish the royal authority. No sooner did the advanced vedettes appear on the heights above the town, than the tocsin was sounded, the people flew to arms, barricades were constructed, and an unanimous determination adopted to resist the royal detachment. A deputation was sent by the regency to wait on General Trip, to implore him not to attempt a forcible entry, which could not fail to end in bloodshed. But, the general persisting in the necessity of executing his orders, the negotiations were so long delayed, that the impatience of the populace could not be restrained.

Some of the most excited threw themselves into the fields, and from the cover of the ramparts and hedges, commenced a sharp fire of musketry on the nearest vedettes. General Trip was on the point of making his dispositions to repel this aggression, when a dispatch from the head-quarters ordered him to retire and avoid all collision with the people. Emboldened by the success, the latter pursued the royal troops to some distance, and after expending the whole of their ammunition withdrew to the town, where a commission of public safety was immediately appointed under the presidency of M. Van Maanen. Whatever might have been the conduct of the other cities of the kingdom, Louvain had now completely thrown off the mask and taken the initiative in civil war. But this town was destined to lend its name to more than one of the most fatal and in-

glorious episodes of the period. Providence seemed to have ordered that the assassination of Gaillard should be revenged by the disasters of the following August.

Whilst these events were passing in Belgium, the neighbouring Rhenan provinces were not altogether exempt from trouble. Aix-la-Chapelle, the vast mass of whose population is composed of factory workmen remarkable for their dissolute morals, was for a short time the theatre of grave disorders. The electric spark which ran through all the neighbouring countries, here left most distressing marks of its malignant influence. But the noble devotion of the citizens and police arrested a conflagration that might otherwise have involved the whole country in an awful flame of destruction.

From its vicinity and constant intercourse with Verviers; from its markets being principally supplied by Liege peasantry, and from many of its workmen being from the Wallon districts, rumours of what had passed at Brussels and in the valley of the Vesdre, quickly spread among the population. As the city had no other garrison than a small detachment of the 30th infantry, a dozen gendarmes, and the staff of the landwher, a few desperate characters laid plans for creating a riot, flattering themselves they should be enabled to glut their appetite for pillage with the same impunity as their Belgian neighbours.

Although the evidence of more than 300 witnesses examined on the trial of the seventy-one wretches implicated on this occasion, proved that these disturbances had no direct political tendency, yet they could not be considered as altogether divested of a political character. For, if not the immediate result of the fermentation caused by the "July days," they were the direct consequence of the more recent excesses in Brussels and Verviers. Indeed, the first symptoms of com-

motion appeared to have been given by the arrival of the Liege diligence on the 29th, with its postillions and horses decked with French cockades ; an event that caused the utmost agitation, and brought the scene of trouble, as it were, to the very doors of the city, and perhaps in some minds excited hopes of similar impunity.

But whatever might have been the indirect cause, the effects were confined to a brutal attack against private individuals and private property. Plunder, massacre, and incendiarism was the purport ; freedom, the excuse. The shouts of *vive Napoleon ! vive la liberté !* uttered by some of the mob, were mere rallying cries by which the miscreants urged each other on to the work of robbery and devastation.

The actors were all men of the lowest class ; the leaders, convicted felons. Not a word was elicited from any witness on the trial of the prisoners to prove that any individual of education was connected with it. No attack was made on any of the public edifices, and the assault on the prison was only undertaken in order to let loose its 290 inmates, amongst whom were several desperate bandits, destined, in case of enlargement, to act as chiefs of a revolt that had more the appearance of one of those terrible exploits of *Schinder Hannes*, than a popular commotion. It is true, cries of *vive les Belges !* were heard, and it was declared that many Wallons had borne an active share in the plunder, and were designated as the leaders of the horde who intended to set fire to the four quarters of the city ; that some of these had been wounded and carried across the frontiers, and that a great part of the others disappeared. But admitting that the Wallons did take a prominent share in the tumult—and of this fact there can be no doubt—it is remarkable that of the seventy-one individuals brought to trial, all but two were Prussian subjects—and of these,

one was a *Dutchman* from Amsterdam, and the other a native of Augsburg. It was proved, on the other hand, that a Belgian officer, who had joined the armed burghers, distinguished himself on this occasion in defence of the laws.

Although the property of several respectable citizens suffered severely, the principal victim was an Englishman, Mr. Charles James Cockerell, brother of the proprietor of Seraing, long domiciled in Prussia, and founder of more than one of those thriving establishments, that are gradually tending to place that country in the highest scale of commercial and industrial prosperity. This gentleman, who is as proverbial through the Aix district for his philanthropy and noble hospitality, as for his wealth and enterprise, had his house completely pillaged.* For, independent of a loss of 135,000 francs in bank-notes, 12,000 in gold, and 3,000 dollars in silver, the value of the furniture destroyed exceeded 52,191 dollars.

But the success of the rioters was short-lived. The burghers quickly rallied, and having placed themselves under the command of the commissary of police, the intrepid Brendamour, they united with the infantry detachment, and gallantly charged the rioters, seven of whom were killed and forty wounded in Mr. Cockerell's house; then rapidly advancing on the assailants of the prison, they killed, wounded, or dispersed the whole band, and before sunset the riot was quelled; and yet the whole force under the orders of Brendamour did not exceed 120 men, of whom forty only were military or police. Had General Bylandt and Mr.

* "Darstellung der Verhandlungen vor den Assisen zu Köln, 1831," &c. &c. Von J. Venedey, p. 94.

Knyff acted in this manner, the revolt at Brussels had shared a similar fate.

To trace the progress of popular fermentation, or to individualize the workings of the revolutionary leaven throughout the different Belgic provinces, would be superfluous. Suffice it to say, that, whilst the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and city of Ghent hitherto manifested little accord with the insurrection, and whilst Antwerp protested against a separation, which its merchants deprecated as ruinous to their interests,* Liege, Mons, Ath, Tournay, Namur, Leuze, Charleroy, Dinant, Verviers, and Louvain, with the whole Borrain and Wallon country, as well as that portion of the Flanders designated as the "Plat Pays," ardently sympathized with the capital. All eyes were, in fact, anxiously turned to the mother city. The whole of Belgium, with the exceptions above quoted, panted to follow the example of the metropolis. Brussels had become the grand focus, towards which all minor sparks converged.

The provincial governors scarcely retained a vestige of authority, and the regencies and civic corporations, whose powers emanated from government, were unable to resist the torrent of public opinion.

Thus the regency of Brussels found it necessary to adhere to the demand for separation, and consequently despatched a courier to the Hague with an address to that effect.† This example was followed by Liege and other cities, so that the only constituted authorities that could be considered as in any way connected with the machinery of the state were thus irresistibly drawn into the revolutionary vortex. The people had, in fact, obtained the most unequivocal supremacy, and if they

* See Appendix, No. 10.

† See Appendix, No. 11.

did not launch into excesses, the merit certainly did not rest with the civil or military power. The moral influence of the former was reduced to complete insignificance, and the physical force of the latter utterly paralyzed. Both had become mere objects of derision.

But in proportion as the weakness of the government became more manifest, so did its apparent contempt for danger increase. Had it not laboured under the most incomprehensible delusion—had it not deceived itself as to its individual position in regard to the great powers, it surely would have abandoned that dilatory, vacillating course, utterly incompatible with the urgent necessities of the crisis. Had it not looked on the cause of the dynasty as integrally connected with that of all other monarchs, and considered its own preservation as antecedent to that of general peace, it would have embraced a system far different from that which it pursued from the 26th of August, 1830, down to the winter of 1832, when it preferred retaining two useless forts on the Scheldt to the possession of two half provinces equal in wealth and population to a seventh of the old Netherlands.

Had the Netherlands cabinet possessed that enlightened perspicacity, that profound knowledge of the internal workings of popular feeling throughout Europe, previously ascribed to its diplomatists; had its statesmen been as remarkable for their penetration as regarded the *future*, as they were pre-eminent for the logical acumen and ability with which they debated the *past*, they must have felt assured that no medium, no compromise, was possible with the people at home, and that no assistance was probable from sovereigns abroad. Only one of two alternatives, therefore, remained—they should either have granted all, nay, more than all that was demanded, and thus placing themselves at the head

of the movement, have carried the people with them ; or, boldly seizing rebellion by the forelock, they should have trampled it under foot ere it had time to reach maturity. Had they selected the first, the nation would have clung with ardour to the dynasty, and the liberals of Europe would have gone with them ; had they chosen the second, all governments would have applauded, for then the outbreaking was universally execrated as a mere wanton, unjustifiable revolt.

It would almost appear that the Netherlands government was impressed with a conviction, not only that Europe had created the barrier kingdom expressively for the dynasty, in lieu of the dynasty having been merely superadded to the barrier ; but that it laboured under the fallacious idea that the great powers having co-operated in its construction, in order to cement peace in 1814, would coalesce for general war, in order to maintain its integrity in 1830 ; forgetting that those halcyon days no longer existed, when the will of sovereigns was the will of nations, and that the people who furnish the sinews of war are now-a-days entitled to a voice in the disposal of their own blood and treasure. To this erroneous supposition may fairly be ascribed that tenacious adherence to a line of policy so pregnant with disastrous consequences to the dynasty which relied on it for support.

The errors of the government were not lost on its opponents, either in the metropolis or provinces ; Liege, above all, signalized itself by its energetic fraternization with the capital. The functions of the Governor Sandberg being a mere dead letter, and General Boecop having withdrawn the garrison into the citadel, the public authority fell completely in the hands of the patriots. Fortunately, perhaps, for the security of property, those who placed themselves at the head of the

movement zealously devoted their attention to the prevention of pillage; whilst, at the same time, they adopted the most decided measures not only to fan the flame of revolt, but to fly to the succour of Brussels with men and arms. Louvain had given the first example of forcibly repulsing the royal troops; Liege went further—it sent forth a body of armed men with the avowed object of aiding in the subversion of the government.

It was at this period that the names of Messrs. Lebeau and Charles Rogier, both barristers practising in the Liege courts, first appeared on the political horizon. The first, whose honourable character and eloquence had obtained for him the confidence of his fellow-citizens, was selected as one of the deputation appointed to wait on the Prince of Orange at Brussels—a mission that he fulfilled with discretion and sagacity; the second, whose energy and liberal opinions had rendered him popular with the lower orders, was signalized as a fit person either to control or excite the people, and was consequently appointed commandant of the auxiliary urban guard.

The enthusiasm of the Liegers, which has in some measure been assimilated to that of the Marseillaise during the French revolution, divested however of its ferocity, was excited to the utmost pitch by the reports of the concentration of the troops around Brussels. The capital was looked on as the heart, on which the vitality of the whole country depended. It was resolved, therefore, to speed to her assistance, not only with the view of aiding her in the hour of peril, but of stimulating the spirits of the Brussels citizens, of whom the most affluent were well known to be desirous for conciliation at almost any price.

Rallying round him a body of three or four hundred volunteers, whom he supplied with fire-arms taken from the armourers' warehouses, and paid for by receipts,

signed "*in the name of the Belgian people !*" M. Rogier put himself at their head, and commenced his march on the capital.

To the utter astonishment even of the very women, the adventurous band reached their destination in safety, bringing with them several cases of arms and two field pieces, on one of which was seated a veteran soldier, named Charlier, better known at a subsequent period as the "*jambe de bois*."

The arrival of Rogier's followers, for they scarcely merited the military denomination of detachment, though dreaded by the well-disposed citizens, who reluctantly saw the city daily filling with a mass of turbulent strangers, was hailed with enthusiasm by the multitude, who justly admired the boldness and success of the enterprise. For Rogier had traversed a route covered by detachments of the royal troops, who permitted both men and cannon to depart from Liege unmolested, and to make their triumphant entry into Brussels without offering them the slightest opposition.

This negligence on the part of the Netherlands commanders, whether proceeding from their own want of energy or from superior orders, was inconceivable. Had any one of them done their duty, this feeble and undisciplined horde ought to have been pursued, and, in case of resistance, either captured or put to the sword. To permit them to traverse the whole country with fixed bayonets, lighted matches and banners deployed, was a direct premium and encouragement to revolt, and gave them an idea of their own prowess and efficiency that produced the worst subsequent results.

The example of Liege was quickly followed by Jemmapes, Wavre, and other towns. Volunteers poured into the capital from all quarters, but for the most part in isolated detachments ; without arms, save a few fowling pieces, and without any other object than that fever-

ish craving after mischief, which pervaded all the lower orders at that period. It was remarked also, that many foreigners, especially Frenchmen, several of whom were known agents of the Parisian propaganda had arrived in the city, and intermingled with the groups that formed in the public places, or harangued the frequenters of the coffee-houses, in language of the most violent and democratic nature. Many strangers also, previously resident in the city, now took an active share in the proceedings, and identified themselves with the cause of the people.

But whatever might have been the object of the strangers that flocked to Brussels, whether native or foreign, they were fortunately kept in check by the prudence of the citizens who held the reins of power; for if there was any vestige of legal authority remaining, it was entirely centered in the chiefs and staff of the burgher-guards. The provincial governor, M. Van der Fosse, declared that his functions were merely nominal. The regency was constrained to follow the impulsion given to it by popular opinion; whilst Mr. Knyff, the director of police, had abandoned his post on the departure of the Prince of Orange. Fortunately, M. Plaisant, a barrister of considerable popularity and influence, consented to take upon himself the arduous administration of that department; and, as a proof of his resolution to enforce submission to the laws, immediately effected the arrest of the leader of the gang of ruffians that had devastated the factories of Mr. Wilson at Uccles. It was, in fact, owing to the exertion of the new police director, that Fontaine, the man in question, was siezed, brought to trial, and subsequently condemned to the galleys for twenty years.

Independent of the arrival of the Liege volunteers, every possible means were adopted to excite the ardour

and sustain the courage of the citizens, many of whom began to complain of the irksomeness of constant military duty by day and night.

The greater part had taken up arms on the 26th and 27th for the protection of their property, but not with the view of being subjected during an indefinite period to all the restraint, fatigue, and loss of time and profit attendant on military service. None dared openly avow their sentiments; but the undeniable desire of the vast majority was to see the city once more restored to tranquillity, and themselves relieved from further duty, by the peaceable return of the royal troops. Besides, as the fear of a renewal of popular excesses gradually diminished, so also did their military ardour begin to relax. Calm consideration also opened to them a new vista of peril. They were in an open city, without other defence than a few barricades.

The royal troops were gradually closing up from Holland. The king appeared determined not to concede, and a struggle seemed inevitable. There was not one among them who did not feel convinced, that as soon as Prince Frederick had assembled his artillery, he would run up his guns to the eminences commanding the city, and reduce it, either to submission or to ashes—for it was not to be supposed that he would compromise the safety of his soldiers by street combats.

Repeated appeals and orders of the day were issued by General d'Hoogvorst, to stimulate the more affluent citizens to join the armed force, and a subscription was set on foot, the produce of which was destined to pay such of the poor classes who had come forward to enrol themselves.

But that alacrity so much desired was far from being evinced, and the utmost extent of the armed force did not exceed 3,500 men, of whom upwards of 900 were required for daily duty.

CHAPTER XIII.

DISTRESS OF THE LOWER CLASSES—BENEVOLENCE OF SEVERAL BELGIC FAMILIES—DINNER GIVEN TO DE POTTER AT PARIS—POSITION OF PRINCE FREDERICK'S ARMY—THEY WITHDRAW UPON A RECONNOISSANCE BEING MADE BY THE BELGIANS—THE PRINCE OF ORANGE ARRIVES AT THE HAGUE—MEETING BETWEEN HIM AND THE KING—A PROCLAMATION ISSUED BY HIM, EXASPERATES THE PEOPLE, WHO SEND A DEPUTATION TO VILVORDE TO PRINCE FREDERICK—DISTURBED STATE OF THE COUNTRY—VIOLENCE OF THE DUTCH JOURNALS—COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY APPOINTED AT BRUSSELS—MR. CARTWRIGHT ARRIVES.

ANOTHER serious source of uneasiness now began to manifest itself. During nearly ten days there had been a complete stagnation of business; there was no demand in the capital, no orders from the provinces, no money, no credit, no employment, and consequently no means of subsistence for the poor. The misery of the lower classes increased with alarming rapidity. With few exceptions, all the aristocracy had retired to their chateaux; and the English, who contributed so largely to the welfare of trade, had fled from the city. Such as remained put down their equipages, reduced their establishments, closed their shutters, wrote up "house empty," or, "to let," on their dwellings, and expended nothing more than was strictly essential for the wants of their families. The regency had offered to furnish employment in the ditches and canals around the city; but handicraftsmen, and artisans accustomed to the loom and other sedentary occupations, felt no inclination to take up the pick and the spade, and either re-

fused to work, or only accepted the offer in order to procure money to expend in liquor.

The prospect was melancholy, and the evil could only be averted by voluntary donations. For this purpose, a commission was appointed in each parish to proceed from door to door to gather contributions; but this only afforded limited assistance, and as the demand for labour decreased, the utmost alarm existed lest the augmenting distress should terminate in indiscriminate pillage. Fortunately, however, through the benevolence and exertions of the citizens in general, and especially through the philanthropic patriotism of the families of D'Ahremberg and Mérode, D'Hoogvorst, De Broûckère, Le Hon, Gendebien, and Méens, the calamity was averted; and, however great the sufferings of the poor, not a single instance of plunder or excess took place.

Notwithstanding this, the general enthusiasm felt for the national cause—for it had now assumed a more definite character of nationality—increased amongst the lower classes, and was augmented by reports from Paris, and a bold foreboding in the minds of the leaders, that there would be no foreign intervention in case of further struggle. The French journals published accounts of the flattering testimonials of sympathy and fraternization lavished on De Potter and his brother exiles. The English deputation which had crossed the Channel to felicitate the Parisians in the name of the London radicals, had waited upon, and complimented these exiles on their glorious martyrdom and the noble struggle in which their countrymen were engaged. A second banquet was offered to them by the Parisian national guard, and they were greeted with honours and applause not inferior to those once bestowed on the illustrious Franklin.

In the meanwhile several members of the States-General having arrived in Brussels, addressed a circular to their colleagues, urging them to assemble without loss of time in the capital, in order to confer as to the measures necessary to be adopted. Upon the first publication of the convocation of the chambers at the Hague, it had been resolved by several members not to obey the mandate; and this resolution, adhered to by others, was maintained up to the departure of the prince. But as a decision of this nature would have been tantamount to a declaration of overt rebellion, as it would have destroyed all possibility of subsequent negotiation, and reduced them to the necessity of seeking to obtain by force that which they hoped to acquire by concession, the previous determination was over-ruled; and it was unanimously resolved that the whole should proceed to the Hague, and there come at once to the question of separation.

This resolution was further confirmed by the intelligence that Baron Stassart, one of their body, who had proceeded as president of a deputation from Namur, had been grossly insulted by the populace at Rotterdam, and that, having narrowly escaped with his life, he had returned to Belgium without effecting the object of his journey. Though this intelligence was far from consolatory, the Belgian deputies declared that it would now be an act of cowardice to pursue their original intention; and the whole, with the exception of one or two detained by illness, took their departure.

Events were now rapidly drawing towards a crisis. Each day was stamped by some fresh act of audacity on the part of the people, and afforded some proof of timidity and vacillation on that of the royal commanders. Yet the position occupied by the force under the orders of Prince Frederick, presented every advantage for hem-

ming in the city. To talk of a stratagetical position, when his royal highness had only an open town, and an undisciplined multitude, without artillery in his front, would be an insult to the very art of war. His business was so simple, so plain and straightforward, that it is scarcely possible to conceive how he could have erred. His main body, consisting of about six thousand infantry, was concentrated on Vilvorde and Malines and the adjacent villages, with its reserves on Contich and Antwerp. His right rested on the high road to Ghent, between Assche and Brussels; and his left extended by Dieghem, across the Louvain Chaussée, to that which passes through Terveuren; thus intercepting all the great communications leading to the capital, except those by Waterloo and Halle. His rear was secure, and every day added to his force. The sturdy Dibbets held Maestricht. Chassé was in Antwerp. Van Gheen in the citadel of Namur, and Boecop in that of Liege. The Duke Bernard of Saxe Weimar was in force at Ghent. Schepern and Goethals held Ostend and Bruges. Mons and Tournay had both sufficient garrisons at least to defend the citadels, and thence to overawe the subjacent towns. But in less than a fortnight the whole was wrested from the hands of the king.

At length the populace carried their temerity so far as to sally from the city, and to reconnoitre the country to some distance. Having, on one of these occasions, met with a detachment of the royal army occupying Terveuren, they not only threw themselves into position with the air of men about to make an attack, but dispatched an officer to the head-quarters, calling on the prince to order his troops to fall back, and holding him responsible for the consequences. To the astonishment of the citizens themselves, this preposterous request was instantly complied with.

in lieu of replying, that, although he should do all in his power to avoid shedding blood, he was prepared to maintain his ground, and protect his troops from insult, if royal highness permitted his soldiers to be bearded, insulted, and absolutely forced to retire from Terveuren before a handful of rabble, armed for the most part with muskets, fowling-pieces, or any other weapons that fell in their way. In lieu of gradually concentrating his forces, he drew them nearer and still nearer, so as to encompass the whole city, and thus intercept its external communication, he withdrew his head-quarters to Antwerp, broke up his camp, threw his battalions back into the distant cantonments, and left all the communications perfectly free. His detachments, it is true, went through the puerile form of stopping diligences or selling carriages, but they permitted armed detachments, cannon, stores, and provisions to pass unmolested.

Whilst Prince Frederick was thus, as it were, playing a game of the party opposed to him, his brother had hurried with all speed to the Hague. On his arrival, he was not only received with unbounded enthusiasm by the people, who on hearing of his entry into Brussels, looked on him as lost, but the king hastened himself to meet him, and a scene of the most affecting nature took place between them.

But the joy felt by the monarch at the safe return of the Prince of Orange, who he hoped had brought tidings of submission and the re-integration of the Orange flag, was converted into grief and astonishment when the truth was unfolded to him. True to his promise, the Prince of Orange lost no moment in acting up to the assurances he had given in the assembly at Brussels. He entered into a full detail of all that had passed, and earnestly beseeched the sovereign to lose no time in granting their request.

His royal highness advocated their cause with a degree of warmth and energy which deeply affected the latter, without, however, in any way operating a favourable change in his plans.

Yielding, however, to the overwhelming torrent of public opinion, the king had already accepted the resignation of M. Van Maanen. The honourable retreat of this veteran servant of the throne was made officially known to the public on the 3d of September. But this concession, so ardently, so long desired by the people, now came too late. Had it been granted a month earlier, had M. Van Maanen then insisted on retiring, in order to feel the sincerity of the public pulse, he would have rendered the king an important service. It would have then been seen whether he was a mere pretext or a real cause, and he would have spared himself and the king the pain of being compelled to yield to that very obsession to which the latter expressed such decided repugnance. But the separation having been demanded, the retreat of M. Van Maanen was looked on with indifference.

A cabinet council having been summoned, the Prince of Orange detailed the result of his mission, and concluded by avowing his conviction that an administrative separation was the only course left to prevent more disastrous consequences. Messrs. De la Coste and Van Gobelschroy, ministers for the home and colonial departments, both Belgians, warmly supported the prince, who offered again to return to Brussels with the two ministers, answering on his head for the immediate restoration of order, if he was furnished with full powers to act as he might think best for the general good.

Had the king accepted this offer, there had been an end to the revolution. Had he said, "Go, my son, lose not a moment's time; tell the Belgians that in accepting the united sceptre, I had no other object in view

but the welfare of the people ; and that the interests of the dynasty are nothing in comparison with those of the nation. I appoint you my viceroy, and grant you full and unlimited powers to promise my future consent to a separation ; but that it is my duty, as a constitutional monarch, to demand at the hands of the national representation, a bill of indemnity to exonerate me from infringing the fundamental law, as well as the treaties by which I am bound." Had the prince returned to Brussels with a short proclamation to the above effect, it is more than probable that the Orange banner would be seen waving at this moment, by the side of that of Brabant, on the towers of St. Gudule.

It is true the situation of the monarch was most embarrassing ; he was not only enchained by the fundamental law, but by treaties ; and to a mind so essentially methodical and pacific ; a mind so strongly imbued with the omnipotence of legitimacy, the idea of anticipating his subjects and his allies in the violation of both, must have appeared a most desperate measure. But had he sprung from his throne on the back of the revolutionary charger, and widely unfurled the banner of liberty, so often displayed by his glorious ancestors, not only all Belgium would have fallen prostrate at his feet, but even the French sceptre was not altogether without his grasp. The revolution of 1688 had given a Nassau to Great Britain. That of 1830 might have placed a descendant of the same house on the throne of the Gauls.

The king's immediate adhesion to the projected separation was likewise rendered less difficult, since it was met without extreme disfavour by the cabinet, and accorded with the views of a majority of the Dutch commercial oligarchy, whose jealousy of Antwerp was daily increased by the rising prosperity of that place. With such an arrangement, the revival of the barrier system

as regarded the Scheldt, was not considered impracticable, and to obtain that object Amsterdam and Rotterdam would have consented to almost any other sacrifices.

But in proportion as the crisis was urgent, and demanded energetic action and presence of mind, so was the conduct of the cabinet torpid and procrastinating. The advice of the Prince of Orange was neglected, and his politic offer declined. It was resolved to adhere firmly to the fundamental law, when the Belgians demanded its abrogation, and to appeal to treaties which the great powers were resolved to abandon. The only result, therefore, of the council was a vague and indefinite proclamation, which, although it teemed with regrets for the past, held out little hopes for the future.*

This document, though replete with sentiments most honourable to the king's heart, and most essentially moderate and constitutional throughout, was in no way suited to the urgency of the moment. Indeed, no sooner was it published in Brussels, than it was torn from the walls, trampled under foot, or burned in the public squares, amidst shouts of defiance and derision. So vivid was the excitement generally produced, that it was deemed expedient to assemble a council of notables at the Hôtel de Ville, who, rather with the view of applying a temporary remedy than with any hope of ultimate benefit, decided that a deputation should wait on Prince Frederick at Vilvorde, to intreat his royal highness to unite his efforts with those of his elder brother, in order to obtain the king's consent to the demand for separation,

This deputation, composed entirely of members of the States-General, was affably received by the prince,

* See Appendix, No. 12.

who listened with profound attention to their observations. But whilst he replied on general points with that caution and reserve peculiar to his character, he frankly avowed that the proposition for separation was likely to meet with opposition from the crown, both in its individual and European character. And although he was convinced the king would be ready to sacrifice all personal considerations for the welfare of the country, the obstacles to their principal demand were such as could not be overcome without great efforts and protracted negotiations, both at home and abroad. Upon this occasion Prince Frederick acted with a degree of prudence and discretion, that showed him to have been initiated into his father's views, and no ways disposed to yield to those emotions of the heart, that had induced the Prince of Orange to hold forth fallacious hopes, which he must have known were directly opposed to the king's most cherished theories.

In the meanwhile the populace of the capital continued to adopt the most energetic measures for defence. The trees of the boulevards were felled, and converted into stockades, the adjacent buildings were loopholed, the barricades at the different gates and streets debouching on the ramparts were strengthened, and those in the interior of the city multiplied, so as to interrupt the circulation of wheel carriages and horses.

During this time the inhabitants of the country were far from tranquil. Bands of poachers and trespassers infested the forests, destroying the game and timber, in defiance of the keepers and woodreaves, who either abandoned their posts, or were put to flight by the marauders. The châteaux and country residences of the nobility and gentry, especially in Hainault, were assailed by groups of sturdy mendicants or volunteers on their road to the capital, who, with shouts of "*vive*

la liberté" on their tongues, and arms in their hands, endeavoured to levy contributions of money or provisions, so that on more than one occasion the proprietors were obliged to repulse them by force. The greatest alarm every where prevailed, lest a general system of plunder and incendiarism should commence, and that the terrible cry of "war to the châteaux," which had filled France with so much misery and bloodshed in 1793, should serve as a rallying cry to the bands that now traversed the country, under the pretence of flying to the assistance of the metropolis.

In order if possible to guard against misfortune, the provincial councils (*états députés*) issued a rescript to the municipal authorities, inviting them to arm the citizens, to establish guards and patrols, and in short to adopt a general system of watch and ward. But the moral power of the government had lost all its influence, and this document signed by the governor produced no beneficial results. Individuals were, therefore, left to adopt such measures for their own security as suited the position of their property, or the means at their disposal.

Fortunately, the moral disposition of the people generally rose superior to the temptations and incitements to plunder and misrule that now presented themselves. The eyes and hearts of all seemed turned towards Brussels. The levy en masse, for so it might be called, had every where commenced, particularly in the Walloon countries. The peasant abandoned his plough, the weaver his loom, and the miner his pick. Indeed, all classes of the labouring population quitted their daily avocations, and flocked towards the capital, where they expected to live at free quarters and to enjoy all the ease and idleness of a soldier's life, without any of its restraints. The tax of lodging and feeding this influx of

exigent strangers, uncontrolled by any discipline or law, at length became so irksome as to cause the greatest discontent and uneasiness to the Brussels householders. The strongest remonstrances were consequently made to the staff of the burgher-guard, which now represented the public force. It was attempted to arrest the evil by means of a proclamation; in which the volunteers were thanked for their patriotic intentions, but earnestly requested "to remain at home, and there hold themselves in readiness to fly to the succour of their Brussels brethren, should the interests of the country require their aid."

Though the effervescence in Belgium had now risen to an overwhelming pitch, the exasperation in the northern provinces was little inferior. The whole Dutch nation joined in one unanimous demonstration of loyalty to the throne and of execration at the conduct of the southerners. This outcry of hatred and defiance was re-echoed by the public press, and being thence re-copied into the Belgian papers, added fresh fuel to the animosity and excitement of the latter. The Hague *Stadts Courant*, or official journal, did not attempt to disguise the sentiments of the government. In a leading article of the 7th of September, it announced that "the king having learned with indignation the continuation of the rebellion, and resistance to the legal authorities in some parts of S. Brabant and Liege, had issued the strictest orders to the governors and commanders to spare neither pains or trouble to strike at the root of the evil, and to repulse force by force." The *Arnheim Journal*, under the same date, distinguished itself by a most violent article. "The rebels," said this paper, "demand the separation of the two portions of the kingdom. They refuse to unite with the Prince of Orange in the cry of '*Vive le Roi*' until their demands are satisfied.

Who is it that calls for this separation? Is it the representatives of all Belgium? No! it is merely a few rebel burghers of Brussels and Liege, with seven members of the States-General, amongst whom is the contemptible Count de Celles. To arms then! down with the rebels! *Blood of rebels is not brothers' blood!* This is the language that resounds in the hearts of the inhabitants of Holland, Gueldres, Friesland, Groningen, Utrecht, N. Brabant, and the majority of the Flanders." The *Nederlandsche Gedachten*, another journal, also contained the following expressions:—"No more parlies or negotiations unless supported by cannon! War to the rebels—war to the knife."

This language, though essentially impolitic as regarded Belgium, not only faithfully expressed the sentiments of the Dutch nation, but found an echo throughout the greater part of Europe. The real nature of the long-standing grievances that had led to the Belgic revolt were scarcely known, even to the members of the diplomatic corps, and still less by the cabinets or people whom they represented. The character of the movement itself was completely misunderstood; it was universally held to be the wanton, uncalled-for rebellion of a few incendiary democrats, against the mild and paternal government of the most enlightened sovereign in Europe. It was declared to be a disgusting plagiarism of the "July days," without any of the characteristics that ennobled that event. It was proclaimed to be a revolt without cause or object; a jacobinical effort to destroy, without any prospect of rebuilding. It was said, that the call for a disunion with Holland was a mere pretext for a reunion with France; and that the sole object of the principal actors in these rebellious proceedings, was to rekindle those passions that commenced to subside in France, and thence, under the

pretext of supporting liberal institutions, to plunge all Europe in a war of opinions.

At this period the cause of the Belgian people was most essentially anti-European, whilst that of the Dutch found sympathy in every bosom. With the exception of the French, and a small party in England, all hearts, all voices, were turned against the former. Never had a nation to struggle against greater moral difficulties; never was a political cause more unpopular. Had their destiny been left to the arbitration of the people of England and Germany, one unanimous shout would have hurled them back prostrate beneath the footstool of Dutch ascendancy. Even the most liberal English journals lukewarmly advocated their cause; whilst the rest of the press, both in Great Britain and Germany, joined in fulminating the severest anathemas against them. Nay, men whose pens had hitherto advocated the cause of liberty, turned against them, and stigmatized their efforts to obtain redress as the odious machinations of a few anarchists.

If, at a later date, these bitter prejudices were in some measure softened, they were partly indebted to the prudent and moderate conduct of their own statesmen and diplomatists, and partly to the exertions of a few zealous friends, who advocated their cause through the medium of the English and German press; that is to say, in such few instances as the censorship of the latter would permit the insertion of articles favourable to their cause.* But, if the Belgians imagined that their cause was popular; if they supposed that the hearts of

* Neither the *Augsbourg Gazette*, the *Berlin Staats Zeitung*, or any of the influential German journals, would accept any article that in any way tended to advocate their cause. Even to a recent period the whole of the Trans-Rhenan press was devoted to the King of the

the British or German nation, generally speaking, were with them, they laboured under a fearful delusion.

No : Europe had to choose between republican war or Belgian independence, and it selected the latter, as a species of political vaccination, necessary to prevent the diffusion of a malignant malady. The Belgians sagaciously profited by the dilemma ; but they could not flatter themselves that they owed it to any universal desire for their consolidation as a power. Their tutelary deity was "the force of events," not the justness of their cause ; and, perhaps, they were more indebted to topography than to any other accessory. Had nature placed them at only twenty leagues from the French frontier, they never would have rebelled, or, if insurgent, would have been crushed with trifling effort. They were, in fact, an ardent firebrand, placed at the very mouth of a mine, whose slightest agitation might send forth a spark that would have caused the most terrific explosion. They might be compared to fulminating powder, which receives life from concussion. It was, therefore, a stroke of admirable policy to render them harmlessly inactive.

It is but just, however, to say, that in proportion as the political horizon darkened around, so did their moral energy or outward daring augment. They perceived that the hearts of all men were turned against them ; but, more penetrating and sagacious than the king, their sovereign, they felt convinced that tongues and pens might anathematize, but that no sword would quit its scabbard to smite them. They were, moreover, certain of the moral support of France, and the physical

Netherlands, by which means the most violent prejudices were excited against Belgium, without its being possible to soften their effects.

neutrality of all Europe ; and, being four millions, they had some right to calculate that they were equal to cope single-handed with a people not exceeding half that number. Their only fear was lest England, after coming to an arrangement with France, might consent to the pressing solicitations of the Dutch cabinet, and send a body of troops to Ostend and Antwerp.

Their courage and audacity would have redoubled had they been aware that the British minister, to whom this proposition was made, frankly avowed his determination to avoid all armed intervention. "If the King of the Netherlands cannot maintain the crown which we have placed on his head, I should deserve to lose mine if I plunged Europe into war to enable him to hold it"—is reported to have been the reply made by the British monarch, when urged to lend himself to the proposed intervention. England and Europe are now reaping the benefits of this prudence.

In proportion as time shall shed fresh lights on the past, so will Europe be convinced that the Belgians deserve not only sympathy, but that the King of the Netherlands merits much that has occurred to him—not as a man, for there he stands spotless—but as a politician, and there the blots are endless. On this score Europe has a heavy balance against him ; for by a series of injudicious and impolitic proceedings, he ruined the barrier that had cost so much labour to construct, and would fain have plunged the Continent into another bloody and expensive war, to recover that which he ought never to have abandoned. Nay more, when Great Britain was striving to remodel that barrier, upon a basis more solid than before ; when she was exerting every nerve to establish his own son as its guardian ; the same ill-fated tenacity, the same half-energetic

measures, the same bastard policy ruined all, and eventually forced those who were sincerely devoted to his interests to act against him, as though they had been his bitterest foes.

At the period that the language above alluded to was employed by the Dutch journals, a prudent government would have exerted every effort to restrain the violence of the press; it would have implored the editors to maintain moderation and reserve so long as there was a prospect of avoiding civil war. It would have preserved secrecy as to its own intentions, and waited until the sword was drawn to launch forth exasperating diatribes, and have met the vituperations of the Belgian papers by dignified and politic silence. For what was the consequence? "The language of the Dutch journals was so clear, so decided, that it was held prudent not to lose another moment. It was universally felt that all would be lost if the nation retreated a single step. Measures still more energetic and decisive were declared to be necessary, and it was said to be high time to place chiefs at the head of the movement at Brussels, which carried that of all Belgium in its train, and that it was essential to destroy, or at least to paralyze, the action of the established authorities."*

In these lines, extracted from a work, which gives a faithful portrait of the workings of popular opinion during the early part of the revolution, one finds the first germs of national independence, or rather the formation of a distinct government. The subject presented many difficulties, and furnished matter for the most animated discussions. So long as the members of the States-General were at the Hague, so long as the southern pro-

* "Esquisses Historiques de la Revolution de Belgique. Brussels, 1830," p. 142.

vinces had not thrown off all semblance of allegiance, the greatest caution was necessary, not only in the selection of the individuals destined to form this collateral power, but in the collective title they were to assume. The idea of a *provisional government* was the first thing that presented itself, and was in fact the object to which tended all their views; but the assumption of such a title would have been a direct declaration of revolution and disunion. It would have been an immediate subversion, not only of the regency and provincial authority, but of the king's government, and would have destroyed all possibility of negotiation or conciliation. In such case, nothing would have remained for the king but to abandon the sceptre, or to cast aside the scabbard and treat them as determined rebels.

The first measure openly proposed was the formation of a "committee of public safety,"—but this met with much opposition, not from the form, but the appellation. The title was considered as too republican and ultra-revolutionary in its attributes, and to be a servile imitation of the French in 1793. Reminiscences of the "days of terror" recurred to men's minds; the convention, the guillotine, Robespierre, Danton, and their blood-stained colleagues rose before the assembly, decked in all their sanguinary horrors. It was important to inspire confidence, and not to excite terror. At length the title of "commission of public surety" was adopted, though the affinity between this designation and that of "committee of public safety" is so strong as to require more than ordinary subtlety to distinguish the difference.

This being determined, an invitation was addressed to the members of the States-General to assemble at the town-hall, "in order to concert with the burgher-guard staff as to the measures necessary to be adopted, in the then critical position of the southern provinces."

The meeting having formed itself into a committee or council, it was unanimously resolved that a commission should be created, under the proposed title, to be specially charged—first, with watching over the conservation of the dynasty ;—secondly, with insuring the maintenance of the principles of separation between the north and south ; and, thirdly, with protecting the commercial and industrial interests of the country.

With a view of still preserving some outward show of deference for the government, it was further enacted that the resolution should be submitted to the ratification of the governor and regency.—A mere mockery ! for the two latter had but nominal existence, the whole authority being in the hands of the burgher-guards. The position of the regency was perplexing. They had no means of resisting the encroachment of the illegal power that was destined to subvert their own, and still less were they entitled to sanction or authorize its definitive constitution.

At such a juncture they could not renounce office without deserting their duty, and yet the only dignified course to pursue, was to have declared the projects of the council to be illegal, and their own functions incompatible with the co-existence of any such body as the proposed commission. But they fell into the same vacillating system that characterized the general proceedings of the government. They first objected, then consented, and lastly, finding themselves borne down by the torrent, they abandoned their post.

It was further decided by the council, that the eight sections should be called on to select delegates to represent them in the selection of the members of the commission. These delegates, consisting of eight commandants, eight officers, eight non-commissioned and as many private, were quickly chosen, and joined the staff and

notables assembled at the town-hall. Here they resolved themselves into a committee, comprising about sixty individuals, and forthwith proceeded to the nomination of sixteen persons, from whom it was intended the regency should select eight, to form the definitive commission.

These resolutions were instantly transmitted to the regency, which, whilst it admitted its incompetency, eventually confirmed this proceeding ; thus making it appear as if the work of the revolted burghers was the act of the local government.

The eight candidates selected by the regency were, the Duke d'Ursel, Prince de Ligne, Baron Frederick Secus, Count Felix de Mérode, Messrs. Alexander Gendebien, Van de Weyer, Ferdinand Méeus and Rouppe. The four first were intended to represent the high aristocracy and Catholic party ; the two next the bar ; the seventh, the financial interests ; and the latter the citizens in general. But the letter of the regency, communicating their selection, having contained some modification of the proposed resolution, the five last mentioned persons declined the appointment. The result was, that the municipality, now in the very throes of death, gave the last feeble signs of existence, by announcing its adhesion to the original resolution, merely adding to the last article, the words "public order." * This act was the immediate forerunner of the departure of the governor, burgher-master, and the majority of the fifteen members of the town council ; so that all vestige of the constituted authorities was effaced, and the basis of a new government henceforward established.

Of the eight members thus selected, five announced their definitive installation by proclamation ; but the Duke d'Ursel, who probably felt the illegality of the whole proceeding, neither accepted nor returned any reply.

* See Appendix, No 13.

Baron Secus excused himself on the plea of urgent domestic business; and the Prince de Ligne declined, because, according to his own expression, "though an inhabitant of Belgium, he was bound by oaths to the Emperor of Austria, and thought that his position did not permit him to form part of a commission, which would perhaps compel him to contract other political engagements."

The conduct of this young nobleman was much criticised at the moment, and his secession was felt the more bitterly by the patriots, as the weight of his name, and his connexion with the Catholic party, were calculated to give strength and dignity to their proceedings both at home and abroad.

Although the commission endeavoured to disguise its real object, from its first installation it assumed absolute power: but whatever may have been the latent views of its members, it is but justice to say that they succeeded in maintaining perfect tranquillity in the city.

Notwithstanding the multitude of strangers that thronged the streets—and these mostly of the lower classes—notwithstanding the subversion of the legitimate authorities, and the universal apparent disorder, not one outrage, and scarcely a single act of robbery, took place. The theatre re-opened on the 12th; the country people arrived as usual with their produce to market; the shops were unbarred, and there was a renewed appearance of business and animation. But with all this there was no confidence; alarm, anxiety, and all the uncertainties inherent in civil troubles, generally prevailed. Indeed, so great was the distrust, that men hesitated to give value for the notes of the bank, so that the burgher-guard was compelled to issue an order of the day, declaring "that there was no cause for panic; that the principal merchants had

agreed to receive those notes, and that instructions had been issued to all tax-gatherers and receivers to accept them in payment.

In the meanwhile the city presented a strange and incoherent aspect. Bands of volunteers, some armed with pikes, others with rusty muskets, preceded by drums and banners, paraded the streets, now rending the air with patriotic outcries, and now roaring in discordant chorus the *Marseillaise* or *Brabançonne*. But they inspired terror, if not disgust, with almost all but the lowest classes. As they passed, men closed their doors, averted their heads, or looked on them with that half-dread, half-curiosity, that may be observed when in times of pestilence the dead-cart is seen hastening by with its corrupted freight.

It was at this juncture that Mr. Cartwright, first secretary to the British embassy to the Hague, arrived at Brussels with instructions to report on the state of the city. But, however zealous and intelligent he might have been, neither his position or political opinions were calculated to enable him to form the most correct or unbiassed judgment.

Imbued with the principles of the administration he served; cramped by that unpropitiatory reserve, that devotion to routine which generally characterizes English diplomacy; hampered by those forms which, however well adapted to ordinary times, are incompatible with a revolutionary crisis, when moments are more pregnant with events than years at other periods; being looked on with suspicion by the leaders of the movement, and misled by its opponents, he could neither penetrate the views of the one, nor elicit the truth from the others. Unable to glean any thing from the former, the latter laboured to convince him that Prince Frederick had but to present himself at the head of his

legions, and that all the respectable burghers would eagerly throw open their gates and arms to receive him, concealing from him at the same time that they had nothing but vows to offer, and that his royal highness could not rely upon any forcible co-operation, or any attempt to level those barricades that were raised and guarded by the people, who were now lords paramount.

If, however, the reports forwarded to the British ambassador at the Hague did mislead him, and tend to confirm the King of the Netherlands in the line of policy he had embraced, such a result was not unnatural; for, it is indisputable that a large portion of the citizens did most ardently sigh for the re-establishment of order, and if submission did not ensue, the fault lay with the impolitic government and its unskilful commanders, and not with them.

An administrative separation, with a vice-royalty, was perhaps inevitable, but the idea of a total divorce had not seriously suggested itself to a single individual; or, if it did lurk at the bottom of one or two hearts, it only glimmered there as a visionary theory. It cannot be too often repeated that the outbreaking was not against the house of Nassau, but against Dutch preponderance and monopoly. "The Belgians," said De Potter, through his organ the *Tribune des Départements*, "can and ought to shake off the Dutch yoke; and if they do not wish for more, they deserve some credit. If the chief of the reigning house shall oppose their legitimate emancipation, let him alone bear the penalty, and let him see the federative republic of the Belgian provinces arise by the side of his Batavian kingdom." But even De Potter, in the wildest intoxication of his Parisian triumph, dreamed as little of absolute separation as of the realization of his republican hypothesis.

Any diplomatic agent arriving at Brussels under circumstances parallel to those of the English secretary, was liable to adopt similar conclusions; not only because the aristocracy, hereditary, financial, and commercial, as well as the great mass of citizens, declared themselves hostile to all commotion, but because the force at the disposal of the Dutch generals, if judiciously employed, was amply sufficient to overwhelm the capital, and to reduce it to submission, without the necessity of firing a single shot. Amongst the respectable householders there was doubtless a general desire for amendment, for redress of grievances, and perhaps for separation, but none for revolution. It is not amongst that class that the germs of movement are ever to be found. The men that invoke civil commotion are those turbulent, designing spirits, who, in most cases, have nothing to lose, and consequently nothing to fear. But those, who constitute the groundwork of the social system, who may be said to represent the legitimate interests and sources of national prosperity (and these interests are incontestibly centered in commerce, industry, and agriculture)—those, having “given hostages to fortune,” must ever be adverse to intestine troubles.

Of all the elements of social existence, none are so essential to fathers of families, merchants, tradesmen, and agriculturists, as perfect repose. Consult each individual of this class abstractedly, and he will be found more ready to submit to moderate absolutism that guarantees uninterrupted tranquillity, than to court immoderate liberty, which, in nine cases out of ten, entails abuse, if not abridgment of freedom. To such men, any deviation from the ordinary practice of life brings with it curtailment of liberty; for to them, liberty is the faculty of continuing their wonted pursuits without restraint. It does not consist in the power of deposing

this monarch, or of electing that prince; but in being able to employ the whole faculties of their minds and bodies in improving their fortunes, and thus adding to the welfare of their country whilst they enrich themselves.

To such men revolutions never can be divested of terror, or separated from ideas of vengeance and proscription. They argue, and argue wisely, that agitation brings with it loss—immediate loss without any prospect of ultimate gain; that they may sow, but others will probably reap, and this is the touchstone of their politics. Besides, there must be victims, and they know that these victims in most cases are the wealthy and innocent. They cannot assent to the theory that revolutions in the body politic are like to epidemics in the body physical—temporary evils, that are often destined to produce permanent benefits—momentary visitations, by which one generation or race of men is made to suffer for the advantage of their successors. Indifferent to theories, they draw their conclusions from material rules. The aspect of their balance-sheet is their barometer—a sane philosophy.

Political tempests and revolts cannot be the working of such men, nor can their opinions ever be relied on in times of trouble. The *vis inertiae* of thousands of this class presents a feeble barrier to the progression of those ruthless, daring spirits, who staking their existence on the turn of a die, would fain rise to eminence, not by progressive labour, but by one desperate bound. For such as these, revolutions have no terrors. For, if they fail or fall, their elevation is so small as to secure them from injury. Amongst them there may be here and there a martyr, but the mass generally escape unhurt. Such, however, are the men whose actions and resources should be most minutely studied during civil commotion.

As to the ulterior measures coming within the higher province of diplomacy, the question stood nearly on a similar ground. The veil that obscured the future was impenetrable even to the most practised eye. No man, however sagacious, could venture to calculate the chances of the morrow ; for at that time hazard or fortune held the scales. However, conversant with its influences, no one could presume to divine results so extraordinary as those which followed, or to calculate on the triumph of opinions, so diametrically opposed to those that had so long formed the basis of British and European policy. To imagine that the Netherlands monarchy, the adopted child of the Holy Alliance, should be abandoned by its step-parents; that the treaties of London and Vienna should be violated ; that a handful of undisciplined volunteers, commanded by a Spanish exile, should repulse a well-organized and brave army, under veteran generals ; or that an enthralled people, who, during eighteen centuries, had been bandied about from one power to another, at the will of despotic monarchs, should suddenly lift up their heads, and, by a succession of incalculable chances, ultimately succeed not only in giving check to all Europe, but in asserting that independence and nationality for which they had vainly struggled through a succession of ages—to have imagined or predicted any such events on September, 1830, would have subjected the speculator to the derision of the whole diplomatic and political body.

CHAPTER XIV.

OPENING OF THE STATES-GENERAL AT THE HAGUE—THE KING'S SPEECH—IRKSOME SITUATION OF THE BELGIC DEPUTIES—MARRIAGE OF PRINCESS MARIANE—EXASPERATION IN BELGIUM CREATED BY THE KING'S SPEECH—CIVIL WAR INEVITABLE.

THE southern deputies having reached the Hague, the extraordinary session convoked for the 13th of September, was opened on that day by the king in person, with the usual ceremonies, but with unwonted tokens of popular attachment. Although the whole of the members, both Dutch and Belgian, wore the orange cockade, the latter maintained an imperturbable silence, amidst the enthusiastic demonstrations of loyalty that burst from the house and galleries upon the entry and departure of the monarch; acclamations that were less grateful to the ears of the southerners, from their being intermingled with menaces and cries of "Down with the rebels! down with the incendiaries!"

The speech delivered by the king, as well as the royal message, subsequently communicated to the second chambers, by the president, Mr. Corver-Hooft, are historical documents of deep interest.* Though the former was evidently founded on the same system of policy that dictated the proclamation of the 5th of September, and reply to the Brussels deputation, it was more clear

* See Appendix, No. 14.

and explicit, and its language, though temperate and conciliatory, was firm and dignified. The facts it advanced were, with slight exception, founded on incontrovertible truths, and the measures it proposed to adopt were in strict unison with the fundamental law, and the regular march of a representative government.

It was not possible for a constitutional monarch, and indeed for the chief of a state, no matter what its form or designation, to embrace a line of conduct, or to utter sentiments more essentially conformable with the law he had sworn to maintain. Having once convoked the chambers, all he could do was to submit the demands of the nation to the wisdom of their deliberations, and to declare his readiness to co-operate in any measures that might be deemed beneficial to the common weal. To attempt to subvert the fundamental law, without the sanction of the assembled states, would have been an arbitrary and illegal assumption of power. The question of separation, however loudly called for by the Belgians, and however well adapted to the vows of a portion of the Dutch people, was not within the King's attributes. It appertained wholly and solely to the national representation, and so long as the united chambers existed, it was his bounden duty to appeal to their verdict. It is true the subject of the numerous grievances complained of by the southern provinces was but faintly alluded to; but as these grievances were all absorbed in the paramount question of separation, any recurrence to them would have been superfluous.

Ill-adapted as the language of the speech, or the regular mode of the proceeding might be, to satisfy the impatient ardour of a people resolved neither to submit to the ordinary delays of parliamentary discussion, or to rest content with any thing less than immediate and unconditional concession, it was imperative for the crown

to adhere rigidly to the charter so long as a single vestige of the code remained in force. And thus far, the king's speech was a model of constitutional excellence. But on a strict consideration of the relative situation of both parties, the language of the king will prove infinitely less frank and loyal than appears at first sight. It was admitted to be essentially constitutional, and in strict conformity with the letter of the law. But the evil lay in the very law itself.

The vicious composition of the national representation, and the facility of commanding anti-Belgic majorities, have already been alluded to. The mischief arising from this system was notorious to the nation. The readiness with which government obtained packed majorities had led to some of the most obnoxious grievances. Any reference therefore to the States-General, upon a question of such vital interest, however constitutional in form, was in point of fact a complete delusion. It was merely submitting the proposition to the States, that it might undergo the parliamentary forms of rejection, and thus obtain a bill of indemnity for refusing that which government had neither the will to grant, nor the courage to deny, thereby shifting the whole odium on the representatives of the people.

If any hope did exist of obtaining redress from the States, prior to their assembling on the 13th, this prospect entirely vanished when the symptoms of antipathy and exasperation exhibited by many of the Dutch members became known. So undisguised were these sentiments that, on the Prince de Gavre, president of the united chambers, uttering the usual concluding formula in French, M. Byleveldt, deputy for Zeland, declared that he would not sit and listen to that language in their house, and that he should withdraw; a threat he put into execution amidst the plaudits of the

public. But here was the dilemma. The king could not adopt any other course without falling into illegality, nor could the Belgians withdraw their pretensions without the certainty of relapsing into their former state of servitude. Experience had taught them that when their interests were concerned, they had nothing to hope from the sympathy of their northern brethren. The consequence was that the speech, in lieu of pouring oil on the troubled waters, served but to increase the fury of the waves.

However clear and straightforward the king's position might have appeared, it was nevertheless most singularly embarrassing and critical. He was placed between two most conflicting elements—constitutionality and policy; that is, between his desire to maintain the charter, by which he risked to sacrifice his crown; and the violation of laws and treaties, by which he would have sacrificed his principles. He was called upon to conciliate Belgium without offending Holland; to flatter the prejudices of the one whilst he satisfied the demands of the other. He had a duty to perform, not only to his subjects and the great powers, subscribers to the treaty of Vienna, but to the Agnates of the house of Nassau and to the Germanic diet, of whom he was the barrier shepherd. And, without violating national law and international treaties, he could not effect any modification in the code that united him with the one, or in the pact that bound him to the other, unless he had the previous concurrence of all the contracting parties.

Such was the opinion of the statesmen of the day, who, whilst they admitted the urgency of an administrative separation, condemned the king for taking the initiative in proposing it to the State; so much so indeed, that the great powers actually availed themselves of the message of the 13th September, to palliate their

abandonment of his cause. For when called on by the Netherlands cabinet to maintain the treaty of Vienna, they referred the king to his own message, and tauntingly declared that he himself had given the first example of infraction, by proposing a separation which was in direct variance with the very treaties he urged them to uphold.

But that which excited most strongly the distrust and exasperation of the southern provinces, was the dilatory mode of proceeding adopted by the chambers. In despite of the critical situation of the monarchy, and the evident necessity of instantly discussing the questions embodied in the message, the same tedious formalities, the same lingering routine that marked the commencement of the ordinary legislative sessions, were adhered to in this; so that upwards of eight days elapsed ere the sections made their report on the reply to the address, and in fact civil war had commenced ere the message had been subjected to preparatory deliberation.

Even admitting that there was no absolute urgency, it would have been politic in the government to show a desire to court instant discussion. Whilst it took all the necessary measures to carry its views secretly and promptly into effect, it should have called on the chambers to continue permanently sitting, or, at all events, to proceed at once to the main point, and thus have endeavoured to prove that the message was not a mere pretext for gaining time. Never did a government so completely lose sight of that politic axiom recommended by our great philosopher: "First to watch, and then to speed; for the helmet of Pluto, which maketh the politic man go invisible, is secrecy in the council and celerity in the execution; for when things are once come to execution, there is no secrecy comparable to

celerity; like the motion of a bullet in the air which fleeth so swift that it outruns the eye."

However skilfully worded, however well calculated the speech might have been to deceive at first sight, it soon became evident that the government was not sincere, and that it only wanted to gain time. Indeed, it had not sufficient address to mask its intentions, or to curb the impatience of its partisans. Already, in the sitting of the 15th, Mr. Donker Curtius lifted up the veil, and boldly threw down the glove of defiance." "Before all things," said he "the rebels must be made to return to order, and I see no other means of effecting this than by force."

It was evident, therefore, that whilst the government professed moderation, it was resolved not to make the slightest concession, and that it adhered to constitutional forms, because it felt assured that these very forms, would relieve it from the necessity of yielding. But its reliance was not so much upon the majority of the chambers, as in the force of its bayonets. It had determined that the sword should be the arbiter; and when the resources at its disposal are considered, it had every right to anticipate success.

The situation of the Belgic deputies at the Hague, was in the meanwhile both irksome and perilous. The exasperation of the lower orders was intense. The utmost exertions of the police could not always shield them from insult, and in some instances, even the better classes carried this antipathy so far as to refuse them shelter; so that more than one member was constrained to apply to the authorities in order to obtain lodging. Besides, they plainly perceived that their presence was useless; that their convocation was a mere delusion, and although it was not perhaps the direct intention of the government to employ measures of intimidation,

still they considered themselves in a state of obsession. Some amongst them calling to mind the projected plan of a movement at Brussels during the ordinary session in October, were not without apprehensions of anticipatory retaliation.

Although the whole of the Belgian deputies, excepting Baron Stassart, remained at the Hague, it was not without the most sinister forebodings. "The heavens are obscured," said one of them in a letter to a friend at Brussels; "dark clouds are gathering round us; the storm already menaces our heads. Belgians, be prepared for combat or slavery." These lines having found their way into the public journals, increased the general indignation. The government had evidently thrown down the glove; the people swore to cast away the scabbard.

It was in the midst of these inauspicious events, that the nuptials of the Princess Mariane, only daughter of the king, with the Prince Albrecht, youngest son of the Prussian monarch, were celebrated at the Hague. The union of this young and virtuous couple, which was solemnized on the evening of the 14th, still more strongly cemented those family ties that already so closely connected the courts of Berlin, Petersbourg, and the Netherlands. In former days, when the individual sympathies of monarchs were paramount to the welfare or interests of the people over whom they ruled, the conclusion of such an alliance, and at such an epoch, would have been looked on, not only as the well-digested result of political calculation, but as the immediate forerunner of active co-operation.

But, if the vicissitudes that have overtaken the Wasa, Bourbon, and Napoleon dynasties were insufficient to demonstrate the utter fallibility of family alliances, the Belgic revolution has furnished the most conclusive

proofs of the immense change that has been operated in the relative position of sovereigns and people, even in absolute states. Fortunately for the repose and happiness of nations, those times no longer exist, when the hymeneal torch of princes were but ensanguined fire-brands destined to spread desolation over the face of kingdoms.

Ties of consanguinity no longer weigh in the balance, and among the many contradictory phenomena resulting from the Belgic struggle, there is nothing more striking than the intimate family connection existing between the two northern courts and that of the Hague, and the complete violation and abandonment by the two former of all those principles, of all those individualities that formerly linked all absolute sovereigns in one indissoluble knot. It matters little whether this be the result of necessity or of more enlightened policy; it is an immense step gained in civilization, and Europe now reaps the benefit of the progression.

In the meanwhile, the state of excitement in the provinces increased to an alarming extent. Civil war appeared inevitable. It was evident that nothing would now satisfy the nation but unconditional concession. The grievances were no longer thought of, they had merged in the demand for separation. Wherever the king's speech fell into the hands of the people, it was torn or burned, and its ashes cast to the winds that blew towards Holland, amidst deafening shouts of defiance. The daily press, which had now gained a complete ascendancy over the public mind, added fuel to the general flame, by the bitterness with which it commented all such passages of the discourse as were liable to wound the national susceptibilities.

A general cry of "to arms!" arose on every side. Volunteers poured into Brussels, not only from the ad-

jacent country, but from the most remote parts. The restless Wallons, with that adventurous daring which is their historical characteristic, abandoned their occupations, and eagerly seizing the pike and the musket, marched towards the centre of commotion. The Borains, like the dark spirits of the melo-drame, rose from their mines, and helter-skelter pushed upon the capital ;* Limbourg subscribed her quota ; the Flanders sent forth their tribute ; Liege furnished arms and cannon, and a body of Wavrians with two field pieces reached the city ; thus rallying under the Brabant banner a numerous band of hardy men, many of whom had bled at Jena, Austerlitz, and the Moskwa, or had crossed bayonets with the dreaded infantry of England, on the banks of the Tagus and Guadiana. It was these men with their reminiscences of Dantzic, Saragossa, Tariffa, and Badajos, that taught the Brusselers how to defend their hearths. Their lessons were not thrown away.

By an inconceivable dereliction of foresight and common military vigilance, supplies of artillery, ammunition, arms, and provisions were allowed to pass unmolested by the royal troops, who, wherever they showed themselves, were insulted, scoffed at, or tempted to unite with their fellow-citizens. Whilst all was audacity and excitement on the part of the people, timidity and supineness marked the conduct of the royal commanders, who, apparently, had neither unity of plan or action. Detachments marched and countermarched, frittering away their force in partial movements, exhausting the spirit, and endangering the fidelity of the soldiers. Nay, so far did the generals carry their forbearance,

* "Borains" are the inhabitants of that part of Hainault in which are situated the collieries, so called from *bore*s—wells ; hence the colliers are all designated as Borains.

that a battalion of infantry having been ordered to reinforce the garrison of Leige citadel, Major-General Boecop thought proper to address a dispatch to the provincial governor, requesting him to assure the public that there was nothing hostile in this movement ;—and yet the whole city lay at the mercy of his guns. But such was the system—the Dutch took up the pen, when they ought to have seized the sword, and hurled shells when they ought to have written dispatches.

In the midst of this general fever and excitement, the greatest alarm and disunion prevailed in Brussels, even among the members of the burgher-guard. Consequently, Baron Van der Smissen, the second in command, who was an object of suspicion to his colleagues and the people—suspicions in some measure justified by his subsequent conduct—gave in his resignation, and retired from the city. In fact, all the peaceable inhabitants dreaded a renewal of those incendiary scenes that had called them to arms on the 26th ; whilst others, aware of the gradual advance of the prince's reinforcements, most anxiously desired to be freed from the host of strangers, who had no interests, no property at stake, and whose projected resistance, according to all human probability, would entail the bombardment and destruction of the city.

The only guarantee for the preservation of order and property, was the maintenance of the supremacy of the burgher-guard ; for, with the exception of the paid substitutes, every individual in that corps was directly or materially interested in preventing outrage. The utmost efforts were, however, made to excite distrust, and to induce the populace to disarm this burgher-guard, whose fidelity to the common cause had become a subject of suspicion to the more exaggerated patriots. Every thing, therefore, depended on the countenance and firm-

ness of its chiefs and on that of the "commission of public surety." During the few days that the functions of the latter existed, they rendered the most essential services to the city. The devotion, activity, and moral courage displayed by General d'Hoogvorst, Count Felix de Mérode, Messrs. Rouppe, Gendebien, Van de Weyer, and Ferdinand Méeus, merited the highest encomiums. The latter of these respectable citizens, now governor of the bank, was ill-requited at a later period for his services. His noble mansion, situated near the Schaerbeek-gate, was first ransacked by the besieging troops, and then attacked by the misguided rabble, under the pretext of his being an Orangist. His property was destroyed; his splendid residence, with all its valuable contents, including an immense dépôt of oil in the cellars and vaults, was committed to the flames, or pillaged by the populace. The scorched and crumbling ruins opposite the Botanical Gardens still point out the spot where this act of vandalism was committed—over which it would be a more pleasing duty to cast the veil of oblivion, even at the expense of screening from infamous notoriety the well-known instigators of this foul transaction.

CHAPTER XV.

CHARACTERS OF GENERAL D'HOOGVORST, COUNT F. DE MERODE, AND OTHERS—EMISSARIES DISPATCHED TO PRINCE FREDERICK—COUNCIL OF DELEGATES ASSEMBLED—ADDRESS FORWARDED TO THE BELGIC DEPUTIES AT THE HAGUE—POLITICAL UNIONS ESTABLISHED—DISSENSION BETWEEN THE COMMISSION AND CHIEFS OF THE BURGER GUARDS—ALARM OF THE RESPECTABLE CITIZENS—SORTIES MADE BY THE VOLUNTEERS, WHO CAPTURE A PIQUET OF HORSE—THE POPULACE INVADE THE HÔTEL DE VILLE, AND MENACE THE LIVES OF THE COMMISSION—DISSOLUTION OF THE COMMISSION—IT IS PROPOSED TO ESTABLISH A PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT.

IT is a task of no ordinary difficulty to draw the character of our contemporaries, especially when the attempt is made by a stranger ; but so little appears to be known of the real antecedents, character, or conduct of the citizens mentioned in the last page, and indeed of many others, that it almost becomes a duty to rectify some of those erroneous statements that have been circulated by designing and vindictive men.

The night of the 21st of August found Baron Emanuel d'Hoogvorst living tranquilly in the bosom of his family, in the utmost enjoyment of all the blessings that wealth and domestic happiness can confer. Endowed with a large fund of good sense, though without any striking or brilliant talents, being unambitious, averse to intrigue, and moderate in his politics ; having for his motto, as M. Dupin admirably expresses it, "*sub lege libertas*," but not "*liberty or death*, whose li-

very is of blood," he was an enemy to those commotions that have revolution for their first element, and anarchy for their last result. Equally esteemed for his honourable character and frank cordiality, as he was proverbial for his philanthropic disposition, he was respected by his equals, a favourite with the middling classes, and highly popular with the lower orders. He had, however, never attempted to meddle in public affairs, or made himself conspicuous otherwise than by his unbounded benevolence—a virtue that his riches enabled him to practise to unusual extent.

It was the knowledge of this high reputation that pointed him out as a fit person to be placed at the head of the armed citizens. Couriers were, therefore, dispatched to him, both by the authorities and burghers; and, however reluctant he might have been to exchange his domestic tranquillity for the stormy and perilous honours that were forced upon him, he did not hesitate a moment between personal sacrifices and the hope of rendering service to his fellow-citizens. A better choice could not have been made, nor could any one more honourably and courageously have fulfilled the task imposed upon him. His fortune placed him above all suspicion of venality or self-interest; his well-known antipathy to anarchy and democracy protected him from any accusation of subversive principles; his proverbial integrity gave weight to his assertions; and his charity and open-hearted manners guaranteed his influence with that class which is the most to be dreaded during turbulent times—the great difficulty in such cases being not to discover a man capable of exciting, but one who has the art to restrain popular passions.

During twelve months of uncertainty and agitation, the safety and security of Brussels mainly depended on his exertions; and although it was impossible for him

or any friend of order to avert the partial excesses that broke out on more than one occasion, and which were the undoubted work of the political associations, yet he did every thing in the power of an honest man to place bounds to these vile excesses. Contented with the honorary distinction of general-in-chief of the civic guards, Emanuel d'Hoogvorst has retired into private life with unblemished reputation, and without having made a single enemy; a rare occurrence in the life of a public man, and a striking proof of his prudence and disinterestedness.

The conduct of Count Felix de Mérode, a descendant of one of the most ancient and noble families of Belgium, offers an instance of patriotism and self-abnegation not often encountered in revolutionary times. Though entitled by rank and fortune to a seat in the States-General, he had never aspired to that honour, nor taken any overt share in politics under the old government. Appertaining to the high Catholic party, of which he was one of the most zealous adherents; indignant at the vexations imposed, not only on his co-religionists, but on his countrymen in general, he had cordially entered into the spirit of the union, and lent all the weight of his influence to the petitioners; but being desirous to avoid all contact with the court and government, he either resided in the country or in France, where he had married a Grammont, and devoted himself to his domestic duties and the education of his family.

Chancing to be present at Brussels on the night of the 25th, and having much property at stake, he, with others of the nobility, instantly flew to arms, and was soon joined by his three brothers, Henry, Werner, and Frederick. The latter, a young man of great gallantry and military ardour, having enrolled himself in the corps of sharp-shooters raised by the Marquis of Chasteler,

was mortally wounded near the village of Berchem, whilst leading on a detachment of volunteers against the Dutch rear-guard, commanded by Duke Bernard of Saxe Weimar.

Having no ties that bound him to the court ; having never accepted any favour at the hands of the government ; professing the most undisguised aversion, not only to Dutch supremacy, but to the king, whom he looked on as the representative of that system, De Mérode eagerly associated himself with the popular party, and from the first moment devoted himself to the emancipation of his country. Possessing immense influence with the clergy and lower orders, amongst whom the name of his family had long been proverbial for its piety and benevolence, he soon became the popular idol ; and, had he been actuated by ambitious or interested views, he might have availed himself of this popularity to raise himself to the highest honours. But the fundamental principle on which he acted was the public good. All personal consideration merged in this one generous sentiment. The fumes of incense that rose around him never once diverted him from this object.

Being placed on the list of candidates for the regency, he opposed rather than sanctioned the selection ; and, in fact, gave his support to Baron Surlet de Chokier. His name was also brought forward as a fit person to fill the throne ; but the zeal with which he first advocated the election of the Duke of Nemours, and subsequently that of the present sovereign, plainly proved that he was not actuated by selfish motives.

Independent in rank, fortune, and character, not less inimical than d'Hoogvorst to revolutionary anarchy, Count Felix earnestly co-operated in the maintenance of order and the re-establishment of monarchical institutions. He vigorously opposed the republican projects of

those whose views were incompatible with the interests of his country, or the general tendency of European opinions; and whilst he did not conceal his aversion to the late Protestant monarch, he has served the present king with the utmost zeal and devotion; a proof that general systems, and not individual prejudices, formed the basis of his actions.

Though not exempt from failings, and certainly not possessing those brilliant talents or eloquence that are essential to constitute great men and orators, he commands the respect of the legislature and country; and although he may not have had the ability to strike out new political systems, he has had the good sense to adhere to those best calculated to benefit his country; an example worthy of imitation by others, who, with inferior powers, are carried away by superior pretensions. The principal defects laid to his charge are exaggerated, uncompromising Catholicism, and a fanatic antipathy to the house of Nassau. But, however rigid in his religious doctrines, he has constantly advocated tolerance and liberty; and, however inimical to the Nassau dynasty, he would willingly have tendered his allegiance to the Prince of Orange, had the voice of the nation called that prince to the throne.

The venerable M. Rouppe, one of the most wealthy and respectable citizens of the metropolis, and formerly a merchant of eminence, had been mayor of Brussels under the empire, during which time he had recommended himself to the people by his paternal administration, and his devotion to his magisterial duties. Indeed, he had given proofs of his independent spirit in a remarkable manner; for, having refused to put in force certain arbitrary measures, ordered by Napoleon's government, he was conveyed prisoner to Paris under an escort of gendarmes, but succeeded not only in de-

precating the wrath of the emperor by the upright manlihood of his conduct, but in obtaining justice for his fellow citizens.

Having considerable property at stake, and the interest of many families in his hands, he was one of the last men to promote anarchy; but being deeply impressed with the injustice of the government, he was one of the first to demand a redress of grievances. He ardently desired to effect this without disorder, or without dissolving that dynastic link that connected the two countries. He did not hesitate a moment, therefore, to abandon the retreat in which he had lived during many years, and to accept the mission conferred upon him; not with the view of propagating misrule, but with that of bridling popular effervescence, or, at all events, of guiding it in a proper channel.

Possessing a reputation of undoubted probity; being an ardent friend of rational liberty, but an avowed enemy to excess, M. Rouppe brought the experience of his grey hairs, the weight of his unblemished character, and the influence of his general popularity to the council, and thus largely contributed to repress those scenes of violence and disorder which at that period threatened the most fatal results; for the meetings of the burgher-guard council and commission were often invaded by the exaggerated party, and became the arena of such fierce debates and fearful menaces, as required all the energy, influence, and presence of mind of more moderate men to resist.

Mayor of the city at the present hour, M. Rouppe has been recompensed for his zealous devotion to the liberty and welfare of the city, by the general respect of all classes of its inhabitants.

The individual of this body who combined more of those vigorous revolutionary elements that urge men to

the most daring extremes, was Mr. Alexander Gendebien. Sprung from a respectable Hainault family, and educated for the bar, at which he was an eloquent and successful practitioner, he possessed a numerous body of clients, over whom his talents and liberality in pecuniary matters had given him considerable influence. Having vowed an antipathy to the Dutch, not less rancorous than that which the Hannibræ swore to imperial Rome, he had long shown himself an uncompromising antagonist of the government, both by his writings and by the zeal with which he defended the liberties of the press.

Ardent, enthusiastic, and ambitious; carrying his liberal principles to the most unbounded extremes; clinging with ardour to those anti-European theories, so loudly vaunted by the votaries of "equality," but so fraught with danger and misery to the people, whom they pretended to benefit, he instantly embraced the popular cause with all the fervour of the most exalted imagination.

Openly professing democratic principles, he conscientiously believed in the practicability of those dangerous theories, which gradually seducing men from one excess to another, impel them first to overturn, then to wade through seas of blood in order to rebuild; and lastly, when the inevitable hour of reaction arrives, to entail chains on posterity, infinitely more galling than those which previously enthralled them. In despite of the almost universal tendency to monarchical institutions; in defiance of history and experience, he ardently cherished that system, which has destruction for its antecedent, blood and proscription for its concomitants, and despotism as its successor—a hideous climax !*

* In the French republican journal *La Tribune*, of the 12th of February, 1834, we find the following blasphemous and atrocious

Almost from the first moment that the separation was mooted, Mr. Gendebien turned his eyes to France ; for he sincerely thought—and in this opinion he did not stand alone—that the most advantageous measure that could be adopted as regarded the material interests of Belgium, was its re-annexation to that country. Indeed, so far was he said to carry his opinions on this head, that he would rather have seen the adjunction of a part to France, than that the whole should continue in any way subject to Holland. Such a plan might have been excusable during a short period ; but the tenacity with which he subsequently clung to its realization, not only proved that he miscalculated the strength of the republican or movement party in France, but that his views were not accordant with those of the vast mass of his countrymen, and that his sagacity as a politician was infinitely less profound than his skill as a jurist.

Even a superficial knowledge of the principles of European policy ought to have convinced him that a partition or reunion could only be purchased at the expense of a general war ; and, however great his contempt of regular armies, had his suggestions been adopted, he would perhaps have shortly seen the bayonet of the stranger again sweeping across the country, in despite of those barricades and blouses in which he placed an overweening reliance.

However well adapted, by his austere probity, activity, vivid eloquence, personal courage, and devotion to liberty, to obtain an ascendancy over the people in tempestuous

profession of faith. After decrying the Protestant and Catholic religions as "obsolete," and their doctrines "good for nothing," it adds—"Revolutionary faith is the only religion for our age ; its mass or its preachings are called propagand ; its communion, association ; its sacrifices and burnt offerings, the devotion of citizens to the common weal ; *its baptism is the baptism of blood !*"

times, he was far from possessing the sterling qualities requisite for a legislator or statesman, when the swollen waters have subsided to their ordinary level. Impatient of contradiction, hasty in his expressions, and immoderate in his politics; subject to the most violent gusts of choler; mistaking vehemence of diction for force of argument, and invective for dialectic; too often deviating from those forms that are essential to the dignity and weight of parliamentary eloquence; being as unmanageable in spirit as he was energetic in expression; forgetting that in negotiation the craft of the fox is frequently of more avail than the strength of the lion; constantly abandoning facts for persons, and allowing the better judgment to be overwhelmed by the whirlwind of his passions, he might be qualified for an accessory, but not for the leader of a party. Indeed, had his system been pursued; had the measures he advocated been adopted, all negotiations would have been nearly impracticable. With the honest intention of sustaining national honour, he would have sacrificed national interests; and, through an erroneous policy, dignified with the name of energy, would have entailed as many misfortunes on the land he loved, as his extreme parliamentary, or rather unparliamentary, vehemence has tended to benefit the party he abhors.

Never perhaps did a man's private character present a more marked contrast to his public conduct. Generous and disinterested; eager both with purse and counsel to assist the needy or oppressed; a kind parent, a devoted friend, and a model of domestic virtue; mild in his manner, polished in his language, and temperate in his dealings, no man can stand higher in the estimation of his fellow-citizens. But the hurricane has not more terrible effects on the waters of the ocean, than politics on his susceptible temperament. Though an ornament

to private life and pre-eminent in his profession, Mr. Gendebien's public career has essentially disappointed the expectations of his countrymen, and proved that, in despite of his undoubted forensic talents and patriotism, he is not destined to rise above the common level, either as a statesman or politician.

Of the quintumvirate forming "the commission," the most talented and sagacious, the only one perhaps destined to arrive at political eminence by the single force of his own merit, was M. Sylvian Van de Weyer.

Only son of a highly respectable judge of Louvain, whose family during several generations had occupied honourable situations in the provincial magistrature, he had received a most careful and enlightened education. Combining rare intelligence with great application ; possessing an intimate knowledge of modern languages and polite literature ; being well versed in jurisprudence, philosophy, history, and the classics, he soon distinguished himself at the bar, and at an early age was appointed professor of philosophy at the museum of Brussels, and conservator of the city library, as well as that of the celebrated collection of Burgundian manuscripts, from which latter he was dismissed in consequence of his having acted as counsel to De Potter, on the trial of the latter, in 1830 ; though, on his joining the opposition in 1829, he had tendered his resignation, which had been refused by the government.

To a pleasing exterior and highly-polished manners, he added the most precious of all gifts for a politician or diplomatist—that is, the most absolute command over his temper, language and countenance. Endowed with a concise and nervous style of writing ; gifted with more than ordinary facility of diction ; having a voice peculiar for its harmony, a ready faculty of discovering the weak points in an adversary's argument, and great prompti-

tude of reply, he was as remarkable for the elegance as for the fluency of his parliamentary language. To these and other qualities essentially calculated to captivate the more enlightened classes, he united devoted patriotism and attachment to rational liberty, and the most perfect self-possession and presence of mind in moments of trying emergency. The skill with which he knew how to strike the right chord in addressing the people, and the knowledge he possessed of their wayward passions, gave him an immense ascendancy over them, and thus enabled him to curb their violence at times the most critical to public safety. Ardently devoted to the interests of his country, he fought its battles, when none but brave men dared utter their sentiments; and, since its independence has been effected, no one has more largely contributed to its welfare at home, or to its respectability abroad.

At the period of the formation of "the commission," neither Van de Weyer, or any of his colleagues, had any fixed object beyond the hope of an administrative separation. But no sooner had the attack on Brussels decided the fate of the revolution, than he zealously adopted that line of policy advocated by M Lebeau and the moderate liberals, and which eventually rallied to its support the whole of the Catholic party. He had sagacity enough to discover two essential facts as regarded the system to be pursued: the one, that republicanism was anti-French and anti-European; the other, that a regenerated *isolated* Belgic monarchy was the only substitute that would be permitted to replace the falling throne of the *united* Netherlands.

A moment's consideration sufficed to demonstrate that the surest guarantee for Belgic safety was an intimate alliance between France and England; for whilst France would never consent to see Belgium invaded by Prussia, in order to favour Dutch restoration, Great

Britain would never patiently submit either to the annexation of the whole or any part to France, and would oppose, with all her energies, any encroachment tending to bring the French nearer the Rhenish provinces. If the independence of Belgium was of any moment, it was vitally important to avoid any act that might tend to cause a rupture between these two powers. So long as they acted in unison, notes might be exchanged, menaces put forth, ambassadors withdrawn, or direct negotiations refused; but there would be no armed intervention on the part of the northern powers. The result has proved the correctness of his provision.

Such may be considered the leading characteristics of the men whose power had completely superseded that of the constituted authorities. And fortunate was it that these men, not only possessed influence, but an anxious desire to maintain tranquillity; for the internal condition of the city was most precarious. It was evident that there was an utter dissidence of interests and intents between the unreflecting, and still more reckless volunteers, who had not an obole of property at stake; and the peaceable householders, whose families and whole existence were at the mercy of their friends within, or liable to all the horrors of bombardment from enemies without.

With discordant songs or fierce shouts of, "arms! give us arms!" the one openly busied themselves in raising barricades, and making other defensive preparations, that appeared destined to entail inevitable destruction on the city; whilst the other were secretly attempting to deprecate the wrath of the government, and, if possible, to avert the dangers that menaced them. Meetings were consequently held by many of the most respectable and wealthy citizens. Addresses and emissaries were dispatched to Prince Frederick,

depicting the state of lawless anarchy in which they were plunged, earnestly imploring him to hasten to their relief, and assuring him that the instant his columns appeared before the city, the hordes of undisciplined volunteers would disappear, that the Orange standard would again be hoisted on the towers of St. Gudule, and that he and his soldiers would have a bloodless triumph, and be hailed as guardian angels. To these solicitations—to these delusive assurances may be attributed, in a great measure, all those subsequent disasters that led to the dissolution of the monarchy.

With a view of calming popular effervescence, or rather of bringing the question between the crown and people to an immediate issue, it was judged advisable to assemble a council of notables and delegates of sections. The object of this assembly was to draw up an address to the Belgian representatives at the Hague, urging them either to endeavour to obtain some immediate guarantee from the throne, or to quit Holland without a moment's delay.

After several hours of wild and stormy discussion, during which sundry violent propositions were made by the more exalted patriots, but triumphantly combatted by Felix de Mérode, Van de Weyer, and Baron Joseph d'Hoogvorst, an address was embodied, and, being carried unanimously, was forthwith forwarded to the Hague.

Annexed to this document was the following memorial, signed by a numerous body of provincial citizens. It may be taken as the essence of the address itself, divested of its political conclusions and strictures on the king's speech. "Having weighed and considered both the speech from the throne, and the danger of civil war, from hour to hour more imminent, as well as the constantly increasing distress and irritation of the com-

mercial and labouring classes, the undersigned inhabitants of Liege, &c. &c., supplicate their deputies to exert every effort to consecrate, without delay, the principle of separation, either through the address in reply to the king's speech, or by some other (public) act, and at the same time to demand the instant withdrawal of the Dutch troops stationed in the Belgic provinces. If these efforts fail to attain the only object by which tranquillity can be maintained in the southern provinces, the undersigned earnestly implore their deputies to return forthwith ;"—an intention already announced by some of their colleagues.

The agents employed to convey these documents to the Hague, after a secret interview with some of the Belgic deputies, lost no time in returning to Brussels. The report made by them of the Dutch military preparations, of the little apparent chance of concession, and the painful situation in which the deputies were placed, added to the exasperation of the people, who already began to entertain suspicions of the good faith of the commission, and to question the intentions of the burgher-guard.

The establishment of political unions or clubs was consequently suggested as the only means of stimulating the drooping energies of the one, and of counteracting the power of the other, should they attempt to employ their influence against the people. After various discussions and preparatory meetings, Messrs. Rogier and Ducpetiaux, with several others, determined on the formation of an association, under the title of the "Central Union," which was installed on the 16th. Here, under the pretext of calmly discussing political questions, the most exaggerated principles were advocated, and the most violent measures proposed. As usual in all cases of civil commotion, one doctrine only

was admitted ; all opposition to the popular will, no matter how just or politic, was declared to be anti-patriotic, and brought down on the speaker the dangerous epithets of traitor and Dutchman, for as yet the word Orangist was not adopted as a term of proscription.

Nothing could be more at variance than the conduct and views of the commission and burgher-guard council, and those of the leaders of the Central Union. The former, who held their sittings permanently at the Hôtel de Ville, employed every effort to restrain the populace from committing any outrage on the property of the citizens, or from any aggressive acts on the king's troops, that might authorize retaliation. In despite of the prevailing enthusiasm, and flattering assurances of fraternization received from the provinces, the members of the commission could not blind themselves to the dangers that menaced the capital, or the inadequacy of its defensive resources. Being for the most part fathers of families, having antecedents, property, and character at stake, they were not insensible to the fearful responsibility of entailing destruction on a beautiful city, and loss of life on thousands of innocent citizens, and this without any apparent chance of ultimate success. For it did not enter into the calculation of the most sanguine that an open town, commanded at various points from the adjacent heights, having only six pieces of artillery ; without government, leaders, ammunition, or other defenders than a few thousand undisciplined rabble, partially furnished with fire-arms, could seriously attempt, much less successfully resist, an army of nearly 13,000 well-appointed troops, with thirty-two field-pieces, supported by reserves and detachments, destined to maintain its own communications, and to cut off those of the besieged with the provinces.

The latter, that is the Central Union, which assembled at the Salle St. George, excited every nerve to augment the fermentation among the lower orders, and to inspire them with contempt for the tempest whose menacing thunders were growling around. Impelled by the most reckless daring, or guided by a species of political instinct, denied to more moderate men, they loudly declared their utter contempt for the Dutch troops, proclaimed victory as certain, and appeared to desire collision as ardently as the commission were anxious to avoid it. Indeed, there were some amongst them who, comparing the populace to a mastiff, openly stated that if the burghers were lukewarm and inclined to treachery, the only means of bringing them to their senses, was "*to unmuzzle Picard*," meaning that an attempt should be made to renew those scenes of pillage and incendiarism, that had already brought so much odium on their cause.

Although no internal excess took place, these discourses were not lost on the volunteers. So confident and bold had the latter become, that they abandoned the covert of their barricades, and hazarded two expeditions into the country—the one within sight of the royal outposts at Vilvorde, and the other to Terveuren, where they expected to surprise a detachment of cavalry. The first one terminated as it was proposed, in a simple reconnaissance, and the other in their carrying off the arms and horses of a picquet of gendarmes, stationed at the latter village. As usual, these enterprises were effected without the slightest opposition on the part of the king's forces; those vigilant and prudent soldiers, relying on the assurances of their partisans in the city, thought it useless to take any extraordinary military precautions. Having an over-abundance of cavalry, horse-artillery, and men of all arms at their disposal,

they might have dashed forward, and, surrounding the adventurous detachments, driven the one into the Vilvorde canal with the flats of their swords, or cut down or captured the other as it debouched from the woods near Terveuren. But no ! with a noble magnanimity they permitted themselves to be bearded by two or three hundred rabble on foot, and consoled themselves with the anticipated triumph which they expected to achieve at the mere expense of a proclamation.

No sooner were these two unauthorized sorties made known to the "commission of surety," than a spirited proclamation was issued, denouncing such acts as "subversive of all discipline—as a violation of the rights of man—as calculated to expose the citizens to all the unhappy consequences of an attack, which they did not wish to provoke;" and further directing the horses to be restored forthwith, and stating "that a letter had been written to Prince Frederick, disavowing the infraction, and announcing the reparation." This incident, though trifling in itself, produced results that quickly reduced the city to the last stage of anarchy.

The proclamation, which was in every point prudent, just, and accordant with the professions of the burgher-council, ill-suited the lawless pretensions and fiery temperament of the volunteers and leaders of the Central Union, who, emboldened by this fresh success, were more confident and more adverse than ever to all conciliation. It was considered as an ungrateful requital of their prowess, and an insult to national honour. For, it must be observed, that on every occasion, not only then, but up to the latest period, "national honour" has always been put forward by the exaggerated party, either as a stimulus to excite the masses, or as a pretext for every act, no matter how incoherent or im-

politic. The proclamation was, therefore, torn from the walls, and every means taken to depopularize its authors.

On the 19th, the day on which this document was published, the popular fermentation appeared to have reached its climax. Groups of sinister-looking individuals filled the streets, at first confining themselves to mere murmurs; but as the evening approached, and their numbers augmented, their outcries became louder, and at length broke forth into the most menacing vociferations. As the night closed in, the square of the town-hall was choked with dense masses of the lowest rabble, exclaiming, "We are betrayed and sold! Down with the commission! Down with the burgher-guard!" Other bands not less numerous, surrounded the meeting-place of the Central Union, whose members they greeted with cheers or cries for arms.

The city seemed on the verge of some terrible catastrophe. Before midnight, upwards of 10,000 of the populace had assembled in the front of the town-hall, uttering the most fearful menaces. At length after several unsuccessful efforts, a body of several hundred forced the doors, and rushing through the passages with wild outcries, burst open the chamber in which the commission and burgher-council held its sittings. The hour of the night, the partial darkness, the disordered costumes and fierce countenances of the assailants, brought to mind the frightful scenes of the convention. Fortunately, the most influential of the council still retained their courage and presence of mind. Opposition was useless, the only thing left was to flatter and promise. These means were so successfully employed, that after an hour the storm subsided, and the populace retired.

On the following day, however, the same scenes were

renewed, accompanied by acts of greater violence. The town-hall was again invaded, and the populace having discovered the dépôt of Orange cockades, which had been put by and forgotten since the morning of the prince's entry, were about to reek their vengeance on the "traitorous" members of the commission, when the presence of mind and self-possession of M. Van de Weyer again appeased their wrath, and succeeded in convincing them that these cockades were but the remnant of those worn by the communal-guard. It would be superfluous to follow the various details of this epoch of alarm and confusion. Suffice it to say, that scarce a vestige of the moral influence of the burgher-guard remained, that many of the piquets and posts occupied by them had been disarmed by the populace, and that the city was in fact at the mercy of the volunteers and people.

Although the utter hopelessness of attempting to oppose the overwhelming force under the prince's orders fully justified the caution of the commission of surety, as well as the fears of the peaceable inhabitants, there was much to palliate the enthusiasm of the people. From abroad the accounts were most exciting. Almost all Europe seemed to sympathize for a moment in the revolutionary spirit. Brunswick had risen, and driven from its walls the hot-headed and imprudent youth that seemed to have rejected from his heart and mind every characteristic that could give him any resemblance to the race of heroes from whence he sprang. Dresden had deposed its monarch; Hesse and Hanover were in a state of internal commotion; Baden was replete with agitation; the whole of Italy was ripe for revolt, and the plains of unhappy Poland were again about to be drenched with the blood of its valiant but imprudent martyrs.

In the Belgian provinces there was an universal sympathy for the capital. Emissaries arrived with offers of assistance and fraternization. Revolutionary committees were established in all the principal towns. The people of Liege, reckless of danger, had escalated and carried the fort of the "Chartreuse," without its garrison firing a shot, and had moreover intercepted a convoy of stores and treasure, dispatched from Maestricht for the use of the citadel, after putting to the rout a strong escort under the orders of Major-general Daine. Mons was in open insurrection, and the king's troops, after a slight demonstration, had given way and retreated to the citadel, abandoning gates, ramparts, and artillery to the people. Namur was in a similar condition. Louvain held the Dutch detachments at bay, and thus intercepted their communications by the high roads of Tongres and Diest. In short, the mine was every where prepared for explosion; and ere many days all that line of noble fortresses, raised as bulwarks against the accumulated art, discipline, military science, and immense resources of France, fell at the mere apparition of a few ill-disciplined volunteers.

By the afternoon of the 20th, the commission and burgher-guard council might be considered as no longer in existence. All remaining power had passed into the hands of the Central Union and the chiefs of the volunteers. But even these were not so blinded to the dangers of perpetuating anarchy and leaving the city at the disposal of the people, as not to feel the urgent necessity of forming some species of government, and this without a moment's delay. Being now determined to resist to the last moment, all those considerations of policy and delicacy that influenced the sections in the selection of a title, no longer interfered. The term "provisional government" was therefore unhesitatingly

adopted. The only difficulty was the choice of its members.

In order to sound public opinion, and pave the way for the execution of this project, Mr. Rogier, after consulting some of the patriots of the Central Union, directed the preparation of a banner, inscribed with the words "*Provisional Government.—De Potter, Gendebien, and D'Oultremont (Count) of Liege.*" Then placing this standard in the hands of his volunteers, he called them to arms, and continued parading the streets with drums beating until nightfall, and thus prepared the people for a similar notice, which was affixed to the walls on the following day.

This announcement had no immediate result, for De Potter had not yet quitted Paris, M. Gendebien left the city before the arrival of the Dutch troops, and D'Oultremont remained at Liege. But it had the effect of preparing the nation for the establishment of that government which continued to preside over the destinies of the country from the day preceding the retreat of the royal troops, until the establishment of the regency.

CHAPTER XVI.

MORE EMISSARIES ARRIVE AT PRINCE FREDERICK'S HEAD-QUARTERS—H. R. H. DECEIVED BY THEM—DESPATCHES A COURIER TO THE HAGUE, WHENCE HE RECEIVES INSTRUCTIONS TO ISSUE A PROCLAMATION, AND TO ADVANCE ON THE CITY—PLAN OF ATTACK—COMMAND OF THE ARMY INTRUSTED NOMINALLY TO LIEUT.-GENERAL TRIP—IMPOLICY OF PRINCE FREDERICK'S ACCOMPANYING THE ARMY—ENTHUSIASM OF THE POPULACE ON HEARING THAT THE ROYAL ARMY IS ADVANCING—MUSTER OF THE ARMED FORCE—D'HOOGVORST RESIGNS THE COMMAND, IS REPLACED BY COUNT VANDERMEERE, AND AFTERWARDS BY VAN HALEN—THE DUTCH ARMY APPROACHES THE WALLS—SURRENDER TALKED OF, BUT THE VOLUNTEER CHIEFS DETERMINE TO DEFEND THE CITY TO THE LAST—ATTACK AND REPULSE—AMOUNT OF LOSS ON BOTH SIDES.

WHILST these events were passing at Brussels, where the people were actively employed in preparing for the most desperate defence, emissaries continued to arrive at Prince Frederick's head-quarters, bringing assurances of the pacific disposition of all the respectable citizens, and declaring themselves authorized to assert that the royal troops had but to present themselves before the town, and that they would be hailed with acclamations. Such, they affirmed, was the state of anarchy and disunion amongst the leaders of the revolt, that both barricades and volunteers would vanish on the slightest demonstration of force; and that the burgher-guard, eager for the restoration of tranquillity, would make a diversion in favour of the government. So that the rebels, taken between two fires, would have no alternative but to fly, or surrender at discretion. Nay, so far were these assurances carried, that it was recommended to leave unobstructed the roads conducting to Hal, An-

derlecht, and Ninove, in order to afford the misguided volunteers and peasantry an opportunity of escaping, without the necessity of coming into collision with the royal detachments.

Not only were the most respectable names cited, in addition to those affixed to the letters and addresses sent to the prince, but in several instances the rank and social position of the messengers were such as to give the greatest weight to their asseverations. When these personages, more than one of whom held office about the court, were subsequently tasked with having misled (it might be said betrayed) the prince, they attempted to exculpate themselves by declaring, "that Prince Frederick ruined all by his own dilatory, vacillating conduct ; that if he did intend to strike a blow, he should have done so before the city was filled with strangers, and before both commission and burgher-guard had lost all influence ; and that they never could suppose the Dutch generals would permit supplies of cannon, arms, and ammunition to enter the city. Besides, they never meant to imply that they, or any other citizens, would compromise their lives and properties by openly espousing the royal cause. All they intended to convey to the throne was their own protestations of loyalty, and the vows of the well-disposed for the re-establishment of legitimate authority. The only assurances they had proposed offering were those of immediate co-operation, so soon as the volunteers and strangers should be expelled, and the city restored to order." That is to say, they were ready to reap all the benefits without incurring any of the risks ; and that, when all peril for themselves was passed, they would have been the first to aid the authorities in falling upon those whom they had neither heart to join nor courage to resist.

But this unfortunately was not the only instance in

which the same personages betrayed a want of discretion and energy most fatal to the cause of the house of Nassau. This was but the prelude to that series of deceptions, and absence of all prudence and vigour, that marked their conduct up to the latest period. The leading characteristics of this party may be summed up in a few words. Prodigal of intrigues and promises, they were avaricious of their purses and persons. Deceiving themselves as to their own influence, they deluded others as to the extent of their resources. Having no real attachment to the soil of their forefathers, and treating their native land as a mere change-house, they denied all patriotism to the rest of its inhabitants. Mistaking the hollow echo of their own voices for that of the respondent people, they talked loudly when silence and secrecy were essential, and were silent when the royal cause stood most in need of their votes and eloquence. They retreated when advance was necessary, and advanced, or rather *urged others forward*, when progression was destruction. Bold in the council, but timid at the moment of action, they showed themselves when their absence was unimportant, and were never forthcoming when their presence was most required. Of the whole body, there were scarcely two that would have ventured a hair of their heads, or the smallest coin of their hoards, in support of the cause to which they boasted an unbounded devotion. Yet such were the persons on whom the King of the Netherlands, the Prince of Orange, and even the British government for some time, relied, as fit instruments to restore the crown to the Nassau family !

Yielding too easily to these reiterated solicitations, and placing too much confidence in the assurances of co-operation so lavishly made by the emissaries from Brussels, Prince Frederick dispatched a courier to the Hague on the 19th, where the reports forwarded by his

royal highness were found to coincide with the representations of several members of the States-General, especially of the first chamber, who earnestly entreated the king to lose no time in making some military demonstration, that might afford the well-disposed inhabitants of Brussels an opportunity of pronouncing themselves in the royal favour. On the receipt of these dispatches, a cabinet council was held forthwith, and although the military preparations were not considered complete, and although it was certainly not the intention of government to effect any immediate change in the position of the advanced troops, a proclamation was instantly drawn up, and forwarded to Prince Frederick, together with unlimited powers to act as might best suit his discretion, or rather that of Lieutenant-General Constant, the chief of the staff.

As resistance was possible, notwithstanding the contrary assurances received from Brussels, the king deemed it prudent to take measures to shield Prince Frederick from the odium that might attach to the effusion of blood. The command of the active army was, therefore, entrusted to Lieutenant-General Trip; an ineffectual precaution, for his royal highness judging it expedient to remain with the head-quarters, he was held responsible by the nation for all the evils that ensued, and thus imprudently drew down upon his own shoulders the whole disgrace of the failure and accumulated hatred of the people, whilst Trip's name was scarcely heard of beyond the squadrons he commanded. It is not possible to attribute this unfortunate arrangement to other motives than excess of zeal and overweening confidence on the part of the prince; but, whatever might be the issue of the expedition, it was highly important for him to remain at Antwerp. In the event of success, he might have hastened forth-

with to the capital, at the request of a deputation, which would or ought to have been sent to invite him, and he should then have arrived to forgive, not to avenge. In case of defeat, he would have saved his own reputation as a soldier, and that which was of greater importance, the interests of his family, by casting the whole odium on those actually in command. For there never was a moment when it was more vitally important for every member of the dynasty to avoid any act calculated to enfeeble that tottering edifice, which stood on the verge of a fathomless abyss. To be withheld by scruples of delicacy to individuals, when kingdoms are at stake, may be a proof of justice and generosity, but it is an incontestible evidence of political weakness.

The proclamation ought to have been issued in the king's name, and General Trip should have been held responsible for its execution. If blood was destined to flow, it was absurd to suppose that Prince Frederick could accompany the head-quarters, and escape the moral consequences. But why accompany it? How could his presence benefit the army? The troops, if judiciously employed, were fully sufficient to ensure success, and his royal highness stood as little in need of the glory of the achievement, as the soldiers of any extraneous stimulant. Besides, what glory could be reaped in such a struggle? Yet if he could not glean honour, he might find disgrace, and this the dynasty could ill afford. Victory could bring with it no credit to the prince, but defeat might and did cause the most irretrievable moral misfortunes to his house. It is true that at the moment the troops were put in motion, success was not doubted. But this in no way diminishes the impolicy of the act, it merely proves the delusion under which the government laboured, and

the utter impuissance of those on whom they relied for co-operation.

On the return of the courier from the Hague to Antwerp, on the night of the 20th, a council of war was instantly summoned. The proclamation being laid before it and approved of, it was printed and distributed before daylight on the 21st.* It is evident that this document was drawn up, not only under the conviction of the royal troops obtaining a bloodless triumph, but that it was founded on these deceptive assurances, too promptly accredited by Prince Frederick and the government. In fact, it shews that the military operations were based on the solicitations and erroneous representations of men, not one of whom had the slightest intention of being forthcoming in the hour of need. This important proclamation merits serious attention. It furnishes a solution, though not an apology, for the plan of attack so pertinaciously adhered to by the Dutch commanders. This plan, attributed to General Constant, having been submitted to the council of war, orders were issued on the 21st to the troops in the rear of Vilvorde to close upon their respective advances, so as to form nearly a half-circle round the city, having their outposts at about two hours' march from Brussels; the left leaning on the Ghent road, near the village of Zellich, the centre in front of Evers and Dighem, and the right extending to the Cortenberg chaussée, above Woluwe. On the same day the head-quarters and reserves moved to Malines.

The force thus concentrated amounted altogether to about 12,000 effective infantry, 1,600 horse, and 40 field-pieces. Of these 1,500 foot, 400 cavalry, and eight field-pieces were destined to move on Louvain, thus leav-

* See Appendix, No. 15.

ing about 10,500 foot, 1,200 horse, and four brigades of eight guns each, one of which was horse artillery, disposable for Brussels. In the meantime, a strong corps, under the orders of Lieut.-General Cort-Heyligers, debouched from Eindhoven by Hasselt on Tongres and St. Trond, menacing both Liege and Louvain.

The object of the Dutch commanders being to obtain possession of the upper part of the city of Brussels, which from its elevated position may be considered the key or citadel of the whole, the following dispositions were made.

On the extreme right, four squadrons of hussars, with a battalion of infantry, and a demi-battery, under the orders of Colonel Van Balveren, were to advance by the Ghent road on the Flanders-gate, and either to occupy the suburbs, or enter the city, as circumstances should require. The right centre column, consisting of two battalions, two squadrons, and a demi-battery, under Major-General Fauvage, following the Vilvorde chaussée, to make a feint on the Laaken-gate, in order to divert the attention of the besieged from the main attacks; but, in case of encountering any serious obstacles, to leave half a battalion and the guns for the protection of the Laaken-bridge, and then, moving by its left, to fall in as a reserve to the left centre. The latter, composed of two battalions of grenadiers and one of chasseurs (guards), with six battalions of infantry, and twelve field pieces, under Major-Generals Schuurman and Bylandt, debouching from the villages of Dighem and Evers, to force the Schaerbeek-gate, near the Botanical Garden, and thence to penetrate into the Park. The left column, principally composed of cavalry, with one battalion and four six-pounders, under Lieut.-General Trip, with Major-Generals Post and Boreel, to throw itself on the Louvain-gate, and having made good its entrance, to move rapidly by the boule-

wards and rue Ducale, and to establish itself in column on the open spaces near the walls of the king's palace and the Namur-gate. The reserves, consisting of three battalions, advancing along the outer rampart, as far as the Prince of Orange's palace, to throw a bridge over the narrow ditch at this spot, and to form on the boulevards, so as to keep open the communications with the exterior, and to furnish supports to the interior. The reserve battery, formed of the eight howitzers taken from the four brigades, to place itself in position on the elevated ground immediately fronting the temporary bridge. Detachments of cavalry to patrol the adjacent heights, and maintain connection between the columns. The Schaerbeek and Louvain gates being carried, and all intervening obstacles removed, the whole to make a rapid movement of concentration on the parks, palaces, and Place Royale, and there to wait until arrangements were effected for taking possession of the different piquets and guards in the heart of the city. *The most rigorous orders for the maintenance of discipline* accompanied their instructions. Two hours were considered amply sufficient for the completion and success of all these dispositions, so that, supposing the troops to arrive before the gates at seven A.M., it was calculated that the whole of the operations would be terminated, and the city restored to tranquillity, before mid-day. In the meantime, a corps under Major-General Trip was directed to move from Malines on Louvain, whilst another, consisting of about 2,000 men, with six guns, under Major-General Everts, was ordered to detach itself from the division of Cort-Heyligers, and, traversing Tirlemont, to menace Louvain from the side of Boutersem.

Even supposing that a perfect understanding had been established between the royal troops and citizens, and

that the Dutch commander was confident that all opposition would terminate at the gates, it is highly questionable whether the foregoing plan should have been adopted. So long as there existed a chance of resistance, however trifling, it was essential to avoid all unnecessary effusion of blood, and to spare the lives of the troops. One of the most important duties of a commander, however much he may despise an enemy, is to be prepared as much as possible against the "frictions" of war, and having taken every precaution to guard against reverses, then to think of securing victory at the least possible sacrifice to human life. But in this instance, the Dutch generals acted as if the blood of their soldiers was of no value, or rather, as if disaster was impossible. They neglected availing themselves of the advantages at their disposal during the first attack, and failed to adopt the commonest precautions that were called for subsequently. This will be shewn presently.

The prince's proclamation not being published in the *Gazette des Pays Bas*, until the evening of the 22d, was little known to the lower orders. Indeed, no effort seems to have been made to give it currency. Those at whose instigation and on whose representations it had been founded, dreaded its publicity, lest they should be compromised by its allusions to the wishes of the well-disposed citizens, and the co-operation of the burgher-guard and commission: whilst those who had resolved on resistance to the very knife, feared its discouraging effects on the people, on whom they solely relied for support. The advance of the royal troops was, however, quickly known by the inhabitants; and, although the members of the "commission of surety" and the greater part of the burgher-guard council had retired from the city, the populace, far from being discouraged, seemed to acquire new energy and excitement.

The barricades were multiplied in every direction ; the streets were unpaved ; stones, lime, blocks of granite, timber, and every other species of missile, was conveyed to the summits of the houses, for the purpose of being showered upon the assailants. A review of the burgher-guard, or rather of the armed force, was ordered, and about 3,000 men, provided with fire-arms, mustered in the Grande Place. Of these, about 800 were Brussels volunteers, under Gregoire, Borremans, Mellinet, Rodenbach, and Niellon ; and about 400 Liegers under Rogier. Baron d'Hoogvorst having declined the responsibility of commanding the active forces, on the grounds of his little conversancy with the art of war, the eight sections selected Count Vandermeere, but he was quickly superseded by Van Halen.

Scarcely had this review terminated, ere some peasantry from the neighbouring villages arrived in the city, announcing the rapid advance of the king's troops, whose outposts were stated to be within gun-shot of the suburbs. In an instant the most fearful scene of confusion and disorder ensued. Doors and windows were closed : the inhabitants in the vicinity of the gates abandoned their dwellings, or prepared to take refuge in their cellars : the drums beat to arms, and the heavy monotonous clang of the tocsin from St. Gudule, re-echoed by those from all the minor churches, added to the uproar : men, women, and children, were seen hurrying to and fro, with screams of terror or shouts of defiance. Many who deemed themselves excluded from hope of amnesty, fled the city. An attack was instantly expected, and, with the exception of two or three thousand reckless men, the rest of the inhabitants held it madness to resist. The idea of an open town, with no other defenders than a few undisciplined volunteers, and little other ammunition than paving-stones, being

able to oppose such a force as was marching against them, seemed the climax of desperation to every reasonable mind.

The commission being dissolved, and its members having sought security in the country, the direction of the defence, indeed the whole authority, now rested with the chiefs of the volunteers, whose confidence and temerity seemed to rise in proportion to the dangers of the crisis. Not satisfied with defensive preparations, they collected a body of some 1,500 men, and then dividing them into three detachments, determined to sally forth to attack the royal troops. One party, with two cannon, taking the Ghent road, fell in with the Dutch vedettes on the heights, in front of the village of Zellich, and having exchanged a few rounds, withdrew, fearing to be enveloped by the cavalry ; but the two detachments that issued by the Schaerbeek and Louvain gates, having encountered the enemy's outposts in front of Dighem and Evers, threw themselves into the enclosures, and, under cover of the banks, hedges, and trees, commenced a heavy tirailleur fire, which they maintained until nightfall. A part of this irregular band having advanced too far, was charged by the Dutch cavalry, who succeeded in capturing a considerable number. But, with this exception, these skirmishes terminated with trifling loss on either side.

It is essential to remark, that on this occasion the aggression was wholly and solely on the part of the people, and that the first blood having been spilled by them, the rules of war perfectly justified the severest reprisals. But, admitting that Prince Frederick was disinclined to retaliate with all the severity that his overwhelming force permitted and the law would have justified, it was his duty to have taken warning from this very aggression, and to have seen the fallacy of expecting sub-

mission from a city, which, so far from being disposed to fraternize with his troops, had the temerity to send forth its detachments to attack them in the open country. It mattered little whether the volunteers were led on by foreigners or natives ; it was evident that their leaders were full of energy and daring, and a prudent general would instantly have regulated his plan of operations, so as to be prepared for the most unfavourable chances.

Emboldened by the impunity with which they had been allowed to retire on the preceding evening, day had scarcely dawned on the 22d, ere the drums again beat to arms, and a body of volunteers, amounting to nearly 1,000, made a second sortie, and finding the troops nearly in the same positions, renewed the skirmish, and at length retired without any attempt being made to molest their retreat, though it would have been an easy matter to have enveloped and annihilated the whole. If the prince had no serious intention of attacking the city, his forbearance was comprehensible ; but, as his royal highness had the firm determination to make good his entry by force, it is inconceivable that he should have allowed himself to be attacked and insulted day after day by the disorderly bands, who, with more courage than prudence, ventured to pluck his very beard. But so many fatal errors were committed, that it is a matter of difficulty to discover a single instance undeserving of censure. Never was a good game so fearfully mismanaged by the players, and never were the lives of brave men so wantonly exposed through the unskilful tactic of their commanders ; for those who imagine that the troops were lacking in courage, commit a grievous error. Men and officers, both Dutch and Belgian, gallantly did their duty. The whole responsibility of the failure must rest, not with the soldiery, but with the chiefs.

Notwithstanding the ardour of the volunteers, the greatest discouragement pervaded the city. Many even of the most exaggerated patriots, on the departure of the commission and dissolution of the burgher-guard, began to compare the inadequacy of their defensive resources with those of the attack, and, therefore, deemed it high time to attempt negotiating with Prince Frederick. Capitulation was anxiously desired, but the dread of being accused of treachery sealed every tongue. At length, M. Edward Ducpetiaux, eager to avert the misfortune that menaced the city, took on himself the responsibility of proceeding to the royal head-quarters. The object of his mission was to open the prince's eyes to the fallacy of all assurances of co-operation; to endeavour to convince him, that the only chance of entering without resistance, was to offer a general amnesty, and to urge his royal highness to retract such portions of the proclamation as regarded strangers, which, of course, included the provincial volunteers, and having obtained this concession, to negotiate for an armistice.

On presenting himself at the royal outposts, Ducpetiaux, who was noted as one of the most ardent patriots and most active leaders of the revolt, was instantly seized, and despite of his urgent demand to be taken before the prince, was conveyed prisoner to Antwerp without being permitted to fulfil the object of his mission. An unfortunate circumstance; for had the interview taken place, it is possible that he might have convinced Prince Frederick of the danger of expecting assistance from the citizens, and that some terms of accommodation might have been agreed upon that would have furnished a pretext for that submission which was so generally desired.

So disheartened were the vast majority at this moment, that even some of the Liege volunteers under Rogier

withdrew, and it was judged advisable to hold a meeting of chiefs and leaders at the town-hall, at six P. M. on the 22d, in order to discuss the expediency of defence or surrender. On this occasion, opinions were extremely divided. Many, and the most prudent, declaring that resistance must entail destruction, opined for submission ; but their voices were drowned amidst the negative shouts of the people ; whilst Gregoire, Niellon, and Mellinet, Frenchmen without an atom of property at stake, and Roussel, of Louvain, a violent democrat, swore that they would defend the city though they buried themselves in its ruins. After a strong discussion, the assembly broke up, and resistance was decided upon : the most ardent patriots retiring to harangue and encourage the people, and the more moderate to take precautions for the security of their families. Later, however, in the night, the solicitations of the merchants, tradesmen, and wealthy inhabitants became so pressing, that a second meeting was held, and the most violent leaders being absent, it was *unanimously* resolved that defence was impracticable and submission inevitable. A petition, or address to this effect, signed by forty notables, was drawn up at midnight, and forwarded to Prince Frederick.

But these pacific resolutions were rendered utterly nugatory by the adventurous conduct of the people ; who, without waiting for leaders or instructions, enthusiastically seized their arms, and at day-break on the morning of the 23d, instinctively rushed to the points most exposed to the assaults of the enemy. From this moment until the night of the 26th, they continued the struggle without unity or instructions, and without any of the essentials most requisite for defence ; and what is more remarkable, in despite of the wishes of the immense majority of the inhabitants.

In the meantime, intelligence of all that had passed during the preceding twenty-four hours, was conveyed to Prince Frederick ; and although he was desirous to await the co-operation of some more distant detachments, he immediately issued orders for the simultaneous advance of the four columns, which were directed to reach the gates at seven, A. M., on the 23d, and to commence the attack according to the plan already detailed. These instructions were executed in the following manner.

The right column, having the whole of its cavalry in front—a strange inversion of the ordinary rules of attack—traversed the suburbs, and reached the Flanders-gate without difficulty. Meeting with no opposition, and concluding that no resistance would be offered, the commander imprudently pushed forward ; but scarcely had the whole body penetrated into the narrow and tortuous streets, that leads from the bridge over the Charleroy canal towards the centre of the city, than they were suddenly assailed with a deluge of stones, quick-lime, burning cinders, and boiling water, accompanied by a most destructive fire of musketry from the cellars, attics, and loop-holes of the houses. Death and confusion instantly spread through the ranks of the hussars, who, falling back on the infantry, bore down the latter in their retreat ; and the whole, after a gallant, but vain struggle, during which several brave officers and men perished or were taken prisoners, were driven back in disorder, and were well pleased to shelter themselves behind their guns, which had fortunately been left in position on the outside the canal.

General Fauvage, commanding the right centre, executed his instructions with greater prudence. Having closely reconnoitered the-Laaken gate, and finding it secure from a *coup de main*, he merely exchanged a few shots with its defenders ; then directing a half-bat-

talion and three guns to maintain the passage over the canal at the end of the Alée Verte, he threw a bridge over the Senne, contiguous to this spot, and making a left flank movement, joined the main body in front of the Schaerbeek-gate.

This was the point selected for the grand attack. Here the *élite* of the army was assembled under the immediate eyes of Prince Frederick and Lieutenant-general Constant de Rebecque. But so little did they anticipate any serious resistance, or so desirous was the prince to avoid first aggression, that the lieutenant-general, accompanied by a knot of staff-officers, preceded the advancing column, and rode up in the direction of the gate, expecting to be greeted with those shouts of loyalty and submission promised by the forty persons who signed the address of the previous night. They were, however, quickly awakened from this error by a volley from the neighbouring barricades. In an instant the columns opened, a battery of six field-pieces was unmasked, and the work of slaughter commenced. The outer defences being quickly carried, the artillery turned its attention to the gate itself; but its entrenchments being found sufficiently strong to resist the fire of the field-guns, and its defenders maintaining a galling discharge of musketry, and being flanked by that from the adjacent houses, the pioneers were directed to demolish the sunken wall in the ditch to the left of the lodges.

A passage being thus effected, the brigade of grenadiers and chasseurs, covered by the fire of two battalions and four field-pieces stationed on the terrace of the Botanical Garden, made good their lodgment on the boulevard, and thus turned the barricade, whilst the guns enfiladed the whole of the streets in front, up to the very perystile of the church in the Place Royale.

After a sharp struggle, these troops gallantly threw themselves into the rue Royale; then advancing with ported arms, and at double-quick time, they swept all before them, penetrated into the park, and immediately took possession of the adjacent palaces. This service was not effected without considerable loss; the advancing column having, as it were, to run a gauntlet of fire from the instant it entered the rue Royale until it reached the shelter of the park. A second brigade of infantry having entered at the same passage with the intention of executing a similar manœuvre, was repulsed, and compelled to follow the more circuitous route of the boulevards, suffering severely in their progress.

After halting a short time on the heights of St. Josse-ten-Noode, near the cemetery on the Louvain Chaussée, and thence cannonading the gate, Lieutenant-general Trip, at the head of the left column, advanced at a rapid pace through the suburb, and meeting with little opposition, easily removed the barricades, and, with triumphant shouts, galloped towards the posts assigned to him. At the same time the reserve, filing along the outer road, immediately proceeded to construct the bridge across the ditch, whilst the howitzer-battery took up a position behind the crest of the old glacis, directly in its rear.

Thus, before ten o'clock, the whole of the main attacks had fully succeeded, and the royal troops were in possession of the parks, palaces, and States-General, the gates of Schaerbeek, Louvain, and Namur, the whole of the intervening ramparts and suburbs from Etterbeek on the left, to those of Mollenbeek on the right. But here their victorious progress terminated. Sanguinary as the previous struggle had been, the task before them, if it was to be accomplished according to

the plan hitherto laid down, offered a still more bloody prospect. It was evident that the populace, though forced to abandon the gates, were resolved to dispute every inch of ground, and to fight from room to room, from house to house. To expect submission from them, or assistance from the citizens, was the climax of delusion. Nothing was more alien to the intentions of one or the other ; and yet so generally was the capture of the city anticipated, that, with the exception of D'Hoogvorst and Baron F. Coppin,* almost every individual of note had hastily abandoned its walls. Even the Liege volunteers under Rogier had withdrawn, and had already reached the forest of Soignes ere they were recalled by assurances of the troops being checked.

On the other hand, some of the Dutch generals were so convinced of the desperate opposition awaiting them, that in the course of the afternoon General Trip addressed a report to Prince Frederick, in which he stated “ that it would be impossible to obtain possession of the rest of the town, without successively besieging each quarter, and, indeed, each edifice ; that general devastation and massacre must ensue ; that, from the mode of defence adopted by the rebels, it would be necessary, in order to obtain victory, to sacrifice all the interests and prosperity of the royal residence ; and, finally, that it was utterly useless to calculate on the co-operation of the burghers, who were held in a state of utter subjection by the revolutionists.”

From this moment the attack lost all character of energy, and might be said to have been converted into a defence. Anxious to maintain his reputation for moderation and forbearance—forgetting that the hour of moderation was past, and that forbearance would now

* Subsequently appointed governor of South Brabant.

be mistaken for weakness—having neither the heart to advance, nor the moral courage to retreat, and being still loth to abandon the delusive hopes that were luring him on to destruction, Prince Frederick, counselled as it is affirmed by General Constant, determined to arrest the further progress of his troops, and, if possible, to open a negotiation with the chiefs of the people. Lieut.-colonel Gumoëns,* a gallant and distinguished soldier, was therefore ordered to proceed with a flag of truce, and having placed himself in communication with the revolutionary authorities, to request some of them to present themselves at the royal head-quarters, for the purpose of discussing the best and speediest means of putting a stop to further bloodshed. But Gumoëns had no sooner passed from beneath the protection of his own guns, than he was fiercely assailed by the drunken and infuriated populace; and, in despite of his sacred character, would probably have fallen a victim to their brutality, had not Mellinet and some other chiefs sprung forward, and rescued him from the hands of those desperate and lawless men. This violation of the usages of war was declared to be a reprisal for the seizure of Ducperiaux; but the cases were widely different. It was not, however, until the expiration of two or three hours that Gumoëns was enabled to explain the object of his mission; and although the leaders appeared desirous to negotiate, and dispatched three delegates for this purpose, they were unable or unwilling to traverse the fire of the combatants, and the project fell to the ground.

Notwithstanding this failure, D' Hoogvorst and Baron F. de Coppin, accompanied by three or four influential

* This officer was mortally wounded during the siege of the citadel, (where he served as a volunteer) and died at Antwerp.

leaders, determined if possible to penetrate to the prince's presence. As soon as the night closed in, and the fire had commenced to slacken on both sides, these zealous and devoted citizens proceeded with a flag of truce to the head-quarters of the prince, established in a house near the Botanical Garden, and after a short parley, were admitted to the presence of his royal highness, whom they found sitting in counsel with Generals Constant and Trip. After exposing the true situation of the city, both moral and physical, D'Hoogvorst openly declared that the only conditions on which the prince could now hope for a truce, were, that he should instantly issue a short and unequivocal proclamation, announcing—"first, a general amnesty without *reserve* or *retrospect* ; —secondly, an assurance of administrative separation. and thirdly, a promise that the troops should be withdrawn to the positions held by them prior to the 21st."

After a discussion that lasted until day-light, in fact until the tocsin again called the people to arms, the prince declared himself unauthorized to consent to any modifications of the original proclamation without reference to the Hague. D'Hoogvorst and his colleagues, therefore, returned into the city, and the struggle, or rather the siege of the royal troops, continued with redoubled ardour.*

Unfortunately, more than one of the same emissaries that had already misled Prince Frederick at Antwerp,

* It was not without feelings of extreme vexation that not only Prince Frederick and the Dutch generals, but D'Hoogvorst and Coppin, remarked the indecent conduct of one of the persons that accompanied them. This individual, not only forgetting what was due to the prince, but to common decency, threw himself into a chair, and then placing his *feet on the table*, gave his opinions in the most uncourteous and inappropriate language.

had again presented themselves, and contributed in counteracting the well-meant efforts of D'Hoogvorst and his coadjutors. They stated that the utmost anarchy existed in the lower part of the city, and that the upper portion was abandoned by its inhabitants; that all authority was destroyed; that even the voice of D'Hoogvorst had lost its influence; that, with the exception of an individual named Engelspach who had assumed the title of "General Agent," not a human being was to be seen at the Hôtel de Ville; that even the most desperate advocates of resistance were divided amongst themselves; that others, despairing of success, had fled the city; that, for the lack of a native officer capable of assuming the command, Van Halen, a Spanish refugee, had been chosen generalissimus; and that the remainder of the volunteer chiefs, gathered from all corners of the world, were disunited, unknown to each other, and, as the sequel proved, not altogether inaccessible to seduction.* They added, that the people were without ammunition, that the hospitals were crowded with wounded and dying, and that if the prince would give orders to his troops to cease firing, and thus remove all cause for continuing the struggle, the respectable citizens would then be enabled to re-assume their preponderance, and propose satisfactory terms.

Though much of this intelligence was founded on fact, these persons omitted to mention that the Liege volunteers under Rogier had returned, and that hundreds of others continued to pour into the city by the avenues that had been so imprudently left unobstructed at their own suggestion; that it had been resolved to establish a "provisional administrative commission," consisting of D'Hoogvorst, Rogier, and Jolly (a retired subaltern of engineers), with Baron F. de Coppin and Joseph Vander-

* This was partially verified by the subsequent conduct of Gregoire.

linden as secretaries, and that the enthusiasm of the lower orders amounted to frenzy ; that many of the citizens who had at first taken no share in the defence, either irritated by the burning or plunder of their houses, or excited by example, had joined the populace ; that in lieu of submission, shouts of victory and songs of triumph rent the air ; that instant death would have awaited the "traitor" who dared to propose surrender ; that several influential persons were scouring the country with a view of raising guerillas to act in the rear of the army ; that Messrs. Gendebien and Van de Weyer, at the head of two or three hundred volunteers, had returned to the city on the 25th, bringing with them fourteen barrels of powder ;* and that, in order still further to arouse the people, an unsigned proclamation had been affixed to the walls, announcing a victory gained over the royal troops by the Louvainists, and declaring (with unblushing falsehood) that Prince Frederick had promised to abandon the city to sack and pillage during two hours.

They might have added, that the sword having once been drawn, that civic blood having once flown, all further scruples on the part of the prince would be of no avail. The injury to the dynasty was almost irrevocable. The prince might advance, retreat, bombard, or patiently submit to see the *élite* of his troops decimated in the parks—no matter ; nothing could restore the moral supremacy of the government. Indeed, another government had already superseded that of the crown, for most of the members of the "commission of surety" having returned on the 25th, they had met together and elected or resolved themselves into a provincial government, and announced their installation by proclamation on the forenoon of the 26th. † If, therefore, the prince seriously

* See Appendix, No. 16.

† See Appendix, No. 17.

entertained a hope of regaining the city, half measures were useless. Nothing remained but to have recourse to all the rigours of war. He had only one of two plans to pursue, namely, either to withdraw his troops to the adjacent heights, to place them on position at half-gun shot—to throw up batteries, and thence menace to bombard the town, unless so many thousand stand of arms and a given number of hostages were sent to him at a prescribed hour ; or, by closely investing all the avenues of the city, and preventing all egress or ingress, thus to reduce it to starvation.

It is not to be supposed that either of these infallible methods could have escaped the prince's attention. They had not—but, unfortunately for his cause, he constantly laboured under the fatal delusion, that negotiation was practicable. Besides, his heart revolted at the idea of employing the terrible power at his disposal, for his howitzers, which never fired a shot, would have sufficed to have reduced Brussels to ashes in a few hours. But if motives of humanity, not unmixed with considerations for the preservation of the royal palaces and property, prevented his adopting extreme measures, it is difficult to comprehend his motives for not selecting the less sanguinary, but not less certain, means of investment.

In the meantime the situation of the royal troops was most distressing. Hemmed in on every side ; harassed by an incessant, plunging fire from the windows, roofs, and chimney-tops, which they could return with little effect ; confined to the park and palaces, without orders to advance, or permission to retire, they were uselessly exposed during four days to all the demoralizing effects of their fatal and false position. They held the key of the city, but it lay rusting in their hands, or rather it was turned upon themselves. Night after night closed in, and not an inch was gained. Day after day dawned,

and Prince Frederick, turning his eye to St. Gudule, and vainly expecting to see the Orange banner floating from its towers, persisted in maintaining his ground, and pursuing the same ineffective and dangerous system. Though resolved to restrict himself to the defensive, he neglected the commonest precautions for the security of his people. Not a single attempt was made by day or night to obtain possession of any of the adjacent buildings whence his soldiers were so severely galled. Neither epaulements, trenches, or breastworks were thrown up to protect his skirmishers or artillerymen, who were compelled to employ the carcasses of their dead horses for this purpose. His brave gunners, though death was inevitable, manfully stood to their pieces in the open streets, and were killed one after another at pistol distance, until at length some of the guns ceased firing, having lost all their people, even to the last officer ; and yet it is notorious that at nightfall the greater part of the defenders abandoned their posts—that scarcely a single sentinel remained near the barricades—that all firing ceased—and that a handful of resolute men, well led on, might at any moment have dashed forward, and carried all the adjacent edifices with the bayonet.*

Had the Dutch generals done their duty, this operation might have been effected on the first night. Working parties should also have been employed to throw up a

* It was during this period that the brave and lamented Lord Blantyre fell a victim to one of those hazards that so often ingloriously terminate the mortal career of the best and most distinguished. After escaping unscathed, but crowned with never-dying laurels, from fifty ensanguined battle-fields—after leading on his heroic Highlanders to as many victories as they had seen combats—after withdrawing to terminate a noble life in retirement, an honour to his country and his family, he fell by a chance shot, whilst looking through a window. What a picture of mortal nothingness !

strong breastwork at the angle of the park, opposite the Place Royale, and the morning of the 24th should have found the Dutch guns (of which only four were employed at one time in the park) sheltered behind a substantial parapet. The sandy ground was essentially favourable for such purpose; and if fascines or bags were not at hand, the mattresses from the palaces should have been employed. But the same want of prudence, the same disregard to the ordinary rules of war and self-preservation that dictated the attacks on the gates, when they might have been turned without the sacrifice of ten lives, pervaded all the subsequent operations, and combined to ensure victory to the people, and to entail defeat and disgrace on the royal arms.

It would be difficult to discover a position immediately contiguous to any large city that offered such facilities for attack without risk, as those that presented themselves to the selection of the Dutch general. From the gate of Louvain to that of Namur, extend a range of eminences that not only command the whole of the inner boulevards and adjacent streets at half-musket range, but which afford opportunities for cannonading the heart of the city, through the streets opening at right angles into the park, which is immediately contiguous. These eminences, forming a natural breast-work towards the city, and falling away in an easy slope towards the country, are admirably calculated to mask the movements of any number of troops. A couple of battalions and a dozen guns placed behind the shelter of this ground, themselves secure from all danger, might have covered the entry of the army, and maintained such a destructive plunging and enfilading fire on all the adjacent buildings and streets, as would have rendered it impossible for the besieged to stand for a moment. Under protection of this fire, an active working party might have

filled up the ditch in a few minutes, so as to admit the passage of any number of infantry and artillery ; and, these having once crossed, the whole would have been instantly in the park—thus turning all the gates and barricades, without the necessity of forcing one or the other, or risking valuable lives in those murderous street-encounters, where discipline and tactic are of little avail ; where the best and bravest are always the first victims, and where the advantage is invariably in favour of the defenders.

False attacks should, doubtless, have been made on all the gates, and working parties ordered to throw up batteries, ready in case of sorties. But it was a wanton waste of life to attempt carrying points so distant from the central object, when the boulevards opposite the prince's palace afforded such facilities for success. To persist in executing such a plan as that at first proposed, might have been excusable, as a mere demonstration to *feel the pulse of the citizens*; but to convert such demonstration into a real attack, when it was evident that a desperate resistance was resolved on, was against all the precepts of strategy and reason ; for one of the first of these laws is to seek to inflict as much harm as possible on an adversary with the least possible loss to one's-self, and to force him, if possible, to combat on ground of your own selection. In the present instance, the Dutch reversed this important maxim, which was literally courting defeat, or, at all events, seeking victory by the most circuitous and sanguinary path.

It would be superfluous to follow the operations during the remainder of the struggle. Suffice it to say, that Prince Frederick not deeming it consistent with the interests of the crown to adopt either of the plans that would have ensured success, had no sooner received instructions from the Hague, than he issued orders for

the total evacuation of the city. Consequently, a little before midnight the battalions were withdrawn in silence from the parks and adjacent edifices, and, falling back in good order and without molestation, resumed the positions they had occupied on the 21st, and here remained two days. Continuing their retreat on the 29th, the headquarters moved to Antwerp, the main body went into cantonments at Walhem, Duffel, Lierre, Boom, and other places on the Nethe and Rupel ; and the Duke of Saxe Weimar having arrived at Malines, took the command of the rear-guard, and established his advanced posts at the village of Sempst on the Senne.

The loss of the assailants during these operations amounted, according to their own statement, to 138 killed, of whom 13 were officers ; 650 wounded, of whom 38 were officers, including, Lieut.-General Constant, and Schuurman ; and 163 missing, of whom 5 were officers, giving a total of 951.* The Belgian official report of casualties, fell little short of 1800, of whom 450 were killed or died immediately after, and 1250 wounded. Of these at least two-thirds on both sides were victims of the first day's assault. Thus terminated an expedition, which, had it been conducted with skill, promptitude, and energy, must have been attended with infallible success ; but, being planned under the influence of the most fatal deception, executed almost in defiance of the rules of art, and persisted in, in opposition to all prudence, it terminated by an inexplicable and inglorious retreat, by the utter demoralization of a brave and well-appointed army, and by the complete ruin of the dynasty. All that was wanting to fill the measure of this tragedy of errors, was the bombardment of Antwerp. Until that sinister

* The Belgian accounts of the Dutch loss states the number of casualties as nearly double : it gives 520 killed, 830 wounded, and 450 missing.

and impolitic act took place, there was yet a chance, a possibility of success, not for the King, but for the Prince of Orange. But the flames of Antwerp destroyed the last vestige of the Orange banner, even to the very flag-staff.

Before bidding adieu to these operations, a word is necessary upon a subject of vital importance to the honour and reputation of the Dutch. Terrible have been the imputations of rapine and excess brought against them, and, for the most part, not less false than terrible. Prince Frederick was not only accused of encouraging pillage and massacre, but of a deficiency of personal courage. Now, as regards the first, his general orders are there to prove, that he adopted every means in his power to enforce discipline, and that it was impossible for any general to have exerted more earnest measures to prevent excess. As relates to the second, thousands were witnesses that he exposed himself much more than was deemed prudent by his attendants, and that he owed his life to the intervention of Providence, for, independent of casual danger, three times did a cowardly and concealed hand take premeditated and deliberate aim at his person. No! whatever failings or defects may be laid to the charge of the members of the house of Nassau, neither want of courage or humanity are amongst the number. Braver hearts never throbbed beneath a warrior's breastplate, nor hearts more generous or humane. They may lack some of the elements that are essential to great statesmen and commanders, but neither Ney, the bravest of the brave, nor Wellington, the coolest of all most undaunted soldiers, were more valiant or more contemptuous of peril.*

* Amongst other calumnies, it was affirmed that Prince Frederick had fled, disguised as a miller. An imputation so base scarcely merits refutation, for it was known to the whole of the army that his royal highness was the *last* person that quitted Brussels, in *rear* of the *rear-guard*.

The prince—for on him rested the responsibility—was further accused of hurling shells, rockets, and hot shot on the city. Now, it is indisputable that he had not a single Congreve with his army ; that not one red shot or even carcase was employed ; and although some of the shells directed against the barricades exceeded their range, and thence caused the destruction of the riding-house, the battery of howitzers retired without discharging a single projectile. That his royal highness might have bombarded the city, and that he refrained from so doing, is incontestible, and, speaking in a military and political sense, his leniency was a grievous error ; for he suffered all the odium of bombarding and burning, without reaping any of its advantages. His forbearance, for such it was, being construed into a proof of weakness, injured his cause as a prince at home, and ruined his reputation as a soldier abroad. To attempt to deprive him, therefore, of the merit of forbearance, when by this very humanity he lost the monarchy, is too unjust. But, unfortunately, history does not reserve her brightest pages for those generals that carry this virtue beyond prudent bounds. Forbearance and humanity are admirable ingredients and accessories in the character of a commander—but they must be the result, not the prelude to battle. War and humanity are antitheses, so opposed to one another, that a general who does not sometimes forget that he has a heart, gives evident proofs that he has little head. In conflicts between nations a drawn battle may lead to peace ; in civil struggles there can be no medium. Either the people or the government must obtain the supremacy ; the sword once drawn, there can be no half measures. What instance does history afford of forbearance on the part of the people, so long as the struggle lasted ? The prince or general that expects to

overcome overt revolt with such weapons, shows that he knows little of the history of revolutions, or of the character of the people.

That most reprehensible excesses were committed, there can be no doubt ; but, however lamentable such outrages may have been, every person practically conversant with the fearful hazards of war must be well aware that these excesses are the inevitable concomitants of almost all assaults. Such persons will admit, that if there be an occasion on which officers may be held excusable for the misconduct of their men, it is during those terrible moments when troops make good a forcible entry into a city, and when the fury of the assailants naturally rise in proportion to the vigour of the defence. Heated by the rage of street-combat, by the fall of their dying comrades, in short, by all the indescribable excitements of combat, soldiers are then no longer masters of their passions, but abandoning themselves to the drunkenness of revenge, added to that of liquor, turn deaf to the calls of discipline and humanity, and do not pause to distinguish the innocent from the guilty—if, indeed, there be any guilt in defending one's household gods to the last gasp.

But after rejecting, as mere fables, the greater part of the odious reports of violation, rapine, cold-blooded assassination of the living, and wanton mutilation of the dead—reports purposely propagated in order to inflame the popular hatred against the Dutch, especially in the provinces—and admitting that much outrage did occur, Belgian historians should be cautious how they dwell on this subject ; for, as two-thirds of the troops employed were natives of the southern provinces, no sophistry can screen them from their full participation in the odium. It has been asserted that the 9th and

10th regiments, recruited at the Hague and Amsterdam. and the punishment battalion (*straf bataillon*), composed of defaulters and loose characters. were the principal actors; but this argument will not hold good, for the reported outrages were not confined to the streets occupied by these corps. Each corner, each alley, had its tale of horror, which passed exaggerated and distorted from mouth to mouth, and found ready credence with a people, whose animosity against the Dutch was roused to madness by the sight of their bleeding relatives and burning property. And yet a large portion of these acts of incendiarism were the undoubted work of the people themselves.*

But it is time to bid adieu to these fatal transactions. On the 27th of September, Brussels, from being a scene of the wildest confusion and terror, was suddenly converted into a theatre of the most unbounded exultation. Yells, shouts, pæans of victory resounded from its remotest allies. The mournful booming of the tocsin, that during four days had called the people to arms, now swelled into a peal of rejoicing, bidding them repose in safety. The fugitives that had sought security in the provinces returned to their abodes. All peril being past, De Potter, the ephemeral demi-god of popular adoration, prepared to return home to enjoy the first honours of the ovation. The incredible intelligence of the discomfiture of the royal legions, with all its exaggerated accompaniments, was conveyed with lightning-speed to the provinces, where the canker of disaffection and demoralization spread like wild-fire through all ranks and classes. That which yesterday was a mere disjointed local revolt,

* Witness the burning of the house of Mr. Meeus, of the Hôtel Torrington, of the edifices near the palace, and others.

now rode triumphant, on the blood-stained bayonets of the populace, a robust and general revolution. The nation was triumphant beyond its most sanguine hopes. The victory was essentially popular, for it was the undivided work of the people—gained, as they gain their daily bread, by the sweat of their brow, or rather by that of their blood. The fabric raised at so much cost and labour by the Congress of Vienna, stood tottering upon the brink of a precipice. Europe looked on aghast and wept, but not a hand dared move to prop the crumbling edifice. The force of events, more powerful than the will of cabinets, pronounced the fiat of destruction, and set defiance to alliances. The doom of the dynasty was sealed.

END OF VOL. I.

APPENDIX.

THE BURGHER GUARDS.

The troops have been reported to withdraw to their barracks, they have crossed in numbers in the night's struggle. The moderate tax is suggested from the fact that it will not be placed by any other of a similar nature under any denomination whatever. If any legislative change remains to be made, let it be addressed to the people, and not to the government. The citizens to obtain its full accomplishment. The government must be instructed, it is impossible to see reason. The government and bloodshed, by placing the people into the hands of the government, which is the only way.

Hôtel de Ville, 20th August 1870.

THE BURGHER GUARDS.

It is a fact that the troops were marching upon the city, the commandant of the bourgeois-guardians has been told that the troops have been ordered by the military authorities to prevent their entering the city, and to command them to halt. The safety of the city therefore remains exclusively committed to the brave bourgeois-guardians, which has so well justified its duty. A delegation of

All these documents have been translated in the translation, as far as the strength and space would allow.
+ This was the municipal law, which had been continued after that of the government had been abolished.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.*—PROCLAMATION.

The Burgher Master, &c. &c. &c., to their Fellow-Citizens.

THE troops have been requested to withdraw to their barracks, they have ceased to interfere in this deplorable struggle. The *mouture* tax is suppressed from this day ;† it will not be replaced by any other of a similar nature, under any denomination whatever. If any legitimate demand remains to be made, let it be addressed to us ; we will unite our efforts to those of all good citizens to obtain its full accomplishment. But these measures must be ineffectual, if tranquillity be not restored. Disorder and bloodshed, by plunging families into mourning, can only generate mischief.

Hôtel de Ville, 26th August 1330.

No. 2.—PROCLAMATION.

INHABITANTS OF BRUSSELS!—Reports having been spread that troops were marching upon Brussels, the commandant of the burgher-guards hastens to inform you, that orders have been issued by the military authorities to prevent their entering the town, and to command them to halt. The safety of the city therefore remains exclusively confided to the brave burgher-guard, which has so well fulfilled its duty. A deputation of

* All these documents have been curtailed in the translation, as far as the strength and essence would allow.

† This was the municipal tax, which had been continued after that of the government had been abolished.

notables is about to proceed to the Hague. Until their return, the troops stationed in the upper town will remain inactive. The officers commanding the burgher-guard have engaged on honour to respect their neutrality.

(Signed) D'HOOGVORST.

Brussels, 28th August 1830.

&c. &c. &c.

No. 3.—PROCLAMATION.

WE, Major General Bylandt, &c. &c., in concert with the other military authorities, hereby make known, that we have agreed that the troops, expected this day, shall *not enter* the city, so long as the inhabitants respect all the civil and military authorities, therein established, and maintain that good order which the chiefs of the burghers have engaged to preserve.

(Signed) COUNT DE BYLANDT.

Head Quarters, Brussels, 28th Aug. 1830.

&c. &c. &c.

No. 4.—ADDRESS TO THE KING.

SIRE!—The undersigned, your respectful and faithful subjects, take the liberty, in the difficult circumstances under which Brussels and other towns are placed, to depute to your majesty five of their fellow-citizens, charged to declare to your majesty that never, under similar circumstances, were the good inhabitants more deserving of your esteem and the gratitude of the public. By their firmness and courage they have, in three days, calmed the most dangerous effervescence, and terminated the gravest disorders. But, Sire! they cannot conceal from your majesty that the general discontent is most profoundly rooted. The effects of the policy of ministers who pay no regard to our vows or wants are universally felt. Although masters of the movement, at this moment, the good citizens cannot answer that they themselves may not become the victims of their efforts, if the nation be not appeased. They implore you, therefore, Sire, by all those generous sentiments that animate your heart, to listen to their voices, and to put an end to their just complaints. Full of confidence in the goodness and justice of your majesty, they have deputed their fellow-citizens to you, in the sole hope that they may obtain the gratifying assurance, that the evils o which they complain will be speedily redressed. The under-

signed feel convinced that one of the best means of effecting this desirable object will be the immediate convocation of the States-General.

(Signed) D'HOOGVORST,
Brussels, 28th Aug. 1830. and about forty others.

No. 5.—PROCLAMATION.*

WE, William, Prince, &c. &c.—Having arrived in this city, according to his majesty's command, in order to consult as to the best means of contributing to the good that may be effected in this part of the Netherlands kingdom, it is right that we should commence by expressing, in his majesty's name, the satisfaction he has derived from the union and success with which the people of Antwerp have maintained that order and tranquillity which a few vagabonds and strangers sought to disturb. After this first expression of the sentiments that have animated us since we have found ourselves in the midst of so many functionaries, merchants, and fathers of families, all equally admirable for their devotion, and equally interested in the maintenance of the tranquillity which we enjoy here, we have turned our attention to the best means of diminishing for them those (military) fatigues that are ill repaid by the short repose which they are enabled to take, when commercial and other duties absorb every moment of the day. It has therefore been extremely agreeable to us to conciliate the measures necessary for the safety of the fortress, with those which are permitted to us, from our confidence in the citizens. We therefore ordain, 1st, the measures to be concerted between the general commanding the fourth military division, and the local and civil authorities of Antwerp, shall be laid before an extraordinary commission. 2dly, Lieutenant General Chassé, &c. &c. are appointed members. 3rdly, the object to be discussed will be proposed by Lieutenant General Chassé, who, under circumstances demanding dispatch, may take upon himself the responsibility of executing any indispensable measure.

(Signed) WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.
FREDERICK, Prince, &c.

Antwerp, 30th Aug. 1830.

* The spirit and sense has been maintained as far as possible; but the original is so diffuse and vague, as fully to justify the observations made upon it in the text.

No. 6.—PROCLAMATION.

INHABITANTS of Brussels!—I have placed myself with the utmost confidence in the midst of you. My security is complete, guaranteed as it is by your loyalty. It is to your exertions that the re-establishment of order is due. I rejoice in acknowledging and thanking you for it in the king's name. Unite with me in consolidating tranquillity. Then no troops shall enter the city. In concert with the authorities, I will take the necessary measures for restoring calm and confidence. A commission, composed of the Dukes d'Ahremberg, d'Ursel, &c. &c., is directed to propose new measures to me. It will assemble to-morrow morning at my palace.

(Signed) **WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.**
Brussels, 1st Sept. 1830.

No. 7.—PROCLAMATION.

OUR DEAR COMPATRIOTS!—We, the undersigned, deputies to the States-General, actually in Brussels, have been summoned by His Royal Highness the Prince of Orange. We have had the honour of exposing conscientiously to him the state of affairs and opinions. We consider ourselves authorized to represent to the prince royal, that the most ardent vow of Belgium was a complete separation between the southern and northern provinces, without any other point of contact than the reigning dynasty. We also represented to his royal highness, that notwithstanding the fever of the public mind, the Nassau dynasty has not ceased for a moment to be the unanimous vow of Belgium, and that the difficulties of its situation, the impossibility of conciliating irreconcilable opinions, customs, and interests being at an end, the House of Orange, free to identify itself with our wishes, might calculate on the attachment and fidelity of all. Our representations, combined with those of several special (provincial) deputations, have been favourably received; and already his royal highness has departed to convey in person, to his august father, the expression of our desires.

(Signed by eight Members of the States.)
Brussels, 3d Sept. 1830.

No. 8.—PROCLAMATION.

INHABITANTS OF BRUSSELS!—His Royal Highness the Prince of Orange has offered to proceed immediately to the Hague, in order to present our demands in person to his majesty. He will support them with all his influence, and he has every reason to hope they will be granted. The moment after his departure, the troops will evacuate Brussels. The burgher-guards engages, *on its honour*, not to suffer any change of dynasty, and to protect the town, and, above all, the palaces.

(Signed by twenty-two chiefs of the burgher-guard, the prince's aides-de-camp, and other Dutch officers.)

(Counter-signed) **WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.**
Brussels, 3d September, 1830.

No. 9.—PROCLAMATION.

CITIZENS OF BRUSSELS!—In conformity with an arrangement concluded between his Royal Highness the Prince of Orange, and the chiefs of the burgher-guard, the military detachment stationed at the palace has just quitted our walls. Every true Belgian will comprehend the duty of respecting, as concerns the troops, the sacred engagement which has been contracted this day—the execution of which is confided to national honour. The prince has declared, that he will lay before his august father the expression of our unanimous vow for a separation between the two portions of the kingdom, in all matters legislative, administrative, and financial. The Liege deputation has declared that the inhabitants of that city are ready to place at the disposal of their Brussels brethren any assistance of men, arms, and ammunition, that may be required. Fellow-citizens! such is the present state of affairs. Let us be calm, for we are strong; and let us continue united, in order to maintain and augment our force.

(Signed) **BARON VAN DER SMISSEN.**
Brussels, 3d September, 1830.

No. 10.—TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF THE NETHERLANDS.

SIRE !—It is not without painful sensations that we have been apprized of the demand made to your majesty, tending to obtain a separation of interests between the southern and northern provinces. The fear that our silence may be interpreted as an adhesion to this proposition, imposes upon us the duty of exposing to your majesty that this vow is in no way participated by us. The experience of fifteen years has proved to us, in the most evident manner, that it is to the free and mutual exchange of produce that we are indebted for reciprocal prosperity. The advantages that navigation derives from the colonies, the increasing issues (*debouchés*) that these same colonies constantly offer to our industry are irrefragable proofs that any separation would not only be fatal to this province, but to the commerce and industry of all Belgium. Intimately persuaded of this great truth, we dare to make it known to your majesty with that confidence and respect inspired by a king who desires the welfare of his people, and who will never labour but in the interest of its well-understood prosperity.

Antwerp, 13th Sept. 1830.

No. 11.—ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF THE NETHERLANDS, &c. &c.

SIRE !—The Council of Regency of the town of Brussels,* assembled in permanent sitting, having examined the causes of the extraordinary movements that agitate this city and Belgium, is convinced that they have their source in the desire to see established a separation between the northern and southern provinces.

It adheres completely to the vows of the Belgians that have been transmitted to you, Sire, by his Royal Highness the Prince of Orange.

It supplicates your majesty to accept them, and to be intimately convinced that the maintenance of the Nassau dynasty has never ceased for an instant to be its desire, as well as that of the generality of inhabitants of this residence.

Brussels, 4th Sept. 1830.

* Consisting of the mayor, four aldermen (*échevins*), twenty-five common-councillors, and a secretary.

No. 12.—PROCLAMATION.

We, William, by the grace of God, &c.—To all whom it may concern, &c.

DIVINE Providence, which has deigned to accord to this kingdom fifteen years of peace with all Europe, internal order, and increasing prosperity, has afflicted two provinces with numberless calamities ; and the repose of several others has either been troubled or menaced.

On the first intelligence of these disasters, we hastened to convocate, extraordinarily, the States-General, which, according to the letter of the fundamental law, represents the whole Belgian people, in order to advise, in concert with their high mightinesses, as to the measures reclaimed by actual circumstances and the state of the nation.

At the same time, our well-beloved sons, the Prince of Orange and the Prince Frederic of the Netherlands, were charged by us to proceed to these provinces, as much to protect, with the forces placed at their disposal, persons and property, as to assure themselves of the real state of affairs, and to propose to us such measures as were best adapted to soothe the public mind.

This mission, executed with a degree of humanity and generosity that the nation will appreciate, has confirmed to us the assurance, that even there, where agitation is most intense, the nation preserves and proclaims attachment to our dynasty and to national independence ; and, however painful the circumstances that have come to our knowledge may be to our heart, we do not abandon the hope that, with the aid of Divine Providence, whose succour we implore in this grave and solemn occasion, and by the assistance of all well-disposed persons and good citizens in different parts of the kingdom, we shall succeed in restoring order and re-establishing the action of legal power and the dominion of the laws.

We rely for this issue on the concurrency of the States-General. We invite them to examine whether the evils that afflict the country are the result of certain vices in the national institutions, and whether there is ground for modifying them, and principally whether the relations established between the two grand divisions of the kingdom, by treaties and the fundamental law, ought, for the common good, to change their form and nature.

We desire that these important questions should be examined with care and with unrestrained liberty. No sacrifice will be too great for our hearts when there is a question of fulfilling the desires and assuring the happiness of a people, whose felicity has been the subject of our most constant and assiduous attention.

But though disposed to contribute with frankness and loyalty, and by broad and decisive measures, to the safety of the country, we are not less resolved to maintain with constancy the legitimate rights of all parts of the kingdom, without distinction, and only to proceed by regular means, in conformity with the oaths taken and received by us.

Belgians!—Inhabitants of the diverse portions of that beautiful land that has more than once been rescued by heavenly favour and the union of its citizens from the calamities to which it was abandoned!—await with calm and confidence the solution of the important questions which circumstances have produced. Second the efforts of the authorities to maintain internal order and the action of the laws, where they have not been troubled, and in re-establishing them where they have been disturbed.

Lend assistance to the law, in order that in its turn the law may protect your properties and personal safety. Let all distinction of opinions disappear before the augmenting dangers of that anarchy which in several places presents itself under the most hideous forms; and which, if it is not anticipated or repulsed by the means that the fundamental law has placed at the disposal of the government, will inflict irreparable injury upon individual welfare and national prosperity. Let all good citizens separate their cause from that of the agitators, and let their generous efforts for the re-establishment of public tranquillity place a term to these immense evils, and permit us to efface, if possible, even the very trace.

(Signed) WILLIAM.

DE MEY DE STREEFKERK.

Done at the Hague, the 5th of September 1830,
and of our reign the seventeenth.

No. 13.—PROCLAMATION.

INHABITANTS OF BRUSSELS!—A *Commission of Public Surety* has been installed. We hereby bring to your knowledge the official document that constitutes it.

The Council of Regency assembled in permanent sitting, in naming the Commission of Public Surety, thought that it ought to adhere to the very terms which it had employed in the proclamation, in which it manifested a desire for a separation between the north and south. However, in consequence of observations made to it by the commission, the council thinks that, whilst it persists in maintaining the vows it has expressed, it cannot nevertheless, change the terms of its original mandate.

Consequently, due regard being had to circumstances, the council has adopted the accompanying resolution ; namely,

“To concur in the formation of a *Commission of Public Surety* for the city of Brussels, charged,

“a. To assure the maintenance of the dynasty.

“b. To maintain the principle of separation of the north and the south.

“c. And finally, to take measures necessary for the interests of commerce, industry, and public order.”

In order to effect the establishment and entrance into office of this commission, the council gives its suffrage to the eight following persons :

Mr. Rouppe, the Duke d'Ursel, Gendebien, the Prince de Ligne, Frederic de Sécus, Van de Weyer, Count Felix de Mérède, and Ferdinand Méeus.

(Signed) DELVAU DE SAIVE.

Hôtel de Ville of Brussels, 11th of September 1830.

NO. 14.—THE KING'S SPEECH.

NOBLE AND PUISSANT SIRS!—Deplorable events have rendered urgent the extraordinary assembly of your high mightinesses, which opens this day.

In peace and amity with all the people of this portion of the globe, the Netherlands witnessed the fortunate termination of the war in her trans-marine possessions. Order, commerce, and industry—every thing prospered in repose. I occupied myself incessantly with endeavours to diminish the burthens of the people, and to gradually introduce into the internal administration such ameliorations as experience pointed out ; when, suddenly at Brussels, and after this example in certain other parts of the kingdom, an insurrection broke forth characterized by scenes of incendiariism and pillage, of which the description

would be too painful for this assembly, for my heart, for national honour, and for humanity.

Awaiting the concurrence of your high mightinesses, whose convocation was my first thought, every measure was immediately adopted, that depended upon me, to arrest the progress of the evil, to protect the well-thinking against the evil-minded, and to avert from the country the curse of civil war.

To revert to the nature and source of what has passed, and to demonstrate to your high mightinesses the object and consequences, is less necessary for the interest of the country, at the present moment, than to seek for the means by which repose, order, authority, and law can be re-established not only temporally, but guaranteed for the future in a more durable manner.

In the meanwhile, Noble and Puissant Sirs, from the struggle of opinions, the agitation of passions, and the discordance of views and projects, it is a highly difficult task to conciliate my wishes for the happiness of my subjects with the duties I have contracted towards you.

For this reason, I invoke your wisdom, your moderation, and your firmness to concert (with the sanction of the national representatives, and by general assent) whatever may be most necessary under these afflicting circumstances for the welfare of the Netherlands.

It is thought in many quarters that the safety of the state would be secured by a revision of the fundamental law, and even by a separation of the countries united by treaties and by this very law.

But such a demand can only be submitted to deliberation, according to the route traced out by that act, of which all the clauses have been solemnly sworn to by us.

This important demand will be the principal object of your deliberations.

I desire to know, regarding this point, the opinion and views of your assembly, which will pronounce them with that frankness and calmness which the importance of the question so urgently calls for. For my part, desiring above all things the happiness of the Netherlands, whose interests Divine Providence has confided to my care, I am ready to co-operate with your assembly in the measures that may lead to this object.

This extraordinary session has for its ulterior object to make known to your high mightinesses that the interests of the king-

dom, in the midst of these serious circumstances, imperiously demand the enrolment of the national militia beyond the period prescribed for the ordinary training.

The actual credits may suffice, for the present, for the expenses of this prolonged enrolment of the militia, as well as for other expenses necessarily resulting from the revolt. However, the ulterior regulation of these expenses ought to become the object of your deliberations during the approaching ordinary session.*

Noble and Puissant Sirs!—I trust to your fidelity and patriotism.

Calling to mind the revolutionary storms that have already thundered above my head, I shall as little forget the courage, the love and fidelity that overthrew despotism, founded national existence, and placed the sceptre in my hands, as the valour which, on the field of battle, strengthened the throne and assured the independence of the country.

Fully prepared to anticipate equitable desires, I will never yield to the spirit of faction, nor ever consent to measures that might sacrifice the welfare and interests of the country to passion and violence.

The vow of my heart is to conciliate as much as possible all interests.

ROYAL MESSAGE.

NOBLE AND PUISSANT SIRS!—In consequence of what we have made known to you on opening your extraordinary session, and previously to all the Netherlands by our proclamation of the 5th instant, we desire that your high mightinesses may immediately take into regular and attentive consideration the two following points :—

1st. Whether experience indicates the necessity of modifying our national institutions.

2nd. If, in this case, it is necessary, for the interest of the common weal, to change the connexion which is established by treaties and the fundamental law, between the two grand divisions of the kingdom.

It will be agreeable to us to receive, as early as the nature of things will permit, the free and undisguised communication of

* The ordinary session would have commenced on the third Monday in October of the same year.

the sentiments of the representatives of the Netherlands people on these important questions, in order to concert with your high mightinesses, according to circumstances, on the measures that may lead to the accomplishment of our intentions.

And we pray God, &c. &c.

(Signed) WILLIAM.

The Hague, 13th September, 1830.

No. 15.—PROCLAMATION.

We, Frederick, Prince of the Netherlands, &c.—To the Inhabitants of Brussels.

BRUSSELS!—The king, our august father, is engaged in concert with the representatives of the nation, and in the only manner compatible with their oaths, in attentively examining the wishes put forth by you.

Nevertheless, tranquillity is constantly troubled within your walls. Whilst with a zeal and activity worthy of the greatest praise, you are watching to defend public and private property, a small number of factious, hidden amongst you, excite the populace to pillage, the people to revolt, and the army to dishonour; the royal intentions are prevented, the authorities are without force, and liberty is oppressed.

In conformity with the king's orders, we are come to re-establish legal order, which is the only true and efficacious remedy for a state of things that ruins your city, and renders more and more distant the possibility of this royal residence being the abode of the monarch and the heir to the throne.

The national legions are about to enter your walls, in the name of the laws, and at the request of the best citizens, in order to relieve them all from a disagreeable duty, and to lend them aid and protection.

These officers, these soldiers, united under the standard of honour and their country, are your fellow-citizens, your friends, your brothers. They do not bring with them reaction or vengeance, but order and repose. A generous oblivion will be extended to the faults and irregularities that circumstances have produced.

The principal authors of acts, too criminal to hope to escape the severity of the laws—those strangers, who, abusing hospi-

talities, have come to organize disorder amongst you—shall alone be justly smitten ; their cause has nothing in common with yours.

Consequently, in virtue of the powers intrusted to us, we have ordained and do ordain the following :—

Art. I.—The national troops shall enter Brussels.

Art. II.—All obstacles to their march shall be removed by the exertions of the municipal authority of the urban guard, of the commission of surety, and of all good inhabitants.

Art. III.—The posts of the urban guard shall be successively given up to the national troops. We will decide hereafter upon the mode of duty for the said guard.

Art. IV.—Armed individuals, strangers to the city, shall withdraw without arms to their own houses. All armed bands belonging to other districts (communes) who may come to Brussels, shall be invited to retire, and, if necessary, be dissipated by force.

Art. V.—The colours adopted, as distinctive emblems by a part of the urban guards, shall be deposed. We shall reserve to ourselves to determine the rallying symbol that it shall be authorized to carry.

Art. VI.—The municipal administration, the commission of safety, the council and chiefs of the urban guard, shall look both to the execution of the preceding arrangements, as well as to the maintenance of order, until the troops have effected their entry.

Art. VII.—The members of these corps are declared personally responsible, from the date of the present notification, for any resistance that may be offered to the public force ; as well as for the illegal employment of the public, or municipal money, arms or ammunition.

Art. VIII.—The garrison shall, as soon as possible, be barracked or camped, so as not to be a burthen to the inhabitants : it will observe the strictest discipline. All violence shall be repulsed by force of arms ; and such individuals culpable of resistance, as may fall into the hands of the public force, shall be delivered over to the competent judges, to be prosecuted criminally.

(Signed) FREDERICK,
Prince of the Netherlands.

Done at our Head-Quarters of Antwerp,
this 21st September, 1830.

No. 16.

THE following "*Appeal to the People*," drawn up at Valenciennes, was distributed in various provincial towns on the 24th and 25th.

"To arms! to arms! to arms! brave Belgians! The Dutch have dared to attack Brussels! The people have annihilated them. Fresh troops may attempt a second attack. We conjure you, in the name of our country, of honour and liberty, to fly to the succour of the brave Brusselers!

(Signed) "F. DE MÉRODE,
"S. VAN DE WEYER,
"A. GENDEBIEN,
"MOYARD, &c. &c."

No. 17.—PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.

SEEING the absence of all authority, as well in Brussels as in the greater part of the towns and districts in Belgium; considering that, under actual circumstances, a general centre of operations is the only means of overcoming our enemies, and insuring triumph to the cause of the Belgian people;

The provisional government declares itself constituted after the following manner:—

Messrs. the Baron Vanderlinden d'Hoogvorst; Charles Rogier; Count Felix de Mérode; Gendebien; S. Van de Weyer; Jolly.—J. Vanderlinden, Treasurer; Baron F. de Coppin, and J. Nicolay, Secretaries.

Brussels, 26th September, 1830.

BAYLIS AND LEIGHTON,
JOHNSON'S-COURT, FLEET-STREET.

THE
BELGIC REVOLUTION.

**BAYLIS AND LEIGHTON,
JOHNSON'S-COURT, FLEET-STREET.**

THE
BELGIC REVOLUTION

OF

1830.

17
BY CHARLES WHITE, Esq.

"The surest way to prevent seditions (if the times do bear it) is to take away the matter of them; for if there be fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the spark shall come that shall set it on fire."—BACON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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ERRATA.

Page	Line	
20	21, <i>for adopted, read adapted.</i>
41	26, <i>for sixteen, read six.</i>
43	2, <i>for sixteen, read six.</i>
43	19, <i>for only, read nearly.</i>
62	21, <i>for to, read from.</i>
62	22, <i>for to, read from.</i>
177	33, <i>for averson, read aversion.</i>

THE BELGIC REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I.

DEMORALIZATION OF THE ARMY—THE FORTRESSES SURRENDER—STRENGTH OF THE NETHERLANDS MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT—OSTEND ABANDONED—ASPECT OF BRUSSELS AFTER COMBAT—THE BELGIAN PARISIAN LEGION—THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHES ITS AUTHORITY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY—DE POTTER RECALLED—HIS TRIUMPHANT RETURN AND FALL—CHARACTERS OF MESSRS. JOLLY AND ROGIER—CONDUCT OF THE BELGIAN DEPUTIES AT THE HAGUE—CONSOLIDATION OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT—THE COMMISSION APPOINTED TO DRAW UP THE CONSTITUTION DECIDES, AS A PRELIMINARY MEASURE, ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MONARCHY—VAN HALEN ARRESTED—POSITION OF THE DUTCH AND PATRIOT FORCES—THE LATTER ADVANCE, AND FORCE THE FORMER TO RETREAT BEHIND THE RUPEL.

THE demoralization produced on the whole of the Netherlands forces by the repulse of Prince Frederick, was rapid beyond all parallel or anticipation. Wherever the troops did not abandon their officers, the populace, after a short struggle, invariably gained the ascendancy. The generals withdrew to the citadels, where, being without provisions or stores, and having no confidence in those under their orders, they were shortly constrained to capitulate, and were either retained prisoners, or conducted to the Dutch outposts. Ath, where the populace had risen, was taken possession of by Baron Van der Smissen, in the name of the provisional government, on the 27th; and thus an immense supply of

cannon, powder, and military stores fell into the hands of the patriots. In a few days, Mons, Charleroy, Tournay, and Ostend, the citadels of Namur, Liege, Ghent, Menin and Ypres, with Courtray, Bruges, Philippeville, Audenarde, &c., and the rich contents of their arsenals, shared a similar fate ; so that, in less than three weeks, the whole line of barrier fortresses, with the exception of Antwerp and Maestricht, were at the disposal of the insurgents.

Defection became rife throughout all ranks, and extended even to the higher grades. In order to encourage this, the provisional government issued an edict releasing all officers from their oaths to the king, and rewarding with immediate advancement those that embraced the national cause. Major-generals Goethals, Wauthier, and Daine were amongst the first that availed themselves of this absolution ; and so rapidly did the contagion spread, that ere ten days, the Dutch officers commanding corps found that they could place no reliance whatever, either on the Belgians or on their own countrymen. For, whilst the one only waited a convenient occasion to desert, the other, who were in the minority, were in constant expectation of being abandoned, or perhaps attacked, by their own comrades. This, in a great measure, accounts for the extraordinary successes gained by the patriots over the Duke of Saxe Weimar and General Cort-Heyligers : the first, after a succession of trifling skirmishes, being driven back upon Antwerp ; and the latter, who had 8000 men and 24 field-pieces under his orders, being compelled to seek a junction with Prince Frederick by the circuitous route of Wavre, Jodoigne, and thence to Terveuren and Cortenberg, after being repulsed at Orege, Louvain, and Tirlemont. A singular manœuvre, seeing that the country by Diest and Gheel was open to him, and that he might thus have immediately

united with the main body, which, for the moment, held its position on the left bank of the Rupel and two Néthes, and ought to have taken every possible precaution to prevent its left flank from being turned by the patriots.

The dissolution of an army so numerous and well organized as that of the Netherlands, is an event of too great importance to be passed over in a cursory manner ; but the surprise naturally awakened by its sudden disorganization is much diminished in considering how deeply the seeds of discontent and disaffection were implanted throughout its ranks.*

“ At the moment of the attack on Brussels, the Netherlands military establishment consisted of three battalions of grenadiers and two of Chasseurs (guards) ; eighteen regiments of infantry ; ten of cavalry (one of which, the seventh, was in Java) ; four battalions of field, six of garrison, and six troops of horse artillery ; a battalion of train ; a pontoon brigade ; two battalions of sappers and miners, and, finally, a squadron of gendarmes for each of the ten southern provinces, including the grand duchy.† The staff, under Lieut.-general Constant de Rebecque, was numerous, and on a par with the efficient state of the rest of the army, which formed a total of seventy-seven battalions of infantry ; seventy-two squadrons of cavalry, and sixty companies or troops of artillery, exclusive of train, sappers, and gendarmes ; giving a general total of about 90,000 men.

“ The whole, of which more than two-thirds were constantly on furlough without pay, was recruited by bal-

* The passages marked by inverted commas are extracted and revised from an article published in the *United Service Journal* (No. 60, Jan. 1833) by the author

† The employment of this species of armed police being contrary to the habits of the Dutch, was not introduced into Holland.

lot on a system of organization, resembling the Prussian landwher, rather than the French conscription. All unmarried men, between the age of nineteen and twenty-three inclusive, were liable to be drawn; a fifth of the whole was renewed annually. The term of service was for five years. The infantry regiments were enrolled by cantons or districts, and remained stationary in these districts or their immediate vicinity during many years. The major part had not, in fact, changed their quarters from their first formation in 1816 down to the summer of 1830. This plan was well adapted for convenience and economy, as regarded those classes of militia called out for annual training; for had the Wallon regiments been quartered in Friesland, or the Gronigen divisions in Hainault, the time occupied in marching to and fro would have augmented the extraordinary expenditure and diminished the period of drill, which was limited by the 208th section of the fundamental law to about one month, except in cases of emergency, when the government could retain either a fourth or the whole of the militia under arms.

“But this system was attended with many drawbacks. From remaining so many years in the same quarters, both officers and men became heavy, inert, and never acquired a smart or soldier-like appearance. They considered their garrisons as a home for life, and thus formed local attachments, which always tend to enervate discipline and enfeeble that military independence so essential to the mobility and efficiency of regular troops. The pernicious effects of this were sorely felt when the revolutionary crisis put the energy and fidelity of the troops to the test.

“The garrisons of the various Belgic towns being thus recruited from the surrounding cantons, the men were connected by ties of parentage and early intercourse with the inhabitants and neighbouring peasantry. They had

relatives and friends amongst the people, from whom two-thirds were only separated during the brief period of annual exercise. They also spoke the provincial dialect, and were thus more easily persuaded that it would be a grievous crime towards God and their country to shed the blood of their fellow-citizens. Independent of the just discontent felt by all ranks at the obnoxious system of Dutch partiality, no arts, no arguments were left untried to inculcate the doctrine of revolt, either by the priests or revolutionary agents. Threats of excommunication and menaces of various kinds were employed to convert the loyal, whilst bribery and cajolery were unsparingly exerted to hurry the disaffected from their allegiance. Even the government and municipal funds were appropriated for the purposes of subornation: credit being subsequently given to the different functionaries for the sums thus disbursed.

“But, however active and well concerted these machinations, the result must be attributed rather to the nature of the military constitution and other local causes, than to the efforts of either clergy or provisional government. The militia, of whom two-thirds resided during eleven months with their families, fully participated in the general sentiment of hostility to the Dutch government. When ordered to join their battalions at the moment of the revolution, for the express purpose of combatting that revolution, their hearts were already embittered against those whom they were required to serve. The ordinary repugnance of the recruits for exercise was aggravated by their hatred to the cause for which they quitted their homes. In bidding adieu to these homes, they felt that, if they were to do their duty, they should probably be called on to immolate the objects of their affection at the command of foreign chiefs whom they detested, and for the support of a

government for which they entertained no sympathy. To expect that such men should suddenly forget all the ties that bound them to the people, and willingly take up arms to smite their own flesh and blood, was to expect too much of human nature: it was a premium and encouragement to desertion. Indeed, great numbers deemed it more simple to avoid the alternative, by not joining their regiments; preferring to risk the punishment inflicted on refractory conscripts, rather than to raise their weapons against their families, or to desert their colours when once enrolled.

“The rapidity with which the Belgic garrisons melted away exceeds all belief. A sketch of events at Ostend will suffice as a portrait of scenes that occurred elsewhere. At the moment the royal troops were expelled from Brussels, general excitement and disaffection were roused to the highest pitch in the Flanders; but Ghent and other towns had not hitherto broken out in open rebellion. Amongst those that still remained faithful was Ostend; here the garrison consisted of one battalion of the 6th and a few artillery-men. With these the veteran governor, Major-general Schepern, contrived to repress two or three partial risings, and held the disaffected in check during three days; for hitherto, the militia-men had evinced no overt inclination to abandon their colours, and on one occasion opened a platoon fire upon the rioters.

“Finding that his men were harassed by patrols and extra-duties, and feeling the importance of maintaining Ostend to the last moment, Schepern applied for reinforcements to Major-general Goethals, who occupied Bruges with about 1,800 men, where he also had to encounter popular tumults, and to go through the form of firing over the heads of the rioters. The indifference shown by the government to the conservation

of Ostend cannot easily be accounted for. Nothing but that fatality which attended all their operations, whether military or political, can account for their not having dispatched a chosen force from Flushing ; either to secure the fortress in the event of sedition, or to retake it after the defection of the troops. At any time, during many subsequent days, a handful of resolute men might have carried and maintained it with the greatest facility, especially if supported by two or three vessels of war off the coast, and as many gun-boats in the harbour. It is true Ostend was not in a state to stand a siege, the fraudulent conduct of a Dutch engineer having rendered it necessary to pull down and rebuild a great portion of the western defences ; but it was the evident policy of the king to make every sacrifice to preserve or retake a place that would have secured him the command of West Flanders, and thus have given a totally different turn to the aspect of affairs.

“Goethals, whose position at Bruges had been extremely critical, abandoned that city on the 1st of October, and having arrived before the gates of Ostend with three battalions, was joyfully admitted by the unsuspecting Schepern, who placed full reliance on his colleague and the troops. Scarcely, however, had the latter reached the barracks, ere symptoms of insubordination broke out, and soon proved that the spirit of disaffection was deeply ingrafted among them. The evening passed off tranquilly ; but towards two A. M., the piquets and guards deserted their posts ; the whole regiment rose on their officers, tore the Dutch cockades from their caps, discharged their muskets in the air, cast away or sold their arms and appointments, and rushing through the streets in the wildest state of excitement and inebriation (for they had been well plied with liquor by the emissaries of the people), filled the

air with shouts of "Long live the Belgians!" "Death to the Dutch!" It is but just, however, to observe, that not the slightest act of violence or outrage was committed. Their only anxiety was to escape from the regiment; and this anxiety was increased not only by their ordinary term of training having expired on that day, but by the accidental appearance inshore of an unusual number of vessels, beating to windward, which were artfully reported to be Dutch craft coming into port in order to carry them off to Holland. In short, so expeditious were they, that by three p. m. of the same day, the whole of the four battalions had deserted, except a portion of the officers and non-commissioned, with some fifty old soldiers.

"Having discovered that he was on the eve of being abandoned by the troops, and being warned of the danger that he and his countrymen were likely to incur from the populace, Schepern assembled all the Dutch at nightfall, and gave them secret directions to prepare for immediate flight. A vessel having been procured, the whole party, with their families, amounting to about one hundred and twenty individuals, embarked at midnight, and made their escape to Flushing. Their departure was timely; for on the following day, the Belgians, in despite of capitulations and the laws of nations, arrested the Dutch officers at Mons, Tournay, Ypres and elsewhere, as well as those who were on their route through Bruges to return by Eccluse and Breskens to Holland.*

* So vigilant were the populace, that neither travellers nor couriers escaped. An English gentleman, charged with despatches from government to Mr. Cartwright at Brussels, was arrested by the mob at Bruges, and carried before the commission of public safety, which, after satisfying themselves that he was not a Dutchman, finally permitted him to proceed on his journey.

“ It would be impossible for any one that had not witnessed these scenes, to form an idea of the effect produced on the mind, by a sight so utterly opposed to all those principles of duty, loyalty, and obedience that are characteristic of regular armies. The bursting of a typhon could not be more sudden and overwhelming than the dissolution of the whole. It is but just, however, to remark, that the majority of the officers exerted every nerve to maintain the discipline of their corps, and literally shed tears of shame and anger at conduct so disgraceful to disciplined troops ; but their efforts were vain. Nor was this the only occasion in which the Belgian officers conducted themselves in strict conformity to those rules of honour that ought to be the sacred, the inviolable guide of the soldier. However much they might have sympathized in the views of their fellow-citizens, or panted for the independence of their country, the majority continued faithful to the monarch to whom they had sworn allegiance, until a proclamation from the Prince of Orange left them at liberty to continue in the service of Holland, or to join the national standard.

“ It has been stated that no excesses were committed at Ostend. It is not less worthy of observation, that on traversing the country by Bruges, Ghent, and St. Nicholas, to the *Tête de Flandre*, the traveller neither encountered the slightest obstruction, nor heard of a single instance of outrage or robbery, although thousands of disbanded soldiers covered the roads, and were scattered through the surrounding villages ; a fact the more remarkable, since there was no police, no government, no civil or military authority ; and thus crimes might have been perpetrated with the utmost impunity.”

But to return to the capital. On the departure of

the royal troops, the upper quarter of the city offered a most melancholy spectacle, strangely contrasting with its previous brilliant aspect. The citizens, who flocked to the theatre of recent combat, shuddered as they gazed on the scene that presented itself, in the park and adjacent streets. The sudden conversion of this beautiful portion of the metropolis into a field of carnage and desolation, was to them both incomprehensible and unparalleled in barbarity. Though hitherto lukewarm, their breasts now swelled with animosity against the Dutch. The whole weight of their execration fell upon Prince Frederick. From this hour, that which had hitherto been a mere uprising against the system of administration, was converted into an irreconcilable war against the dynasty. The word *Orangist* became henceforth a term of proscription.

In the park, the statues, trees, gates, and ornaments were shattered or defaced; the walks, alleys, and hollows, were strewn with fragments of fire-arms, gun-carriages, uniforms, and military equipments. Here, the mangled bodies of dead horses obstructed the path; there, lay a still palpitating, half-stripped, unburied corpse; and there again, a dozen others, barely covered by a few handfuls of earth or leaves. Here, ensanguined or discoloured streaks marked the trace where some wounded victim had dragged himself from the scene of combat; while there, deep indentures in the sand, and dark coagulated pools, covered by myriads of insects, indicated the spots where other gallant men had made their last death struggle.

The Hôtel Torrington, the buildings contiguous to the palace, and those fronting the Botanical Gardens

* The Hôtel Torrington, so called from its having been the residence of Lord Torrington, when ambassador to the Austrian Governor-

were converted into a heap of reeking ashes: the noble mansion of Mr. Méeus was reduced to cinders; its proprietor, denounced as an Orangist, was compelled to seek protection for his wife and family in the country; while an infuriated and brutal populace revelled in the unrestrained licentiousness of devastation and plunder.* The Hôtel de Bellevue, and the adjacent buildings, were so riddled with projectiles as to menace dissolution. The granite posts and massive chains that decorated the foot-paths, were riven asunder; the houses were perforated or spangled with shot; the window-glass shattered to a thousand atoms, and the frames broken; the doors splintered; the interiors ruined or utterly devastated; brains on the walls, and blood on the floors. The streets, intersected at every angle with barricades, were filled with bands of armed volunteers, whose discordant shouts were only hushed as they encountered the funeral convoy of some fallen comrade, on its way to the general receptacle of the killed, in the Place des Martyres. Amidst all this scene of exasperation and misrule, it is worthy of remark that the royal palaces, which offered so tempting a bait to popular vengeance, scarcely received the slightest injury. Nor was it less curious to see the patriot leader, Van Halen, who a few days previous had been contented with a modest abode in some distant quarter, now established beneath that roof which had hitherto been the residence of all that was most exalted and illustrious in Europe. Here, surrounded by his numerous staff, Van Halen issued his orders, and appointed governors to the royal

general. The buildings near the palace, as well as the mansion of Mr. Méeus and other edifices, were burned by the populace either during or after the combat.

* The loss of Mr. Méeus was estimated at 1,500,000 francs, including 800 barrels of oil in the tanks and cellars.

residencies. And fortunately so, for it is probable that the palaces were as much indebted for their salvation to his energy and firmness, as the people were for their victory to his intrepidity and that of Mellinet, Charlier, and other volunteers.*

Even as the fumes of carnage are said to allure beasts and birds of prey, so the rumours of these sanguinary scenes attracted numerous adventurers, of every class and denomination, to Belgium, where they lived at free quarters, and in some instances laid the towns and cities under heavy contributions. These bands, attired in a hundred different garbs, of which the blue frock formed an indispensable part, assumed various denominations, such as the "Belgian Parisian Legion," the "London Belgic Legion," or "The Friends of the People;" fierce, disorderly hordes, having of soldiers nothing but the reckless valour and the thirst for licentious indulgence, uncurbed by discipline. Belgium had become an "El Dorado," which these restless spirits held to be a fair field for advancing their desperate political projects, or for restoring their dilapidated fortunes. Some, however, of the leaders of these bands were not only men of birth and education, but evinced a degree of courage and presence of mind that would have merited unreserved praise, had they not been tarnished by concomitant acts of a less noble character.

It was thus that the Viscount Pontécoulant, son of the French peer of that name, and commander of the Belgian Parisian Legion, rendered immense services to the citizens of Bruges, and by his coolness and bravery, put a stop to the frightful scenes of disorder that a second time afflicted that city on the 18th and 19th of October. Suddenly arriving from Ghent, whence he

* The total expenses of Van Halen's head-quarters, during the combat and subsequent days, did not exceed 1765 florins.

was followed by 400 of his troop, Pontécoulant galloped to the great square, attended by a single aid-de-camp, and springing sword in hand among the rioters, partly by his dauntless bearing, and partly by the energy of his words, kept them at bay, until the arrival of his followers, who seized several ringleaders, and conveyed them prisoners to Ghent. Then consulting with the mayor and municipal officers, who had fled for security to a private house, he issued a proclamation, which is not one of the least remarkable documents of that epoch, since it shews the extraordinary attitude and powers assumed by the leaders of these bands.*

In the meantime the *de facto* government at Brussels, proceeding with that energy and promptitude which is the ordinary characteristic of revolutionary times, assumed the title of "Provisional Government of Belgium;" thus extending its powers over the whole country, and thereby subverting at one blow the whole royal power. It further commenced its administrative career by issuing several proclamations. The most remarkable of these were—firstly, a decree, declaring that justice should be administered in its name, in all the tribunals throughout Belgium: secondly, an appeal, calling upon the troops to abandon the Dutch standard, and liberating them from their allegiance: thirdly, a declaration, stating that, in consequence of the inability of Brussels commerce to meet its pecuniary engagements, the payment of all bills due on the city should be postponed for twenty-five days—a bold and unprecedented measure, which added immensely to the revolutionary influence, and averted the evils that were anticipated from commercial distress and bankruptcy: and, fourthly, a

* See Appendix, No. 18.

proclamation, "inviting M. Louis de Potter and all other Belgians to return to their country."

De Potter, who had been publicly banished, and was desirous to be recalled by some act proclaiming the remission of his sentence, though disappointed at this laconic and vague notice, lost no time in quitting Lille, where he had awaited the invitation of the provisional government, and set out for Brussels. A more striking instance of the capriciousness and instability of popular favour, never was exemplified than in the forty-seven days' reign of this celebrated personage. The following description of his entry into Brussels, extracted from the notes of an eye-witness, is at once graphic and veracious.*

"The immense popularity De Potter had attained surpassed every thing of the same kind in the memory of the oldest men: even that of Vandernoot in 1790, or of the Prince of Orange in 1820. His journey from Tournay, where he was first recognized, was literally a triumphal march. He might have travelled the twenty leagues, carried, or rather dragged by the arms of the population, that thronged from every side to touch or gaze upon him. The mayors, the authorities, the musical societies, waited on, escorted, and disputed the honour of receiving and lodging him. At Tournay, Leuze, Ath, Enghien, Hale, and lastly at Brussels, the horses were taken from his carriage, and the people drew him along, in despite of his remonstrances, whether real or pretended! Universal shouts of "Liberty and De Potter for ever! Long live the Belgic Lafayette! Long live our defender!" rent the air. Single and married ladies struggled for the honour of embracing him; flowers and laurels were offered to him; so that he wept for very joy and emotion.

* "Esquisses de la Revolution de la Belgique." Brussels, 1830.

“ At six o'clock he reached the gate of Anderlecht, attended by several bands of armed volunteers that had joined him on the road. Here he found a numerous detachment of civic guards, and more than 20,000 citizens. Followed by this immense multitude, he proceeded on foot to the town-hall, where he was received by all the members of the provisional government, who threw themselves upon him, and had like to have smothered him in their embraces, hailing him as the principal author of the revolution. At seven o'clock he appeared at the balcony and addressed the people. Thunders of applause drowned his words.”

Such is the correct picture of De Potter's entry and momentary popularity: a popularity founded on the prosecutions he had undergone, and the exertions of the journals in his favour, rather than on any intrinsic merit of his own. For although he was a man of undoubted talent, an able juriconsult, a good classic, an elegant, caustic writer, and a loud declaimer for liberty and equality, it was well known that he was ambitious and overbearing; that he aimed at supreme power; that although he had the head to devise, he had not the heart to execute any bold project; and that, while he preached agrarian equality, no man was more covetous of increasing his own treasures. Being well versed in the history of ancient and modern revolutions, he thirsted to imitate Marius, Sylla, Cromwell, or even Robespierre; but he lacked two or three great elements of success—namely, a disregard for danger and a contempt for money. He hated monarchy, and loved a republic, because, even in the extremest intoxication of his triumph, he knew that he could not aspire to a crown, though he might perchance become president.

Thus, insomuch as his popularity was sudden and overwhelming, and his entry triumphant and honour-

able, so was his fall rapid, and his departure pitiful. The man who on the 29th of September had been raised to a level with all that Belgium had ever produced most illustrious and noble, was as suddenly cast down by the ostracism of the nation, and treated with a contumely as degrading as ever had befallen the commonest political mountebank. Never did popular idol, crowned with the tinsel lustre of mob celebrity, sink down into such a night of oblivion. So that ere long, men would have forgotten that he lived, had he not occasionally thrust himself on their notice, through the medium of some republican journal. Nay, this idol, whom thousands had obeyed, as though his behests were those of a god, could scarcely find a single hand to shield him from the filth cast on him by the very proletaries who, a few weeks previous, would have offered him their bodies as a foot-stool.

On the morning subsequent to De Potter's arrival in Brussels, a decree announced to the nation that he was adjoined to the provisional government. He also communicated this event in a letter addressed to his fellow-citizens, in which appeared the following professions of faith :

“ Liberty for all ! Equality of all before the supreme power, the nation. and before its will, the law ! People ! what we are, we are *through* you ; that which we will do, we will do *for* you.”

There is no circumstance more worthy of attention than the contrast between the influence so suddenly acquired by the members of the provisional government and their private and public antecedents. The merits and qualifications of all, except Messrs. Jolly and Rogier, have been already detailed. The former, who had served with credit as a subaltern of engineers, had abandoned the career of arms for that of the arts, and

had lived in the most complete retirement ; but, though a promising artist and honourable man, he neither possessed influence, abilities, energies, or knowledge of administration necessary for the Herculean task of re-organizing the wreck of an army, of which not a vestige remained save the raw material. Consequently, in less than a fortnight he retired and made way for Goethals, who had been advanced to the rank of general of division on the 7th of October. His brief administration was, therefore, an utter failure.

The other, Mr. Charles Rogier, descended from a respectable French family settled on the Meuse, was scarcely known to the public before the outbreaking of August. As a practitioner at the Liege bar, and professor of French literature at the university of that city, he was esteemed by the limited circle of his acquaintance ; but he enjoyed no general fame either as a jurisconsult or political economist ; and would probably have ended his days in comparative insignificance, had not the revolution called forth his energies, and opened for him a new field of exertion. He was one of those that might exclaim with Cicero :—*“ Neque cuiquam tam statim clarum ingenium est, ut possit emergere ; nisi illa materia, occasio, fautor etiam, commendatorque contingat.”* Being, however, endowed with great firmness and personal courage ; possessing that blunt eloquence and decision, which is so effective in times of trouble, and being ardently devoted to constitutional liberty, he soon brought himself into notice. Disgusted with the conduct of government, he embraced the popular cause with fervour, but not with blindness. His only aim was redress of grievances, and not subversion of the crown ; for it is undeniable that when he entered Brussels at the head of his volunteers, the extent of his hopes was an administrative separation, under the viceroyalty of the Prince of Orange. The energy and presence of mind that he displayed at Liege

in curbing the mischievous spirit of the populace when inclined to pillage ; the boldness with which he led his detachment through the centre of the royal army ; the firmness and prudence of his conduct, from the moment of his arrival at Brussels to the last hour of the defence to which he had mainly contributed, gave him great influence over the people, and rendered his nomination highly satisfactory to the volunteers, who associated his name with those of the first heroes of the revolution. Being linked by private and public sympathies with M. Lebeau, Rogier early associated himself in the views of that statesman ; and although there were occasions when he abandoned himself too lightly to the excitement of the moment, his parliamentary career has shown that constitutional monarchy has not a more devoted advocate, nor his country a more zealous servant.

By a remarkable anomaly, there was not a single individual composing this self-elected government that could boast of any superlative antecedents. Not one of them had been a member of either legislative chamber, or, with the exception of De Potter, in any way known to the country at large. It is true they were all devoted partisans of liberty, and had many times advocated her cause, both in the journals and at the bar ; two or three also possessed superior abilities. But no political halo surrounded their brows — no previous parliamentary career, or public services, had entitled them to pre-eminence. They were cast forward by the sudden throes of the revolution, and, grappling boldly with the times, skilfully converted them into instruments of advancement.

Various fortuitous circumstances also contributed to the first foundation of their power, and none, perhaps, more cogently than the convocation of the States-General at the Hague. For, supposing the deputies of the

south to have been assembled at Brussels, or even in any other Belgian city, it is not to be supposed that Charles de Brouckère, De Meulenaere, Le Hon, Gerlache, De Chokier, and others, whose merits as orators, politicians, and patriots were universally acknowledged, should not have entered into competition with individuals who were comparatively obscure.

The conduct of the Belgic deputies being moreover subject to much criticism at this period, the members of the provisional government skilfully availed themselves of their absence to fortify their own power, though they were subsequently compelled to admit some of them to a share in the administration. Whatever might have been the opinion entertained by the Belgic people of their representatives, dispassionate consideration soon placed their character in its true light. Nothing could be more critical and embarrassing than their position, nor more judicious than their conduct. In the heart of an inimical country; cut off from ordinary communications with the south; aware that an hostile army was advancing on the towns that contained their families and properties; alarmed by daily reports of the defeat of their countrymen, and the destruction of their native cities; ignorant of the real state of affairs; compelled from motives of policy to remain at the Hague, while their hearts and thoughts were at home, they were accused of cowardice and want of patriotism, when, in fact, they were giving essential proofs of moral courage and civic devotion.

It is true, they might have returned home, or distinguished themselves by violent propositions and speeches ill-befitting a grave legislative body. But they could not employ the latter without exasperating even the liberal portion of their Dutch colleagues; nor could they have adopted the former step without deviating from the constitutional course, which they had resolved

to pursue, and thereby involving the rejection of the two great questions submitted to their deliberation. This proceeding was the more politic; since, in the event of the submission of Brussels, it was of vital importance to reserve the constitutional means of securing both the separation and the revision of the fundamental law.

These measures, proposed by the message of the 13th September, were in fact debated during the attack on Brussels, and were carried affirmatively on the 28th and 29th. The first, by a majority of 50 to 44; the latter, by 55 to 43 votes.* The address in reply to the king's speech having been previously voted, the extraordinary session was closed on the 2nd of October, and the southern deputies returned home forthwith, and there found the provisional government established as firmly as though it had long formed part of the national institutions.

The first great point that occupied the attention of De Potter and his colleagues was the political conformation best adopted to the immediate exigencies and collateral position of the nation. "The provisional government," says Mr. Nothomb,† "propounded to itself, and as it were *à priori*, three fundamental questions, destined to arise from events still incomplete; namely, shall Belgium erect herself into an independent state? What form of government shall she adopt? Shall she separate herself entirely from the house of Orange?" The ultimate solution of these questions was reserved for the national congress, ordered to be convoked by a decree of the 4th of October; but a passage of this decree already revealed the views of its authors.‡

* M. de Stassart and two other deputies were absent.

† "Essai Histor. et Polit.," par Nothomb.

‡ See Appendix, No. 19.

Although the provisional government was nearly unanimous as to the question of national independence, much difference of opinion existed as to the form. De Potter, who coveted the presidency, strongly opined for a republic; therefore, all connexion with the house of Nassau was utterly opposed to the object of his ambition. Mr. Gendebien, though a partisan of democracy, warmly advocated a reunion with France; while Mr. Van de Weyer, and the remainder, who were devoted to independence on a monarchical basis, were no way disinclined to preserve relations with the Nassau family, inasmuch as concerned the Prince of Orange individually—always providing that his royal highness should unequivocally abstract himself from all national and family ties, and frankly offer himself to the Belgic people as their chief.

This latter plan was by no means impracticable as regarded the nation, nor impolitic as concerned Europe. The revolution had not been originally directed against the dynasty; for, in the first place, the insurgent chiefs had sworn “on honour,” to maintain it. Secondly, it was universally understood that the Prince of Orange was strongly opposed to the assault on Brussels, and that he was at that moment disgraced for espousing the popular cause; therefore, however fierce the antipathy to Prince Frederick and the king, the majority of the nation and army were well disposed to the heir to the throne. Of the concurrence and support of all European cabinets, there could be no question. From the banks of the Thames to the shores of the Neva, the nomination of the latter would have been hailed with joy. Even the French government, then under the pilotage of Lafitte, was averse to the entire exclusion of the Nassau dynasty; at all events, it went through the form of sending an agent to Brussels, to endeavour to obtain the adjournment of this measure.

A striking political syllogism tended to confirm the opinions of those who advocated an independent monarchy. Firstly, the mission undertaken by Gendebien, in order to sound the French government and the leaders of the movement party, as to the practicability of a reunion, had not been attended with satisfactory results: the one reluctantly but frankly declined the tempting bait; the other could only offer hopes and contingent promises. Secondly, the immense ascendancy of monarchical over democratic principles, both in France and Belgium, could not be denied even by the most sanguine republicans—a fact fully confirmed in the latter country by the national congress, where, out of two hundred members, *thirteen* only voted for a republic. Thirdly, the most short-sighted politicians were aware, since there was little prospect of inducing France to occupy Belgium, or, in other words, of dragging her into a war, in order to propagate anti-European doctrines, that the only means of preventing re-action was to embrace a system of negotiation, which could alone throw open the doors of communication with other powers, and afford a prospect of developing those seeds of nationality and independence which the most politic and patriotic were desirous to foster.

There certainly existed a party, both in and out of the government, eager for the employment of aggressive measures. A plan offering some probabilities of temporary success was suggested, and in the then phrenzied state of the Belgic people, and the demoralized condition of the Netherlands army, it is possible that, had the attempt been made, Maestricht might have followed the example of Mons and other fortresses, and that the patriots might have penetrated to the Moerdyk, and overrun the whole of North Brabant. But, setting aside all stratagetical considerations, this success must have been ephemeral, and

would have been a death-blow to Belgic independence. Even if England had remained neuter—and this was scarcely possible, since the *sine quâ non* of British neutrality was the non-interference of Belgium with neighbouring countries—Prussia must have sprung forward to repulse the aggression. France would thus have been compelled either to abandon Belgium to restoration, or, sacrificing her true interests to the fever of public opinion, she must have broken her alliance with Great Britain, declared war on Prussia, and commenced those very hostilities that were so strongly deprecated by her statesmen, and so contrary to the prudent policy and interests of Louis Philippe.

Fortunately, the majority of the provisional government fully comprehended the perilous risks into which the movement party was eager to seduce them. They consequently curbed the ardour of their troops, and casting aside the firebrand with which they might have ignited Europe, devoted themselves to cultivate a good understanding with other powers. This politic proceeding, however much opposed to the popular but fallacious theory, that “revolutions commenced by the sword should only terminate by the sword,” was the salvation of Belgium and of European peace. The men who advocated this system, and who unflinchingly adhered to it under circumstances the most trying, deserve no ordinary commendation.

Not only at the period in question, but up to a recent period, the falsest impressions have existed in Europe as to the prevalent demand for re-union with France, and the general existence of a republican spirit in Belgium. As regards the first, the question was essentially anti-national, anti-Catholic, and was never seriously mooted or proposed for public discussion. Not only did the infant government publicly declare that Belgium

should constitute an independent state, but the national congress unanimously ratified this decision in one of its earliest sittings. At the same time, it must be admitted, that a numerous body of commercialists and jurisconsults at Mons, Philippeville, Liege and Verviers, together with a portion of the aristocracy, would have gladly hailed a re-annexation to France, could this have been effected with the assent of foreign powers. But, nevertheless, the measure would have been as generally unpopular in 1830 as it was when Dumouriez addressed his letter to the convention in 1793.

As relates to the second point, nothing can be more erroneous than the received opinion that the Belgic people were generally imbued with democratic tendencies. The following are striking proofs of the contrary. As early as the 12th of October, while yet De Potter was in the zenith of his power, and while the country was still a prey to agitation and excitement, a commission was appointed to draw up a project of constitution. This commission, composed of twelve most devoted patriots, proclaimed, as an essential preliminary, the necessity of determining whether the proposed constitution should be founded on a monarchical or a republican basis. The former was adopted, with the exception of one voice, that of M. Tielemans.* This dissentient, who was a participator in the doctrines, exile, and short-lived popularity of De Potter, and who was devoured by an ambition not less potent than that which animated his friend, was soon named to a post in the administration, a place for which his habits of business and previous occupation in some measure qualified

* This decision was ratified by the national congress on the 22d of November, 1830, by a majority of 174 to 13.

him. But his maxims, founded on the most extravagant and dangerous theories, were not suited to the more moderate views of his colleagues. Thus, after surviving M. de Potter for a brief space, he retired from office, and sunk into that retirement, where he is probably destined to rest ; unless some fresh convulsion shall call him from his retreat, and revive those illusive republican visions, which are so essentially anti-sympathetic to the general views of the Belgic people. Yes ; a hundred-fold more so in Belgium than in Holland, where the oligarchical principles of more than two centuries have not been effaced by the monarchical attachments of twenty years ; for, if one would seek for the seeds of the old leaven of democracy in the Netherlands, it must be in the father-land of the illustrious Barneveldt and De Witt, and not in the Belgic provinces.

So rapid, however, was the revolutionary contagion, that in less than three weeks after the defeat of Prince Frederick, the Brabant tri-colour waved from every tower and spire ; whilst trees of liberty reared their heads in every square and public place throughout the land. The authority of the provisional government was universally recognized, and its decrees had the force of laws. The ministerial departments were formed. The civil functionaries suspected of Orangism were superseded. The military commanders shared a similar fate. The civic guards were

• First Belgic ministry :—

<i>Interior</i>	Messrs. Tielemana.
<i>Finance</i>	Coghen.
<i>War</i>	Jolly.
<i>Justice</i>	Gendebien.
<i>Foreign, or Diplomatic Commission</i> {	Van de Weyer.
	De Celles.
	D'Aerschot.
	Nothomb.
	Le Hon.

re-enrolled, and the war department commenced a new system of military organization, copied from that of France. The Marquis of Chasteler, who had served as a captain of hussars in 1815, and who raised the corps of Brussels sharp-shooters, which still bears his name, was entrusted with the re-formation of the cavalry, and General Wauther with re-modelling the infantry regiments. Permission was also granted to several officers, to levy free corps in the metropolis and provinces. Every effort was made at the same time to place a few batteries of artillery in a fit state to take the field. Van Halen, who appears to have excited the jealousy of De Potter, and to have been suspected of aiming at the dictatorship, had been forced to resign, after enjoying the command eleven days. But, as some amends for this disgrace, he was appointed Lieutenant-general on the retired list, with a pension of ten thousand francs, and half that sum in reversion to his wife. Imputations of a serious nature were, however, levelled against this officer. He was accused of having promoted the disorders, that, by an unfortunate coincidence, broke out at Bruges, Mons, Malines, and other places, at the period of a visit made by him in the provinces ; and, being suspected of Orangism, he soon shared the fate that so often awaits objects of popular favour. Arrested by order of De Potter and his colleagues, he was cast into prison at Mons, and prosecuted, but, being quickly able to prove his innocence, was honourably acquitted.

In the meantime the Dutch, who had been abandoned by the greater part of the soldiers, and many officers of infantry — by a portion of the cavalry, and by all the garrison artillery, except that of Antwerp and Maestricht—were constrained to evacuate Malines and Liérre, and to withdraw behind the Rupel and Néthes ; having their right at Boom, their advance and centre at

the bridges of Walhem and Duffel, and their left on the Chaussée leading from Liérre to Antwerp. The patriot right wing under Niellon, having occupied the former town, an attempt was made by the Duke of Saxe Weimar to dislodge them from this important point; but he was repulsed with loss. Thus, the left flank of the Dutch was laid open, and the troops at Duffel and Walhem were subjected to be turned, and even cut off from Antwerp; which would infallibly have been the case had the patriots been provided with cavalry. If Prince Frederick entertained any serious intention of maintaining his position on the Néthes, it was contrary to all the rules of strategy, to allow the enemy to cross that river, or to penetrate into Liérre. Few positions offer such facilities for defence. A handful of men ought to have defended any given point against a host. But the demoralization of the Netherlands troops was such as to baffle all ordinary provision.

The whole of the Belgic active forces, under the orders of Major-general Nypels, who had superseded Van Halen, proposed to follow the retiring foe. The right, consisting of about 3000 infantry, a dozen cavalry, and six field-pieces, under Lieutenant-colonel Niellon, after driving the Dutch from Campenhout and Liérre, established itself at the latter place. The centre, under Nypels and Mellinet, composed of about 4,000 infantry, a brigade of guns, and a few mounted vedettes, pushed on through Malines, and pressing the Dutch rear-guard, occupied Walhem, and forced the latter to withdraw beyond the bridge.

Thus, by the 22d October, the whole of the country on the left bank of the Rupel and Néthes was in possession of the patriots, who were busily engaged in preparing to pursue their advantages to the gates of Antwerp. At the same time defensive precautions were not neg-

lected at Brussels. The gates were stockaded, secured with breast-works and *chevaux-de-frize*, and well flanked with parapets for cannon. The park was surrounded by deep intrenchments, and a similar line of works extended from the gates of Hal, Namur, and Louvain, to the canal. The houses in the vicinity of the gates were loop-holed; the observatory was converted into a block-house, and a multitude of palisaded barricades intersected the inner ramparts and adjacent streets. The city was thus rendered secure from any sudden attack.

Although the public treasure scarcely contained a thousand pounds in specie, money was soon forthcoming for the exigencies of the moment, and the public receivers announced that the contributions were paid with alacrity and regularity. It was evident, however, that a forced loan would immediately be required to meet the extraordinary expenditure.*

* Voluntary gifts, to a considerable amount, were subscribed and forwarded to the treasury, but these were far from sufficient for the exigencies of the government.

CHAPTER II.

INTELLIGENCE OF PRINCE FREDERICK'S DEFEAT REACHES THE HAGUE—THE PRINCE OF ORANGE DEPUTED TO PROCEED TO ANTWERP TO ESTABLISH A SEPARATE GOVERNMENT — MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO PRINCES—THE LATTER ISSUES A PROCLAMATION, AND DISPATCHES THE PRINCE KOSLOWSKY TO SOUND THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT—FAILURE OF THIS MISSION—THE PRINCE OF ORANGE, AFTER SOME DAYS' HESITATION, DETERMINES TO BREAK OFF ALL COMMUNICATION WITH HIS FATHER'S GOVERNMENT, AND TO PLACE HIMSELF AT THE HEAD OF THE MOVEMENT—IS REJECTED — QUILTS ANTWERP, AND RETURNS TO HOLLAND—THE PATRIOT TROOPS ADVANCE, AND AFTER DRIVING BACK THE DUTCH REAR-GUARD UNDER THE DUKE OF SAXE WEIMAR, SUCCEED IN GAINING POSSESSION OF ANTWERP — THE DUTCH RETIRE INTO THE CITADEL, AND BOMBARD THE CITY.

WHILE the events narrated in the foregoing chapters were passing in Belgium, the Hague cabinet, confiding in the bloodless success of Prince Frederick's mission, and the restoration of legitimate order at Brussels, was occupied in discussing the best method of settling the embarrassing question of administrative separation, which, by a calculation of the votes of the chambers, had appeared inevitable as early as the 20th of September. With the ardour and enthusiasm natural to his character, and perhaps with a sinister foreboding of misfortune, the Prince of Orange was eager to set out for the south, and at once to proclaim that separation, which, had it been frankly promised by the king on the 5th of September, in lieu of being torn from him on the 29th, and that by the very means his majesty had indignantly spurned, it would have saved the monarchy. The affirmative solution of the questions propounded in the message of the 13th being considered unavoidable,

the king, in despite of his inveterate prejudices, appeared more inclined to listen to the suggestions and entreaties of those who urged him to depute the hereditary prince to establish a separate government at Antwerp. But this measure was so repugnant to the king's feelings, so completely at variance with his principles and his hopes of reducing the patriots to submission, that it was postponed from day to day, and was still undecided, when the astounding intelligence of Prince Frederick's retreat reached the Hague on the night of the 28th.

It was with mixed sensations of grief and shame that the Prince of Orange received the intelligence of an event so injurious to the military fame of his family, so fatal to the interests of the throne. But, however painful, he at least had the sorrowful consolation, that the fatal results were produced by measures diametrically opposed to his own conclusions, and that he was exempt from all participation in the odium attached to the military operations. He therefore cherished, and had grounds for cherishing, hopes that the Belgic people would not confound him with his brother, nor visit on his head the political errors of his father. But, by a terrible fatality, the frank and loyal conduct of the prince was treated as a machiavelian artifice. He was declared to have violated his oath, and to have sent his brother to encounter all the hazards, and thus to reserve for himself the means of re-appearing with advantage on the scene.

For the first time, those that had treated the representations of the prince and the Belgic deputies as exaggerated, and who had maintained submission to be an indispensable preliminary to concession, now began to open their eyes, and to deplore that obstinacy and impolicy which induced them to oppose the return of

the former to Brussels. Defeated in the field, discomfited in the chambers, and abandoned by diplomacy, the government found itself outflanked, and borne down on every side. With bitter hearts and reluctant hands, they were now constrained to grasp at those very measures, as a last precarious plank of safety, which the prince had frequently recommended, and the Belgic people earnestly implored them to accept, as a sheet-anchor of security. The bitterness of these feelings was not diminished by the conviction that they were solely indebted for these pernicious results to their own impolicy, and their utter disregard to public opinion and to the signs of the times.

After a succession of cabinet councils, and consultations with foreign envoys, who now, when there was no alternative, strongly opined for concession; after appointing a commission to compile a project of organization, "based on a separation and revision of the fundamental law;" after instructing its ministers at foreign courts to demand the strict execution of the treaty of Vienna, the cabinet came to the tardy determination of according temporary powers to the Prince of Orange to act as governor of the southern provinces, and appointed three ministers and seven councillors to aid him in his functions; thus establishing an administration totally distinct from that of the Hague, as far at least as regarded all internal questions. A royal decree of the 4th of October announced this resolution to the nation.* But this satisfactory document came too late. Indeed, it was looked upon as an additional monument of the ill-timed and vacillating policy of the government. Precisely one month sooner, and it would have been effectual. It was now treated with derision, and added

* See Appendix, No. 20.

to the triumph of the south. The nation had gone too far to dream of retraction, or reconciliation with the crown. The bond was utterly broken. A government like to that mentioned in De Potter's letter had effectually risen up by the side of the Batavian throne. The royal personage and his authorities were virtually extinct. The monarch was already spoken of as deposed.

However, no sooner had the government come to this decision, than the Prince of Orange hastened to Antwerp, whither he was immediately followed by the Duke d'Ursel, Messrs. de la Coste, and Van Gobelschroy, as well as the Counts d'Aerschot, De Celles, and other members of the States-General. There his royal highness found Prince Frederick, who inhabited the right wing of the palace, the left of which was destined for his own reception. The meeting of the two princes was embarrassing. The chivalrous glories of a long line of heroes had met with a stain in their descendant. The laurels won by the Prince of Orange himself on twenty battle-fields, to the least sanguinary of which the combat at Brussels was but a mere skirmish, were tarnished by his own brother, and a dark shadow obscured the family escutcheon. But the paleness, the depression, and mental suffering of Prince Frederick; the conviction that the disaster resulted from a vicious plan of attack, and from misplaced forbearance rather than from any lack of personal exertion, deeply affected the elder prince; and, although the bitterest feelings filled his heart, he threw himself into his brother's arms, and wept.

Indeed, such persons as were admitted to Prince Frederick's presence could not witness unmoved the change that anxiety and distress of mind had produced in his appearance within a few days. His countenance, rarely brightened by beams of hilarity, now portrayed

intense sorrow in every lineament. It was not the actual repulse from Brussels that affected him (for the ablest generals and bravest troops are liable to similar disasters), so much as the odious calumnies lavished both on him and the corps under his orders; and perhaps the secret upbraiding of his conscience, which told him that the measures he had adopted had lost the monarchy. When speaking upon this subject, he vainly strove to conceal his emotion; and although he disdained to notice the charges that affected his courage, he expressed extreme anxiety that the British nation, and indeed Europe in general, should know that he had spared no pains to diminish the disorders inevitable to an assault, and that the aspersions cast upon him were as unmerited as they were odious. For this, Europe gave him full credit; but no arguments, no proofs could eradicate the fatal impression made upon the Belgic people.

One of the first public acts of the Prince of Orange, was a proclamation, announcing the object of his mission.* But this unfortunately produced no better effects than that of his father. It was evident that His Royal Highness, although he professed to have supreme authority, was dependent on orders from the Hague, and that his powers were *temporary*, and subservient to those of General Chassé and Prince Frederick, who still retained the command of the army. This destroyed all confidence, and neutralized all his efforts.

But never was distrust more undeserved. The intentions of the prince were frank and loyal in the extreme. At that moment he would willingly have sacrificed his best blood to serve the people, or to save the throne. Had his filial piety been less, or his moral energy

* See Appendix, No. 21.

greater, he might have triumphed. Divided between devotion to his father, and his conviction that only one path could lead to success; still doubting the irretrievable lengths to which the revolution had been carried, and relying on the assurances of passive partisans, instead of seeking to baffle the resistance of active opponents, he temporized when instant action was essential, and began to act when the hour of exertion was gone by. He was, moreover, surrounded by injudicious friends, and timid if not treacherous counsellors. He was secretly counteracted by his brother, and openly opposed by Chassé, who, as well as all other Dutch generals, burned with an ardent desire to revenge the recent disasters.

From the first moment, however, of his arrival at Antwerp, his royal highness adopted such measures as were considered likely to flatter national prejudices, and anxiously sought to procure information as to the best means of obtaining the support of the provisional government. Various emissaries were employed for the latter purpose, and it was in consequence of advice from Brussels that he resolved to despatch a neutral agent, to treat directly with De Potter and his colleagues, of whom almost all were declared to be favourable to his views.

The person selected for this mission was Prince Koslowsky, who, being out of favour at the Court of St. Petersburg, was at that moment sojourning at Ghent. This talented diplomatist forthwith obeyed the prince's summons, and instantly proceeded to Brussels, where, after communicating with Mr. Cartwright, and addressing himself to D'Hoogvorst and Van Halen, he was introduced to some members of the provisional government; but, notwithstanding the tact and ability displayed by Koslowsky, the mission completely failed.

Setting aside the suspicions awakened by the intervention of a person who, in the then state of popular excitement, was looked upon as a Russian spy, rather than as a mediator on the part of the Prince of Orange, the propositions of which Koslowsky was the bearer were not calculated to produce the desired effect.—

1. The provisional government had proclaimed national independence, and the prince mainly founded his claim on legitimacy, and his rights of succession. 2. His royal highness demanded the fulfilment of their promise to maintain the dynasty, and they objected that the dynasty had violated its own oaths. 3. He still clung to the union, and talked of a connecting link with his father, while they declared the separation to be absolute and irrevocable—not obtained as a boon from the crown, but wrenched from it by force; and, consequently, they renounced all further allegiance to the *ex*-king. In short, there was scarcely a single preliminary on which there was any appearance of concord. “Let him come amongst us alone,” said they, “as a Belgian, or only attended by Belgians. Let him throw himself into our arms, and trust to the votes of the people. We can offer no guarantees, but these are his only chances.” It is true, some members of the provisional government would gladly have availed themselves of the prince’s offers; but these were not only uncertain of the extent and duration of their own influence, but were completely under the control of their master-spirit (De Potter), whose mere breath would have sufficed, at that moment, to have raised a hurricane that might have overwhelmed them all beneath its blast.

Those who counselled the Prince of Orange on this occasion, seem to have acted in utter ignorance of the real state of affairs; and, above all, of the immediate position of the provisional government, both in regard

to each other, and to the daily press ; which latter had assumed undisputed dominion over the public mind, and may be said to have set its foot upon the very neck of the nation. Maturer consideration ought to have convinced his royal highness and his advisers, that his only prospect of success was to offer himself unconditionally to the people—not as a link in the dynastic chain, but as the prince best calculated to satisfy national and European exigencies : that is, by reconciling the liberty of the one with the tranquillity of the other. But, even admitting that he had adopted this bold plan, it is still problematical whether the jealousies and vindictive animosities of the few, would not have prevailed over the more pacific vows of the many. Besides, it required no common energy, and disregard of all moral and political ties, for a man in his exalted position to attempt an enterprise so novel and precarious.

It would have been a desperate undertaking, without a chance of retreat in case of failure. Before him was doubt, hazard, a probability of insult, and a possibility of death. Behind was ignominy, national hatred, family dissension, and European objurgation. Success would have stamped him a usurper in the eyes of his father, and as an alien in those of his native country ; whilst defeat would have thrown him on the world a political outcast, without a home or family. In either case, friends and enemies would have looked upon him with suspicion, and probably stigmatized his conduct as attended with immorality and filial apostacy. Yet this plan, with all its evils, was the only one that offered a chance of salvation for the dynasty ; and the cabinets of Europe would have done well to have urged him and his family to its frank adoption, and to have supported him, not only by all the mediatory influence at their disposal, but with solemn assurances of instantly recognizing the national

independence. For the obstacle lay, not in any paramount objections on the part of the Belgians to the prince, but in their fears of re-action, and of again falling beneath the Dutch yoke.

A situation of greater embarrassment could scarcely be imagined. At length, after wavering some days, his royal highness overcame some portion of his scruples, but not to the extent necessary to insure success. After fruitlessly occupying himself from the 5th to the 16th of October, in devising means for the better government of a country, which fiercely disavowed his authority, and contemptuously repudiated his decrees; after seeing his pacific and conciliatory assurances unequivocally counteracted by a royal proclamation, which designated the southern provinces as rebels, and energetically called the Dutch to arms, in the name of their king, their country, and their God;* after a second ineffectual effort to negotiate with the provisional governments, and the commission appointed to draw up the projected constitution; after a vain attempt to effect a general exchange of prisoners; after visiting and succouring these prisoners on board the pontoons, and eventually liberating the whole—a generosity unimitated by the Belgians:† in short, after adopting every possible measure of conciliation, he determined to break off all direct connexion with his father's government, to dissolve the royal commission of administration, to acknowledge the national independence, and to place himself at the head of the movement. A proclamation to this effect was published on the 16th.‡

* See Appendix, No. 22.

† This proceeding was the less excusable on the part of the latter, seeing that the greater part of the Dutch prisoners were retained in despite of capitulation, or had been seized by the populace when deserted by their troops.

‡ See Appendix, No. 23.

But this resolution, like all others emanating from the same source, utterly failed. It offended the susceptibilities of the people, and aroused the jealousies of the provisional government, who declared, by a contemptuous counter-proclamation, "that the national independence, being a fact established by the victory of the people, required no ratification; that they protested against the prince having any power or share in the authority, which was solely vested in their hands; and added, that the people having consummated the revolution, and expelled the Dutch, they, and not he, were at the head of the movement." The prince's decision was in fact not only tardy and incomplete, but it was attended by two striking defects. For, whilst it far outstepped all bounds as regarded the king, it fell short of the exigencies of the patriots. It thus excited to the utmost the dissatisfaction of the one, and failed to captivate the good-will of the other. Overwhelmed with choler and indignation, the former instantly revoked the powers accorded to his son, and gave public vent to his feelings in a message addressed to the States-General, on the 20th of October.* The latter, assuming the democratic tone of the first French revolution, declared "that William of Orange, having recognized the national independence, had placed himself under the necessity of choosing either to become a Belgic or Dutch subject. If he determined for the latter, he would find himself in flagrant hostility with the Belgic people. If he selected the former, he must go through the forms of naturalization, acknowledge the government, submit to the laws, and consider himself on a level with any other Belgic citizen." No medium was allowed to be possible. It was farther argued that by recognizing Belgic indepen-

* See Appendix, No. 24.

dence, and the legality of a national congress, "William of Nassau (the Prince of Orange) had admitted the nullity of his own rights and those of his family."

Disheartened by the ill success of his efforts, alarmed by the menaces and reproaches of his father, and moved by the sullen murmurs of Chassé and the Dutch generals, repentance quickly followed, and the prince was therefore as eager to recede as he had been anxious to advance. Consequently, after an ineffectual effort to conclude an armistice, a proposition haughtily replied to by the provisional government, who demanded "the preliminary evacuation of Maestricht, Antwerp, Termonde, and Venloo, and the retreat of all the royal troops beyond the Moerdyck;" after seeing every attempt or proposition for conciliation disdainfully rejected by the Belgians, and his authority disputed by Chassé, who placed Antwerp in a state of siege on the 24th; after liberating from their oaths a number of Belgian officers, who having tendered their resignation, and refused to fight against their countrymen, had been placed under arrest; after witnessing the inundation of the Polders, and the still more dangerous overflowing of the revolutionary spirit in the hitherto loyal city of Antwerp, the prince embarked for Rotterdam, on the the night of the 25th, and abandoning all hope of conciliation, with a bleeding heart bade adieu to the Belgic provinces, in a short but touching address.*

Thus terminated a mission which served but to consolidate the strength of the insurgent government, and to tear its last prop from that of the crown; a mission that produced no other result than to demonstrate more fully the generous, but vacillating character of the prince, and to expose more clearly the system of con-

* See Appendix, No. 25.

tradictory policy pursued by the Dutch government. For what could be more paradoxical than to charge the hereditary prince with the formation of a distinct local government in the south, to admit the question of separation, and to promise forgetfulness of political errors ; and yet, ere the ink of this decree was dry, to issue a proclamation declaring these provinces "in a state of rebellion," and calling the Dutch to arms, for the avowed purpose, not of defending their own hearths, but of reconquering and crushing their revolted brethren ?

The proceeding of the prince was not only injudicious as regarded the present, but it exercised a most pernicious influence over his cause on more than one subsequent occasion. For it undermined the confidence hitherto reposed in his sincerity and firmness, and proved that although he might have the inclination, he had not the courage, to separate himself entirely from his father ; and between the father and the Belgic people it was clear that there could be no further connecting link, unless it were rivetted by foreign bayonets or proclaimed by foreign cannon. Although such were, and still are, the auxiliaries called for by the partisans of the Nassau dynasty, it is evident that these are not the means best calculated to place or maintain a sovereign on the Belgic throne. The conduct of His Royal Highness on this occasion was the more unfortunate, from its showing not only that he lacked that promptitude and energetic decision, which alone paves the way to victory, and gives great minds so powerful an ascendancy over the cast of fortune, but that he was neither fully master of his own will, nor totally submissive to that of the king ; and that, although he coveted the fruit, he had not hardihood sufficient to climb the tree. Thus, neither on this nor upon any subsequent occasion, did he ever abandon those half measures, which are so inimical to success in moments of crisis. His

entry into Brussels on the 1st of September had afforded ground to suppose that his moral energies were equal to his dauntless personal valour; but the events of the twelve succeeding months plainly demonstrated that, if he had the hand to execute, he wanted the head to guide. However pre-eminent for many of the noble qualities which distinguished his ancestors, his talents and energies as a statesman and commander were not on a par with the exigencies of his position. Thence the mission to Antwerp in October, 1830, was an utter failure, and thence the short campaign of August, 1831, added nothing to his reputation either as a strategist or a tactician. But of this hereafter.

The departure of the prince from Antwerp, preceded by that of his brother, was the immediate forerunner of that memorable event which has coupled the name of Baron Chassé, not with a bold and terrible operation by which an important city, and perhaps a crown, was restored to its master, but with one of the most useless acts of rigour that stands recorded in the annals of war.

A word as to the military operations immediately preceding that catastrophe is necessary. These were not less unfavourable to the Dutch than those of September. On the forenoon of the 22nd of October, the patriot bands, forming an irregular mass of about five thousand men, with sixteen guns, commenced a simultaneous movement upon the line occupied by the royal troops, who were about seven thousand strong, with forty pieces of artillery. Of these nearly one half, forming the rear-guard, were in position upon the Néthes.* The

* These streams have their source, the one near Lummel, and the other not far from Hechtel, in the province of Limbourg. The lesser falls into the greater Néthe at Liérre, and thence runs through Walhem, where it assumes the name of the Rupel, which discharges itself into the Scheldt opposite Rupelmonde.

patriot leaders, having held a council of war on the previous day, it was determined that Niellon, pushing forward on the Chaussée from Liérre to Antwerp, should turn the Dutch left flank, and thus menacing their rear, compel them to fall back on Berchem; and, while the centre threatened Duffel, that the left under Mellinet should make demonstrations on the bridge of Walhem, which was deemed too strong to admit of any direct attack, even should the Dutch neglect to destroy it.*

But the reckless valour of the patriot volunteers was not to be restrained until Niellon had executed his manœuvre. At dawn on the 23rd, a small detachment, led on by one or two daring men, threw themselves into boats, above and below the village, and succeeded in crossing the stream with little opposition, whilst another body gallantly charged the bridge in front, and in despite of a galling fire of grape and musquetry, quickly made good their passage, and forced the Dutch, who had partially set fire to the wooden piles, to fall back upon Contich. On the following day the patriot left, after a sharp skirmish near the last-mentioned place, effected its junction with the right, at the spot where the Liérre and Malines roads unite, near the

* Niellon, now a naturalized Belgian major-general, had been a non-commissioned officer in the French service. At the moment of the revolution he was associated with the director of the Park theatre. Mellinet, also a Frenchman, had likewise served in the French service, in which he had risen to the rank of general of brigade. Pecuniary and other circumstances had rendered it necessary for both to quit France. Kessels, now a major of artillery, had originally served as a non-commissioned officer in that arm; but had abandoned the service, and at a later period had purchased the skeleton of a whale, which he exhibited at Paris, and was decorated by the King of France with the cross of the Legion of Honour. All three distinguished themselves by their courage, during the attack on Brussels, and on every subsequent occasion. During the short campaign of 1831, Niellon displayed military talents of a higher order.

vieux Dieu. Advancing from thence on the morning of the 25th, these two corps, supported by sixteen pieces, made a simultaneous attack on the Duke of Saxe Weimar's rear-guard, which held Berchem with about three thousand infantry, several squadrons, and two brigades of guns; and, although roughly handled, they succeeded in forcing the duke to seek shelter under the walls of the fortress.* On the 26th, Mellinet, having received intelligence of a rising within the city, dispatched Niellon and Kessels to feel their way on the side of the Borgerhout suburb. Here the latter took possession of the half-moon in front of the gate, and turning the cannon abandoned by the Dutch upon the city, fired a few blank rounds to announce his presence. In the meantime, the centre debouching from Berchem, advanced cautiously upon the Malines-gate; and the left, pushing forward by Wylrick upon Kiel, succeeded in driving the enemy into the body of the place, and thus formed the investment of only the whole exterior, extending from the Scheldt by Kiel on the left, round to the high road conducting to Bergen-op-Zoom on the right. A detachment upon the left bank having followed the movements of those on the right, took possession of Burcht.

While these operations were going on without the walls, the emissaries of the provisional government, in conjunction with various disaffected persons, had been actively engaged in preparing a diversion within. During several days the hostile spirit manifested by the lower orders, had caused much disquietude to the governor. These turbulent symptoms had been restrained by the presence of the Prince of Orange; but no sooner

* It was in this affair that Count Frederick de Mérode was mortally wounded. His remains were interred near the spot where he fell. A monument has been raised there to his memory.

was it known that his royal highness had departed, than the explosion instantly burst forth. Divers partial disturbances having taken place, the garrison, consisting of about eight thousand effectives, was kept under arms; the guns of the fleet and citadel were in constant readiness, and an attempt was made to palisade the Malines-gate, and thus to convert it into a block-house. But the general commanding appears to have confided in the destructive resources of his citadel for avenging an attack, rather than to have exerted any extraordinary means to anticipate commotion, and to guarantee himself from external surprise or internal treachery. For, though he assured the friends of government of the arrival of reinforcements, and of other energetic measures to be adopted for the security of the place, he availed himself most sparingly and injudiciously of those which were already at his disposal. In fact, until the adventurous patriots had rushed into the city, and audaciously running down their field-pieces to the water's-edge, fired at the arsenal and fleet, he spurned the idea of their attempting so desperate a *roup-de-main*.

Scarcely had day dawned on the 26th, ere a riotous body of the populace commenced operations by pillaging a small vessel laden with old arms, and this at half-pistol distance from the ships of war. Having effected this, they threw themselves on several isolated military posts, some of which fled, while others surrendered. Thus, in the course of a short time, the people became masters of almost every part of the city not occupied by the main guards, and having thereby procured an ample supply of arms and ammunition, commenced a harassing attack upon the troops in the squares and at the gates. But with the exception of the piquet at the town-hall, and another in the *grande place*, the other Dutch detachments maintained their ground until the

morning of the 27th; when the *porte rouge*, and immediately afterwards that of Borgerhout, were wrested from them, and having been instantly opened by the populace, Niellon, Kessels, and their followers rushed into the city, encountering but trifling resistance except near the residence of the governor.

A sudden panic now appeared to seize upon the garrison. Hastily abandoning the whole line of external and internal works, except the Lunettes St. Laurent and Kiel, and a portion of the arsenal, they retired into the citadel, pursued by Niellon and Kessels, who charging along the ramparts, dashed upon the Malinesgate, which they burst open amidst deafening hurrahs, and thus admitted the corps of Mellinet. At this moment the authorities made their appearance, bringing with them the city keys; an offer derided by the patriot chiefs, who claimed the honour of an assault. Following up their success, the volunteers eagerly rushed after their flying foes to the very foot of the citadel glacis; and thus, in less than two hours, this important and splendid fortress, which might have resisted the attack of a regular army of fifty thousand men from without, and which had a garrison and fleet sufficient to have repressed any popular movement within, was irrevocably wrested from the crown. On this occasion, General Chassé committed one of those grievous errors, so necessary to be avoided in the event of popular tumult. In lieu of concentrating his masses, and withdrawing his small detachments, so as to prevent their being overpowered and cut off one after the other; instead of occupying in force the most important points, especially the gates, and covering them with barricades or entrenchments—a precaution most essential in times when the barricades of the people are the great instruments of popular triumph; in lieu of keeping his reserves

ready to move in dense columns, so as to sweep the streets and ramparts, he divided them into small parties and patrols, and left the gates with little more than the ordinary number of men, and thus subjected his people to be harassed, demoralized, and annihilated in detail.

A prevalent opinion existing that Chassé had resolved to avail himself of the earliest pretext to sacrifice a portion of the city to the jealous exigencies of Dutch commerce, and that he had thus hastily withdrawn his garrison in order that he might execute this barbarous project, the regency, hoping to negotiate an armistice, dispatched a flag of truce to the citadel, attended by a delegate from the provisional government, as well as some of the foreign consuls. The mission was successful, and Chassé having concluded a verbal truce, instantly hoisted the white flag. This being observed by Mellinet, Kessels was directed to proceed to the citadel to inquire into the nature of the negotiation, and to claim the right of ratification; but he was referred to the civil authorities, and informed by the Dutch general that he would neither recognize nor hold communion with the rebel leaders. Elated with their triumph, and indignant at the reception their commissioner had met with, the patriot chiefs hastened to the town-hall, whither an officer had been sent by Chassé to conclude a definite arrangement with the municipality. Here Mellinet and Niellon asserted that the city, having been taken by assault, they, and not the regency, were the only competent authority; then declaring all former arrangements to be null and void, they drew up an insolent project of capitulation, which was indignantly rejected by Chassé; at the same time, the delegate from the provisional government produced the following document, empowering him to act in their name.

" The Provisional Government of Belgium.

" Central Committee,

" Authorizes M. Van der Herreweghe to take possession of the city and citadel of Antwerp, and to see it occupied in the name of the Belgic people.

" Brussels, Oct. 26, 1830.

(Signed) " MERODE, &c., &c."

The history of civil wars can scarcely furnish an official instrument parallel in audacity to these few lines. That such a fortress as Antwerp, having a numerous and chosen garrison, under experienced and brave commanders, with a powerful and devoted fleet, moored at musket-shot from its open quays; a fortress immediately under the guns of that celebrated citadel which Alba had purposely raised to overawe the people; having a large portion of its respectable burghers and communal guard firmly attached to the government, and being in itself of such paramount military and political importance, as to render its preservation a matter of vital necessity; that such a fortress should be abandoned almost without a struggle, is sufficiently incomprehensible; but that the patriot government should anticipate such triumph, and actually empower its delegate "to take possession" of the citadel, is certainly not one of the least singular and daring episodes of the revolution. Yet the general commanding has been held up to Europe as a model of firmness and military skill. Had General Chassé's talents or energy borne any proportion to his reputation, Antwerp, and perhaps all Belgium, would have now owned the dominion of Holland.

The mystery that envelops the causes immediately leading to the fearful catastrophe of the 27th of October, is so profound; the assertions on one side are so opposed to the asseverations of the other, that it is extremely

difficult to arrive at any impartial conclusion. Indeed, the proceedings of both were of a nature so little honourable to either, that they are equally interested in concealing or disfiguring the truth. On the one side, the Belgians affirm that a preconcerted plan had been laid to sacrifice the arsenal and valuable depôt of merchandize upon the first pretext, no matter how frivolous; that combustibles had been placed for this purpose in various parts of the buildings; that paid emissaries were employed to mingle with the populace and fire upon the troops, in order to make sure of that pretext, which had been averted by the truce; and that the Dutch soldiers, and not the volunteers, were guilty of the first aggression.

On the other hand, the Dutch affirm that the infraction was entirely on the part of the patriots, and that although a heavy musquetry fire had been kept up during some time, not a single cannon was discharged until Kessels, the commander of the assailing artillery, had brought up a six-pounder, and began to batter the arsenal gate, in despite of the white flag which still waved upon the citadel; a fact corroborated by the report of the patriot chiefs. The Dutch likewise indignantly disclaim all malice prepense, and adduce as a proof of this their readiness to renew negotiations. They assert, with great justice, that had it been their desire to destroy the city, the whole would soon have shared the fate of the entrepôt. That their object in confining their fire principally to this quarter, was not to satisfy the demands of jealous Dutch merchants, but to prevent the contents of the arsenal from falling into the hands of the patriots; and that the destruction of the one was the unfortunate result of its immediate vicinity to the other. After calmly and impartially weighing the evidence on both sides, there appears little doubt that the first infraction of the

armistice was the act of the volunteers. It is not, therefore, against the right of Chassé to repel force by force, but against the impolitic abuse of this privilege, that the historian should raise his voice. There can be no doubt that *he was authorized*, by the strict laws of war, to wreak his vengeance upon the city, and to render the whole responsible for the few. But such an act of barbarity was not only inconsistent with the civilization of the nineteenth century and the dictates of humanity, but the guilty escaped, while the innocent alone suffered; and although Chassé partially employed the means of destruction at his disposal, he neglected to obtain the advantageous conditions that were within his reach.

The course to have been pursued was simple and efficacious. Had it been adopted on the 25th, the revolt had never broken out, nor could the volunteers have entered the city. On the first appearance of sedition, Chassé should have withdrawn his small guards, contented himself with maintaining his gates, and having turned some of the guns of his ramparts on the town, have strongly occupied the posts enfilading the streets. He should have kept a sharp look-out from Fort Montebello, on the Berchem road, and from the lunette Carnot, and the half-moon on that of Borgerhout. Upon the first symptom of insurrection, he should have issued a short, but energetic proclamation, somewhat to the following effect:—"Inhabitants of Antwerp! The safety of the fortress entrusted to my charge is menaced. The first open insult offered to any of my soldiers—the first shot fired on any post or detachment, shall be avenged by the extermination of the quarter of the city where such aggression may take place. The bombardment shall continue until the ringleaders are delivered up. Citizens! the salvation of your homes

and fortunes is in your own hands ; unite with me to maintain tranquillity, or the consequences be on your own heads !”

Supposing, however, that he had not adopted this step *à priori*, it was his duty to have replied to the insulting proposition of Mellinet and Niellon, by reminding them that the city was under the muzzle of the guns of the citadel, forts, and fleet ; that unless the whole of the volunteers instantly evacuated the limits of the fortress, liberated the Dutch prisoners, restored their arms, and brought those of the people to the foot of the glacis, and hoisted the Orange flag on every turret in the place, that he would reduce the whole to a heap of ashes.

Nay, even after the expiration of the bombardment, had he peremptorily demanded the evacuation and submission of the city, as the *sine quâ non* to further concessions, he might have imposed his own terms. The terrible lesson the populace had received had rendered them sensible of the imminence of these perils ; and the delegates of the provisional government would have paused ere they persisted in sacrificing the second city of Belgium to the obstinacy of a few desperate men. But Chassé unfortunately let slip the golden opportunity, and thus paved the way to the subsequent downfall of the citadel.

All that is known of the incidents immediately leading to the bombardment is, that a multitude of volunteers, many in a state of intoxication, and all in a most violent paroxysm of excitement, spread themselves through the streets contiguous to the citadel and arsenal, and perceiving some Dutch soldiers at the window of the latter, first insulted, and then fired at them. This aggression was quickly answered, and volley after volley rapidly succeeded on both sides. A Belgian six-pounder then opened its fire on the arsenal-gate, and the volun-

teers, having forced the entrance with axes, rushed into the building, where they made several prisoners.

Justly exasperated at this infraction of the truce, for which Niellon, Mellinet, and Kessels should have been held responsible—for they might have prevented the employment of artillery, although perhaps they could not have restrained the insolence of their men, so as to hinder partial discharges of musquetry—Chassé ordered two or three guns to be fired from the raveline and bastion facing the arsenal. But this being ineffectual, and the attack on the latter continuing, he hauled down his white flag, and gave the signal for action agreed upon with the fleet, which consisted of eight vessels of war, presenting a broadside of upwards of 90 guns.

An awful and simultaneous roar of artillery now fell on the ears of the affrighted inhabitants. In an instant the citadel, fleet, and forts hurled forth their converging thunder. An iron deluge rained upon the city walls, and clattered among the buildings. Showers of shells, bombs, and carcasses, were heard cracking, bursting, and bellowing around the venerable towers of St. Michael; the uproar of their explosion being multiplied by the echoes of the cathedral. Walls, roofs, and floors fell crushed beneath the resistless weight of projectiles, which sought their victims in the very cellars, confounding mangled bodies and ruined edifices in one mutilated and confused heap. Ere long, dark columns of smoke and jets of flame were seen to rise. The arsenal and entrepôt were fired. The obscurity of the night soon gave way to a red and glaring lustre, that converted the dark vault of heaven into a fiery canopy, whose lurid reflexion announced the fearful catastrophe to the distance of many leagues.

The terror and stupefaction of the inhabitants baffles all description. Some concealed themselves in their

vaults and cellars; others rushed wildly through the streets, shrieking and bewildered. Such as had horses or vehicles, no matter of what kind, seized their valuables and hastily fled into the country. Others, alone intent on saving life, darted through the gates on foot, and sought refuge in the neighbouring fields. Old men, pregnant women, and young children; rich and poor, the hale and the sick, were seen flying in frantic disorder. The flames having gained the prison, there was no time to remove its inmates. The doors were therefore thrown open, and nearly two hundred convicts were let loose, but none had the heart to plunder. Terror, confusion, and despair, reigned paramount. Weeping women and children clung for succour to men who could afford them no relief or consolation. Some died of fright, others lost their senses. Groans, screams, and prayers were heard between the pauses of the thunder, intermingled with maledictions on the destroyer, and curses on the revolution. In a few hours, however, all those that had power to move, or were not transfixed with terror, had fled into the country. The roads were covered with fugitives of all ages and sexes, who, with tearful eyes, turned to gaze on their devoted homes. The darkness of the night, awfully relieved by the red glare of the flames; the hissing and roaring of the destructive element, the thunder of the cannon, the rattling of shot and falling of timbers, the frantic screams of women and children, and the groans of the wounded and dying, all united to fix an impression of horror on the mind, not to be effaced by time or space.

As the evening advanced, various attempts were made to reach the citadel, but the intensity of the fire, the noise, and darkness, baffled every effort. At length, between nine and ten, P.M., a deputation of four persons, preceded by a trumpeter, succeeded in gaining the ad-

vanced post, and, having delivered a letter with which they were charged by Mr. Rogier, who had arrived from Brussels, as delegated from the government, were admitted into the interior. This letter urged General Chassé to order a suspension of arms until daylight, when it would be perhaps possible to renew the negotiations that had been "apparently interrupted through the error of a few drunken men." Chassé lost no time in replying "that he consented to this proposition, on condition that his troops were no further molested; declaring that, in the event of the slightest aggression, he should recommence firing; and terminating by calling on the provisional government to nominate a commission, empowered to treat with him on the following morning." This being assented to by Rogier, orders were instantly issued to the fleet and forts to discontinue the bombard-ing, which had lasted, without interruption, from half-past three till half-past ten, P.M.

During the night other delegates having arrived from Brussels, a second deputation was dispatched to the citadel, and a preliminary truce was determined upon early on the 28th. On the 30th, Mr. Rogier concluded a more formal armistice for five days; which, though never strictly adhered to on either side, formed the basis of the subsequent diplomatic negotiations, until the surrender of the citadel. This convention was further ratified on the 5th of November, by the addition of the following laconic postscript:—"Affairs shall continue *in statu quo*. The renewal of hostilities shall be announced four days beforehand."*

The injury done by the bombardment, as respects the generality of the city, has been greatly exaggerated;

* See Appendix, No. 26.

for, with the exception of some few casual accidents, little damage was inflicted on the central or remote quarters. On the other hand, the brunt of the fire being directed upon the arsenal and entrepôt,* the whole of these buildings, together with the venerable church of St. Michael, and the greater part of the adjacent street, were reduced to a heap of ruins. All that remained of the rich contents of the one was a calcined and reeking mass of sugars, coffees, hides, cloths, silks, tissues, and fragrant spices; all that could be rescued from the other were a few remnants of iron or shot. The mischief was also principally inflicted by the citadel, for the fleet had but slightly maltreated the buildings on the quays; their shot passed over the city and lighted harmless in the fields. These are important facts, for they prove that Chassé did not avail himself to the utmost of the means of destruction at his disposal. It is evident, that had it been his intention to annihilate the whole instead of a part, he could speedily have effected his object. Had the range of his howitzers and mortars been diverged; had the ships, not elevated their guns; in short, had his projectiles been scattered over the town, in lieu of being concentrated on one point, it is indisputable that ere the expiration of

The official estimate of the loss of merchandize, according to the reports of the customs, was 1,888,000 florins; the real value is averaged at 2,200,000. No valuation has yet been made of the buildings. The damage done to private houses in the city has been declared to be 429,466 florins; that of furniture, &c. about 250,000, although the proprietors claim 440,886. Thus, the official return of the whole loss, exclusive of the buildings of the entrepôt and arsenal, may be taken at 3,880,000 florins, in round numbers. The loss of killed were eighty-five, of whom sixty-eight were civil, and seventeen military; the number of wounded about 120; of these, eighty were cured in the public hospital.

seven hours, the whole of Antwerp might have been involved in a blaze of destruction.*

But this must be taken as a palliation of the intent, not as an apology for the act; which had the sole merit of destroying the goods and habitations of innocent citizens, without chastising the aggressors, curbing the progress of the revolution, or regaining a particle of what had been lost. It had not even the advantage of example, for, with the exception of Maestricht and Venloo, the Dutch had no longer possession of a single fortress; and of these the one was soon wrested from them, and the other only preserved by fortuitous circumstances, or rather by the anticipatory energy of General Dibbets, commanding at Maestricht, which formed a meritorious contrast to the useless and tardy rigour of Chassé at Antwerp. The one, with confined means but with unlimited activity, firmly maintained his ground, without spilling a drop of blood, or firing a shot. The other, with every advantage of force and position, abandoned that which he ought never to have surrendered; and after neglecting the golden opportunity of recovery, contented himself with gazing on the scorched ruins, beneath which he had buried the last hopes of the house of Nassau. For this deed was more fatal to their cause than the loss of twenty combats.

The scorched ruins of the Carmelite tower of St. Michael's is a monument that will record to future ages how Lieut.-general Chassé, at the head of 8000 choice troops, fled from a few armed rabble and undisciplined volunteers, abandoned a city that he had

* It has not been possible to obtain a return of the number of rounds fired on this occasion by the fleet; but one fact has been ascertained, that the quantity of *cartridges* expended exceeded that of *shot*—a proof that the guns were not always *shotted*.

neither talent or energy to defend, secured himself behind the shelter of his citadel, and thence immolated aged men, pregnant women, young children, and the property of inoffensive citizens, either to an impolitic thirst for revenge, or to a flagitious condescendance to Dutch commercial egotism. When posterity learns that Lieut.-general Chassé had ample time for preparation, and still more ample means for preserving the city of Antwerp; that he gave it up almost without a struggle, and thus lost to the Dutch crown the great key of Belgian dominion; that, under the pretext of revenging half-a-dozen shots fired on his troops, he bombarded a populous, ungarrisoned city, during seven hours; and then contented himself, not with general submission and the expulsion and chastisement of the aggressors, but with the recovery of *twelve oxen, three barrels of spirits, and two barrels and a half of rice!*—when posterity think of this, they will marvel that a veteran soldier should thus tarnish his hard-earned laurels by a deed so inglorious; and that a government should thus wantonly add fuel to the intense fire of national antipathy, and while it applauded this barbarous feat of destruction, utterly forget that the wealth and resources of the bombarded city exist, not in its buildings, but in the noble river that bathes its quays.

Having stated that there is every reason for believing that the fault of aggression lay with the volunteers, and that the leaders should have been held responsible, it is just to observe, that Mellinet, Niellon, and Kessels devoted themselves, with rare intrepidity, to diminish the evil their people had produced, and to carry succour where it was required. They not only exerted their utmost efforts to rescue the wounded, to direct the fire-engines, and to maintain internal tranquillity, but several tumbrils, laden with powder, having been deposited in a building likely to become a prey to the flames,

Mellinet rushed to the spot, and, amidst a deluge of projectiles, harnessed himself to one of the cars, and, encouraging the people by his example, dragged them from the spot, and thus averted an explosion. The two others gave equal proofs of self-devotion at the arsenal, where nearly forty ammunition waggons were rescued from the flames. Many of the inhabitants, and some of the foreign consuls, also distinguished themselves in a most laudable manner, and none more so than those of Great Britain and Hanover.*

From this period, until the winter compelled the ships of war to abandon their moorings before the city, the fleet maintained its position tranquilly in the Scheldt, and the Dutch troops having retired within the limits prescribed by the convention of the 30th of October, abandoned the remainder to the patriots.

Cort-Heiligers having likewise fallen back on North Brabant, the Duke of Saxe Weimar embarked from the citadel, with the guards and superabundant troops, for Rotterdam, and was appointed commander of a corps on the extreme left. Thus ended this memorable and eventful episode.

Belgium now assumed a new aspect. The revolution was rapidly advancing to its consummation. With the exception of the citadel of Antwerp, and fortress of Maestricht, the Brabant banner waved over every town. The whole country acknowledged the dominion of the provisional government. One great national act was alone wanting, to break down all further connexion with the Orange dynasty. This measure, which was nothing less than the perpetual exclusion of the House of Nassau, was already in preparation, and alone awaited the assembly of congress to receive development and ratification.

* Baron de Hochepeid Larpent and Mr. Ellerman.

CHAPTER III.

THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT SOLICITS THE GREAT POWERS TO INTERVENE BY FORCE OF ARMS—IS REFUSED—THE CONFERENCE ASSEMBLES—THE DUTCH INVOKE THE TREATY OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE—ARE REJECTED—MESSRS. CARTWRIGHT AND BRESSON ARRIVE WITH THE FIRST PROTOCOL AT BRUSSELS—ARMISTICE CONCLUDED—BELGIAN CONGRESS OPENED—PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT CONFIRMED—DE POTTER RETIRES—CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATION IN ENGLAND—EXCLUSION OF THE NASSAU FAMILY VOTED BY CONGRESS—MISSION OF MR. LANDSBERG TO BRUSSELS—GENERAL STATE OF EUROPE.

SCARCELY had intelligence of Prince Frederick's discomfiture reached the Hague, when the king dispatched the most pressing solicitations to the four powers that were parties to the eight articles of the London treaty, as well as to France, calling on them to fulfil the obligations imposed on them by the treaty of Vienna; or, in other words, to interpose between him and his revolted subjects, and to renew the armed intervention of 1815. For, although the demand for forcible co-operation was not overtly put forward, the real purport of the application was not to be mistaken.* But, however well inclined the Rhenan powers and German confederation, might have been to obtemperate to this invitation, or however well disposed the British cabinet to support the cause of the Prince of Orange, the latter could not be induced to deviate from that pacific system, which had formed the basis of its policy with regard to

* A phrase in the speech of M. Versloek de Soelen of the 20th of January, proves that armed intervention had been demanded. "His majesty," said the Dutch minister for Foreign Affairs, "in order to stifle the revolution, *first invoked the arms of his allies according to treaties,*" &c. &c.

France, while the former were too much occupied in watching the seeds of sedition at home, to be enabled to lend assistance in curbing revolution abroad. France, also, was too deeply interested in preventing re-action within her own territory, to aid in any measure tending to promote restoration, at her very threshold.

Besides, the English administration stood on the verge of dissolution. The party which had held the reins of government so long that power seemed a prescription rather than an elective right in their hands, felt themselves about to be ejected from the tenure into which they might be said to have been infeodated by the tacit consent of king, lords, and commons. A universal craving after reform, with all its mingled virtues and illusions, had taken irresistible possession of the public mind, producing a general thirsting after constitutional ameliorations. Thus, while the whole British people were resolved to stand up for the assertion of more extensive franchises at home, they were no less determined to oppose all direct interference with internal affairs abroad. The ministry were not blind to this truth, and thus Lord Aberdeen affixed his signature to the first two acts of the Conference,* which, without directly consecrating the revolutionary principle in Belgium, or openly acknowledging that of separation, tacitly recognized the provisional government, as a power to be treated with on a basis of reciprocity, and thus paved the way for the celebrated protocol of the 20th of December, 1830 (No. 7.)—the first harbinger of Belgic independence.

This document, which frankly admits the inefficacy of the treaty of Vienna, as regarded the Netherlands kingdom, is highly interesting, for it is declared, “that

* Protocols of 4th and 17th November (Nos. 1 and 2.)

the events of the four previous months had unfortunately demonstrated, that the perfect and complete amalgamation, which the powers wished to effect between the two countries, *had not been obtained* ; that henceforward it would be impossible to effect it ; that the object of the union *was thus destroyed* ; and that it was consequently indispensable to have recourse to other arrangements, in order to accomplish those intentions, to which the union was meant to serve as a vehicle." That is, that the object of the treaty being to erect a barrier against France, and the integral maintenance of its provisions being no longer practicable, it became indispensable to adopt such measures as would secure the independence of the two fractions of the kingdom, in order to replace the barrier services of the whole. This solemn and undisguised admission of the original vices of the union, and of the necessity of co-operating in combining the future independence of Belgium with the stipulations of treaties, with the interests and security of other powers, and with the maintenance of European equilibrium," was ably combatted by the Dutch cabinet ; but their remonstrances produced no other effect than a determination, on the part of the powers, to continue their labours to secure the independence of a country to which the force of events compelled them to extend their protection.

All, therefore, that could be obtained by the king of the Netherlands was that the powers should assume the character of arbitrators ; a character that subsequently gave rise to numerous difficulties and contradictions ; not on the part of the plenipotentiaries, but on that of the two parties upon whose disputes they were required to pronounce judgment. For, so long as matters remained undecided ; so long as there was a prospect of restoration, Holland, at whose express demand, and

for whose special benefit the Conference had been assembled, not only called for *arbitration*, but eagerly desired still more vigorous interposition; whilst Belgium, elated with her recent successes, and conscious that she held the brand of universal discord in her hand, expressed the utmost impatience at all foreign interference, and could with difficulty be brought to listen even to *mediation*. No sooner, however, had the ratification of the twenty-four articles guaranteed the independence of the latter, than both parties changed their system. Belgium, wisely founding all hope of consolidating her nationality upon the maintenance of peace, willingly admitted arbitration, and eagerly clung to the treaty of November as her sole *ægis*; whilst Holland, relying on general war as the only chance of restoring her puissance, and basing her objections upon the protocol of Aix-la-Chapelle and her right of *post liminii*, protested against all arbitration, and would only consent to mediation.*

Although these reclamations served most materially to complicate the negotiations, and to retard their issue, the conduct of the great powers in deviating from the protocol of Aix-la-Chapelle was just and reasonable. For, had the Netherlands plenipotentiary been admitted as a direct party to the Conference, the Dutch government would have been established as judge in its own cause; while the Belgians, excluded by the very nature of circumstances from all participation in the dis-

* The fourth section of this protocol, signed the 15th of November, 1818, stipulates that all conferences or re-unions touching the immediate interests of the Netherlands kingdom shall only take place in virtue of the formal invitation of such states as the matter may immediately concern, and under the express reserve of their right to participate therein directly, or through their plenipotentiaries. The Dutch plenipotentiary, Mr. Falck, was summoned to assist at the Conference as an evidence, not as a subscribing party; thence the complaints of the Hague Cabinet.

cussion, would have been placed in the situation of felons at the bar, without other counsel or interpreter than the very magistrate whose interest it was to condemn them. This was a fact that struck the plenipotentiaries at the first outset ; and, in thus eluding the strict letter of the protocol in question, they gave a striking proof of their impartiality and sense of justice. Such a determination was naturally most galling to Holland, who was thus unable to avail herself of the influence she might otherwise have acquired. But the decision was essentially European, and was the only method of meting equal justice to both parties, and thence of maintaining general tranquillity.

It was on the 4th of November that the Conference held its first deliberation at the Foreign Office, and gave birth to the eldest of that long series of protocols, which kept Europe in suspense during so many months; imperishable monuments of the diplomatic skill of their compilers, not less than of the vacillating policy of the day ! a policy partly emanating from the latent wish of the Russian cabinet to gain time, and partly to the ardent desire of Great Britain and France to maintain peace, but more especially to the difficulties encountered by all parties in reconciling so many divergent and conflicting interests.

So pressing were the solicitations of Mr. Falck, and so great the alarm of the plenipotentiaries, lest the Belgians, taking advantage of the demoralization of the Dutch forces and the enthusiasm of their own, should carry their victorious arms into North Brabant, that the first protocol was scarcely consigned to paper, ere Messrs. Cartwright and Bresson were dispatched to Brussels to communicate its contents to the provisional government. These gentlemen arrived on the 7th, and after various preliminary discussions and exchanges of

notes, touching the strict interpretation of territorial rights and limits, especially as concerned Dutch Flanders and Maestricht, a suspension of arms was agreed to on the 10th. This preparatory negotiation, ably and successfully conducted by the two agents, produced a second and more detailed protocol on the 17th. Messrs. Cartwright and Bresson, who had returned to London, having been re-dispatched to Brussels, a farther truce was concluded at that place on the 21st, and at the Hague on the 26th of the same month. This convention, projected as much for the interest of general peace as for the advantage of Holland, stipulated that hostilities should cease on both sides, until the conclusion of a more definitive armistice; that the troops should maintain the positions respectively held by them at 4 P.M. on the 21st of November; that the reciprocal blockade of all rivers and fortresses should be raised forthwith; and that a free communication should be established between all places occupied by both parties, without the territorial limits that separated the United Provinces from Belgium, prior to the treaty of Paris of May 30, 1814.*

But the Dutch cabinet still persisting in obstructing the navigation of the Scheldt, and evincing an evident disposition to revive the restrictions imposed by the 14th section of the Munster treaty, the Belgians continued the blockade of Maestricht, and entertained serious thoughts of attempting a *coup-de-main* on that fortress; an effort offering some prospect of success—

* This suspension of arms, or rather armistice, signed by the Belgians on the 15th of December, did not receive full execution until the end of March following, when Lord Ponsonby dispatched Messrs. Abercrombie and Charles White to Maestricht, to verify the state of the communications between that fortress, Aix-la-Chapelle, and North Brabant.—*Pièces Diplomatiques. La Hague*, vol. i.

not only from the recent fall of Venloo, but from the numerical feebleness of the garrison, the sympathetic spirit of the inhabitants, and the weakness of a portion of the fortifications. Although Mr. Gendebien had declined to sign the armistice, and loudly opined for a system of aggression, which would probably have entailed general war, and struck a death-blow to Belgian independence, the remainder of his colleagues fortunately foresaw the difficulties into which such measures would plunge them. By prudently repressing the belligerent ardour of the people and volunteers—for as yet the troops did not merit the name of army—they gradually drew the nation from the dominion of force to that of negotiation, which they were well convinced could alone lead to the consolidation of that nationality, for which the vast majority so ardently thirsted.

It was with this view that the provisional government deemed it expedient to dispatch Mr. Van de Weyer to London, with instructions to open a communication with the British ministers, as well as to sound the opinions of some of the leading opposition members with regard to Belgium. After consulting Sir John Hobhouse, Mr. Hume, and others of the same party, Mr. Van de Weyer was admitted to an interview with Lord Aberdeen and the Duke of Wellington; from whom, especially the latter, he received assurances, not only of the pacific intentions of the British cabinet, but of the resolution of all the great powers, to refrain from direct intervention, so long as the Belgians abstained from any act calculated to disturb the tranquillity of other states. It was on this occasion that the Belgian agent was called to an audience by the Prince of Orange, who had arrived in London almost at the same moment. The meeting was painful to both; for it was impossible for the prince to see before him a man to whose exer-

tions were principally owing the destruction of a noble heritage, without the bitterest sentiments of wounded pride and vexation ; whilst it was no easy matter for the other to appear unmoved in the presence of the son of a king, to whose downfall he had been mainly instrumental, and who, as he well knew, was innocent of all the errors of his father's government. The task was the more severe, since he was compelled to tell that prince that the nation, over whom he sought to reign, had confounded him in the same anathema that was about to be fulminated against his whole race.

In the meantime, Maestricht having been closely invested on the left bank of the Meuse by the Belgic regular forces under Daine, and on the right by the free corps under Mellinet, and General Dibbets being sorely pressed for provisions, the Duke of Saxe Weimar was ordered to assemble a convoy for his relief. All things being prepared, his highness broke up from Eindhoven on the 18th of November, and advancing by Peer and Winterslagsche at the head of six thousand men and an ample supply of stores, successfully threw himself into Maestricht on the forenoon of the 21st, after sustaining a trifling skirmish with a Belgian detachment. Leaving a reinforcement of fifteen hundred men in the fortress, the Dutch general made good his retreat on the 22nd, by following the right bank of the Meuse to Mazeyk, where he recrossed the river, and regained his position by Eindhoven without loss. This enterprise, skilfully planned and executed, was highly creditable to the duke's military character, and served in some degree to re-establish the reputation that had been tarnished at Walhem, Contich, and Berchem ; though it is hardly just to ground strategical strictures on disasters which resulted from a combination of frictions utterly independent of the control of the general

commanding. For it is ludicrous to suppose that the handful of volunteers, under the patriot leaders, could have carried the strong positions held by the Dutch on the Rupel and Néthes, or have been enabled to drive them back in disorderly rout, had there been any unanimity between the officers, or even a common disposition on the part of the troops to hold their ground.

The solemnity that was so eagerly awaited by the Belgian people at length took place in the capital. On the 10th of November, the national congress assembled for the first time in the palace of the States-General, and was installed in the name of the provisional government by M. de Potter.* The ceremonial was simple and unassuming, yet solemn and decorous. The classic semi-circle destined for the deputies was filled with men who, though for the most part utterly unaccustomed to the usages and forms of legislative bodies, and generally selected from amongst the most ardent patriots, nevertheless brought with them a full sense of their own power and of the importance of their new vocation. With the exception of two or three individuals, who vied with each other in extravagant exaggeration, the temper and discretion of the rest might at first have served as a model to the oldest legislative assembly. Indeed, the light, airy and symmetrical in-

* A decree of the provisional government declared that the number of members should be two hundred, and the mode of election direct. The qualifications of an elector or candidate were, that he should be a native, or naturalized Belgian, twenty-five years of age, without distinction of religion, and paying taxes varying from a maximum of seventy-five florins in the richest, to a minimum of thirteen florins in the poorest provinces, so as to give the whole numerical population an equitable representation; a measure rendered necessary by the extreme difference between the wealth of different provinces, especially those of Flanders and Luxembourg.

terior of the hall of congress, its lofty dome, its graceful columns, its commodious galleries, its plain but appropriate furniture, and its rows of desks, provided with writing materials for each member, was not less striking than the sober deportment of the great majority of the deputies, and the venerable and interesting appearance of the celebrated Baron Surlet de Chokier, who was immediately elected president.

The meeting of congress, an event sufficiently remarkable in itself, was rendered still more so by its being the immediate forerunner of the termination of De Potter's political career, and the extinction of his popularity. His colleagues in the government had the good sense to feel, that independent of the ordinary uncertainties and jealousies inseparable from power, their position was the more precarious from their being self-elected. They were, therefore, desirous to see their mandate revoked, or legitimately confirmed by the representatives of the nation. They consequently tendered their resignation to the chambers, and were rewarded for this politic act of apparent disinterestedness, by having their powers solemnly renewed, in terms the most flattering to their public characters. But De Potter, bitterly disappointed at the prevalent anti-republican spirit, and having neither tact to yield, nor influence to stem the tide of opinion, and who saw his hopes of obtaining supreme power on the eve of dissolution, was resolved to make one desperate effort to turn the current in his favour. Vainly imagining that he was still the popular idol, that the nation held him essential to the conservation of its liberties, and that the mere menace to abandon them would create a movement in his favour, which would produce that anarchy without which he could have no political existence, he

separated himself from his colleagues, protested against the supremacy of congress, and declaring the power of the provisional government to be antecedent to that of the former, declined to accept the mandate, and withdrew.

But his illusions soon vanished. The people, as if ashamed of the grovelling incense they had previously offered at his shrine, heard of his resignation without murmur or emotion. The press, of which he had been the demi-god, either turned against him or remained silent ; and his colleagues, inwardly rejoicing at being delivered from a man whose exaggerated principles and ambition were inimical to the general voice, and injurious to the independence of the country, neither expressed regret, nor made the slightest effort to turn him from his purpose. Nothing more was heard of him until a few weeks after, when, having attended a public meeting, and attempted to argue in support of his favourite theories, he had like to have fallen a victim to the exasperation of the people. Though De Potter's abdication produced no effect upon the public mind, his friend M. Tielemans' was more fortunate ; but, by a process no way similar. This gentleman, who of all the members of the commission entrusted with drawing up a project of constitution, had alone opined for a republic, addressed a letter on this subject to the provisional government, containing a proposition the most monstrous and absurd that ever entered the head of a political dreamer. This was nothing more or less than that, in the event of the national assembly pronouncing in favour of monarchy, the question of a republic should be again submitted to the deliberation of a new congress at the expiration of *three years*, and *vice versâ* ! Or in other words, that the country should alternately elect

kings and presidents, and try republics and monarchies every three years, until all parties were able to judge by experience what form of government best suited their inclinations ! This nonsensical rhapsody met the fate it merited. But it had, however, one advantage ; it served to show the measure of M. Tieleman's talents and paved the road for his return to that insignificance from which he had alone been raised by Mr. Van Maaenen's impolitic prosecutions.

It was on the 16th that Mr. Van de Weyer returned to Brussels, and made the report of his mission to the congress, who received with unequivocal marks of approbation his assurances of the moderate and pacific intentions of the great powers—an assurance that had the greater weight by its being accompanied with the announcement that the Duke of Wellington's administration was on the eve of giving way to a more liberal ministry. For the names of Lords Grey, Holland, Durham, and other Whig noblemen who were about to assume office, were received by the liberals of France and all Europe as guarantees that the system of non-intervention laid down by the Duke of Wellington, would be acted upon in the most extensive sense of which that system was capable, as far as regarded the constitutional liberty of other states ; while the retreat of Lord Aberdeen was hailed with a degree of satisfaction scarcely to be credited by those who did not witness its influence on the public mind abroad.

Three questions of vital importance, not only to Belgium, but to all Europe, were proposed to congress in rapid succession, and were discussed and voted with a degree of promptitude and energy, that proved the extreme desire of the country to avoid anarchy, and secure national consolidation. On the 18th the question

of independence was carried unanimously; on the 22d a majority of 174 to 13, determined in favour of a constitutional and hereditary monarchy—without, however, fixing on the title of the future “chief of the state;” and on the 23d the more paramount proposition for the “perpetual exclusion of the Orange Nassau family,” was made by Mr. Constantin Rodenbach, a Flemish physician, whose family possessed considerable interest in the Flanders, and who had long been among the most active members of the Catholic union, and the most irreconcilable opponents to the king’s government.

Although the speech accompanying this proposition betrayed stronger evidence of prejudice and personal antipathy, than of profound argument and enlightened political conception; although it was replete with passages tending to excite the passions, rather than to awaken reflection; although it erroneously confounded the name of the Prince of Orange with the unskilful attack on Brussels, and the no less impolitic bombardment of Antwerp, and attributed to him a power of averting events over which he had no control, it was nevertheless the fruit of an intimate conviction that the return of the prince would be the signal for immediate civil war, which could only terminate in the most frightful reaction, and eventually lead to restoration.

A few citations from this and other speeches, will suffice to shew the general spirit that animated the nation at this period. They will afford striking proofs of the impassioned prejudice of the orators, and of the fevered state of the public mind. Indeed, never had a subject of such vital interest a less favourable prospect of calm and impartial investigation. Many of those who were most opposed to the motion, contented them-

selves with giving a silent vote ; and others, who had prepared speeches in the same sense, were converted through want of moral courage, rather than conviction ; whilst those who did speak against it, adopted language even more injurious to the cause of the Prince of Orange than the violent diatribes of the supporters of the measure. Many, however, of those who voted for it, condemned it as premature. " If I had been consulted," said Mr. Gendebien, " the proposition would not have been made at present." De Brouckère, Destouvelles, and others were of the same opinion ; but being once brought forward, and popular feeling excited, it was deemed impossible to retreat, without plunging the country into a fatal state of uncertainty, and perhaps of anarchy and misrule. Besides, by a singular fatality, the very means adopted by the French cabinet to retard the discussion, served but to accelerate its fate ; for the tardy and lukewarm mission of Mr. Landsberg, produced an effect diametrically opposed to its avowed object ; a result so singular, as to throw the strongest doubts on the sincerity of the remonstrance, and at all events to afford just cause for criticising the mode in which it was conducted.

But let the extracts of the speeches speak for themselves.—" The pact that united us to the house of Orange," said the mover, " was broken on the day on which its chief attempted to substitute his own will and personal opinions for the law. William never showed himself *king* but of Holland ; he was only the *possessor* of Belgium.

" Have those who admit the possibility of the Prince of Orange's election, reflected on the painful position in which that prince would be placed ? How could he return to this capital, and present himself to a too confiding people, with whom he has violated his promises ?

In what manner will he make his entry? Will it be by the gate that witnessed the shameful flight of his brother and his cowardly and barbarous soldiers? Will he re-occupy that palace on which the traces of his own shot have inscribed the fatal sentence of the deposition of his family? Will he venture to set up the statues of his father that have been mutilated and trampled under foot by the people? Will he place on his head a crown defiled with blood and filth? What oath can the son of a perjured monarch tender as the gage of his fidelity? What expiatory gift will he offer up at the tomb of the brave that repose in the square of St. Michael? No words of peace, no assurances, no promises, no expiations can repay us for the evils that have oppressed our unhappy country during fifteen years. A river of blood divides us. The name of the Prince of Orange is buried beneath the smoking ruins of Antwerp!"

"Will you elect as hereditary chief the Prince of Orange Nassau?" exclaimed a second (Claes of Antwerp). "No! a thousand times no! You ask my motives. Because the dynasty is anti-national—because its return would be the signal for civil war—because it is impossible to unite that which blood has disunited—because history teaches us that all restorations are but a mere replastering (*replâtrage*), that, sooner or later, render other revolutions necessary. Look to the Stuarts—look to the Bourbons."

"From Brussels to Luxembourg," said a third (the Abbé de Hearne), "there is but one cry—'Down with the Nassaus!' It is impossible that a prince of Orange can reign in Belgium—the people will not hear of it. This sentence is irrevocable. It includes parents and children—it is a malediction, an anathema—it is the invisible hand that traces in letters of flame, 'Thou shalt reign no longer!'"

“Heaven forbid,” observed a fourth (Baron de Stassart), “that I should insult the misfortunes of those princes ; but the horrible scenes of Brussels and Antwerp have rendered their return impossible. The people would rise in mass to repel them, and their arrival would be the signal of the most invincible anarchy. What can nations ever expect from political restoration? The effect of such experiments in other countries is notorious. Distrust, hatred, ill-repressed pretensions, and smouldering vengeance would form the royal escort. No more Nassaus ! This is the universal cry of Belgium, and I trust it will find a general echo in this assembly. It is important—it is urgent that foreign diplomacy should know what it has to look to in this respect. By this means we shall avoid disagreeable intrigues, and destroy culpable hopes. Europe, when informed of our irrevocable purpose, will take heed how it objects. Ill-advised interference will but throw us into the arms of auxiliaries (alluding to France), who have no desire more ardent than to make common cause with us.”

“Our revolution,” said Mr. Nothomb, “has exposed us to three kinds of war—a European war, a civil war, and a war with Holland. The first, in the present state of Europe, is impossible ; the exclusion of the Nassaus will secure us from the second ; but it may entail the third. Come what will, the last is inevitable, and we ought not to fear it. The reign of a prince of Orange would be a counter-revolution. Sooner or later he would say to us, ‘I do not rule in virtue of the election of 1830, but by the treaties of 1815. I never freely renounced the rights of my house.’”

Such were the doctrines of the supporters of the proposition. Of its opponents, only two or three ventured to utter their sentiments, but not one spoke in favour of

the prince ; nay, more ; while they deprecated the motion, all united in declaring that the members of the Nassau family were utterly ineligible. The most remarkable of these speeches were those of Messrs. De Langhe, Gerlache, and Baillet, all three ex-members of the opposition in the States-General. "It is said," observed the first, "that the people impatiently desire to know what will be done in regard to the exclusion of the Nassaus. Every one speaks in the name of the people, and yet all speak differently. To whom must we listen, or whom believe ? For my part, I think that the great mass of the people, both in the provinces and capital, will confidently await the decision of their representatives. If there be agitation, it must be attributed to those who seek to excite their passions, and to sow distrust among them. People, as well as kings, have their flatterers. The sycophants of the one, like those of the other, have no other object in view than their own interest. Little does it matter to them whether or not the people be plunged into misery by cessation of work, which is the inevitable result of disorder. In lashing up a storm, they have no other object than to rise to the surface of the waves. I, however, am far from being favourable to the Prince of Orange ; and if I had to give my vote at this moment, it would not be for him. Not on account of the insults which have been heaped upon him, and which prove nothing, but because I do not think he possesses sufficient strength of character to govern us at the present moment ; and, above all, because a vast portion of the nation is so strongly opposed to him, that I should fear his presence would be the signal for civil war."

"I do not rise," exclaimed Mr. de Gerlache, "to insult the Nassaus ; they are unfortunate, and no longer here to defend themselves. It is not thus we were accustomed

to combat them.* I have a hundred times predicted the rupture of the diplomatic and compulsory marriage between two people differing in origin, customs, language, interests, and religion. This monstrous alliance could not last long, unless supported by justice, tolerance, and pre-eminent ability. The monarch evinced none of these qualities. A radical vice existed in the very constitution, namely, in the inequality of representation. No majority was possible for us in the chambers, and, consequently, we had no means to constrain the sovereign, either to govern in accordance with the general interests, to select responsible and capable ministers, or to redress abuses, but by refusing to vote supplies. The king, born a Dutchman, surrounded by Dutchmen, only breathing Dutch sentiments, never made himself acquainted with the Belgic people. What was the result? Whilst we were constantly vanquished in the chambers, we conquered out of doors through the medium of the press. The powers having resolved that we should remain united to Holland, ought to have come to our assistance when we so loudly expressed our discontent. They refused; Belgium applied to the *ultima ratio*; she conquered, and irrevocably tore asunder the treaties that bound her to the house of Nassau. * * * * But why this extraordinary and extra-legal measure? You are victors—you have declared your independence; the Nassaus exist no longer for you but as strangers; they are morally dead. Would you pursue them beyond the grave? When the Convention proclaimed the deposition of the Bourbons, and the senate that of Napoleon, both were despoiled fugitives, while France still remained puissant

* In allusion to the opposition in the States-General, of which he had been a member.

and terrible in the eyes of her enemies. But the King of Holland retains the whole of his ancient territory, and part of yours ; and the alliance of his family with Prussia and Russia renders his influence still more formidable. Will not a tacit omission, a simple preterition, suffice ? You desire an express exclusion, absolute and perpetual, in the face of Europe. In short, you demand a solemn declaration of infamy and indignity ! This is a gratuitous, sanguinary insult, that may produce grievous mischief. Reflect well on it. I believe that I may boast of as much patriotism as any one else ; but I will not vote for resolutions involving such important consequences, by acclamation, as the majority of this chamber appears to be about to do at the present moment. Although little disposed, as you well know, to support the Nassaus, after well consulting my conscience and cool judgment, I shall oppose their perpetual exclusion."

The debates which commenced on the 23d were hurried to a conclusion on the following evening ; when the president rose, and addressed the house in the following words : " The number of members present is 189 ; of these 161 have voted for, and 28 against the proposition. Consequently, the National Congress, in the name of the Belgic people, declares that the Orange Nassau family are excluded in perpetuity from all power in Belgium." Thunders of applause re-echoed from the galleries, as Baron Surlet, with a voice betraying deep emotion, thus laconically pronounced the *fat*, that at one blow tore asunder the only remaining link which connected the dynasty with the nation, and overturned the political edifice which had been raised at the expense of so much blood and treasure. The adopted child, the boast and glory of the great powers, was cast back on their hands a disjointed and mutilated carcass. A revision of the labours of the

Vienna congress was indispensable. Its errors were there to serve as a beacon. The Conference soon gave proof that it was resolved to take warning by the past.

It was natural to suppose that a question of this nature would open a field to violent personalities, and that the more exaggerated advocates of the measure would avail themselves of the opportunity to launch forth much bitterness against a family to which many bore direct hatred. But the language held on this occasion as far exceeded all ordinary bounds as the motives for coming to a hasty and premature decision were passionate and anomalous. The latter afford a curious portrait of the feverish and unwholesome mistrust of all foreign powers that swayed the minds of the representatives. The alleged cause for this precipitation was the arrival of Mr. Landsberg, furnished with instructions from the French cabinet, to obtain from the provisional government the adjournment of a measure that appeared calculated to embroil the great powers. Scarcely was the purport of the French diplomatist's mission made known to the deputies, than their jealousy and impatience of all foreign interference pronounced itself in the strongest manner. Mr. Landsberg's intercession for a simple adjournment was construed into a direct attempt to "impose" the Prince of Orange. Some deputies, who had declared Mr. Rodenbach's proposition to be premature, now agreed that it would be an act of weakness to recede; while its supporters, calling to aid those high-sounding phrases that were well adapted to excite passion within, and fermentation without the chamber, found fresh grounds for persisting, and exclaimed, that "national honour, and the very existence of the revolution, depended on their rejecting all foreign interposition."

Whether the French cabinet was sincere or not in the object it professed to have in view, matters little; but it is

evident that the negotiation was not only an utter failure, but that it produced results diametrically opposed to its avowed purport. Indeed, there are several points in this transaction that excite surprise. First, it is impossible to avoid asking, if remonstrance was deemed expedient, why was the mission retarded until the eleventh hour? Mr. Rodenbach's intended proposition, which had been already delayed several days, was known, or *ought* to have been known, to the French and British governments before the Duke of Wellington's resignation, on the 16th, and yet no diplomatic steps were taken until the question was already before the chambers; the public mind being then inflamed to the utmost pitch, adjournment was rendered extremely difficult, if not impracticable. Secondly, why did not the French cabinet exert its influence, not with the provisional government, but with Mr. Rodenbach himself? Not in a languid, supplicating tone, but with that firmness and tact which it well knows how to employ on critical occasions. Though inaccessible to corruption, Rodenbach was not blind to conviction; and had he been adroitly persuaded that the adjournment would be conducive to the interests of Belgium and France, and that it was no ways intended as a snare in favour of the Prince of Orange, against whose whole family he entertained an ancient and inveterate animosity, it is highly probable that he would not have persisted in his motion, as it were, *per fas et nefas*. But not a word was addressed to him, either by the diplomatists then at Brussels, or by any other person on their behalf, except by one or two Antwerp deputies, who dreaded lest the fiat of exclusion should be the signal of a renewed bombardment of their city.

It must farther be asked, why was the mission confided to a subaltern diplomatist, unknown and without influence? If the exertions of M. Bresson, aided by

those of Mr. Cartwright, were considered insufficient, why not select some personage of political or military eminence?—General Belliard, for instance, whose name and antecedents were a passport to all Belgic hearts, and would have given immense weight to his suggestions. The same remarks may be applied to the British cabinet, of whose sympathy for the Prince of Orange no one could doubt. The jealousy and distrust felt towards the Duke of Wellington's administration (for the Whigs had not fully entered into office until the question of exclusion was already under discussion) extended itself to their agent, and was increased by his being the secretary of the British envoy at the Hague. Besides, it does not appear that he evinced any striking address on this occasion. Confining himself to ordinary diplomatic formalities, he limited his remonstrances to those who were known partisans of the falling dynasty, and consequently required no persuasion. As to any efforts with the provisional government, they could be of little avail; for whatever power they may have enjoyed in the eyes of the nation, as a collective body, they had no individual influence in the chambers, and were moreover too sagacious and politic to risk their own popularity and power by openly obstructing the wishes of the majority.

These observations apply more to the means than to the results; for even admitting the general exclusion of the Nassau family to have been adjourned or avoided, the possibility of placing the Prince of Orange on the throne was highly problematical. Nay, had it been attempted, had his royal highness even been elected, it is probable that another detestable crime would have been added to those which already stain the history of nations. More than one regicide hand was ready to imbrue itself in his blood. He was foredoomed. Several young men had entered into a sanguinary pact

to assassinate him. There were some that did not disguise their intention; that spoke of it openly; and, boasting of it as a glorious act of patriotism, eagerly disputed the right of precedence. "If ever they (the congress) elect the Prince of Orange," exclaimed one of this association, "my rifle, that rarely missed its aim, shall give a good account of him."—"If yours fail, I swear that mine shall not," said a second.—"And if both miss, I will poniard him," added a third, "though it be at the foot of the altar, or on the steps of the throne!"*

That these and others would have attempted to execute their detestable menaces, there can be little doubt; but even admitting that the odious crime of assassination were not perpetrated, it is indisputable that civil war would have broken out in almost every province. The prince could only have ascended the throne by wading through a river of blood; or have continued to reign, save amidst a succession of riots, outbreakings, and with the perpetual fear of revolution. That his royal highness had the physical courage necessary to encounter these perils, is beyond all question; but it is problematical whether he had the moral energy; or the talents for government and administration requisite for so arduous a task. Such, at least, was the opinion of those on whom he must have relied for support; who, even though they might have been satisfied as to his abilities, never could have overcome their distrust of his sincerity and independence. "In accepting the Prince of Orange," says Mr. Nothomb, "the revolution would have retired before itself (*reculé devant elle-même*), and would have retrograded more and more every day.

* This conversation took place on Sunday, the 23d of January, in the salon of a public restaurateur at Brussels, and in the presence of twenty persons.

The thought of *conquest* would not have been destroyed; there would only have been a shadow of independence. The prince, at first starting, would have been a rebel associated with rebels; then, an intermediary personage; and he would have terminated by again becoming the first subject of his father. As King of the Belgians, the Prince of Orange would have been the Monck of William I.*

But there were other collateral causes that led to this great consummation of the revolution. The maxims of the Holy Alliance, from which England inwardly dissented, even under Lord Castlereagh's administration, and which she had openly repudiated under that of Mr. Canning, could not be resuscitated, or ever again form the basis of British policy; and British foreign policy might fairly be taken as the index of that of all the great northern powers. For, without her concurrence, her subsidies—nay, her very permission, none dared move, however much they might menace, unless under the penalty of seeing their fleets swept from the face of the waters, and their thrones shaken to their very foundation. Thus, when the Belgians discovered that England was no longer disposed to support an edifice, whose elevation had been the constant object of her struggles and sacrifices during ages, and that the other great powers, borne away by the same overwhelming impulsion, were prepared to acknowledge the vices of treaties, of which they had hitherto boasted as masterpieces of diplomatic excellence, they became the more emboldened, and determined, by one vigorous effort, to confront all the perils of the storm, or to reap all the advantages of the calm.

The position of the Conference at this moment was

* "Essai sur la Revolution Belge," page 52.

critical beyond all precedent. The path lay over a bridge, narrow as that of Al Serat. On both sides was the unfathomable abyss of war; at the extremity, the elysium of peace. The slightest error might plunge it into the first; the second could only be attained by the development of extraordinary skill and moderation. A general conflagration would have been the infallible result of armed intervention, and even of menacing remonstrance; whilst mediation, however skilfully handled, and moderation, however sincerely persevered in, were not without their perils. For this negotiation was a Proteus-like question, susceptible of a thousand transformations, and of being enlarged or contracted at the will of any one of the parties; a question easily productive of stormy discussion, and very difficult to retain within tranquil bounds. Mediation is, indeed, twin brother to intervention; and there was something in the latter so offensive, so irritating to public opinion, that it required no ordinary ability to prevent the one from being confounded with the other. Had this been the case, war would have been inevitable.

An eminent orator in the French chambers has so well depicted the political position of Europe at this period, that one cannot do better than terminate this chapter by an extract from his speech, more especially as his observations are essentially applicable to the present state of affairs.*

After developing the principal causes calculated to produce explosion, the speaker proceeds thus: "Among the chances of peace, I will place, in the first rank, the influence of the progress of public reason over the policy of cabinets; the esteem of Europe for the frank

* Speech of M. Bignon in the French Chamber on the 15th November, 1830, on the question of French foreign policy.

character of Louis Philippe, who, in respecting the independence of foreign states, knows how to inspire respect for our own; and the perspective of the imminent perils that war might entail on absolute governments.

“To the foregoing chances must be added some other circumstances favourable to general peace. First, the impoverished financial condition of almost all states, not even excepting England, who, though she may have abundant resources for her own wants, can, at all events, no longer furnish to other powers those subsidies that she lavished on them between 1798 and 1815; and secondly, the extinction of ancient national animosities, especially between France and Great Britain, the sympathy of divers people one for the other, and the yearnings of all for those principles of just liberty that are now so well understood in France.

“If the vanity of political calculations, and the uncertainty of human previsions were ever demonstrated, it is by the events that have recently occurred in the Low Countries. For many ages it has been an established political axiom in London, that Great Britain would be menaced with destruction on the day that the French territory should receive the slightest extension on the side of Belgium. Thence, those long and bloody wars, the principal object of which was the formation of a barrier against France. Thence, those famous barrier treaties, which, in leaving to the house of Austria the unprofitable dominion of Brabant, delivered over her fortresses to Dutch garrisons.*

“In vain did the revolutionary wars disannul these treaties; England never for a moment renounced the hope of reviving them. During twenty-five years it was

* Barrier Treaty, 1715.

for Belgium that she fought. During the brightest days of Napoleon's dominion, she constantly pursued the idea of detaching Belgium from his empire. This thought was the main-spring of the coalitions she fomented and subsidised. In 1815, she obtained complete success. She prepared and consummated the agglomeration of Belgium and Holland under one chief. She formed of these two countries a compact mass, for the profit of the house of Orange.* It was not only Dutch troops that she established in the fortresses belonging to another sovereign, but the Dutch Stadtholder, having become king, was made possessor and guardian. The produce of the war contribution raised (by England) in France, was employed in bristling the French frontier with fortresses deemed impregnable. The general-in-chief of the victorious coalition presided in person at their construction, and regarded the re-establishment of the ancient (barrier) system, with the recompence attached to it, as the noblest fruit of his triumphs.

“ Suddenly a combat takes place between the king and his subjects ; the separation of Holland and Belgium is effected ; the fortresses that the Dutch ought to have preserved, instantly fell into the hands of the Belgians. Adieu to the mighty edifice of ages, the great work of England, so dearly paid for by torrents of blood, and by a debt of eight hundred millions sterling ! *All would have to be redone were a similar enterprise to be attempted.* No ! England cannot conceive so insane

* It would here have been more correct to have said, “ *by which the house of Orange profited* ;” for the object was not the aggrandizement of that house, but the re-establishment of the barrier. The next phrase is equally erroneous ; the fortresses did not belong to another sovereign, for the same treaty that established the kingdom also proclaimed the renunciation of the Emperor of Austria's rights to his Belgic dominions.

a project. She cannot desire absurdities, nor aim at impossibilities. At the moment that an immense debt overwhelms her, a debt in a great measure accumulated by her efforts to construct an artificial barrier, which has crumbled away in a few days, will her ministers think of doubling that debt, by abandoning themselves to the pursuit of similar chimeras? Even supposing that no material obstacle intervened, one has every right to calculate on the progress of reason in the British cabinet.

“Independent of the constitutional spirit of the French nation, Europe has another guarantee for peace, in the straightforward and loyal character of Louis Philippe. In fact, suppose that in the place of the prudent monarch who now governs us, the July revolution had produced a republic; or that it had placed on the throne a prince, or a fortunate soldier, more intent on his own grandeur than on the happiness of France; what would have prevented the bold chief of a republic or monarchy, on the day that the tocsin of war sounded in Belgium, from precipitating himself into that country at the head of an army, and proclaiming *universal liberty*? What could have prevented our armies from pouring into the Rhenan provinces (once French departments), and there exciting or seconding the movement of the people against their present sovereigns, by promising them free constitutions? Certainly this step might have subjected France to fearful risks, but fortune often favours the bold. Thus if she had been impelled by an adventurous chief in the path of conquest, and had re-seized a territory close at hand, a territory which would have hastened to re-unite itself to her, she might now perhaps be in a condition to brave the united efforts of Europe, behind her triple rampart of the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees?

“In the situation in which all the continental powers,

and even England, stand in regard to Louis Philippe (the destruction of whose new dynasty would be a calamity for all others in Europe), is it probable that they will decide for war? The soldiers of our days are no longer mere automatons, even in those countries the least advanced in civilization. From henceforth the passions and moral affections of the people must essentially influence the events of war. Old prejudices have vanished; national prepossessions are extinguished. The English of to-day, for instance, are no longer those of Mr. Pitt or Lord Castlereagh; and, on the other hand, the French have abjured the rancours of the Convention and the empire. Everywhere men date from more recent epochs. There are English, French, and German patriots, but the love of one's own country no longer consists in hatred for foreign states.*

* Lord Palmerston thus expressed himself in the House of Commons on the 17th of March, 1834, on the same subject:—"The relations existing between France and England are more amicable than ever. The friendship between the two countries has augmented in proportion as the two governments have learned to know each other, and have evinced a reciprocal confidence, founded on mutual loyalty and good faith." No stronger proof of the justice of M. Bignon's provisions could be adduced, nor could Lord Palmerston advance any assertion more honourable to himself and his colleagues: for this good intelligence between the two countries is the key-stone of peace. Sir R. Peel has still more recently acknowledged the importance of this great truth.

CHAPTER IV.

LORD PONSONBY ARRIVES AT BRUSSELS—DIFFICULTIES OF HIS SITUATION AND THAT OF M. BRESSON—CHARACTER AND POSITION OF THE ORANGISTS—MANIFESTO OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE—POLICY OF GREAT BRITAIN—LORD ABERDEEN'S SPEECH ON THE BELGIC QUESTION—MESSRS. VAN DE WEYER AND VIL-LAIN XIV. DESPATCHED TO ENGLAND; THEY RETURN AFTER ADDRESSING AN ENERGETIC MEMOIR TO THE CONFERENCE—PROTOCOLS NOS. 11 AND 12—THE FRENCH CABINET REFUSES ITS RATIFICATION—EMBARRASSEMENTS CREATED BY COUNT SEBAS-TIANI'S CONDUCT—THE BELGIANS REJECT THE PROTOCOLS OF THE 20TH AND 27TH OF JANUARY—THE INJUSTICE OF THE LATTER AS REGARDED BELGIUM—PROTOCOL OF THE 19TH OF FEBRUARY—FRANCE ADHERES TO THE PROTOCOLS—GENERAL DIPLOMATIC CONSIDERATIONS—M. BRESSON RECALLED.

THE change of administration in England, without bringing with it any immediate or apparent alteration in British foreign policy, produced a moral effect on the Continent, most essentially favourable to the maintenance of general repose, and in no country more so than in Belgium, which had now become the axis on which revolved the paramount questions of peace and war. Participating in the prejudices of their French neighbours against the Duke of Wellington, prejudices for the most part originating in that great soldier's immortal triumphs; overjoyed at his retreat, and above all, in that of Lord Aberdeen, whom they looked on not only as a prejudiced partisan of the Netherlands government, but as essentially hostile to the diffusion of liberal principles abroad, as he was adverse to reform at home, the Belgians were the more ready to enter the

path of moderation and negotiation, when they found that the exclusion of the Nassaus, in lieu of producing unfavourable results, had operated to their advantage.

For the Conference, instead of breaking off diplomatic relations, redoubled its labours, and almost immediately despatched Lord Ponsonby to replace Mr. Cartwright, who was accredited to the German Diet, as a reward for the zeal with which he had fulfilled his instructions at Brussels. And certainly, if the most unremitting endeavours to maintain that good understanding with his colleague, which was so requisite to the success of their mission, merited recompence, no one was better entitled to it than Mr. Cartwright. Indeed, it was not one of the least anomalous events of this period, to find a British and a French diplomatist dwelling under the same roof, acting under the same instructions, and simultaneously exerting themselves in the same pacific cause; and this on the very arena where their countrymen had never before met but for purposes of hostility, and with the deadly rancour of implacable rivals!

The appointment of Lord Ponsonby, who, attended by Mr. Abercrombie, reached Brussels on the 5th of December, was hailed with general satisfaction. His liberal antecedents, his rank as a peer of Great Britain, and his connexion with Lord Grey, were regarded as favourable omens prior to his arrival; while his prepossessing countenance, his noble and courtly bearing, his perfect self-possession, and the affability of his manners, produced the best effects, as soon as he was introduced to the provisional government and other influential persons. It was well that his lordship possessed these and other advantages, for the annals of diplomacy scarcely furnish an instance of greater difficulty and delicacy than the position in which the commissioners of the Conference were placed at Brussels. Such, at least, was the light in which the mission was regarded, both by

Prince Talleyrand and Lord Palmerston—no mean judges of its intricacies and complications.

Though apparently pursuing the same object, and acting from one sole impulse, Lord Ponsonby and M. Bresson had, as it were, to serve two different masters, and thus to perform duties frequently of a nature so opposed to each other, as to require consummate tact, temper, and discretion, to prevent misunderstanding either between themselves or their governments. On the one hand, the French envoy had to reconcile the interests of France with those of Europe, and to execute the injunctions openly imposed on him by the Conference, without either irritating the feverish susceptibilities of the French people, or acting in opposition to the latent desires of the French Cabinet. He had to unite with the British commissioner in carrying into effect the common instructions received from London, and yet to abstract himself from his colleague, in order to perform contradictory commands emanating direct from Paris. He had to obey Prince Talleyrand, without contradicting General Sebastiani; and yet the views of the French foreign minister were oftentimes at variance with those of the Nestor of diplomacy.* He had moreover to sacrifice his natural prejudices and vows for the aggrandizement of France, and to turn a deaf ear to the temptations and seductions that were constantly pressed upon him. For whilst the Orangists spared no exertions to circumvent and mislead his colleague, the movement party and the re-unionists were no less active in endeavouring to induce M. Bresson to lend himself to their views.

On the other hand, Lord Ponsonby, enchained by circumscribed instructions, had to combat the predomi-

* A striking instance of this is afforded by Count Sebastiani's refusal to ratify the signature of Prince Talleyrand to the twelfth protocol.

nance of French influence, and yet to support his French colleague. He had to counteract the machinations of the movement party, and yet to advocate liberal principles. He had to neutralize the effect of the vote of exclusion, by endeavouring to bring round the popular voice to a member of the repudiated dynasty, and yet to avoid any measure that might excite the passions of the Belgic people. He had to conciliate the interests of the northern powers without giving offence to France, and to propitiate the latter, without giving umbrage to the former. He had to establish British influence where there was an anti-British feeling, and to restore tranquillity by the very means calculated to produce civil war—that is, by attempting to turn the tide of national sympathy in favour of a branch of the Nassaus, and this against the secret agency of France ; in despite of the open opposition of the great mass of the Belgians, and, what is more extraordinary, in defiance of the positive declarations of the king of the Netherlands ; who, in lieu of being prepared to support or acknowledge his son as a sovereign, did not scruple to assert, “ *that he would rather see De Potter placed on the throne than the Prince of Orange.*” The task imposed on Lord Ponsonby was Augean, and, as far as concerned the Prince of Orange, utterly impracticable ; a fact unfortunately not discovered until much valuable time had been thrown away, in this illusory project.

Without pretending to draw aside the veil that enveloped the policy of the great powers, or to explain the motives that actuated their proceedings at this juncture, a few words are necessary in order to point out the real position of the case, as regarded their general connexion with the Prince of Orange. This is the more essential as concerns England, for not only has the conduct and intentions of the British cabinet been completely misunderstood and misrepresented, but the foulest and most unwarrant-

able calumnies have been heaped on those whose only fault consisted in having faithfully executed the orders of their government, and perhaps in having too long trusted to the assertions of a party who, to serve their own views, would not have scrupled to plunge their country and all Europe into a bloody and interminable war. These accusations issued from two sources, which, though antipodes one to the other, seem to have approximated for the purpose of calumny and misrepresentation. The one were the Orangists, who were desirous to saddle all the odium of their own want of talent, courage, and unity, on those whom they had too long succeeded in duping, —and the other were the movement party, whose hearts were filled with rancour at the successful opposition that was made to their efforts to produce anarchy.

That it was the earnest desire of Great Britain and the northern powers to see the prince of Orange called to the Belgic throne, does not admit of a shadow of doubt; that is, so far as this could be effected without compromising the harmony that existed between France and the other cabinets, or without producing any violent convulsion in Belgium that might lead to a renewal of anarchy and bloodshed. That instructions to this effect were issued to the British commissioners, is as certain as that the Prince of Orange's tranquil election would have been hailed with general satisfaction, and would have been followed by the instant recognition of all European sovereigns. But under existing circumstances, and more especially under the limited circle within which each power had circumscribed its co-operation, the attempt was chimerical.

In the first place, though France did not openly dissent, she was essentially adverse to the return of any of the deposed dynasty; not only on the ground of its being a dangerous example to her own Carlists,

but from her entertaining other views in regard to Belgium; that is, from her still cherishing a hope that England might be induced to listen to a partition. Secondly, anxious as Great Britain might have been for the success of the Prince of Orange, she had determined to confine her good offices to mere *semi-official intercession*, and to decline all other assistance or intervention, whether in the shape of subsidy, or even of *official remonstrance*; a system rigidly adhered to from first to last. Thirdly, though the other powers may have furnished some private pecuniary succour, they were equally resolved to avoid all overt interference, and to leave the issue of the prince's cause to his own energy and the exertions of his partisans. Besides, the bursting forth of the Polish revolution on the 29th of November, intelligence of which reached St. Petersburg before that of the exclusion of the Nassaus, utterly precluded the emperor from affording any assistance to his brother-in-law. Indeed, the immense influence which this event had over the negotiations was not long in disclosing itself. The Belgians were not backward in availing themselves of this favourable conjuncture of circumstances, which thus completely neutralized the hostility of their most dangerous adversary.

Of the strength and real resources of what was termed the Orange party in Belgium, the most erroneous impressions every where existed; even the prince himself appears to have been as much deceived up to the last moment, as he had been at Antwerp in the commencement of October. Either from ignorance, want of candour, or false policy, his agents and partisans constantly over-rated their own powers, whilst they under-valued those of their opponents; and not only buoyed themselves up with false hopes, but utterly misled others as to their chances of success. Thus Mr. Cartwright left

Brussels knowing little of the real state of the case ; and Lord Ponsonby had no sooner arrived, than the same efforts were exerted to delude him as had been successfully employed in mystifying his predecessor.

To arrive at the truth was in fact extremely difficult, nor could it be effected but by the aid of time. In the first place, almost all those persons who sought access to the British commissary boldly affirmed that the Orangists were so numerous and powerful, that money and the mere countenance of the great powers were alone required to produce a general movement in the prince's favour. And yet, they must have been well aware not only of the conspiracy formed against his royal highness's life, but that preparations were concluded in many of the large provincial towns for hoisting the French tri-colour, should any attempt be made on the part of the Conference to impose the prince upon them. The army, the high aristocracy, both hereditary and commercial, as well as the burgher-guards, were said to be devoted to his cause. But, when the moment of action arrived, scarcely a single officer or soldier could be induced to move, with the exception of Baron Van der Smissen, who, having risen from the rank of major to that of major-general by the revolution ; first abandoned the king, and then deserted his country, and who, with three or four others, either stipulated for the confirmation of their rank, or for further advancement. The aristocracy, however much attached to the prince, were not inclined to hazard their lives or fortunes ; and the burgher-guards were as little disposed to place themselves in collision with the people, as they had been when Prince Frederick trusted to their support in the month of September.

It was confidently asserted, that, notwithstanding the recent decree of congress, his royal highness had a

strong party in the chambers, willing and desirous to propose the revocation of the act of exclusion: when, in fact, not one of the Orange deputies, with the exception of the venerable Maclagan of Ostend, had the courage to express their sentiments, much less to advocate a measure that would probably have entailed proscription and pillage on the whole. Indeed, the Marquis de Trazegnies, with other influential Orangists, in lieu of shewing any disposition to support the prince's cause, withdrew from congress, and limited their assistance to the concoction of still-born conspiracies and empty discussions within their own saloons. There, indeed, they were no ways of sparing their maledictions of the revolution and expressions of attachment to the prince. There they made vigorous speeches, destined to die away among the echoes of their own halls. There they uttered vows of eternal fidelity to the Nassaus; yet many would have preferred a return to that union with France, which they hoped would restore to them—not the Prince of Orange—but the places which they once held at the French court. There, they called for supplies of money, but would not unlock their own coffers. There they invoked bloodshed, with a determination not to spill a drop of their own. There, they eulogized the Emperor of Russia, because he had carried proscription and death into the heart of unhappy Poland; and with parricidal vows, earnestly longed for similar calamities to befall their own country,—no matter whether inflicted by Calmucs or Dutch. Within this, their limited circle, they cursed the British government and its agent; because the one had at length discovered the fallacy of their assertions, and the other would not embroil themselves and all Europe in war, in order to revive a system of policy which the progress of reason had shown to be incompatible with the interests of Great Britain.

Liege, Ghent, and Antwerp were, by the same fallacious reporters, declared to be in readiness to proclaim the son of their late sovereign ; and yet, the only proofs that could be adduced of any intention of active co-operation in those places were a few passive petitions. Plans of operation and pecuniary demands were certainly not wanting ; but the first were drawn up without combination or regard, either to local facts or general circumstances ; and the latter, when granted, were lavished on men of disreputable character and broken fortunes, who had no other influence or power over the people than the mere example of their courage. And, even of these, Lieutenant-colonel Gregoire was the only one who gave proofs of a willingness to repay in his person that which he had received in his purse. Beyond this, there was neither *unity, force, prudence, or true devotion*. *All* were ready to urge *others* forward ; scarcely *one* was prepared to expose *himself*. All were desirous to profit by successful results ; but few were inclined to encounter dubious chances.

On the other hand, whilst the press redoubled its hostility to the ex-dynasty, the National Association—active, energetic, and relentless—had obtained such complete command over the populace, that a breath from them sufficed to reduce to ashes the abode of any person suspected of Orangism ; nay, even the sacred character of the British envoy could not screen his habitation from insult, nor protect those who were in immediate relation with him from domiciliary visits and the seizure of their papers.

If there was a deficiency in the Orangist party of every essential requisite to the success of so difficult an enterprise as the restoring any branch of that family, there was a no less striking defect in the counsels and conduct of the prince himself. His departure for

England was essentially ill-advised. If it was considered prudent for him to quit Holland, and thus to detach himself from all apparent contact with his father's cabinet, any place would have been preferable to London, none more appropriate than France or the Rhenan provinces. If he expected to be joined by the army of the Meuse, with which he had certainly established partial relations, he should have decided for the latter ; and thence, boldly throwing himself into the province of Limbourg, have tried the effect of his presence on the people. If he trusted to a sympathetic rising in Ghent, he should have selected Paris or Lille ; whence he might suddenly have shown himself in the Flanders ; and, although his life had been placed in jeopardy, have thus put those to the test who had made such lavish professions of their attachment, and shamed them into activity by his example. In either case, he would have been at hand to profit by circumstances, and to direct and animate the exertions that were making in his favour. His vicinity would have facilitated communications, and would have given courage to his partisans. His manifesto of the 11th of January, 1831, which produced results contrary to those anticipated by his partisans, would have been more effectual had it been dated from any other place than London ; for so jealous were the Belgians of British influence that they determined to send a deputation to Paris, to consult the King of France as to the choice of "*a chief of the State*," whilst they declined holding any communication with the British government on the same subject.*

By residing in France he would have had the appearance of being supported by that country, and not

* See Appendix, No. 27.

of acting under the control of the Conference, or rather of the Duke of Wellington; an impression that increased the suspicions of his opponents, and operated strongly to his disadvantage. Above all, he would not then have incurred the censure of wasting his time in the lap of ease and idleness, while the great game of monarchy was at stake, nor have brought on himself the accusation of diverting himself with frivolous amusements, while his partisans, who so much needed a leader and rallying point, were abandoned to their own impulses, and left to encounter death or proscription.

The question, however, as far as it regards Great Britain, reduces itself to the narrowest and most simple compass. On this, as on all subsequent occasions, during the progress of the Batavo-Belgic negotiation, the British cabinet and its agents acted in a manly, straightforward, and candid manner towards all parties. The sympathies of the English for the Prince of Orange never were concealed; indeed they were candidly avowed by Lord Grey in the House of Lords. But these sympathies were not only made subservient, from first to last, to the maintenance of a good understanding between all the great powers, but were never intended to be demonstrated in defiance of the Belgic national will. So long as the Orangists succeeded in deluding the English government with assurances that the Prince of Orange was certain of being called to the throne, by such an overwhelming majority of the nation as would not only preclude civil war at the moment, but offer guarantees for future stability, so long was that government inclined to encourage the project. But it never entered into the plan of the cabinet to *impose* the object of their predilection, or to bring him back into Belgium as an apple of intestine discord. Still less

was it intended to countenance this or any other speculation that would have driven the Belgians into the arms of France, and thus engendered that general war which England had determined to avoid, at the sacrifice of the long-cherished political axioms of her statesmen, the dearest affections of the crown, and the sympathies of a vast majority of her people, and above all, of her army and navy.

Political ties may easily be riven asunder, and it is well that a renovated policy at length prevailed over those ancient and ruinous doctrines, which, while they filled the cup of British glory to the very brim, had drained the pockets of the people almost to the last dregs. But individual sympathies are not so easily rooted out. Thence the abandonment of the Prince of Orange's cause was painful to almost every person, whether in or out of office in England, and was not rendered less galling from its being the result of a paramount duty. Great Britain had to choose between that prince with a general war, or the continuance of peace without him. Had the alternative been put to the vote in the British senate, it would probably have been carried without a division.

Indeed, nothing can present a more striking proof of the enlightened wisdom of Lord Grey's foreign policy, and the skill with which Lord Palmerston conducted the whole of these difficult negotiations, than the triumphant manner in which the question as regarded the Netherlands has always been met in both houses of parliament. This is the more remarkable, from the triumph being the fruit of conviction over those deep-rooted sympathies, and party prejudices, which so strongly developed themselves in the arguments of the opposition. Even Lord Aberdeen himself was compelled to acknowledge "*the indispensable necessity of*

an administrative separation ;" a remarkable admission, which implicitly tended to condemn the treaty of Vienna, and to stigmatize the government of the King of the Netherlands. For it is notorious that this necessity for separation arose wholly and solely from the defects of the one, and the impolicy of the other. The marriage between Belgium and Holland ought never to have been contracted ; but, as it had taken place, the divorce might have been avoided, had the king pursued a system less exclusively Dutch, or acted more fully in accordance with the spirit of treaties, and the intentions of the great powers.

The animosity or opposition of the Belgians before the revolution—nay, even at the moment of the Prince of Orange's entry—was as little anti-dynastic as Orangism at a subsequent period has been dynastic. In both instances the dynasty must be considered as an accessory, not a cause. Had the dynasty not identified itself with obnoxious acts of oppression and flagrant partiality, it never would have lost its hold on the hearts of the people. Were Belgium now restored to the same commercial advantages that it enjoyed during the union, there would be no Orangism. For, in fact, *Orangism is a mere commercial question*; a question of interest, totally distinct from policy, patriotism, or personal sympathy. It is in this that it essentially differs both from the Carlism of France and Spain, and the Miguelism of Portugal. In these latter countries, there is a degree of self-abnegation and chivalrous devotion in the conduct of the legitimists that ennoble their cause ; but in Belgium, it is a mere matter of aristocratical pride, of commercial speculation, and of arithmetical calculation, divested of anything that is dignified or disinterested. Braving exile, proscription, confiscation, and death, from pure attachment to ancient

predilections, the Carlists of France and the Peninsula have some claim to the respect even of their immediate enemies; but in Belgium scarcely a single instance can be advanced of an Orangist having made a single *voluntary* sacrifice, or having courted the slightest danger or risk, in support of the avowed object of his affections.*

When Lord Aberdeen, in his memorable speech of the 22d of January, 1832, reproached Lord Grey with being the sole author of Belgic independence, he was in some measure unjust to himself; for, in the first place, the two first protocols were ratified by the former upwards of a month after the Belgians had proclaimed their independence; and, secondly, it is evident that these protocols were the foundation on which were based all the subsequent negotiations that led, not to the "*indispensable separation*," for that was already consummated, but to the consolidation of Belgic nationality. It was Lord Aberdeen who first dispatched a British commissioner to negotiate with the existing Belgic government, not on the footing of "revolted subjects," but on that of an independent nation; implicitly, if not directly, admitting their right to sign conventions, and treating them as a power co-equal with Holland. It is true that this step was taken with a view of rescuing the latter from the danger that menaced it, and with the still more laudable intention of averting the calamities of war. So desirous was his lordship to effect this important object, that he even signed the

* Baron Van der Smissen may be adduced as an exception to this remark; but even he might return with impunity, and would in all probability be restored to his rank. The case of Borremans may also be cited: but he also was soon liberated, and has returned to the position in society in which he was found at the revolution, and from which neither his talents or antecedents ever entitled him to emerge.

second protocol the day after he had quitted office ; an anomaly to which he alluded in his speech in the following terms : “ The first duty of the Conference was to endeavour to establish peace, by effecting a cessation of hostilities between Holland and her revolted provinces. The second object with which the British government was bound to occupy itself, was the signature of a protocol to that effect. I signed it, therefore, on the day after I resigned the seals confided to my charge ; a step which I decided upon from my extreme anxiety to arrange this affair.” But the purport in no way deducted from the consequences ; and of these consequences Lord Aberdeen has no cause to be ashamed ; unless, indeed, he blushed at having largely contributed to save Great Britain and Europe from a sanguinary war.

Although it is in no way intended to deprive Lord Grey and his colleagues of the honour of having completed a work which, according to the opinions of all unprejudiced European politicians, was essential to the maintenance of peace—a work, without which, anarchy and general war were inevitable—yet, when the consolidation of Belgic independence, which was the vehicle by which this delicate and difficult operation was effected, is thrown forward as a reproach, it is proper that those who put the first hand to the work should bear their share of the onus of creation. If the simile may be permitted, Lord Aberdeen laid down the railway ; Lord Grey supplied and put in action the locomotive engines.

The armistice certainly secured Holland from great hazards, but it likewise anticipated the *casus fœderis* on the part of Prussia, and thence directly paved the road to Belgic independence. The opinions of the veteran and enlightened diplomatists whose names are

affixed to the protocols, under the sanction of the most illustrious and eminent statesmen and monarchs of Europe; the very essence of these protocols, which breathe throughout a noble spirit of peace and conciliation, and the most elevated policy, are proofs, that if Lord Grey was the author of Belgic independence, he was not only a benefactor to that country, but to all Europe. For Belgic independence and European peace were synonymous. The one could not be denied without endangering the other. In fact, the conservation of the latter was as intimately linked with the consolidation of the former, as the life of one of the Siamese twins with the co-existence of his brother.

Had it been possible to reduce France at one blow to the condition in which she was placed subsequent to the battle of Waterloo, or even to have filled Belgium with foreign bayonets, as was the case prior to that glorious event, then the possibility of a different policy was comprehensible. The same power that placed the King of the Netherlands on the united throne, might have maintained him at the head of the two countries whose disunion was admitted to be "indispensable;" but that any British statesman should advance so dangerous a theory as the possibility of a restoration, or a continuance of *dynastic* connexion, after the events of Brussels and Antwerp, is an inconceivable infatuation, showing a very imperfect knowledge of the real state of public opinion both in Belgium and France. "It was to forget that the refusal to recognize Belgic independence, in the then state of popular feeling, would have entailed the French occupation of these provinces, and rekindled a fresh war of twenty years, in which England must inevitably have been involved."*

* "Lettre à Lord Aberdeen, par Victor de la Marre;" a pamphlet attributed to Mr. Van de Weyer, and ably refuting the argu-

The exclusion of the Nassaus, as previously observed, was followed by redoubled diplomatic exertions on the part of the Conference, which was not long ere it came to the important resolution developed in the protocol of the 20th of December (No. 7), wherein it frankly acknowledged the vices of the treaty of Vienna, and the necessity of establishing the independence of Belgium. In consequence of this, the provisional government was requested to dispatch commissioners to London, "furnished with full powers to consult, explain, and facilitate the definitive adoption of the new arrangements." By this step the Belgians were admitted to a share in the negotiations; and their agents, without being overtly received as envoys from an acknowledged government, were nevertheless indirectly placed on the same footing, in respect to the Conference, as the Netherlands ambassador. But *Messrs. Van de Weyer and H. Villain XIV.*,* who were charged with this mission, having received instructions to lay claim to the possession of the whole of the left bank of the Scheldt, Luxembourg (saving its relations with the Germanic Diet), and Limbourg, including Maestricht, these inadmissible pretensions were instantly rejected by the Conference, and the two commissioners returned to Brussels—not, however, without addressing an energetic note to Lord Palmerston, touching the free navigation of the Scheldt, which the Netherlands government continued to obstruct up to the end of January.

ments advanced by Lord Aberdeen in his speech of the 22d of January, 1832.

* The singular title of this family is said to have arisen from a request of one of their progenitors, who, on being ennobled by Louis XIV., demanded as a boon that the king would permit him and his heirs to assume, as an addition to their name, the cypher attached to that of his majesty.

“War is imminent,” says the penultimate paragraph of this document; “if it breaks out, if neighbouring states and other European countries suffer from its counteraction, the fault will rest with the monarch who will have provoked a patient and generous nation—but a nation too proud to allow that the just and reasonable deference, which it has consented to show to the sovereigns who have offered a benevolent mediation, should be mistaken for a symptom of weakness.”

Independent of a mass of notes, explanations, and protestations, eight protocols saw the light before the termination of 1830. Five more were produced during the month of January, 1831, of which those of the 20th and 27th (Nos. 11 and 12) were the most remarkable. The first of these, which may be looked upon as the arch on which all subsequent treaties were founded, contained seven articles, which the plenipotentiaries had determined upon as the basis for the territorial limits intended to separate Belgium from Holland, and which further announced the intention of erecting the former into a “perpetually neutral state.”* The second was principally confined to financial arrangements, by which it was “*proposed*” to saddle Belgium with $\frac{1}{4}$ of the whole of the debt inscribed in the great book of the Netherlands government; the interest of which debt, at two and a half per cent., amounted to more than twenty-seven millions.† In consideration of which,

* See Appendix, No. 23.

† According to the note B annexed to the 48th protocol, the following is the exact amount of the Netherlands public debt on the 1st of October, 1831:—Interest of debt at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. 19,272,275 fl.; of which 167,806,836 of capital, forming 4,195,145 of annual interest, had been incurred during the union; independent of this were the following items:—Sinking fund syndicate, at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., 4,950,000: obligations, at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., 1,050,000; sinking fund, 2,500,000; giving a total of 27,772,000 florins.

Belgium was to be admitted to a free intercourse with the Dutch colonies, on the same footing, and with the same rights and privileges, as the people of Holland. It was also determined that Antwerp should continue to be a mere commercial port, as stipulated by the 15th section of the treaty of Paris, and that the whole of the articles of the 11th and 12th protocols, should be embodied in one category, forming a species of preliminary convention, under the title of "*Basis destined to establish the independence and future existence of Belgium.*"

The two last paragraphs of this important document are too remarkable to be omitted. For they afford convincing proofs of the honourable intentions of the five powers, and of their resolution to sacrifice all secondary considerations to the preservation of European tranquillity. "Intent on maintaining general peace," say the plenipotentiaries, "persuaded that unanimity is its only guarantee, and acting with perfect disinterestedness in the Belgian affairs, the grand object of the five great powers has been to assign to her (Belgium) an inoffensive position in the European system, and to offer her an existence that may secure both her own welfare, and the safety of other states. They do not hesitate, therefore, to assume to themselves the right of advancing these principles; and without prejudicing other grave questions, without deciding any thing as to that of the Belgic sovereignty, it behoves them to declare, that, in their opinion, the sovereign of that country must necessarily answer to the principles of existence of the country itself—satisfy by his personal position the safety of neighbouring states—accept for this purpose the arrangements consigned in the present protocol, and occupy a station to insure their tranquil enjoyment to Belgium."

But the pacific views of the Conference had like to

have been frustrated by two incidents immediately resulting from the promulgation of the above-mentioned basis. The conditions, especially as concerned the limits and the debt, excited the utmost clamour in Belgium. The congress, on the 1st of February, solemnly protested against the 11th protocol ; and the diplomatic committee, representing the ministry for foreign affairs, returned to Lord Ponsonby the 12th and 13th, accompanied by a note dated the 22nd of February, declaring that these documents were tainted with undue partiality ; that they were a violation of the principle of non-intervention, and a complete departure from that principle of simple mediation which had been the avowed object of the Conference ; and further, denying the right of the latter to final arbitration. This proceeding not only shewed the determined spirit that animated the Belgic government, but that it was fully alive to, and resolved to avail itself of, the favourable nature of collateral circumstances, which, if they did not empower it to dictate its own conditions, nevertheless enabled it, by the mere threat of exciting general war, to hold the Conference at bay, and thus to give a new turn to the conclusion that had been too hastily predetermined by the great powers.

This contrariety had been preceded, and was perhaps caused by another circumstance, totally unexpected both by Prince Talleyrand and his coadjutors, and which served to complicate the negotiations, and to endanger the perfect good understanding that had hitherto existed between the great powers. To the surprise of all Europe, the French cabinet, which had adhered to the protocol of the 20th January, declined to ratify that of the 27th ; thereby not only annulling the act of its own plenipotentiary, and encouraging the Belgians to renewed opposition and a continuance in a system of diplomacy

exclusively French, but rendering the position of the agents of the conference at Brussels extremely embarrassing, and perhaps laying the foundation of that want of cordiality that subsequently arose between them at the period of the election of the Duke of Nemours. A misintelligence in no way to be attributed to a want of discretion or tact on the part of either of these diplomats, but to the contradictory nature of the instructions forwarded to M. Bresson, who appeared to be the victim of a mystification practised on him by his own foreign minister.*

This unlooked-for resolution of the French cabinet was conveyed to M. Bresson by a dispatch from Count Sebastiani, dated the 1st of February, which, while it directed him not to take any share in presenting the protocol in question, contained the memorable passage so justly criticised and so often quoted by the Dutch, when the French government subsequently proceeded to acts of open intervention: "The Conference of London is a mediation, and it is the intention of the king's government that it should never lose this character."

In consequence of this communication, the onus of presenting the protocol of the 27th devolved on the British commissioner; thereby giving rise to an idea that the French government was not sincere in its professions

* By a note dated the 11th of January, 1831, M. Bresson informed the diplomatic committee, of which the Count de Celles was president, that "the king and his government thought that the election of the Duke of Leuchtenberg would throw Belgium into great embarrassments—that this prince would not be recognized by the great powers, and under no consideration (*dans aucun cas*) by France." Yet, on the 16th of the same month, Count Sebastiani declared in the French chamber, that France, "respecting the right of the Belgians to elect their own monarch, would recognize that monarch, whomsoever he might be."

of cordiality towards the other powers, and that it was inclined to support the Belgians in their extravagant pretensions to the left bank of the Scheldt, and Maestricht. By a singular coincidence which had all the air of calculation, Count Sebastiani's dispatch reached Brussels on the morning of the election of the Duke of Nemours, where it produced a striking effect on the public, and added to the illusion of those who relied on the acceptance of that prince. Fortunately, the embarrassments of Russia, the perfect unity existing between Lord Palmerston and Prince Talleyrand, the consummate temper and ability displayed by both, and the immense superiority of the latter over Count Sebastiani, neutralized any evil results that might have arisen from this proceeding. A proceeding the more inexplicable, since a note from Count Sebastiani to the Belgic envoy at Paris, Mr. Le Hon, of the 15th of April following, placed the former in direct contradiction with himself, by certifying the adhesion of France to the protocol of the 20th of January, and terminating by declaring, "that he believed he could not furnish a more convincing proof of his amicable sentiments, than by advising the Belgians to adhere without restriction or delay to that document." Similar notices of adhesion to the protocol of the 27th were addressed to the Conference, and officially acknowledged by them on the 17th of April. (Protocol 21.)

By thus retracing its steps, and withdrawing its objections, the French cabinet dispelled the darkness and confusion that for a short time clouded the negotiations, and threatened the most grievous consequences. In the meanwhile, however, these incidents had been highly advantageous to Belgium, for by retarding the march of the negotiations, they compelled the plenipotentiaries to enter more minutely into the territorial and financial questions, and enabled them to devise a system of com-

pensation for the one, and a more equitable division as regarded the other.

However unfounded the objections of the Belgians might have been to the general spirit and tenor of these protocols ; however chimerical the idea of establishing a country so situated as Belgium as a “perpetually neutral state,” the reclamations against the allotment of the debt were indispensable. It is true that those conditions were skilfully declared to be simple “*propositions* ;” but it was impossible for Belgium to admit them under any shape or form, or to avoid rejecting them *instantly*. Indeed, the Conference was not long ere it was constrained to admit the injustice of saddling Belgium with so large a portion as $\frac{1}{4}$ of the interest of the general debt, without distinguishing that part which had been incurred prior to, or subsequent upon, the union of the two countries. The hardship of such an arrangement must be apparent to the most prejudiced person, when it is considered that the maximum of the Belgian burthens, antecedent to 1815, and known as the Austro and Gallo-Belgic debts, did not exceed 2,750,000 florins of annual interest ;* and on taking a just share—that is, *half* of the debts incurred during the union—the whole would only amount to 4,847,572 florins, or, including the deferred debt, to 5,800,000 florins, in round numbers. On the other hand, at the moment of the union of the two countries, in 1815, Holland was loaded with debts, the capital of which amounted to 575 millions active, and 1150 millions deferred. The just proportion, therefore, between the obligations of the two nations with the public creditor, prior to the union, was as 43 is

* “Observations sur la Pièce, adressée à la Conférence par les Plénipotentiaires Hollandois, relative à la Dette.”—Rapport du Ministre des Affaires Etrangères. Brussels, 1831.

to 2.* The 48th protocol rectified this injustice; but in announcing that the interest of the various debts incurred during the union amounted to 10,100,000 florins, of which the half was allotted to Belgium, it proclaimed a most remarkable fact—namely, that the Netherlands government, in lieu of being enabled to diminish its burthens, during *fifteen years of profound peace* and apparent prosperity, had *augmented* them in the proportion of one-tenth of her whole budget, which in 1830 amounted to about eighty millions, *with a deficit of five!* Without going to the length of Mr. Nothomb, who asks “if this fact does not justify the revolution?” it may be affirmed, that it is a convincing proof either of the unskilful management of the Netherlands financial system, or that the country was not in that flourishing condition so generally supposed by all strangers. Continued peace, and augmenting incumbrances, are anomalies in political economy that justify the extremes of discontent.

In the meanwhile, however, the Dutch cabinet, to whom the propositions, especially as regarded the debt, were eminently advantageous, fully adhered to the protocol rejected by the Belgians. by a note addressed to the Conference on the 18th February — an important fact; for, without directly recognizing Belgic independence, or renouncing his pretensions to the throne, his Nether-

* The French debt incurred during the union with France amounted to two millions of florins, and the Austro-Belgic debt to 756,000 florins annual interest. The latter, as the name indicates, arose from certain engagements of Austria when mistress of the Low Countries. In virtue of a convention concluded between the Emperor and the King of the Netherlands, bearing date the 11th of October, 1815, with a secret *addenda* of the 5th of March, 1828, the latter took on himself this charge, which had been previously supported by France, according to the eighth article of the treaty of Luneville.

lands Majesty thereby “fully and entirely” admitted the principles of that independence, as well as those of the *election* of a new sovereign. Mr. Nothomb goes still further in treating this point; for he argues, “that the king not only retracted hereby his protestation against the principle of Belgic independence—the basis of separation, according to the protocol of the 20th January, having no other purport than to realize the object of that of the 20th December—but that he implicitly abdicated the sovereignty of Belgium, since the protocol of the 27th January, in its conclusion, admits the possibility of the election of a new sovereign.” The first of these conclusions is certainly borne out by the very letter of the protocol in question; but it does not follow, because the Netherlands monarch was ready to admit the theory or opinion of the Conference, as to the possibility of electing a new sovereign, that he should recognize this as a consummated fact, and thereby renounce for himself and family those rights to which he has since clung with the most unflinching tenacity. Every subsequent act has proved that such an admission was the farthest from his intentions. Indeed, he has been accused of risking the peace of Europe, and sacrificing all other considerations to those of his own family, without regard to the real interests or views of the Dutch people. Certainly, the Netherlands statesmen, who had given such irrefragable proofs of sagacity and ability during the whole course of the negotiation, and whose state papers are for the most part models of diplomatic talent, were not likely to be surprised into the admission of a principle, against which their sovereign was determined to combat “*unguibus et rostro*.”*

* Such was the literal expression employed by the King of the Netherlands in a conversation held with a foreign diplomatist. “I am resolved,” said his majesty, “to resist tooth and nail; and if the

The labours of the Conference, during the month of February, were not less arduous than during that which had preceded them, and were rendered still more complicated by the embarrassments resulting from Count Sebastiani's note of the 1st. Fortunately for Belgic independence and the repose of Europe, neither the counsels or predilections of that minister long prevailed in the French cabinet. Had it been otherwise, the anti-sympathetic feeling which he evinced for the one—a feeling not arising from any regard to the King of the Netherlands, but from an overweening attachment to the aggrandizement of France—would have given rise to consequences that must have fatally compromised the other, and produced that convulsion which the statesmen of Europe were eagerly seeking to avert. Between the 1st and the 19th of February, seven new protocols were made public. Those of the first and seventh (Nos. 14 and 15) consecrated the principle, that the five great powers were resolved to renounce the acceptance of the Belgic throne for any prince directly appertaining to their respective dynasties; the latter of these two documents, expressly stipulating the exclusion of the Dukes of Nemours and Leuchtenberg, was returned by the Belgians, as being “contrary to the decision of congress.” Although the protocol of the 7th was based on a declaration of the King of the French, who had solemnly refused the sovereignty for his son, M. Bresson declined participating in its presentation, and thus it again fell to Lord Ponsonby's lot to act without the support of his colleague, between whom and himself a coldness had now arisen, which terminated in the recall of the former. Perfect

worst comes to the worst, I and my family are prepared to follow the example of that young hero” (pointing to an engraving of Van Speyck, which hung in his cabinet).

unity, if not perfect cordiality, was so essentially necessary to the maintenance of amicable relations, that the removal of one or the other of these two diplomatists became essential. Justice guided the Conference in its selection; but a mission to Berlin soon recompensed M. Bresson for the talent he had shewn, as well as for the momentary annoyance which he must have suffered from obeying the contradictory instructions of the chief of his department.

The protocol of the 19th of February (No. 19), one of the most interesting productions issued by the Conference, merits peculiar attention; it may be considered as containing the political creed of the great powers, and as a skilful summary of all the negotiations up to that period. One or two extracts deserve more than ordinary notice. After briefly explaining the motives that led to the union of Holland and Belgium, as well as those which guided the Conference in resolving to modify the treaties of Vienna and Paris, it proceeds thus: "The union of Holland and Belgium fell to pieces. Official communications were not long wanting to convince the five courts that the measures originally destined to maintain it (the union) could neither re-establish it for the time being, nor preserve it for the future; and that henceforward, in lieu of amalgamating the affections and welfare of the two people, it would only bring their passions and animosities into collision, and cause war and all its calamities to spring from the shock.

"It was not the province of the powers to judge of the causes that led to the rupture of the bonds they had formed. But when they saw these bonds torn asunder, it behoved them still to secure the object they had proposed to themselves in their formation. It behoved them, through the medium of new combinations, to ensure to Europe that tranquillity of which the union of Holland

and Belgium had formed one of the bases. The powers were imperiously required to do so. They had the right, and events imposed on them the duty, of preventing the Belgic provinces, now *become independent*, from endangering the general security and equilibrium of Europe."

After alluding to the measures that had been adopted to avert the further effusion of blood, and to demonstrate to the Belgians the duties they owed to Europe—duties no way inconsistent with their vows for separation and independence: it proceeds thus. "Each nation has its particular rights, but Europe has also her rights. Social order has conferred these upon her. Belgium having become independent, found the treaties that govern Europe already framed and in vigour. She ought, therefore, to respect, and not to infringe them. In respecting them, she conciliated the interests and repose of the great community of European states. By infringing them, she would have produced anarchy and war. The powers could alone prevent this misfortune; and since they *could*, they *ought*. It was their duty to establish the salutary maxim, that though circumstances may give rise to the creation of a new state in Europe, they do not give this state more right to alter the general system into which it enters, than any changes which may occur in the condition of an ancient state, authorize it to consider itself absolved from its anterior engagements. This is the maxim of all civilized nations; a maxim to which is attached the very principle according to which states survive their governments, as well as the imperishable obligations of treaties on those who contract them; a maxim, in short, that cannot be forgotten, without causing the retrocession of civilization, of which morality and public faith are fortunately both the first results and the first guarantees.

“As to the rest,” add the plenipotentiaries, “Belgium has obtained all she could desire; a separation from Holland, independence, external security, guarantees for her territory and neutrality, the free navigation of the rivers that serve as issues to her productions, and the tranquil enjoyment of her national liberties. Such are the arrangements against which the protestations in question oppose the publicly avowed intention of neither, respecting the possessions or rights of neighbouring states,”*

This memorable document, replete with maxims of the most elevated and enlightened policy, terminated by seven articles, renewing the arrangements determined on by the protocol of the 20th of January, and declaring them to be “fundamental and irrevocable.”† Circumstances, however, arose that rendered it necessary to modify these arrangements; and by a letter of the 17th of March, addressed to the French government by the four powers, in reply to the objections of the former, both to the twelfth protocol and to certain portions of the nineteenth, it was declared, “That the principle laid down in regard to the partition of the debt, was that each country should bear its *just proportion* of the burthens incurred before and after the union, but that it was not intended to fix the exact amount, this question being reserved for ulterior arrangement.”

Such is the general outline of the diplomatic relations of the Conference during the first epoch. To follow these diversified and contradictory negotiations through all their various phases and ramifications, would necessi-

* Meaning those protestations of congress, and the diplomatic committee, to the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth protocols.

† See Appendix, No. 29.

tate an analysis of the whole of the protocols. We shall, therefore, confine ourselves to those striking and salient events which gave such an air of contradiction to the whole proceeding, by compelling the Conference to pursue, what might be termed, a Penelopean process of diplomacy; that is, by undoing by one act the very stipulations which, but a few hours previous, it had declared to be final and irrevocable.

CHAPTER V.

MILITARY AND SOCIAL POSITION OF BELGIUM—ORGANIZATION OF ITS ARMY—SUCCESSIVE WAR MINISTERS—FINANCIAL CONDITION—RIOTS—POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS—PILLAGE OF MR. MATHIEUS' HOUSE—CONDUCT OF THE ORANGISTS—POLICY OF LORD PONSOMBY; HIS PRUDENCE AND SKILFUL CONDUCT—VAN DER SMISSEN—SITUATION OF THE LABOURING CLASSES—TACTICS OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE'S PARTISANS—ASPECT OF BRUSSELS—CIVIC GUARDS.

IN the meantime the state of uncertainty and incoherence in which Belgium was plunged by the unsettled state of affairs, and the pretensions and intrigues of conflicting parties, principally arising from the want of a central rallying point, was so intensely felt, not only by the sane part of the nation, but even by the most exaggerated patriots, that already in the month of January it was almost unanimously resolved to bring the question of the choice of a sovereign to an immediate issue. Before offering any details of these proceedings, which occupied public attention from the commencement of January until the question was finally set at rest by the acceptance of Prince Leopold on the 11th of July, it is necessary to offer a few observations on the general condition of the country, and to show what progress it had made towards re-organization. The two points that naturally attract most interest, are those of its defensive and financial resources; for the juridical and internal administration, though considerably modified, especially by the re-establishment of trial by jury, appeared to march without effort or shock; and, beyond the univer-

sal struggle for place and appointment, gave little trouble to the ministers charged with the administration of justice and the interior.

So complete had been the dissolution of the Netherlands forces, so absolute was the destruction of all discipline and subordination, so immense the pretensions of men of all ranks, not only to promotion but command, that up to the period in question little progress had been made in the re-composition of the Belgic army. The Netherlands military system had perished with the government, and that of France had been adopted in its place. Re-creation was, therefore, necessary in every branch, and in none more so than in the artillery and engineers. For, although the armament of the fortresses was complete in its most minute details, and the Dutch had left behind them a quantity of light guns, and material sufficient to establish a noble park of field-artillery, the Belgians found themselves not only without superior officers, but without subalterns, non-commissioned, or instructors. The whole of the mounted batteries having been removed into Holland, they were likewise without horses. It was with the utmost difficulty, therefore, that at the expiration of four or five months, they were enabled to organize half-a-dozen brigades of guns, and even these miserably deficient in every necessary qualification. The same observations are applicable to almost every other department. They had the skeletons of eleven regiments of infantry of the line, two of light infantry, ten battalions of free corps, and five regiments of cavalry, forming a nominal force of about thirty thousand infantry and two thousand horse, with double this number of civic guards; but a third of the former were non-effective, and the whole of the latter utterly useless for field service.

The general state of insubordination was pitiful. All

attempts on the part of superiors at enforcing discipline was met by inferiors with accusations of treachery and Orangism. All efforts at weeding out incapacity or punishing misconduct, were distorted into acts of anti-patriotism or lèse-nationality. On the one hand, the press—the most factious, the most unbridled that was ever endured in any country—took up the cause of the condemned, not from conviction, but from sheer love of misrule. Not content with defence, it often demanded re-integration and promotion for those whose want of every essential quality too frequently incapacitated them for the lowest grades. On the other hand, the hall of congress constantly re-echoed with the most wild and dangerous doctrines. Many of the deputies, while they cried aloud for war, and rebuked the ministers for the inefficiency of the troops, not only disheartened the regular military, by exaggerated praises of the hordes of volunteers or free corps, but became the open advocates of indiscipline, by supporting those whose misconduct and ignorant pretensions rendered organization almost impracticable. Half-a-dozen lawyers, without the slightest acquaintance with the simplest rules of strategy or tactics, not only arrogated to themselves that knowledge of military economy which can only be acquired by long years of toil and experience in the field and cabinet, but pretended to dictate plans of attack and defence as visionary as they were dangerous. Some there were who, because a handful of volunteers had driven Prince Frederick from Brussels, affected to deride the use of regular armies; and, with bombastic exaggeration, declared that their blouses and barricades might bid defiance to the legions of united Europe.

In lieu of supporting the government, these men, whose fevered discourses found a ready echo in the journals, did all they could to increase the already

numerous obstacles that lay in the way of re-organization ; and while they filled the nation with the most preposterous notions of its own strength and importance, threw it off its guard, and thereby materially contributed to the disasters of August.

The task of the successive war ministers was, in fact, most arduous, and required the energy and vigour of one of those superior minds that revolutions sometimes produce, but which, in the present instance, was nowhere forthcoming. Exposed to the personalities of the deputies, and nailed, as it were, to the pillory by the journals, which exercised the most unblushing terrorism over the public mind ; trembling lest any act of vigour should expose them to be denounced to the patriotic associations, and thence entail on them proscription or pillage—a weapon wielded by the latter with fearful dexterity, the successive ministers evinced a degree of lukewarmness and moral debility utterly incompatible with the exigencies of a period, when, to effect any good, it was essentially necessary for a man to arm himself with the most stoical firmness and an utter disregard, not to the prudent counsels, but to the *assaults* of the press.

They had to create every thing afresh, as if no army had ever existed. The raw material was there in abundance, but the question was how to mould it into some serviceable shape.* “ Indeed, down to the month of August 1831, the armed force presented a chaotic picture of incapacity, jealousy, and division on the part of the chiefs, of arrogant pretension on that of the subalterns, and of insubordination on that of the non-commissioned and soldiers, not to have been surpassed by the bands of Bolivar or other South-American leaders.

* The passages marked by inverted commas, with some necessary alterations, are extracted from a contribution to the *United Service Journal*, of Jan. 1833, from the author's pen.—[NOTE OF ED.]

“ The want of officers and non-commissioned was above all most sensibly felt. The average proportion of Dutch over Belgians having been as six to one, it can be no matter of surprise that Belgium should not find herself in a condition to furnish the requisite number for her augmented army, especially for those scientific branches where Dutch partiality had most preponderated.

“ This immense increase of the troops, and the corresponding deficiency of officers, rendered the admission of foreigners, or the most rapid promotion, inevitable. In later times much discretion has been shewn in the selection and promotion of the former ; but at the period in question, the higher military grades were distributed with a less sparing hand. Thus Van Halen, an exiled Spanish lieutenant-colonel, was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-general ; Count d'Hane, a major of cuirassiers ; Count Vandermeere, who had served as a captain in the colonies ; Mr. Goblet, a captain of engineers ; the Marquess de Chasteler, a former captain of hussars, and Mr. Niellon, a retired subaltern of French cavalry, were quickly raised to the rank of major-generals ; whilst Mr. Charles de Brouckère and Mr. Kessels, ex-lieutenants of artillery, were promoted, the one to the rank of colonel, the other to that of major in the same corps.* Such instances of rapid advancement, anomalous as they may appear in ordinary times, are however one of the inevitable results of those great political con-

* It must, however, be observed, that as early as 1819, Mr. de Brouckère held the rank of lieutenant, and was charged with the instruction of all the officers and non-commissioned, and cadets of his battalion. He quitted the service in 1820, and devoted himself to the study of administration. Possessing considerable property in Limbourg, he was named lieutenant-colonel of a regiment of communal guards in 1826 ; but being disgusted at the conduct of the government, he resigned this post in December, 1829.

vulsions, which open a field for the development of political or military powers, that might otherwise remain for ever buried in obscurity.

“It was thus that during the wars of the first French revolution, a crowd of citizens and private individuals suddenly started into notice, and ere a few months had elapsed, some among them added their names to that galaxy of illustrious commanders, who have shed such lustre in the annals of French history. It must, however, be observed that many officers, who owed their sudden elevation to the revolution, would already have attained higher grades, had the Dutch government shewn but common impartiality in its selections. Nay, had it not absolutely rejected the services, or placed at the bottom of each rank, many of those who, faithful to the falling fortunes of Napoleon, awaited his abdication, and their own honourable dismissal, ere they quitted the French service, and offered their swords to their new sovereign, upon the first formation of the Netherlands kingdom.

“When the unlooked-for defeat of the king’s troops took place, and the remnants had retired across the North Brabant frontier, the Belgic war department was directed by Mr. Jolly, having Major-general Nypels, who had replaced Van Halen, as commander-in-chief of the active forces. At that time the skeletons of two or three regular regiments were in process of formation ; but the principal force consisted of roving bands of volunteers or free corps, amongst whom were adventurers of every class, country, and denomination. The provisional government, who soon discovered that Mr. Jolly was no way adapted for the task he had undertaken, was not sorry to accept his resignation, and replaced him by Major-general Goethals. Having grown grey in the career of arms, and being accustomed to the precision and

routine of regular armies, but possessing neither activity nor energy sufficient for the due execution of the duty he had undertaken, Goethals soon found all attempt to direct and organize so incoherent a mass beyond his power, and at variance with his antecedents: he, therefore, retired after a short essay, during which no progress was made.

“He was followed by General Goblet. This officer had served with credit to himself in the French engineers; had made several campaigns, and particularly distinguished himself at the siege of St. Sebastian; where he largely contributed to its gallant defence. Though a lieutenant of 1808, he was not promoted to the rank of captain till 1822; nor did he receive further advancement until the revolution, when he was successively and rapidly raised to the rank of field officer and general of brigade—no exaggerated recompence for twenty-two years’ arduous and honourable service. Goblet, whose mild disposition, regular habits, and moderate politics ill-suited him for such a charge, accepted office with reluctance, and was not long ere he sought to escape from its labours and vexations. Discouraged by the virulent attacks of the opposition and press, and finding himself unable to satisfy the pretensions of the many claimants to promotion; and being unable to establish that discipline or regularity, without which all effort at organization was useless, he gladly resigned, and exchanged the burthens of administration for the superintendence of the engineer department, of which he was appointed director.

“In a few days he was replaced by Count d’Hane.* But, however zealous and indefatigable this officer may

* Afterwards aide-de-camp-general to King Leopold, and superintendent of his majesty’s military household.

have been, he also soon found himself unequal to support the immense weight of responsibility and diversified labour that accumulated around him, and only continued at his post at the pressing solicitation of his colleagues. Some progress was, however, made during this and the preceding administration. The army, augmented to twelve regiments of the line, two of chasseurs, five of cavalry, and eight brigades of guns, besides two or three battalions of sharp-shooters, was divided into two corps.* The one, called the army of the Meuse, under Lieut.-general Daine, having its head-quarters at Tongres, was destined to watch Maestricht and the Campine frontier, by Hasselt, Hamont, and Weerd ; the other, designated as the army of the Scheldt, was cantoned in the vicinity of Schilde and Turnhout, with the view of covering the roads from Breda and Bergen-op-Zoom. A small garrison occupied Antwerp, while a detached corps under General Duvivier, with its head-quarters at Ghent, was destined to observe Dutch Flanders. The total budget of the war department amounted to thirty-six millions florins.

“ Had d’Hane or Goblet been fairly seconded by those under their orders, much might have been effected ; but the disunion and jealousy among the chiefs, the negligence, bad faith, and malversation among some officers, and the want of experience of the great majority of all ranks, baffled their exertions, and kept them in a constant state of error. Thus, when d’Hane laid a report of the army before the chambers, as late even as the 25th of May, declaring that he had reinforced the active forces by 26,000 men, and that he had

* Each regiment consisted of three active, and one dépôt battalion of six companies. The regiments of cavalry had four squadrons of 120 horses each ; and the brigades of artillery six pieces, until a later period, when they were augmented to eight.

50,000 disposable infantry, 60 field-pieces, and 3,000 horse, the total amount of effectives present did not exceed 25,000, while half the artillery was without tumbrils, or was only incompletely horsed.*

“Disheartened at the bad success of his efforts, and harassed by the same attacks that had affected his predecessor, General d'Hane also retired, and was followed on the 16th of June, by Major-general De Failly, who had commanded the 5th Dutch regiment during the attack on Brussels, and had subsequently been appointed governor of Antwerp. This officer continued his functions until after King Leopold arrived, and was in office at the moment of the Dutch invasion. But the army appeared rather to have retrograded than advanced under his administration. Confusion and insubordination were at their height; and thus, when the Prince of Orange threw himself into the Campine, the troops were surprised in a state of indiscipline and destitution that baffles all description.

“It is but just, however, to observe, if there was a deficiency of brilliant talent, energy, and experience in the part of the successive war ministers, that they encountered obstacles at every step that were calculated to dishearten the most sanguine, and to frustrate the combinations of the boldest and most matured military economist. So irritable and inflammable was the state of the public mind—so inconsiderate the language of the deputies—so virulent and licentious the workings of the press, that men were already overwhelmed with libels, and condemned as unfit for office ere yet they had

* The waste, or misemployment of the public money, must have been immense; for the war-budget of 1833, for an army of 110,000 effectives, including 8,000 cavalry, and 136 field-pieces, fully horsed and equipped, only exceeded by a trifling sum that of 1831 for a third of that number.

commenced their functions. In lieu of meeting with indulgence or support on entering office, they were vilified and held up to scorn ; and the violence of their assailants, who, having torn down the military edifice, expected it to be rebuilt in a day, augmented in proportion to the difficulties which were the natural result of the revolution. Lord Halifax's maxim, "that there are few things so criminal as place," was amply verified on this, and indeed on almost every subsequent occasion in Belgium."

Nothing, in fact, could present a more striking contrast than the moral conduct of the belligerents. The disasters that had overwhelmed the Dutch appeared to operate like a talisman upon the whole nation. Scarcely had it recovered from the first stupor of defeat, ere the unanimous population roused themselves with the most noble and devoted energy. Firm and united among themselves, both press and public rallied round the throne, and forgetting all party or individual differences, ardently combined for the support of government and the defence of the country. There was but one voice, one purpose. King, princes, senators, and people, were linked together in one bond. No sacrifice was esteemed too great, no endurance too severe. Shaking off their usual tardy habits, activity and vigour pervaded every department. The process of re-organizing their legions advanced rapidly, and ere yet their adversaries had 20,000 men in a fit condition to take the field, the Dutch could boast of 35,000 well-disciplined infantry (independent of communal guards), 4,000 cavalry, and 64 field-pieces ; a large body of devoted and obedient officers, and an experienced staff, with magazines, train, transport, hospitals, and every requisite for defence or attack.

On the other hand, the Belgians, torn by internal

feuds, jealousies, and conspiracies, without unity of purpose or political system, were a prey to the direst confusion. They counted, it is true, a long list of generals, field-officers, and staff, but they were, in fact, without efficient commanders or officers in any one department. Both generals and subalterns were at the mercy of the press, the congress, and the associations, which assumed the most overbearing and tyrannical pretensions to omnipotence and omniscience. Their infantry, though well-clothed and armed, was destitute of field equipment, miserably drilled, and scarcely able to execute the simplest evolutions. The cavalry, though well horsed, was deficient in every essential point, and was totally unacquainted with the commonest field duties. The artillery, though composed of athletic and powerful men, was without officers, and above all, non-commissioned, and had no experience whatever either in the practice or in the theory of gunnery. They were without commissariat, hospitals, transports, or reserves; in short, the whole was in a condition utterly unfit to oppose an enemy, and continued in this deplorable state until the disasters of Louvain showed the necessity of pursuing a different system, and induced both deputies and journalists to remain silent, or to co-operate with the government in the process of organization.*

* To judge by the debates in the Belgian chambers, its representatives are not yet cured of their bombast. In the discussion that took place on the 24th of March, 1834, in consequence of the Dutch having assumed a menacing attitude in North Brabant, a member thus expressed himself:—"It was not courage that was wanting in the month of August, 1831; for wherever the Belgians measured themselves with the Dutch, *the latter were beaten!!* I know a major who, at the head of four hundred men, repulsed and defeated a corps of ten thousand Dutch!" This was spoken and listened to with undisturbed gravity!

Such may be taken as the outline of the military or material condition of the Belgians during the first twelve months subsequent to the revolution; a condition that in no way corresponded either with their strategical position, which was eminently disadvantageous as regarded Holland, or with that of their expenditure which was upon the most liberal scale. A few words will suffice to throw some light on the pecuniary resources of the provisional government, as well as the means adopted to meet the extraordinary exigencies of the crisis.

Under the ancient government, the southern provinces had been taxed somewhere in the proportion of $\frac{3}{4}$. That is, taking the whole of the ways and means arising from taxation to have been 75,000,000 fl., Belgium, with a population of 3,900,000, paid 40,000,000; while Holland, whose inhabitants did not exceed 2,100,000, paid the remaining 35,000,000. But this calculation was not based on the amount of population, but on that of the comparative wealth of the two countries. The great riches of Holland consisting in her commerce, and that of Belgium in her agriculture, the Dutch cities contributed much more largely than those of similar extent in Belgium. But the agricultural wealth of the latter, was not so much superior to that of the former, as to render the balance equal. Indeed, some parts of Namur, and the greater portion of Luxembourg, were so sterile as to produce a revenue totally out of proportion to their extent. The low rate of electoral qualification in these provinces, which only averaged twenty florins, whilst in Flanders it is as high as thirty, is a sufficient proof of the comparative inferiority of the former.

Upon assuming office, the provisional government found the public coffers nearly empty, and were therefore constrained to seek assistance from the bank, which advanced 600,000 florins. But as this occurred at the

commencement of the last financial quarter, and as the taxes were paid with more than wonted punctuality, the sums received by the treasury promptly enabled it to meet the first pressing demands. The ways and means, although augmented by an addition of twenty centimes per franc on the property tax, being insufficient for the increasing exigencies of the crisis, it was necessary to have recourse to other measures.* To raise money by the ordinary process was of course impracticable. The only mode of obtaining supplies was, therefore, to authorize a patriotic loan, or, in case of this failing, to exact a compulsory contribution. The first was essayed by an *arrêté* of the 22d of October; but not producing much more than half a million, in addition to 380,000 francs voluntary gifts, the second was enforced to the amount of 25,000,000 in October, and 21,000,000 in March.†

Such were the resources and means pecuniary employed to meet the struggle.

To examine the moral situation of a nation emerging from, or rather still struggling in, a state of revolution, is one of the most instructive studies that can occupy the philosopher or political economist. That of Belgium presented a continual series of episodes fraught with the deepest interest, not only as regarded the mighty foreign questions that were interwoven with its destinies, but as concerned such internal passages and incidents as merely related to her own moral character, and the rank she was entitled to hold in the estimation of other people. Al-

* The Dutch financial system modified by the abolition of some taxes, and divested of many fiscal inconveniences, was maintained, and is still in existence.

† These forced loans, raised by doubling and forestalling a part of the direct taxes, were reimbursed with five per cent. interest in 1832 and 1833.

though much exaggeration and misrepresentation went abroad, it cannot be denied that, during the first eight months, Belgium presented a picture of effervescence and commotion, which, independent of its dangerous results to Europe, menaced her own cities with civil war under its worst forms. Exclusive of the republicans, whose efforts constantly tended to the subversion of all social order at home and abroad, and whose intrigues were encouraged by General Lemarque, Odillon, Barrot, and others of the French movement party, three great factions divided the country. These were the independents—the re-unionists, some of whom were republicans—and the Orangists.

The first of these possessed the greatest power, its doctrines being advocated by the most politic and enlightened members in the chambers, and supported by the popular journals, and Catholic party, whose preponderating influence sufficed to ensure success to almost any system it chose to adopt. The most constant and eloquent partisans of independence were Messrs. Lebeau, Van de Weyer, de Muelenaere, and Nothomb. They may, in fact, be considered as the parents of that line of policy to which Europe is indebted for the maintenance of peace, and Belgium for the consolidation of her nationality. They were also mainly instrumental in producing a modification of that diplomatic system, which, from its being exclusively French, and, as it were, essentially anti-English, largely contributed to enhance the difficulties of the negotiations, and to augment the embarrassments that lay in the way of Lord Ponsonby.* The ability with which

* It was because the principles of some of his colleagues were essentially French, that Mr. Van de Weyer resigned the ministry for foreign affairs in April, 1831, wisely determining to have no share in a system that menaced the most serious results to

the latter availed himself of this favorable turn, served not only to restore the balance, but proved to the generality of the Belgians that their existence as a nation depended on their frankly associating themselves with that policy which had for its object a cordial union between France and Great Britain. For nothing but the most wilful prejudice could blind the Belgians to the fact, that without perfect unanimity between France and England, Belgium would be seized by France, or be again made over to some other power, as "*a territorial acquisition.*"

The re-unionists were all aware of this. Every effort, therefore, was employed by them to create rivalries and jealousies between the two cabinets and their diplomatic agents, and to nourish that thirst for aggrandizement and conquest which they well knew lurked at the bottom of Count Sebastiani's heart; a passion from which even Prince Talleyrand himself was not totally exempt. Though the immense preponderance of monarchical, over all other theories, rendered the efforts of the republicans utterly nugatory, and although the re-unionists were few in number, still, up to the latest hour, both these factions caused considerable embarrassment: the one, by inviting into the country a number of desperate individuals, members of the "Society of the Rights of Man," and other associations; the other by constantly endeavouring to induce the French cabinet to deviate from that system of moderation which had been laid down by Lafitte, and cordially pursued by Casimir Perier.*

Inimical as this party might have been to the repose

Europe, and the annihilation of the independence of his country. Such conduct was at once politic and patriotic-

* These passages were written long before the melancholy scenes of the 5th of April, 1834.—[NOTE OF ED.]

of Europe, it was not more so than that of the Orangists—from their perpetual efforts to induce armed intervention; from their fomenting plots and conspiracies among the people; from their spreading discontent, treachery, and confusion through the army; and from their serving as a cause or pretext to those detestable scenes of pillage and outrage, that so frequently disgraced both the capital and provincial towns; scenes in which they, however, were the victims, not the actors.

The principal counterpoise to the efforts of the Orangists was the patriotic association, to which many officers, as well as the majority of public functionaries resident in the capital, were affiliated. This dangerous *imperium in imperio*, whose powers were equal if not superior to that of the government, exercised a species of inquisitorial terrorism over the public mind, that vibrated through the most distant parts of the country. So puissant, indeed, was its influence, that it not only held considerable sway over congress, embarrassing and counteracting the march of government, but it frequently placed the lives and properties of the citizens at the mercy of the populace, by stimulating them to the most wanton acts of outrage and misrule, and thus spreading consternation and affliction throughout the land.

“The intelligence from Hainault,” says, the *Courrier Belge*, in an article written at an earlier date, but singularly applicable to this period, “is most distressing; and the more so, since these symptoms of anarchy and disorganization appear connected with some dark plots and criminal machinations.* Here it is not an enemy that is defeated, but peaceable citizens that are despoiled, or brethren that are ruined or massacred. There, respec-

* Alluding to the supposed intrigues of the Orangists to excite disorder, when they, in fact, were the invariable victims.

table merchants or manufacturers, who diffused abundance and civilization around, are mercilessly plundered by a frenzied populace. Splendid factories, the glory and prosperity of our beautiful country, are sacked and devastated by hordes of malefactors ; and we are reduced to the necessity of placing our cities in a state of siege, (this occurred at Ghent), in order to protect ourselves against internal enemies, more barbarous than the Dutch soldiers."

The only apology that can be offered for revolutions is, when they are the result, not of despotism, but of insupportable tyranny, and the violation of civil rights ; or, when they arise from the universal demand for constitutional ameliorations, and are made in the sole interest of social order, civilization, and rational liberty. For the mild and paternal government of Prussia is a proof that the subjects of absolute sovereigns may enjoy almost all the benefits of the most liberal constitutional monarchy. But revolutions are fearful curses, when, escorted by violence and outrage, they advance amidst the ruin of the peaceable and industrious, or when they rend asunder all the ties of law and justice. When civil war, anarchy, and pillage are the results of political changes—a result unfortunately too common to all revolutions—and terrorism is enthroned in the name of liberty ; then the slavery of the most despotic government is a thousand times preferable. Such horrors must be the inevitable consequence of the uncontrolled power of political associations ; no matter what their title, or the country that gives them birth. Whatever may be their ostensible purport, the true object of political unions is not consolidation, but subversion. It is a coalition to oppose the power of the many to that of the few ; or, in other words, to substitute the argument of force for that of reason and the law. Associations and legal

governments are incompatible. France, after two revolutions, and dreading a third, has discovered this truth.

“Political associations,” says an eloquent French orator, “such as we understand them, such as they exist among us, forming a city within a city, a state within a state; calling themselves a republic in the heart of a monarchy; having their journals, rostrums, army, and diplomacy; declaring war, not only against the constituted authorities at home, but against powers abroad; seeking to subjugate us all beneath their yoke; falsifying all our institutions by their mere existence; striking at the prosperity of all by their efforts; suspending the labours of the industrious, when the fruits of their industry are most necessary for their own existence and our prosperity; being able, at any moment, to plunge us into a war with our neighbours, when we have resolved to maintain peace; and, nevertheless, enfeebling us in the opinion of Europe, rendered distrustful by this schism in the national bond, and by other schisms, still more dangerous, that may result from their machinations; political associations such as these are monstrous anomalies, incompatible with national existence. The liberty demanded by them is not the freedom of association, but impunity for conspiracy—that is, the power of executing in open day, aloud, by tens and hundreds of thousands, with the press for their interpreter, and the whole country as their theatre, that which hitherto had only been attempted in the dark, in silence, and by a few timid conspirators. This is the good old anarchy of 1793—thorough-bred anarchy!—(*Anarchie de pur sang*).”*

These Strictures on the Political Societies of France

* Speech of M. Salvandi in the French Chambers on the 25th of March, 1834, on the law for the abolition of political associations.

are applicable, on a reduced scale, to those of Belgium. Fortunately, the good sense of the nation did justice to them, without the necessity of legal intervention; the country saw the danger of their existence, and they, consequently, fell to the ground, for want of support and aliment. The leading members of this association, selected from among the most exaggerated patriots—for the title of patriot was assumed in contradistinction to that of Orangist, no matter whether the individual was republican, re-unionist, or independent—have strenuously repudiated all participation in the disorders that afflicted Brussels, Liege, Ghent, Antwerp, and other cities, especially during the months of February and March, 1831. Not a shadow of doubt, however, exists that these outrages were not the spontaneous acts of the people, but that they were suggested and executed under the eye of the associations in the capital, and organized by its delegates in the provinces. One example—that of the devastation of Mr. Mathieu's house, at Brussels, on the night of the 26th of March, 1831—may be taken as an illustration of the power of the association, and will suffice to demonstrate how these melancholy scenes were generally organized and executed.

Counter-revolutionary plots, real or imaginary, being in constant agitation; public rumour casting suspicion on the fidelity of some, and private denunciation accusing other individuals of conspiring against the national cause, the exasperation of the political leaders was excited to the utmost pitch. However, as no absolute proofs of treachery could be brought home to any particular person, the vengeance of the association was directed against those whose antecedents and inclinations rendered them liable to suspicion. It was, therefore, resolved (to adopt the cant term of the day) to “warm

up popular patriotism" by "*a salutary act*" of terrorism, that might serve as a lesson to others. The victim, in this instance, was a general merchant of considerable wealth, who was supposed to have furnished funds to the Orangists, and to be one of the most active and zealous partisans of the prince. Not only was the intended pillage known many hours previous, and openly discussed in the streets, but the populace, the instruments of outrage, were regularly mustered, paid, and instructed ; and influential members of the association were seen to applaud the disgraceful work. Nay, the very authorities were constrained to become indirect accessaries. For, on their being informed of the meditated outrage, they deemed it advisable not to oppose this "demonstration of popular feeling," which was admitted to be an evil, but an evil calculated to produce subsequent benefit. It was said to be essential to strike terror into the ranks of the Orangists, and thus to prevent those disasters that would inevitably ensue, unless the machinations of that party were checked. A sort of compact was, therefore, entered into between the authorities and the ringleaders, who were to be allowed perfect impunity, provided their outrages were limited to the example in question.

This being settled, emissaries were employed to collect the most desperate characters from the neighbouring villages, by promising them ample remuneration for their loss of time, and a certainty of pillage, without any personal risk. Consequently, towards the afternoon of the appointed day, groups of ill-favoured strangers were seen pouring into the city, where they, forthwith, proceeded to predetermined points of rendezvous and refreshment. Here they were regaled with liquors, animated with songs, and, having received their earnest-money and the necessary instructions, soon worked them-

selves into a fearful state of excitement. As the evening closed in, they sallied forth ; and, being joined by an immense rabble of the lowest class, for awhile they paraded the streets, singing, shouting, and vociferating, " death to the Orangists !" until, at length, they rushed to the abode of their intended victim. Ere many seconds, the doors and windows being smashed to atoms, the wild horde darted into the interior, and commenced the work of devastation and pillage. Sugars, coffees, spices, valuable merchandize, costly furniture, plate, and linen fell an indiscriminate prey to the fury and avidity of the invaders. The adjacent streets were literally strewn with rich colonial produce, which was either wantonly hurled into the mud, or had escaped from the plundered sacks. The very gutters absolutely reeked with coffee. Mats and bags, filled with this and other valuable commodities, were carried off and sold by the rabble at vile prices, or were secreted by them for their own consumption. This scene having lasted some hours, and every article of merchandize and furniture having been borne away or destroyed, the rioters dragged Mr. Mathieu's carriages to the public squares ; where, fire having been procured, the whole were burned, amidst the triumphant yells of the by-standers. Some of these, in a furious state of intoxication, mounted the roofs and boxes of the vehicles, and had nigh perished in the flames. All this was effected without the slightest impediment being offered by the armed force. It is true, the drums beat to arms, the civic guards fell in, and moved about with the apparent resolution of maintaining order ; but no effort was made to protect the sufferer's property. It was evident that there was a general understanding that a sacrifice was required, and that it was resolved to permit its consummation.

The work of spoliation being completed, and the

last embers of the burning equipages having faded away, the rioters quietly dispersed; and, by a transition as rapid as it was remarkable, the town was suddenly converted from a state of the wildest uproar to one of the most absolute calm. Long before day-break on the following morning, not an individual was to be met with in the streets, so that the passing stranger could discover no vestige of the recent disorder. The terror and anxiety of the peaceable inhabitants was nevertheless most intense. Doors and windows were closed; silence reigned around, but few persons sought repose. No one knew who might be the next victim. Those especially, who considered themselves liable to be accused of attachment to the Nassau family, trembled for their lives and properties. The calm of the night was dreaded as the precursor of a renewed tempest on the morrow. Exaggerated reports of further mischief were circulated abroad. Imaginary lists of proscription were spoken of, including the names of many wealthy citizens, as well as those of certain foreigners; amongst whom were a few British subjects, who had incautiously expressed their hatred to the revolution. Indeed, the greater part of such English as had remained at Brussels, whether gentry or traders, did not hesitate to acknowledge their vows for the return of the Prince of Orange. Although those persons, especially the former, had little property at stake, and less to fear from popular fury than any other inhabitants of the capital, they were not the less forward in propagating the most alarming and wanton rumours, or in expressing fears for their own safety. The association skilfully availed itself of these reports, to augment its influence over the public mind. It was this terror, more than any other accessary, that served to paralyze all the efforts of the prince's partisans.

However, with one exception, the Belgic revolution

does not furnish a single instance of any foreigner of respectability being molested for his political opinions. The case of Baron de Krudener may be alleged in contradiction ; but it must be observed that this Russian diplomatist appeared at Brussels at a moment when party feuds ran highest ; that his arrival excited the utmost suspicion and jealousy, and that he was seen in constant communication with the most eager Orangists, who flocked around him, and had neither tact nor discretion sufficient to preserve his secret nor their own. Baron Krudener's motions were consequently watched ; spies tracked his steps and correspondence ; his object was ascertained beyond a doubt ; and as he was, to all intents and purposes, aiding those who sought to overthrow the existing government, and as he was not protected by any official or acknowledged character, that government availed itself of the means at its disposal—means sanctioned by a despotic but unabrogated law—and ordered him to quit the Belgic territory within a given period.*

The animosity of the republicans and reunionists being likewise directed against Lord Ponsonby, for the countenance he was supposed to have shewn to the Orangists, a similar expulsoy measure was suggested and pressed on the government ; but, although one or two were desirous to adopt this impolitic advice, the majority saw the danger of this insult to the British government, and the project was over-ruled. Determined, however, not to renounce altogether the intention of insulting the British envoy, three or four individuals provided themselves with stones, and taking advantage of the darkness of the night, succeeded in breaking a few panes of glass at the hotel he inhabited. Lord Ponsonby wisely treated this

* In virtue of the celebrated law of Vendemiaire, an IV. of the republic.

outrage with the contempt it merited, though the instigators and actors were well known to him.

In noticing this occurrence, it is necessary again to recur to the difficulties and embarrassments of Lord Ponsonby's position, as well as to the misrepresentations that have perverted both his acts and the intentions of his government. This is the more essential, since the coalition was composed of legitimists and republicans; a coalition still more anomalous than the "union" of liberals and Catholics prior to the revolution; and which has spared no efforts, either through the medium of the Dutch press or Belgic chambers, to vilify the one and malign the other.

In speaking of the exertions of the Orangists, and the views entertained by the powers for the election of the Prince of Orange, it has been shown to what extent the British government determined to carry its co-operation; and that, however ardently it might have desired the *pacific* adoption of a measure that would for the time being have conciliated all foreign exigencies, it had resolved strictly to adhere to a system of non-interference, and to leave the issue to the voice of the people. From the tenor of Lord Palmerston's instructions to his agent, and from the frank and unreserved declaration of Lord Grey in the House of Lords, it would be as easy to demonstrate that this system was faithfully adhered to, both as regarded the Prince of Orange and Prince Leopold, as it would be to show that Lord Ponsonby never deviated from these instructions. It would require but a few words to prove that the moral and physical resources of the Orange party were totally inadequate to effect the desired object; that to have countenanced such a project beyond a certain period would have been totally at variance with the interests of European peace; and that it would have merited for the British govern-

ment all those accusations of machiavelism and insincerity that have been cast upon it.

But the time is not yet come when it is permitted to draw aside the veil from transactions apparently mysterious, and yet so simple as to require but little explanation. Such disclosures would be at once dangerous and impolitic. The period is yet too recent. Men's passions are still too much excited to admit of stating truths that might expose estimable individuals to popular vengeance, and rekindle the animosities and jealousies of those who consider themselves the "men of the revolution," against those who are either designated as the "men of the morrow," or who, having fallen into the wake of the revolution, are hostile to its principles, although they have loyally and frankly adopted its consequences.*

At a moment when the Belgian monarch is endeavouring with political sagacity to overlook the existence of any other party than that which called him to the throne; when he is striving to amalgamate divergent opinions, to rally all his subjects round one common centre, and to inspire them with those sentiments of unity and nationality so essential to their independence, it would be criminal to rake up dormant passions by exposing names; and without such disclosure, it would be impossible to verify facts, or to rebut those malevolent assertions that have been so unsparingly heaped both on the British ministry and its agents. It becomes a duty, therefore, to leave this portion of the subject in that state of obscurity in which it has hitherto been involved. Besides, the acts of the British government require no

* Mr. Le Grelle, the burgomaster of Antwerp, one of the most devoted and honourable supporters of King Leopold's government, did not hesitate to declare in the chambers, that "he *hated revolutions and revolutionists*."

defence. Based on the broadest and soundest principles of regenerated policy—a policy not as heretofore narrow-minded and exclusively English, but essentially liberal and European—and having for its sole object the maintenance of peace, so far as that peace was compatible with the dignity and welfare of the British crown, those acts speak for themselves. The continued repose of Europe, and the increasing prosperity and extended franchises of the British people, are noble monuments that Lord Grey's administration raised to its domestic and foreign policy.

On the other hand, as regards Lord Ponsonby, it may be affirmed, that a consciousness of having dealt fairly and justly towards all parties, and of having honourably, zealously, and ably executed an arduous and intricate mission, will doubtless console him for the aspersions that have been levelled against him, no matter whence they spring. The passage that so feelingly terminates the fifth chapter of Mr. Nothomb's Essay, wherein he alludes to the death of General Belliard, may be adduced as a proof, that men the most competent to judge of the British envoy's conduct, knew how to appreciate its merits. "More fortunate than Lord Ponsonby," says the author, "General Belliard had not to complain of *public ingratitude*. Belgium, thankful for his services, promised him a monument. It was with regret that she saw herself deprived of his ashes."* A more delicate and forcible mode of expressing a sense of Lord Ponsonby's services could not have been adopted, than by thus contrasting the posthumous honours conferred on the memory of the French general with the "*ingratitude*" displayed towards his British colleague, who had

* General Belliard died of apoplexy on the 28th of January, 1832.

zealously and cordially participated in his labours, and gone hand-in-hand with him on every occasion. If there be a term more strongly corroborative than another of individual merit, it is the acknowledgment that a man has been the victim of ingratitude.

Lord Ponsonby never made any secret of his policy, which was founded on the soundest and most enlightened views, both as regarded European and Belgian interests. His paramount object was the maintenance of a perfect harmony, not only between all the great powers, but especially between France and Great Britain. He was an advocate for the stability and splendour of the French throne, but an adversary to French aggrandizement abroad. He held the maintenance of general peace to be essential to the interests of Great Britain, and the welfare of all Europe. A restoration, or even *quasi* restoration, being found impracticable, he eagerly advocated the consolidation of Belgic independence on such solid and advantageous principles, as, by rendering her strong, prosperous, and contented, might gradually wean her from all foreign sympathies; and by arousing her self-love and nationality, thus render her an efficient moral substitute for that barrier, whose existence in a conjoint state had been declared impossible even by Lord Aberdeen.

As long as Lord Ponsonby thought there was a practicability of bringing back the Prince of Orange, without foreign war or internal anarchy, so long did he feel himself authorized in countenancing the partisans and advocates of that measure. In so doing he fulfilled the *undisguised* wishes of his government, and conciliated those of all the great powers; excepting, perhaps, France, whose secret aim was partition; until the election of Leopold opened the door to a matrimonial alliance between the Belgic monarch and the eldest

daughter of Louis Philippe. In acting thus, Lord Ponsonby made no mystery either of his own wishes or those of his government, nor neglected any fair opportunity of promoting the prince's cause; not with his adherents, for that would have been superfluous, but with his opponents, whose hostility he ably sought to disarm. But as soon as the English envoy penetrated the haze of deception in which he was enveloped by the Orangists; as soon as he was enabled to obtain a clear insight into the state of national feelings, and discovered that he had been deceived as to the strength of the prince's party; that his royal highness's cause was essentially anti-popular; that the force of his partisans lay in their tongues, not in their arms; that the press and the public were irrevocably opposed to him, and that, if longer persisted in, the project would entail all those domestic and foreign calamities that he was bound to avert; then, and then only, did he find himself imperatively called on to warn the Conference of the fallacy of the prince's hopes, and of the necessity of turning its attention to some other combination, which might effect the same purpose, without endangering the repose of Europe, or without rendering impracticable the final adjustment of the negotiations.

The tact, prudence, and humanity displayed by Lord Ponsonby at this critical juncture, was of no ordinary kind; for a further adherence to the original plan, in lieu of benefitting the prince, would have accomplished the wishes of the anarchists and re-unionists. After inundating Belgium with civic blood, it would have thrown her prostrate and mutilated into the arms of France, and thence engendered a general conflagration. These were not hypothetical but infallible conclusions, borne out by the opinions of all the first statesmen of the day. That the re-unionists and movement party, or those to

whom bloodshed and convulsion are essential elements of existence, should be wrath at the destruction of their projects, can be well understood ; but that the Orangists, for the most part belonging to the hereditary or commercial aristocracy, should be blind to results fraught with such incalculable evils to themselves, is a proof of their ignorance of their own position, if not of their selfish indifference to the general welfare. Independent of all political motives, ancient sympathies rendered the support of the Prince of Orange's cause a congenial task to every Englishman. To abandon it was painful, but to pursue it would have been weak and criminal. Lord Ponsonby felt this acutely. But the necessity being flagrant, he did not hesitate to act upon it with promptitude and frankness. Policy pointed out the change, and humanity urged him to accelerate the operation. He did not balance a moment between the duty he owed his country and Europe, and the fear of drawing upon himself the rancour of contending factions. In order to insure success or avert disaster both in diplomacy and war, there are golden moments that must be seized with eagle rapidity, and acted on with unflinching energy. Lord Ponsonby adopted this maxim, and *peace was maintained*.

However much the Orangists might deplore the stern necessity that produced a change in the views of the Conference, they are the last persons who are entitled to reproach others with its creation. For it is incontestable that diplomacy did not renounce their cause until their cause had abandoned them ; until their lives and properties were on the very verge of destruction, and the tranquillity of Europe stood tottering on the brink of a fathomless abyss. The demon of war, a war of opinions and principles, already brandished his torch on high. The most trifling error might have shaken forth sparks, that

would have instantaneously ignited the mass of inflammable matter that lay ready for combustion ; and when once ignited, who could calculate its awful consequences ? Then, and then only, did Lord Ponsonby ably and rapidly grapple the sole substitute compatible with the demands of the Conference and the independence of Belgium ; and skilfully availing himself of the talents and honourable courage of Mr. Lebeau, devoted himself to the success of that combination which might be considered the last plank of safety for Belgium, and the only remaining anchor on which reposed the maintenance of general peace. The able publicist above quoted thus expresses himself on this point. “ Mr. Lebeau found a sincere and devoted auxiliary in a foreign diplomatist (Lord Ponsonby), who, despairing of establishing Belgic independence under a prince of the Dutch dynasty, embraced with ardour a combination that might preserve Belgium *as a barrier against France*, without the aid of a restoration.”

If any further proof were wanting of the policy and views of the Conference and its commissioner, it may be found in the instructions of the Prussian cabinet to Baron Bulow. “ Exert every nerve to bring back Belgium under the sceptre of King William,” said the Prussian foreign minister to his plenipotentiary in London ; “ but if this does not succeed, then endeavour to erect an independent kingdom under the Prince of Orange ; and if this also fail, then consent that Leopold should be king of the Belgians ; as, from his personal qualities and position in regard to the great powers, this prince offers the surest and most necessary guarantees (for the maintenance of peace).”^{*} Another

* Extract from a pamphlet entitled “ Noch ein Wort über die Belgisch-Hollandische Frage.”—Hamburg, 1832. This able production is attributed to Baron Stockman.

passage from the same work, the author of which was profoundly initiated in all the secrets and mysteries of these negotiations, plainly shows the urgent light in which the plenipotentiaries regarded the question. "Two days before the departure of Leopold for Brussels, before the return of Baron de Weissenberg, who had been dispatched to the Hague, with the view of urging the King of the Netherlands to accept the eighteen articles, all the members of the Conference came to Marlborough House, and *unanimously* declared to the prince, that his acceptance of the Belgic throne was *the only means of rescuing Europe from the immense embarrassment in which it was plunged, and of securing that peace, which, without his acceptance, must be infallibly compromised.*"

The true motives for the animosity of the Orangists, re-unionists, and movement party against the British government may be summed up in a few words. The first, with a profound disregard to the moral and political condition of Europe, anxiously sought a restoration, or even a *quasi* restoration, no matter whether purchased by foreign invasion or by internal commotion; not from any direct attachment to the dynasty, but in order to recover that which they had lost, or to augment that which they had already gained by the revolution; for, as in the case of Baron Van der Smissen, Gregoire, and Borremans, many had attained rank and emoluments by the very process against which they were now conspiring. The second party, equally indifferent to general consequences, selfishly calculated that the benefits that might accrue to themselves individually by a return to France, would be an ample compensation for the misfortunes which would be entailed on the rest of their countrymen, by the general war which would be the inevitable result of any

direct attempts at re-union.* The third party, and at one moment the most dangerous, had no other object than anarchy and confusion. Having hitherto gained nothing by the revolution, they were eager to excite universal commotion, that they might either rise to power, or falling, drag down others in the same frightful vortex with themselves. The prudent and courageous policy of Lebeau and his colleagues, seconded by Lord Ponsonby, annihilated the hopes of all these factions, and preserved Europe. Strong in the conviction of having been mainly instrumental in this great and good work, Lord Ponsonby, and those who co-operated with him, may support with indifference any calumnies that may be directed against them. Impartial posterity will render them justice, although it may be denied by prejudiced contemporaries. It is the common lot of the best and wisest.

After a convulsion so violent as that which had occurred in Belgium, a convulsion that had totally subverted all pre-existing institutions, it may be well imagined that the whole social system was shaken to its very foundation, and that the nation was not only plunged into an alarming state of commercial languor and depression, but that, being torn by intestine contentions, and a prey

* The town of Verviers, famous for its cloth manufactories, presented a petition to Congress on the 29th of December, 1830, praying for a re-union with France; the *Courrier Belge* of the 1st of January, 1831, thus notices this act:—"We do not contest the right of the petitioners to emit their opinions freely, but all Belgium will reserve to itself the right of appreciating and judging this step, and of condemning as bad citizens those who could not make the temporary sacrifice of some few commercial interests in favour of the future tranquillity and independence of our country." Again:—"Unhappy people! it is thus that a few egotists, in order to sell a little dearer a few yards of cloth or calico, a few quintals of iron or coal, would deliver us up like a vile herd!"

to all the uncertainties of political strife, the utmost misery prevailed among those classes, who, living from hand to mouth, draw their diurnal subsistence from the speculation of the trader, or from the luxurious exigencies of the aristocracy. Great misery did in fact exist, and, however incredible it may appear, this very misery was stated to have formed one of the auxiliaries relied on by the extreme factions, as the means of stimulating the masses to espouse their cause. It was argued by the one, that the stagnation of industry and trade would soon become insupportable, and the general discontent so intense, as to render a return to the old government an indispensable alternative ; while the others, speculating on the ignorance and passions of the multitude, calculated that it would be still more easy to urge them forward in the path of confusion, when excited by the miseries caused by want of employment.

But, as it often occurs in cases of public and private distress, the greatest sufferers were not those who were the most clamorous. For the loss falling upon the merchant and tradesman, was thence reflected on the artisans and operatives, who bore their privations with exemplary patience. Indeed, throughout the revolution, it was the men of this class that may be said to have evinced the greatest degree of self-abnegation and patriotism. Tools in the hands of others, they bled and suffered without the slightest hope of compensation or amelioration for themselves. The loudest declaimers were the aristocracy and landholders, who, with the exception of such proprietors of forests as derived their principal revenue from supplying fuel to the furnaces and forges of Namur, Liege, and Luxembourg, had little cause for complaint. The demand for agricultural produce was greater than had ever been known in any previous year ; and the consequent prices of grain, cattle, and forage, as

well as the value of land, had greatly augmented. The producer was thus enriched, while the consumer alone suffered. Indeed, it is a notorious fact, that such was the improvement in the condition of the farmer, so great the demand, so advantageous the sale, and, by a fortunate coincidence, so abundant the harvest, that many tenants who had not paid their rents during two or three years, were suddenly enabled to acquit all arrears. In short, in proportion as commerce and trade declined, so the value of the land augmented ; for those who under other circumstances would have been inclined to embark their fortunes or accumulations in mercantile speculations, now sought to invest them elsewhere.

The effects of the revolution were in fact scarcely felt by the agricultural interests ; the whole onus unfortunately fell on those who contributed most largely to the welfare of kingdoms, that is, on the commercial classes. The spurious prosperity resulting from the system of the "million of industry" now rapidly began to develop itself. Factory after factory, furnace after furnace, and steam-engine after steam-engine closed their doors, extinguished their fires, or diminished their hours of labour. The produce, which under the ancient government had far exceeded the healthy wants of the market, was now deprived of the artificial demand of the society of commerce, and thence of its principal issue. There was already an accumulated glut, which it would have been madness to augment. Reduction of labour became indispensable ; thus, amongst many others, our enterprising countryman Mr. John Cockerell, whose magnificent establishments at Seraing, near Liege, were the admiration of all strangers, was reduced to great straits, and was constrained to discharge the greater portion of his workmen, of whom upwards of 2,500 were employed at the moment of the revolution. Hundreds at Ghent,

Tournay, Liege, Namur, and Brussels were also thrown out of employment, and their families compelled to seek parochial assistance. The immense demand for agricultural produce took off some superfluous hands, while the augmentation of the army removed others : but this was but a trifling relief in a country where the cotton trade alone had occupied upwards of "250,000 hands." *

The misery was great, the prospect melancholy, the danger imminent; yet, by a most extraordinary anomaly, those crimes which result from necessity, from the outcries of famishing children, from the agonies of cold, hunger, and sickness, were not sensibly augmented ; nor did they bear any proportion to the increased suffering of the lower classes in the manufacturing towns. Indeed, it is a fact worthy of remark, that the number of crimes committed during the first six months of the revolution, were much less than those perpetrated during the same space at any previous given period. Not only did the stagnation of commerce weigh heavily on the general merchant, but the dislocation of society deeply affected the retail traders in the capital. Numbers of those who had hitherto mainly relied on the court, aristocracy, and on the mass of foreigners, especially English, who flocked to Brussels, were now compelled to abandon their shops, or live on their capital. Strange, however, as it may appear, although this numerous class had every cause for abhorring the revolution, and every rational motive for desiring a restoration, at no time were the Orangist leaders enabled to seduce them into active co-operation. Whether they dreaded the vengeance of the association, or whether their thirst for national independence was greater than the sense of their

* Petition of the Ghent cotton manufacturers to King Leopold, January 18, 1834.

own private interest, matters little. Whatever might have been their secret and individual views—and that these views were generally favourable to the Prince of Orange, cannot be denied—still they could not be induced to express such wishes collectively, that is, either by electing Orange candidates to congress, or by lending the slightest aid in promoting those scenes of confusion which they had the good sense to see must result from openly espousing the cause of the deposed dynasty. Six months' experience had taught them the misfortune of civil commotion. All they now sighed for was a return to that tranquillity, without which trade cannot exist.

It has been said that the extreme factions, that is, the Orangists and movement party, speculated on the distresses of the people as an auxiliary to their respective causes. "All means are equally good in times of revolution; no matter what the lever, provided it produces the required impetus," is the common maxim of agitators of every country. That *they* should reckon upon such assistance, will create no surprise; but to attribute a policy so machiavelian and unfeeling to the great Orange families, would be bold and unwarrantable, were not the accusation founded on circumstantial evidence of a very striking nature.

It is almost superfluous to state, that the greater portion of the workmen, and, indeed, of the indigent classes in all capitals and large towns, derive their subsistence from the residence and expenditure of the rich and luxurious. It is not so much the necessities as the superfluities of life that are the great sources of prosperity to the artisan. The Belgic aristocracy, the most wealthy of whom, with few exceptions, appertained to the Orangist party, were at all times remarkable for their frugal habits, for their overweening fondness for money, for a disinclination to that frank

and generous hospitality, that liberality and profusion that characterize the nobility of Paris, London, and other capitals. More intent on husbanding their fortunes than on contributing to the conviviality of their equals, or the prosperity of their inferiors, they generally practised a degree of economy bordering on parsimony, and rarely displaying any symptoms of spendour or profusion.

This organic disposition, a species of moral heirloom, might, however, be ascribed to the constant political changes to which the country had been subject for so many ages; changes that not only deprived it of name and nationality, but had gone far to stifle those feelings of unity and patriotism that are so essentially characteristic of the old Netherlanders. Alternately called upon to swear allegiance to Spain, Austria, France, and Holland, bandied about from one power to another, according to the issue of battles, of which their own estates were too frequently the theatre; having constantly suffered from the past, and having little to hope from the future, homogeneity and confidence were destroyed among the aristocracy, who treated their country as a *mere savings-bank*, and felt themselves as imperatively called on to guard against political hurricanes, as the West Indian planter against those of the elements. Thus, that frugality which had its source in politics, eventually became a national type.

The revolution afforded this class an admirable pretext for indulging in their natural habits of economy; producing thereby the double result of improving their fortunes by accumulated saving, and increasing the misery and discontent of the lower orders, and the embarrassment of the city authorities, by reducing the demand for labour, as well as the produce of municipal dues (*octroi*), portions of which were allotted to the

maintenance of the poor. The better to effect this, the majority of the nobility withdrew into foreign countries, or immured themselves in their chateaux ; whilst those who returned to the capital closed their gates, removed their furniture, inhabited a mere corner of their mansions, put down their equipages, discharged many of their domestics, and confined their expenditure within the strict limits of necessity.

It may be objected that these were not times for the display of wealth or luxury ; that at a moment when civil convulsion might have suddenly cast men down from opulence to penury, it was more than ever necessary to lay by a store for the morrow.

It was said that the people, being the artisans of the revolution, and of their own consequent sufferings, had no claims on the support of the aristocracy, or of those that were attached to the ancient government. If, therefore, by augmenting the temporary privations of the poor and middling classes, they could have been brought to compare the blessings they had lost with the pains they actually endured, and thus have been induced to pronounce themselves for a restoration, or for the Prince of Orange, it would have been an immense benefit conferred on the country at large, and would have fulfilled the vows of all European cabinets. Granted. But, had the persons who held these arguments studied the history of popular commotions, or even of human nature, they would have discovered that the sufferings generally attendant on civil strife and social disorganization have always been more instrumental to the progress of anarchy than to a return to order.

Even as those who are the victims of physical intemperance too frequently fly to further indulgence as a relief from present pain, so the lower classes, when

inflamed by political excess, of which they feel the effects without comprehending the causes or consequences, are infinitely more prone to rush forward in the course of subversion, than to retrace their steps to that of moderation. The natural obstinacy and tendency of man to mischief and misrule are additional incentives. Thus, in the midst of the general suffering, the Orangist party were unable, either through the medium of gold or intrigue, to excite the masses in their favour; whilst the patriotic association always found in them ready instruments, either for attempting to overawe Congress by vociferous clamours, or for executing any other schemes that accorded with their own views.*

Fortunately for the Orangists—for, they being wealthy and anti-popular, would have been the first victims—the patience of the people, and the charitable exertions of the majority of the citizens, averted the evils that might otherwise have arisen. Private donations to a large amount were distributed by the patriot nobles, by the clergy, and, indeed, by all such persons whose means admitted of their affording relief to the sufferers. Loans were also raised by the municipalities; public employment was given to all labourers out of work, and thus the industrious were furnished with subsistence, and the profligate deprived of all pretext for idleness. A sum exceeding 100,000 florins was thus expended by the regency of Brussels during the first six months of the revolution. The venerable burgo-master, Rouppe, with many others of the respectable citizens, displayed a degree of philanthropy and devo-

* The detestable pillage of the Orangists on the 6th of April, 1834, and the disorders committed at Brussels, fully corroborate the foregoing observations.—[NOTE OF ED.]

tion during this crisis, that afforded a noble example to their fellow-countrymen

On passing through the rich and luxuriant plains of this fertile country, on whose soil Providence had for ages showered down its choicest blessings, as some compensation for the evils inflicted on it by the ambition of man, the traveller would have discovered no symptoms of the tempest that had overwhelmed the throne, or even of that civil strife which was still fiercely gnawing its vitals, and menacing it with misfortunes still more poignant than it had ever endured from previous convulsions. All was calm, cheerful, and apparently prosperous. An air of consummate abundance, ease, and happiness reigned around. But on reaching the capital, the scene changed. There Brussels still stood, in all that graceful and picturesque beauty that renders it so pre-eminent among continental cities; but the immense change that had been operated in its social condition was visible even to the naked eye. There was a general anxiety and want of confidence depicted in all men's countenances. Neighbour looked askance at neighbour; friends were averse to trust in friends. The very right eye seemed to suspect the left. All professed independence and disinterestedness, and yet thirst for place, and jealousy against those in office, never was carried to a greater pitch.

The streets were dull and lifeless; the public walks and thoroughfares were nearly abandoned, or only animated by gesticulating groups of politicians. The wealthier classes appeared to have abandoned the city and surrendered it to the poor, hundreds of whom, especially females, obtruded themselves on the passenger. The mansions of the aristocracy were closed, whilst advertisements upon almost every door announced "a house abandoned," or "to let." Public vehicles now and

then traversed the streets, but not a single private equipage. The very grass commenced growing in the squares, in the centre of which half-withered trees of liberty, surmounted with tattered caps and banners, reared their unsightly heads. There was no society—no cordiality; all was uncertainty and alarm. Rumours of intended riots agitated the tranquil citizens by day, whilst shouts and vociferations disturbed their repose at night. The sittings of the congress were often turbulent and disorderly; now disturbed by the groans or plaudits of the galleries, or now interrupted by the exaggerated declamation of orators, who, in order to strengthen their arguments, not unfrequently appealed to the passions of the spectators. Agents of the Parisian jacobinical society mingled in the groups both in and out of the chambers, menacing and insulting the deputies. Business was carried on, but the goods exposed in the shops were deficient in novelty and splendour. There was a demand for the necessaries, but none for the luxuries or superfluities of life. Forced loans and contributions weighed heavily on the burghers, whose sufferings, from these and other causes, were augmented by incessant military lodgments. Brussels, from its central situation, being the rendezvous or place of transit for almost all the troops, scarcely a day elapsed without officers and soldiers, oftentimes exigent and ill-conducted, being quartered on the inhabitants.*

Men's minds were so completely absorbed by the overwhelming interests of the day, that all subjects

* Householders in affluent circumstances generally gave the men a sum of money to enable them to furnish themselves with lodgings and food elsewhere; but this could not be the case with the middling classes. The absolute expenditure for each soldier was about seventy cents per day—that of an officer, from six to ten francs. A portion of this was returned by the authorities.

save those connected with politics were excluded. Arts and sciences were neglected, and no literature thought of but the public journals. The avidity with which men sought to fortify their individual hopes or opinions by those of the daily press, was not less remarkable than the immense influence obtained by the latter. Yet a part of these journals were supported and edited by foreigners, who, utterly regardless of Belgic interests, had embraced journalism as a mere pecuniary or political speculation. The ascendancy of these papers over the public mind was not less prejudicial than extensive. For one argument tending to the maintenance of peace, or evincing any acquaintance with the true principles of European policy, fifty were subversive, visionary, and utterly opposed to those maxims which form the basis of social order. Both writers and readers, unable to discriminate between the uses and abuses of a free press, fell into the opposite extremes of excessive licentiousness or excessive timidity. The one, unrestrained by law, or any other consideration than that of personal chastisement, launched into the most unwarrantable excesses; the other, especially such as were in office, being unaccustomed to those attacks which are so incessantly directed against public men in England, trembled lest their words and actions should be misinterpreted, or that they should be held up as objects of sarcasm, calumny, and perhaps persecution. Scarcely one public individual was exempt from this weakness, except Mr. Lebeau, who, from the first moment that he raised himself above the level of the common political horizon, displayed the utmost moral courage and manly indifference to the insults and libels that were levelled against him.

The most salient defects in the conduct of Belgic journalists were, firstly, an erroneous impression entertained

by them that it was necessary always to oppose government, in order to prove their own independence; and, secondly, their forgetfulness of their true position in regard to other states. In almost every point connected with European policy, they argued as if Belgium was paramount, and Europe secondary. They treated the questions of territory and external relations, as if they were a power of the first order, and other nations a mere assemblage of petty states, destined to receive laws at their hands. Eager to be admitted into the general family pact, they repudiated the maxims that were acknowledged and adopted by all other nations as the essential conditions of co-existence. That which Great Britain, Austria, and Prussia considered as honourable to themselves, they declared to be degrading to their country. Regardless of all interests but their own, they objected to the smallest concession, and yet demanded sacrifices from others, not as a boon, but as a right. Forgetting the exiguity of their numbers, their intestine divisions, and the absence of every essential even for defence, they boasted of their strength, unity, and powers of aggression, and talked of battles and campaigns, as though the grand army had been at their disposal.

It is true they held the torch of discord suspended, like the sword of Damocles, over Europe. They might have plunged into war, and constrained France to fly to their assistance; but they forgot that the first bound of the lion would have been upon the carcass of their own country, on which it would have gorged and battered ere it advanced to the Rhine. Whether victors or vanquished, the result must have been equally disastrous to them. The inevitable consequence of war was either an exchange of foreign rulers, or a return to the very chains they had so recently burst asunder.

In speaking of the general condition of Brussels at

this period, a few words respecting the civic guards are essential. This class of armed citizens received a definite organization by a law of the 31st of December, 1830, by which it was enacted, that all persons, with some few exceptions, between the age of twenty and fifty inclusive, should be liable to this service, under fine and penalty. They were divided into three classes; the first, comprised of all bachelors and childless widowers, between the age of twenty and thirty-one, was subject to be called into active service; the second, consisting of all persons of the same class between the age of thirty-one and fifty, was destined for garrison duty; and the third, comprehending all individuals indiscriminately between twenty and fifty, to be exclusively sedentary. In the event of being called into active service by legislative sanction, the first ban was placed on the same footing, as to pay and discipline, as the line. The officers and non-commissioned, exclusive of commanders, to be elected by their comrades; a system well adapted, perhaps, during peace, but highly prejudicial to discipline when on active service.

No opportunity has been afforded for judging of the utility of the first ban of Belgic civic guards, since they were subjected to regular organization; for the law as regarded them was not put in force till after the Dutch invasion. But there is every ground for believing that, in case of necessity, they would do their duty before an enemy, as well as the troops of the line, to whom they are generally superior in physical appearance, and not much inferior in point of equipment and discipline. The utter inutility of employing the undisciplined bands for any other purpose than local duty, was sorrowfully proved by the disasters of August, 1831. The bombastic reliance placed on this species of force by some members of the Belgic congress, showed their

utter ignorance of military science. No sophism, no theory can destroy the practical conclusions of experience. Ancient and modern history abound with examples. It is incontestable that without discipline there can be no unity, without unity no force, and without force no triumph. Even valour, however ardent or chivalrous, is an ineffectual substitute. If a nation were to rely on legions of this description for its defence against a well-organized enemy, its fate would be similar to that of Belgium in 1831. A few regular battalions would suffice to overthrow a host. On the other hand, give these masses the organization and pay of the line, and you destroy their civic character and independence, and assimilate them at once to standing armies.

For external defence, in their crude form, national guards are useless, and for internal protection, their utility is problematical. Disorders were often indisputably averted at Brussels during the first six months of the revolution, by the firmness of these burgher militia; and it is incontestable that the repose of Paris has been maintained, since the July revolution, by the same class of citizens. But when order can be maintained, so can it be subverted by the same means; and it becomes a fearful and precarious position, when the existence of a government or dynasty, or even the security of private property, hangs on the will of an armed people. Such dependence is a mere inversion of military despotism. The moral distinction between regular soldiers and national guards with arms in their hands, is so trifling as to render them nearly similar in effect. Bring masses together by battalions or corps, and they must act from one impulse, or they would fall into inextricable confusion. There must be temporary obedience and docility, though there be no discipline or

instruction; and as the mind of man is prone to yield to enthusiasm or example, and to be led away by the fascinations of superior intellect, these citizen soldiers may become more dangerous to freedom in the hands of designing persons, than regular armies in those of absolute governments. Let an ambitious and able leader, no matter whether he be a prince or fortunate soldier, gain over these bands, and he may convert them into the direst instruments of despotism. It is a trite axiom that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." This may be applied to the national guards, for when the people are taught to legislate with arms in their hands; when those whom it were best to keep in utter ignorance of military science, and of the immense power derived from unity, are initiated into the elements of their own force, and supplied with the means of applying it, the danger not only to governments, but to public liberty, must be imminent. Place arms in the hands of the whole male population of Birmingham, Manchester, or Glasgow; teach them to close, wheel, and deploy; try the same experiment in London—and the trade-unions would be quickly converted into an overwhelming power, that would render all constitutional government or legal authority utterly impracticable. The day is yet far distant, it is to be hoped, when the innovation will be introduced into Great Britain.*

* These lines were scarcely dry ere the disgraceful scenes of pillage and disorder of the 8th of April, 1834, took place at Brussels. On this occasion the civic guard, though legally summoned, almost unanimously *refused* to take up arms in defence of the property of their outraged fellow-citizens, that is, so long as the rioters confined their attacks to the Orangists.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BELGIANS DECIDE ON PROCEEDING TO THE ELECTION OF A SOVEREIGN—COLONEL ACHILLE MURAT—CANDIDATES FOR THE THRONE — THE CHOICE DIVIDED BETWEEN THE DUKES OF LEUCHTENBERG AND NEMOURS—POLICY AND INTRIGUES OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO INSURE THE ELECTION OF THE DUKE DE NEMOURS—CONDUCT OF LORD PONSONBY AND M. BRESSON UPON THIS OCCASION—LETTERS AND NOTES FROM COUNT SEBASTIANI — THE DUKE OF LEUCHTENBERG, THE POPULAR CANDIDATE, PROPOSED BY MR. LEBEAU AND SEVENTY-FIVE DEPUTIES — THE MARQUIS DE LA WOESTINE ARRIVES AT BRUSSELS — THE DUKE OF NEMOURS ELECTED—A DEPUTATION FROM THE BELGIC CONGRESS PROCEEDS TO PARIS—THE CROWN REJECTED BY LOUIS PHILIPPE—ORANGIST MOVEMENTS—CONSPIRACY OF GREGOIRE AT GHENT DEFEATED BY THE ENERGY OF VAN DE POEL—GREGOIRE LIBERATED—VAN SPEYK'S DEATH.

THERE is nothing, perhaps, in the whole history of these times more remarkable than the circumstances attending the first efforts of the Belgians to determine the question of sovereignty. But the nation was so well convinced of the urgent necessity of putting an end to the intrigues of contending factions, it was so wearied with the uncertainty of its position, and so apprehensive of falling into complete anarchy, that it unanimously applauded the resolution of congress to bring matters to a speedy issue.

Diplomacy alone regretted this determination, and sought to throw obstacles in the way of immediate solution; but from motives so widely different, as to threaten an interruption to the continuance of that mutual good understanding which was the avowed object of the great powers. Russia, in the first place, though on the eve of commencing the bloody struggle which was destined to rivet more securely the chains of

unhappy Poland, never for a moment abandoned her hopes of Dutch restoration, and consequently instructed her plenipotentiaries in Paris and London to avail themselves of every possible artifice by which time could be gained. Austria and Prussia, though more sincere in their intentions, and more interested in the maintenance of peace, followed the same track, until the utter impracticability of success pointed out the necessity of turning their attention to less chimerical projects. Secondly, England, though acknowledging the impossibility even of an indirect restoration, still eagerly clung to the cause of the Prince of Orange, and was, therefore, extremely adverse to a solution that must be fatal to her favourite candidate. Thirdly, the situation of Europe was so critical, and the prospect of averting war so precarious, that France courted delay in order that she might dart forward on the first signal of hostilities, and possess herself of what the movement party persisted in considering her natural boundaries, and this without the embarrassment of negotiation or alliance, or even the necessity of conquest. For it is scarcely necessary to observe, that had war broken out before the election of a sovereign, or had the aggressive doctrines of which La Fayette, Lemarque, and Maugin were the apostles, prevailed over the pacific system determined upon by Louis Philippe, and so wisely supported by Casimir Perier and his colleagues, the whole Belgic people would have eagerly thrown themselves into the arms of France; and the wish for a reunion, hitherto confined to certain isolated fractions, would have become general and simultaneous. It was, therefore, the evident interest and policy of Great Britain and of Prussia, to accelerate, and not to impede, the election of a sovereign.

The difficulty did not, however, consist so much in the admission of this principle, as in the choice of a fit

person to fill the new throne. All were unanimous as to the point of exclusion, whilst they differed as to the individual selection. The most appropriate choice for all parties would, doubtless, have been Prince Leopold, of Saxe-Cobourg; but the motives that induced Great Britain to desire delay, influenced her at that moment in discouraging all overtures regarding that prince, whose name had already been suggested both to the British envoy at Brussels and to the government at home. The jealousy then entertained towards England by the French liberals was likewise an obstacle to a combination, which, in fact, was skilfully reserved for a future and more propitious occasion.

An immense step towards the preservation of harmony had, however, been effected by extending the exclusive *veto*, not only to "*any prince of the families reigning in the five states, whose representatives were assembled in London in Conference,*"* but to the Duke of Leuchtenburg.† The consanguinity of the latter to Napoleon's family was calculated to revive the intrigues of the imperialists, and to fill Belgium with the partisans of a dynasty who were far from having renounced their pretensions to the French sceptre. Indeed, the hopes of this party were at one moment so strongly excited, that even Colonel Achille Murat, eldest son of the chivalrous ex-king of Naples, was induced to quit his retirement in the United States, and to try the general pulse by entering the Belgic service. Others of the same family also endeavoured to obtain a revocation of the edict of banishment from France, and threw out hints of transferring their residence to Brussels. The striking personal resemblance between Colonel Murat

* Protocol 14, 1st of February, 1831.

† Auguste Charles Eugene Napoleon, son of Prince Eugene (Beauharnois), born 9th of December, 1810, now Prince Auguste of Portugal, married to Dona Maria.

and his mighty relation the emperor Napoleon—a resemblance which he appeared to encourage by his style of dress and general bearing—his undoubted abilities, courage, and extraordinary proficiency in almost all modern languages, were well calculated to produce effect in troubled times. But the sympathy that the name of Murat might have awakened in the bosom of a few veterans and refugee Italians, finding no echo with the people, and his vicinity having excited the jealousies of the French court, Colonel Murat resigned the command of the foreign legion, with which he had been entrusted during a few weeks, and quitted the Continent.*

The remonstrances or intrigues of the different cabinets were, however, inefficient barriers to the impatience of the Belgians. Therefore, on the 19th of January, after several days' preparatory debate as to the question of urgency, the day for final election was irrevocably fixed by congress for the 28th. In the same sitting it was resolved, that the Belgic legation at Paris should consult the French cabinet "as to various commercial and political points connected with the choice of a sovereign," while a similar proposition regarding Great Britain was unceremoniously rejected; a gratuitous and impolitic act of discourtesy to England—for, unless the Belgic deputies had blinded themselves to their real position and future interests, they would have comprehended that any attempt to excite rivalry between the cabinets of St. James's and the Tuileries, must recoil on themselves; and that the very existence and consolidation of

* As Colonel Murat did not arrive in Belgium until after the election of King Leopold, the author may be accused of a trifling anachronism; but the primitive object is not affected by this transposition. Colonel Murat has since returned to his estate in America, where he was seen lately, exercising the modest functions of post-master of the adjacent town.

that national independence of which they appeared so jealous, depended on the maintenance of a perfect accord between England and France. To interrupt that harmony was the grand object of their adversaries. Had they succeeded, reunion or restoration were inevitable. Fortunately, however, for Europe and Belgium, the bond which the great powers had entered into, a bond which has been well designated as "a virtuous conspiracy to avert war," acted as an efficient counterpoise to the feverish impolicy of the Belgic deputies; whose resolution was the more uncalled for, since they had already determined to gratify their own inclinations in the choice of a monarch, in despite of friendly counsels and hostile warnings.

No sooner was the question of "the choice of a chief of the state" seriously agitated, than a host of competitors for royal honours were introduced to public notice. The pretenders, most of whose names were brought forward without their previous knowledge or acquiescence, were nearly as numerous as the deputies destined to elect them. France, Italy, Germany, and Belgium each contributed its quota. Petitions were presented to congress on the 27th of January in favour of La Fayette, Fabvier, Sebastiani, Chateaubriand, the Prince of Carignan, the Archduke Charles, Surlet de Chokier, Charles Rogier, *the Pope*, Felix de Merode, Prince Otho of Bavaria, Duke John of Saxony, a prince of Salm, the Dukes of Nemours and Leuchtenberg, and even Louis Philippe with a vice-royalty. Independent of these, the names of the Dukes of Lucca and Reichstadt, and the Prince of Capua, brother of the King of the Two Sicilies, were also suggested. The choice of the latter was seriously contemplated by the French cabinet, and even recommended by Prince Talleyrand, but the Belgians never evinced the slightest predilection for him; and though he was not absolutely objection-

able to the four great powers, he possessed few of those essential qualifications required by the concluding paragraph of the twelfth protocol. Had the Belgians shewn any decided eagerness to elect Prince Otho of Bavaria, it is probable that he would have been recognized forthwith by England, Prussia, and France, and that he would have obtained the hand of the Princess Mary, third daughter of Louis Philippe. But the youth of this prince, who had not then accomplished his fifteenth year, was a sufficient motive for his rejection. Indeed nothing could be more impolitic than to trust the government of a country emerging from a state of civil convulsion to a minor, when the experience and energies of maturer age were so imperatively called for.

In the meantime, while the claims of some of the popular candidates, especially those of the Duke of Leuchtenberg, were warmly advocated by the daily press, others, and amongst these a prince of the insignificant media-tised house of Salm,* endeavoured to attract public attention by hand-bills or advertisements posted on the walls, in which he tendered his services as a prince fully qualified to insure the prosperity and independence of the Belgians, and to reconcile the views of the great powers. But by one of those capricious contradictions that gave such a singular character to the events of this period, all this body of ephemeral competitors for the thorny glories of royalty were abandoned on the eve of election, save the very two whom the great powers had expressly excluded. A singular alternative; for, as Mr. Nothomb has justly observed, "the Duke of Leuchtenberg was essentially anti-French without being European, while the Duke of Nemours was so exclusively French as to be directly anti-European."

* Prince Frederick Ernest Otho Philip, of Salm Kyrbourg, of Aa-haus in Westphalia.

Both were consequently declared inadmissible by the Conference. The Belgians could not plead ignorance; for although the protocols of the first and seventh of February were posterior to the election, they were warned by M. Bresson, up to the moment when he received instructions to encourage the choice of the Duke of Nemours. They were assured of the same fact by Lord Ponsonby, from the first hour the question was agitated, down to the moment that the ultimate refusal of Louis Philippe opened the eyes of the most incredulous. The language of Lord Ponsonby, which was wilfully misrepresented by both parties, never varied—it was essentially and unequivocally negative, without a moment's intermission. The name of the Archduke Charles of Austria was likewise brought forward; but, independent of his imperial highness being directly affected by the exclusive prohibition of the fourteenth protocol, he could only be considered as a cloak for the partisans of the Prince of Orange, and for those who, being intimately convinced of the non-acceptance or non-recognition of the other two, voted in his favour, in order to reduce the amount of the absolute majority that might pronounce itself for either one or the other.

The combination in favour of the son of the illustrious Eugene, in a great measure the creation of Mr. Lebeau, was proposed by him, and advocated by almost all the moderate liberals, and those who might be considered most frankly attached to the independence of their country. The French re-unionists, including the few republicans, and a portion of the Catholic party, rallied round the Duke of Nemours, whose sovereignty, had it been peaceably recognized, would have been equivalent to a French vice-royalty—with this important difference, that in lieu of admitting the Belgians to a participation in the honours and advantages of an integral incorpora-

tion with France, would have subjected Belgium to be inundated by a multitude of French placemen, and thus renewed one of the principal grievances complained of under the Netherlands government.

As the period of the election approached, the conduct of the French cabinet, which had hitherto been manly and honourable, gave rise to severe criticisms, and was to all appearance tainted with insincerity and a desire to abandon its pledges. It was accused of secretly intriguing to insure the election of the Duke of Nemours, whilst it solemnly professed to the great powers and to the Belgian agents not to countenance that combination. It declined to subscribe to the protocol affecting the territorial limits of a country of which it might become possessor by vote or by war, on the plea that the Conference was a "mediation;" and yet it preremptorily intervened, by opposing the election of the popular candidate. It disavowed all views of aggrandizement, and proclaimed the utmost sympathy for Belgium; and yet it wilfully created obstacles to the immediate adjustment of the question—obstacles calculated to produce anarchy, and to throw that country, wearied and exhausted, into its arms.

Some of these accusations were, doubtless, well-founded; but the critical position of France at home must be admitted as an extenuation of her dubious conduct abroad. She may be said to have been living from hand to mouth, uncertain of the morrow. Dependent on the force of events, which often hold dominion over systems—and at the mercy of popular will, which had well nigh been superior to that of the government; bounding, as it were, from riot to riot, she lived but in the intervals; and unless the July throne had carried its self-abnegation to imprudent extremes, or been prepared to follow the destinies of

the doctrinaires, it was a duty it owed itself to be prepared for that aggressive system which would have been infallibly forced upon it, had the movement party gained the ascendancy. It is evident that its object in promoting the choice of the Duke of Nemours, after repeated assurances of opposing such election, was not undertaken with the ultimate view of acceptance, but in order to prevent the success of the Duke of Leuchtenberg, whose vicinity was considered dangerous to the internal repose of France and the consolidation of the new dynasty. In the position in which the cabinet of the Palais Royal found itself, and under the irrevocable determination formed by the king not to accept the crown for his son, the election must be considered as a fine stroke of policy. It averted a great and immediate evil, and afforded time for the consideration of a more congenial combination, which only required development and skilful management to ensure success.

By refusing to adhere to the protocol of the 27th, under the plea of the Conference being "a mediation," and at the same time directly intervening by denouncing the election of the Duke of Leuchtenberg as an act of hostility to France, it was guilty of a palpable contradiction. But had it remained neuter—had the Belgians, who were deaf to advice and remonstrances, not been menaced, the son of Beauharnais would have been elected by a large majority. France must then have drawn the sword, or submitted to the neighbourhood of a monarch, who, rallying round his throne all the discontented spirits of Europe, would have been a perpetual firebrand at her threshold, and, without offering the smallest guarantee to Europe, would have been a source of uneasiness and embarrassment; in fact, a mere tool in the hands of internal and external enemies. In the then social and moral con-

dition of that country, it would have been better for Louis Philippe to have abdicated the throne, or to have thrown his armies into Belgium, than to admit the contact of so dangerous a neighbour. Delays were certainly perilous ; anarchy might and would infallibly have ensued had these delays been prolonged ; latent thoughts of conquest or partition may have lurked behind ; the bait was tempting and difficult to resist in despite of the immense concomitant risks. Subsequent events have proved, however, that the professions of the French government were sincere and honourable. At all events, since Belgium has obtained nearly all she was entitled to demand, and as France has zealously co-operated in maintaining peace, it would be unjust to inculcate the motives of its government.

In advocating the cause of his favourite candidate, its talented proposer observed that only three combinations were practicable, namely, the Prince of Orange, the Duke of Nemours, and the Duke of Leuchtenberg. "The first," said he, "will entail civil war; the second general and immediate war; but with the third, there is at the utmost a mere possibility of the latter. Two causes, may, nevertheless, produce an immediate conflagration. The one certain—that is, a direct or indirect union with France; the other problematical—that is, a struggle between the principles of liberty and servitude." Meaning by the latter the election of the Duke of Leuchtenberg in defiance of French menaces, or the abandonment of his cause in submission to the right of intervention. As regarded the Prince of Orange, who was unsupported by a single man of energy or talent, while the whole force of the revolution rallied around his competitors, and as related to any direct or indirect union with France, the above conclusions were essentially correct; but it may be objected that the

hypothesis of the two last princes, as connected with the question of war, ought to have been reversed.

The simple fact of the election of the Duke of Leuchtenberg would have rendered it imperative on France to act up to her declarations, under the penalty of betraying a dangerous feebleness. If she did not declare immediate war, she must have renounced all amicable relations with Belgium, and withdrawn her plenipotentiary from the Conference, and thus impeded the march of those negotiations, on the solution of which depended the repose of the Continent. On the other hand, the acceptance of the Duke of Nemours never having been seriously contemplated, his mere election offered no impediment to the maintenance of a good understanding between the powers. It not only afforded the French government a favourable opportunity of trying its own strength at home. but of proving its moderation and disinterestedness abroad, and thereby fortifying itself in the opinion of foreign cabinets. Immense clamour was raised throughout Belgium at what was denominated the weakness of Louis Philippe, and the duplicity of his ministers. But men judged from the excited passions of the moment, and not from the dictates of reason, or from any profound calculation of political chances. The six days' debates on this question scarcely produced one single political prophecy borne out by subsequent events. All seemed bewildered in a maze of theory, utterly opposed to the experience of the past or the probabilities of the future.

Until within a few days of the time appointed for final discussion, the French government appears to have acted in perfect concordance with the general views of the allies. Indeed, as late as the 11th of January, M. Bresson addressed a note to the president of the Belgic diplomatic committee, stating that the election of the Duke of

Leuchtenberg would throw Belgium into great embarrassment, and that this prince would not be recognized by the great powers, and on no account whatever by France. "I must add," said M. Bresson, "that his majesty having repeatedly manifested his intention neither to consent to the union of Belgium with France, nor to the election of the Duke of Nemours, all perseverance in questions already decided will have no other result than to agitate Belgium, and to endanger the peace of Europe, which his majesty is desirous of maintaining."

Similar language had been invariably held in answer to all previous endeavours to induce the French cabinet to deviate from its determination. The first of these measures, that is the re-union, had never been put forward in an official or collective form, or sanctioned by national appeal. But had the French government not been restrained by an earnest desire to avert war, it might easily have availed itself of the importunities of the Belgic emissaries, and, following the example of Danton and the Convention of 1793, it might have interpreted the private wishes of Mr. Gendebien, the Coryphæus of the re-unionists, as the voice of the whole nation. Although Gendebien had been encouraged in his favourite speculation by La Fayette, Lamarque, and the principal movement leaders; and although the partisans of the Duke of Leuchtenberg were secretly supported by the Duke of Bassano and others, connected by ties of ancient sympathy with the family of Prince Eugene, both Louis Philippe and his ministers, and indeed all persons appertaining to the administration, unhesitatingly rejected every overture tending to compromise European tranquillity.

A letter addressed to his government on the 9th of January, by Mr. Firmin Rogier, the Belgic diplomatic agent at Paris, places this matter in a still stronger light.

It was stated therein that Count Sebastiani had peremptorily declared, "that the objections of the king were irrevocable; that France would never recognize the Duke of Leuchtenberg as King of Belgium, nor Louis Philippe ever give him one of his daughters in marriage; and that his majesty did not hesitate to say that of all possible combinations, that of the young Duke of Leuchtenberg would be the most disagreeable to France, and the least favourable to the repose and independence of Belgium." The private dispatch from whence the above passage is extracted, and which contained other observations equally positive in regard to the Duke of Nemours, was not intended for publication. But with that puerile thirst for publicity, that impolitic indiscretion, and total disregard to diplomatic usages, which characterized the proceedings of the Belgic government and representatives of that period, the letter was read to the chambers, and thence found its way into the journals. The unlooked-for publication of this document having given rise to an attack on the French ministry in the Chamber of Deputies, its contents were partially denied by Count Sebastiani; but not the slightest doubt remained that Mr. Rogier had faithfully repeated the sense, if not the literal expressions, of the French foreign minister.

However, in lieu of producing the desired effect, these communications were clamorously objected to as a direct violation of the principle of non-intervention. They served but to augment the headstrong obstinacy of the Belgic chambers and patriotic associations, and to confirm them in their reckless determination to gratify their own inclinations in the choice of a sovereign; a resolution that was loudly applauded as a vigorous and necessary proof of nationality and independence. Consequently, the partisans of the two principal candidates

redoubled their efforts, and divided themselves into two bodies, each of which sought counsel from the envoys of the Conference; the Nemourists, flocking around M. Bresson, and the friends of the Duke of Leuchtenberg appealing to Lord Ponsonby. The tide of popular favour appeared at first to lean towards the latter prince. Seventy-one deputies had already pledged themselves to support him. Commissioners were privately dispatched to Munich to consult him. A party, principally composed of old servants of the empire, laboured for him in Paris; and, in order to encourage and augment the number of his adherents in Belgium, it was boldly affirmed in the public journals, that an autograph communication had been received, in which the prince declared that, "being deeply affected by the proofs of confidence and esteem evinced towards him, he should consider it his duty to accept the throne in the event of his obtaining a majority in congress." This assertion was, however, totally void of foundation. Whatever might have been the secret inclination of the young prince and his mother, under whose guardianship he still remained, he not only abstained from all direct communications, but commanded the persons charged with the negotiation, both at Brussels and Paris, to avoid compromising him by any positive assurance; a caution the more necessary, since the British government, which was erroneously supposed to be favourable to this combination, instructed Lord Erskine, its minister at the court of Bavaria, to express its unequivocal dissent; while the French envoy was ordered to remonstrate in terms still more energetic. Withheld by these and other prudential motives, the prince, so far from ever consenting to accept the crown at all hazards, addressed a letter to the Duke of Bassano, in which he declared "that his acceptance would be subordinate to the sanc-

tion of the King of the French, and that the interest of Belgium herself imperatively commanded this reserve."

Every possible intrigue was nevertheless set on foot to procure a majority. The Count de Mejean, a French officer, long attached to the Beauharnais family, was despatched from Munich to Brussels, where he remained three days, and contributed largely to strengthen the hopes of the prince's partisans. The name of Leuchtenberg was scrawled upon all the walls. The press, especially the *Courrier*, enthusiastically supported his cause, and, declaring the will of the French people to be paramount to that of the government, derided the idea of French intervention. His portrait was exposed in all the shops, or appended to the trees of liberty. Songs to his honour were chanted in the public thoroughfares. His bust was crowned and inaugurated at the theatre, amidst deafening plaudits. The taverns were filled with drunken roysterers, carousing at his expense; and processions, preceded by banners and music, paraded the streets, or tumultuously assembled round the hall of congress, demanding his election.

In short, unless some vigorous counter-effort was made by French diplomacy, it was evident that his success would be inevitable. This appeared the more probable, as, by a sudden and capricious revulsion of popular opinion, the conduct of the very cabinet for which congress had recently evinced such exclusive sympathy, was now looked on with suspicion by the representatives, and acrimoniously criticised by the press. These sarcasms were, however, principally levelled against Count Sebastiani, who was held up as the greatest enemy to Belgic independence, and spoken of, even in the presence of M. Bresson, in terms of undisguised aversion.*

* M. Bresson, chancing to dine one day at the celebrated restaurateur Du Bos, a party of patriots loudly discussed the merits of certain

In despite of the suspicions of Orangism attaced to the English mission, the current of popularity set for a time in its favour. Mr. Lebeau, and many other sane-minded patriots, appeared desirous to establish an intercourse which had hitherto been avoided by almost all save the anti-national party. British influence imperceptibly gained ground: that of France diminished in a corresponding ratio. Lord Ponsonby skilfully availed himself of this turn in the public mind to improve his acquaintance with the moderate liberals, and especially with Mr. Lebeau, in whom he quickly discovered many of the essential qualities that were calculated to entitle him to a prominent situation in the future government of his country. Indeed, with the exception of Mr. Van de Weyer, Charles le Hon, the De Brouckères, and two or three others, Mr. Lebeau was almost the only man who at that moment offered any evidence of future parliamentary or political pre-eminence.

In the meantime M. Bresson's report of the progress of the Leuchtenberg combination awakened considerable uneasiness at Paris, and at length induced the government to adopt the only course by which it could extricate itself from its embarrassment, without disturbing the repose of Europe. Not only was the utmost dexterity and promptitude required on the part of the French agents, but, in order to guard against all possibility of

diplomatists, and, above all, of Sebastiani, in terms of extreme bitterness. At the moment they were on the point of quitting the room, one of them, feeling perhaps that they had gone too far, approached M. Bresson, and offered some excuses, hoping that he did not consider there was any thing personal towards himself. "I suppose not," replied M. Bresson, with great coolness, "for I conclude if you had the intention to insult me, that you would at least have had the courage to say so." The other stammered, bowed, and retired.

indiscretion, it was even deemed necessary for the government to conceal from them the real nature of its ulterior intentions ; a proceeding that might have led to fatal results.

Instructions were, therefore, forwarded to M. Bresson to insure the election of the Duke of Nemours. Instructions that were followed by him with such eagerness and zeal, as to impress the public with the idea that he acted under a conviction of immediate acceptance. Such, indeed, was the case ; for, however devoted to the interests of his country—however well calculated to conduct the most intricate diplomatic mission with skill and ability—M. Bresson was too high-minded and too independent to lend himself knowingly to any such act of duplicity as that of which he was the instrument. A subsequent illness, brought on by anxiety of mind, afforded sufficient proof of his vexation at the equivocal character he had been compelled to sustain. Although denounced at first as a willing participator in the delusion practised upon the Belgians, and even menaced with personal violence, public opinion was not long ere it distinguished the agent from the employer, and rendered due homage to the integrity and upright character of the former.*

The coldness that had already manifested itself between M. Bresson and Lord Ponsonby, which had its source in the mysterious and vacillating policy of the French government, was augmented by the events attendant on the Duke of Nemours' election ; during which the French commissioner, not unfrequently yielding to

* So serious were the apprehensions for M. Bresson's personal safety, that an old French cabinet courier, who had formerly served in his family, urged him with tears in his eyes to quit the city furtively. Of course, this exasperation did not manifest itself until the reports of the refusal of Louis Philippe shewed the Belgians that they had been duped.

the impetuous ardour of a sanguine temperament, was not always enabled to restrain himself within those cool and phlegmatic bounds that are so requisite in diplomacy. In this essential qualification he was inferior to his English colleague ; who, independent of that high-bred bearing for which he was conspicuous on all ordinary occasions, appeared to gather additional dignity and self-possession in proportion to the increase of surrounding frictions.

Great allowance must, however, be made for both. On the one hand, the British commissioner did not suppose that the French cabinet could think it necessary to deceive their own agent. Feeling satisfied also, that the election of the Duke of Nemours was diametrically opposed to the views of the Conference, of which he and M. Bresson were joint envoys, Lord Ponsonby was justly surprised and indignant on perceiving that his colleague had identified himself, heart and hand, with what he considered a dangerous and anti-European combination. This astonishment increased on his being informed that M. Bresson had assured those who sought counsel of him, that no doubt existed of immediate acceptance, though it was evident that such acceptance was utterly incompatible with the peace of Europe, and a direct violation of all previous pledges. Such, in fact, were the assurances of M. Bresson, until within a few hours of Louis Philippe's definitive reply. A convincing proof of his sincerity ; for the Duke of Leuchtenberg having been rejected, and the evil so much dreaded by the French cabinet victoriously set aside, it is opposed to common reason to suppose that he should persist in protracting the mystification up to the eleventh hour, had he not himself been grievously misled. Lord Ponsonby could, however, only judge from effects. The schism, therefore, waxed into an absolute breach ; and as

all farther co-operation was impracticable, the removal of one or the other became imperative. Lord Ponsonby had obeyed the instructions of the Conference, M. Bresson had violated them. Justice demanded the recal of the latter.*

On the other hand, the malevolence and excessive zeal of the contending parties contributed to augment the misunderstanding, and to increase the jealousy and ill-will, of M. Bresson towards the English mission; and this in despite of the prudent and conciliatory efforts of Mr. Abercrombie, the British secretary of Legation, who acted as mediator. Amongst other circumstances calculated to irritate M. Bresson, it was reported that Lord Ponsonby not only supported the Duke of Leuchtenberg, but that he had spoken with confidence of his recognition by Great Britain, and that he had declared that "his instructions were to quit Brussels within twenty-four hours, should the Duke of Nemours be elected." An explanation consequently ensued, in which Lord Ponsonby unequivocally denied having used the expressions attributed to him, and declared that he was furnished with no other instructions than to discountenance the election of both candidates, "*neither of whom would or could be accepted.*"

Such was the language held by the English mission, not only to M. Bresson, but to all those who consulted it. Indeed, Great Britain being still deceived as to the

* This necessity became the more imperative, for the Belgic government had grounded its rejection of certain protocols (20th of January and 7th of February) on the absence of M. Bresson's signature. "It is evident," said Mr. Van de Weyer, in the congress, on the 10th of February, "that Lord Ponsonby cannot *alone* make any communication to congress. Lord Ponsonby and M. Bresson are the agents of the London plenipotentiaries; they can only act *officially* when acting *together*; and the diplomatic committee can only recognize their communications as *official* when they are signed by *both*."

force of the Orangists, continued to adhere to the cause of the hereditary prince, whose partisans were actively engaged in preparing a movement in the Flanders. It was in the sterile hope of the Prince of Orange's success, that England opposed every other combination, and even objected to that of Prince Leopold. But even supposing the national will had not raised an insuperable barrier against such a project, the French cabinet no longer made any secret of its hostility. This fact was publicly announced by Sebastiani to the Chamber of Deputies, on the 23d of February. After acknowledging that, prior to the exclusion of the Nassaus, he had not considered the choice of the Prince of Orange impossible, the French minister terminated thus:—"From that moment, the cabinet, having due regard to a decision by which the Belgians so peremptorily manifested their will, has not participated in any steps in favour of the House of Orange. Not only has it not participated, but it has interposed the influence of its counsels. This combination, which would have encountered insurmountable obstacles, is only calculated henceforth to illumine civil war."*

No ways dismayed by surrounding difficulties, both Lord Ponsonby and M. Bresson steadily pursued their own course: the one, with a degree of zealous energy that gave the affair the air of being a question in which the honour of his country was implicated; the other, with the cool penetration of a man who felt assured that, if the grand object of his government could not be carried into effect, the failure would lead to the successful introduction of another combination, which offered all the guarantees demanded by the Conference, and which

* *Moniteur Français*, 24th of February, 1831. Speech of the foreign minister.

was in every way calculated to conciliate the views of the Belgic nation.

Fearing lest M. Bresson's exertions might prove insufficient, the French cabinet thought it prudent to send a coadjutor to his assistance. The person selected for this mission was the Marquis de la Woëstine, an old imperial officer, who had passed the sixteen years of the restoration in exile at Brussels; where, from his connexion with several noble families, he was supposed to possess considerable influence. Without offering any official pledges of acceptance, De la Woëstine privately expressed his conviction that the election *once effected*, France would not hear of a refusal, and thus gained over many persons who were hitherto undecided in their opinions. At the same time, the Belgic envoy at Paris, the Count de Celles, contributed largely by his private communications to the success of the intrigue. Nevertheless the strength of the parties was so nearly balanced, that M. Bresson judged it expedient to demand some more forcible demonstration on the part of his government, and to proceed himself to Paris, to explain the critical nature of the impending struggle. During his brief absence, the following letter, in reply to a despatch previously addressed by him to Sebastiani, was communicated to the provisional government and chambers, by M. de la Woëstine, who had remained as chargé d'affairs :—

“ *Paris, January 27, 1831.*

“ SIR,—I hasten to reply to your letter of the 24th. The king's council, which assembled this morning, was unanimous as to the necessity of declaring to the provisional government, that the French cabinet will consider the choice of the Duke of Leuchtenberg for the Belgic throne *as an act of hostility towards France*. In

case congress, in despite of this declaration, shall proceed to such election, you will quit Brussels forthwith."

(Signed) "SEBASTIANI."

"To M. Bresson."

This peremptory declaration, which Count Sebastiani, by an extraordinary sophism, afterwards declared to be an act of *non-recognition and not of interrention*, was too unequivocal not to produce the desired effect. Consequently, of the seventy-one who had signed the proposition in favour of the Duke of Luchtenberg, four on the first division receded from their pledge, while all those who had reserved their votes, or had intended to pronounce themselves for him, passed over to the side of his competitors. The discussion, which commenced on the 28th of January, continued until the afternoon of the 3d of February, on which day M. Bresson, who had only remained a few hours in Paris, communicated that celebrated note from Count Sebastiani, which has so often been alluded to, and which, being skilfully thrown in at the moment of the debate, served to rally more than one hesitating vote, and to impress the whole with a conviction that France had resolved to abstain from all farther intervention:—

"*Paris, February 1, 1831.*

"SIR,—If, as I hope, you have not communicated to the government the protocol of the 27th of January, you will oppose yourself to this communication, because the king's government has not adhered to its dispositions. As regards the question of debts, as well as that of fixing the extent and limits of the Belgic and Dutch territory, we always intended it to be understood that the free concurrence of both states was necessary.

“The Conference of London is a mediation, and the intention of the king’s government is, that it should never lose that character.

(Signed) “HORACE SEBASTIANI.”

“To M. Bresson.”

The communication of this letter elicited the liveliest demonstrations of satisfaction from the assembly. It was, in fact, admirably calculated to restore French influence, and to promote an idea that France, differing from the views and principles of the Conference was prepared to co-operate with Belgium in resisting any encroachment on the part of the great powers; it was, above all, well adapted to mask that latent thirst for partition, which lurked behind all the movements of the French cabinet. Mr. Lebeau, however, availed himself of its contents to endeavour to rally the spirits of his supporters. He declared, that “France having thus acknowledged the principle of non-intervention, could not refuse to recognize the Duke of Leuchtenberg, without being guilty of a flagrant contradiction, and thus destroying all confidence in her sincerity.” But this, by no means, entered into Count Sebastiani’s contemplation. His object was not to annul the veto against the Duke of Leuchtenberg, but to inspire confidence in those who supported the Duke of Nemours. Count Sebastiani’s note, as regarded the actual crisis, must be considered as a master-piece of diplomatic craft — but when coupled with subsequent events, it stands unparalleled for its inconsistency and want of sincerity.

As the discussion drew to a close, the impatience and anxiety of the deputies, and the eagerness of the people, who crowded the galleries and adjacent streets, was raised to the utmost pitch. The fluctuation and indecision of several members was, however, so great, even

up to the last moment, that it was difficult to calculate the result, although M. Bresson, who watched the proceedings with intense anxiety, appeared confident of success. The critical moment having at length arrived, the tellers drew the names from the urn, and read them aloud amidst a breathless silence. Neither candidate having obtained an absolute majority on the first scrutiny, it was necessary to proceed to a second, when eight members, who had previously supported the Duke of Leuchtenberg, or the Archduke, having transferred their votes to the French prince, the latter obtained the victory by a majority of one voice.*

Although many were deeply disappointed at the defeat of their favourite, the fickle populace received the announcement with uproarious acclamations; and when the thunder of the artillery, and the merry chiming of the bells proclaimed the election of a monarch, they were as eager to applaud the choice of Louis Charles Philippe, of

* First scrutiny:—

Number of voters.....	191
Absolute majority.....	96
<hr/>	
Duke of Nemours.....	89
Duke of Leuchtenberg.....	67
The Archduke.....	35
Absent.....	9
<hr/>	
Total.....	200

Second scrutiny:—

Number of voters.....	192
Absolute majority.....	97
<hr/>	
Duke of Nemours.....	97
Duke of Leuchtenberg.....	74
The Archduke.....	21
Absent.....	8
<hr/>	
Total.....	200

Orleans, as they would have been to celebrate that of the son of Eugene. The tradespeople and artisans of Brussels, who had so grievously suffered from a stagnation of business, hailed with joy an event that promised a return to prosperity. All they wanted was tranquillity, and the presence of a court, no matter whence the prince that might ascend the throne. Triumph now sparkled in the eyes of M. Bresson and his adroit assistant, who lost no time in hastening to Paris, to communicate the successful issue of one of the most extraordinary diplomatic artifices that was ever practised on a nation ; an artifice which, however objectionable as an abstract fact, had the indisputable merit of preserving European peace. As a general measure, therefore, it requires no defence.

No sooner had Congress terminated the grand operation of election, than it resolved to dispatch a deputation of ten members to Paris, to communicate the result to Louis Philippe, and solicit his acceptance ; a result little doubted by the deputies, who joyously proceeded on their mission on the morning of the 5th, and arrived in the French capital on the following day, where they were received with distinguished marks of regard and courtesy, and even lodged and entertained at the royal expense.

It would be superfluous to follow the negotiations at Paris through their various stages. Suffice it to say, the deputation was not long ere it discovered that it had been buoyed up with false hopes ; that neither the intrigues of the Count de Celles, nor the remonstrances of the movement party, nor, what in most instances ought to be regarded as a still more powerful stimulant, *ambition*, could induce Louis Philippe to swerve from his pacific pledges. This honourable conduct on the part of the King of the French was further confirmed by his

adhesion to the protocols of the 1st and 7th of February, (Nos. 14 and 15). the first of which had been signed by Prince Talleyrand *ad referendum*. By a remarkable and unexpected coincidence, nearly the whole of the Parisian press, which, at that period, zealously supported the July crown—for, as yet, republicanism had scarcely shewn its head—was unanimous in confirming the king's resolution.

After several private interviews, in which both monarch and ministers endeavoured to soften the disappointment of their approaching rejection by expressions of the warmest sympathy for the Belgic people, the deputation was received in solemn audience on the 17th. Seated on his throne, and surrounded by the whole of his interesting family, and by the ministers and officers of state, Louis Philippe, after listening with deep emotion to the address of Baron Surlet de Chokier, pronounced the irrevocable *fiat* of rejection in terms well calculated to move the hearts of his auditors; and to prove that he was willing to sacrifice all feelings of personal aggrandizement and of family pride to the general welfare of France and of Europe; a noble contrast to the self-interested principles that apparently influenced the chief of the Nassau dynasty!

“If,” said the French monarch, “I only listened to the dictates of my heart, and my sincere desire to obtemperate to the voice of the people, whose repose and prosperity are equally dear and important to France, I should consent with eagerness. But, however poignant my regrets, however profound the bitterness I feel at refusing to you my son, the severity of the duties I have to fulfil imposes on me this painful obligation. I am bound to declare that I cannot accept for him the crown which you are charged to offer.

“My first duty is to consult the interests of France, and, consequently, not to compromise that peace which

I hope to maintain for its welfare, for that of Belgium and of all European states, to whom it is so precious and so essential. Exempt, myself, from all ambition, my personal views accord with my duty. Neither a thirst for conquest, nor the honour of seeing a crown placed on the head of my son, will ever induce me to expose my country to a renewal of those evils that follow in the train of war, and that cannot be counterbalanced by any advantages. The example of Napoleon suffices to preserve me from the fatal temptation of erecting thrones for my children, and causes me to prefer the happiness of having maintained peace to all the splendour of those victories which, in the event of war, French valour could not fail to ensure again to our glorious standards.*

Having terminated his discourse by assurances of undeviating amity and protection, Louis Philippe descended from the throne, and, taking the hand of Surlet de Chokier, exclaimed, "Sir, it is to the Belgic nation that I thus give my hand. Tell your countrymen on your return that they may rely on me, and that, above all things, I implore them to continue united;"—a prudent and paternal counsel, too little heeded by the nation to whom it was addressed. The deputation now took its leave, and returned with heavy hearts to Brussels, where, the issue being already anticipated, it was proposed to entrust the reins of government to a lieutenant-general.

Thus terminated this remarkable episode, in which the partisans of the Duke of Nemours, without being conscious of the fact, largely contributed to the general welfare. Having once involved themselves in a dan-

* Speech of Louis Philippe to the Belgian deputies on the 17th of February, 1831.—*Moniteur Français*.

gerous dilemma, that menaced the most disastrous consequences to Europe, the election of their candidate must certainly be considered as the least of two evils. Such was not the declared opinion of English diplomacy at the moment; for it was incumbent on it to discourage that combination by every argument in its power; but such must have been its inward conviction. To have let fall the slightest admission of this opinion would have been the extreme of impolicy. It would have excited false hopes in Belgium, and encouraged the French cabinet in thinking more seriously of acceptance; and thence increased its hesitation to adhere to the last protocol; an objection that had already created great embarrassment, and threatened disastrous consequences. It was not so much the election by a trifling majority, but the acceptance of the Duke of Nemours that was to be dreaded. The surest means of counteracting such an issue was, to endeavour to diminish the majority to the smallest possible limits, and to impress the public with a conviction, that although both selections were pregnant with mischief, that of the Duke of Leuchtenberg presented less immediate danger.

The true position of the question has been admirably summed up by Mr. Nothomb. "Every one," says he, "knows what has been the result of the choice of the Duke of Nemours. Impartial persons will ask, what would have been the consequence of the election of his competitor? Whether he accepted or refused, the consequences would have been equally disastrous. By his refusal, the Duke of Leuchtenberg would have left us in *statu quo*. We might have remained in a peaceful state; but the new French dynasty would have had a cause of complaint against us; the act of hostility would have been flagrant, personal; and, perhaps, the project of partition would have encountered less repugnance.

“By accepting, in defiance of France and the Conference, the Duke of Leuchtenberg would have placed himself under the ban of Europe, and would have become the crowned representative of a belligerent system. His mission would have been noble and honourable; for he would have found himself at the head of a movement that might have subverted the world. Vanquished, he would have fallen with Belgium, leaving an imperishable fame;—victorious, the Belgic throne would have been a mere stepping-stone to another crown. Under every hypothesis, our independence would have perished.”

One great lesson was derived from this episode, which was neither lost on Belgium or France. Louis Philippe, by proclaiming, in the face of the world, his impossibility, either as a king or father, to accept the crown of Belgium for his son, taught France to know, that no people are sufficiently powerful to place themselves above the general laws of Europe. If no other result had been obtained from the election of the Duke of Nemours, this was sufficient to render it of permanent value.

In the meanwhile the partisans of the Prince of Orange were not idle. An active correspondence was carried on between his royal highness, who still remained in London, and his agents in Belgium and the Rhenan provinces. Emissaries were employed on the side of Maestricht, Antwerp, and the Flanders, to tamper with the superior officers and the troops. Some of these were unable to resist the temptations thrown in their way; and, although they excused themselves from instant co-operation, they solemnly promised silence and neutrality at first, and active assistance at a later period. Attempts were likewise made to seduce various civil functionaries, by the most advantageous assurances. Pamphlets and anonymous advertisements were distributed at night.

The Orangist journals asserting the impossibility of the acceptance of the French or Bavarian princes, and the danger of anarchy, boldly upheld their candidate; whilst the Orange aristocracy redoubled their intrigues, in which they were supported by Baron de Krudener, who had arrived with a secret mission from the Russian court. In short, no efforts were spared to give force and consistency to the plot.

Independent of the counter-exertions of the all powerful patriotic association, and the immense disfavour in which the Orange name had fallen with the people, two serious impediments lay in the way of success. The one was the want of a chief or head, of such rank, influence, energy, and talent as qualified him for a task so replete with danger and difficulty: the other was the deficiency of funds. The first embarrassment was never overcome, and the second not to an extent equal to the exigencies of the crisis. For the wealthy Orangists were as reluctant to open their coffers, as they were cautious of exposing their persons. Exertions were made to induce the British government to advance supplies from the secret service funds; but this was steadily resisted. Although the English ministry did not scruple to avow its predilection, and although the great mass of the British people offered up sincere vows for the success of the Orange cause, every attempt to induce the cabinet to deviate from its principle of non-intervention proved fruitless. On this, as on other occasions, the name of English diplomacy was unblushingly cited and abused. Its sentiments and expressions were misinterpreted, its passive wishes were misconstrued into assurances of active assistance. Its advice was asked, but never followed. Its warnings were disregarded. It was accused of deluding the prince's partisans, when, in fact, from the first to the last moment, it was itself most grossly

deceived, by exaggerated reports of their strength, influence, and unity. Every effort was made to induce it to compromise itself by some open demonstration; but it fortunately discerned the danger ere it irrevocably involved itself in an impracticable enterprise.

Funds were however forthcoming, and were wasted in regaling the lower orders, or in corrupting the higher. But the devotion of the one evaporated in the fumes of the liquor they had imbibed; and the courage of the other seemed buried in the coffer that engulfed the price of their co-operation. Although the majority of the Orangists distinguished themselves by an utter want of union, courage, talent, and indeed of every essential required for an undertaking so hazardous as that of promoting the cause which they advocated, one individual was found, who combined in a rare degree all that was requisite for a partisan of the first order.

This person, named Ernest Gregoire, a native of France, long domiciliated in Belgium, was a man of shattered fortunes and versatile habits, but energetic, enterprising, and of dauntless courage. He had received a good medical education, had alternately essayed surgery, law, commerce, and literature; but had failed, more from his imprudent and irregular conduct than from any dearth of talent. The revolution had overtaken him in an hour of extreme pecuniary need, and excited his hopes and ambition. Anarchy opened for him a vista of advancement and wealth. He flew from Liege to Brussels, and was one of those who, on the advance of Prince Frederick, most strenuously opposed submission. During the attack he fought with the courage of a lion, and was rewarded with the epaulettes of lieutenant-colonel. But neither his ambition nor his necessities were satisfied. He aspired to higher honours and more lucrative emoluments. His demands were

rejected, and his discontent being aroused was keenly manifested. This coming to the knowledge of the Orangist leaders, he was considered a fit instrument for their purpose. Overtures were made and accepted ; his propensity to extravagance was partly gratified by immediate supplies ; his ambition was stimulated by promises of future recompence, and his vanity flattered by a direct correspondence with the Prince of Orange : for the latter, in his eagerness to avail himself of every possible auxiliary to his cause, had allowed himself to be drawn into autograph relations with more than one person, with whom, under other circumstances, he would not have deigned to hold the slightest intercourse.

The following letter was found on the person of Gregoire when captured at Eccloo, a small town of Flanders, half-way between Bruges and Ghent. The original of the letter, in the hand writing of the Prince of Orange, is preserved in the archives of that town.

“ COLONEL : “ *London, 14th Jan. 1831.*

“ I this morning received your letter by Mr. ———. I think I cannot better reply to it than by thanking you for the sentiments you express towards me, and for the zeal which you appear disposed to display in my cause. The enclosed document contains a profession of my political creed.* Communicate it to my partisans, and avail yourself of it to tranquillize such Belgians as may consider themselves too deeply compromised, and who may fear re-action. Perfect oblivion of the past is guaranteed by the species of manifesto which I transmit herewith. You know I never violated my promise.

(Signed) “ WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.”

* The document alluded to was a copy of the prince's manifesto of the 11th of January. See Appendix, No. 27.

The moment of the election, or rather that of the confusion attendant on the anticipated refusal of Louis Philippe, was considered favourable for a rising in the prince's favour. A separate command with which Gregoire had been entrusted in the Flanders, in order if possible to obtain possession of the territory held by the Dutch on the left bank of the Scheldt, or to protect the frontier, afforded facilities for attempting a demonstration on Ghent, the grand focus of Orangism.

Bold, indefatigable, and intelligent, Gregoire soon established relations with many influential persons in that city. At the same time he was solemnly assured of simultaneous risings in the army of the Meuse, in the garrison of Antwerp, commanded by Van der Smissen, and among the Dutch partisans at Brussels. Indeed, no doubt existed that the plot had extensive ramifications, that many persons high in civil and military authority were initiated into the secret, and, if the whole of the conspirators had conducted themselves with the daring gallantry displayed by Gregoire, that the movement would have partially succeeded, and that the country would have been plunged into the horrors of a bloody civil war.

This enterprising partisan, having made his preparations, and communicated his plans to a few officers of his corps, who were directed to gain over the privates and non-commissioned, quitted Bruges on the evening of the 1st of February, at the head of about 400 men. Advancing rapidly on Ghent, he arrived there before mid-day on the following morning, and entered the city without the slightest opposition on the part of Generals Duvivier and Wauthier, although they had been apprised of his intentions, and had a garrison of nearly 4,000 men at their disposal. Having forced the Bruges-gate,

Gregoire divided his troop into two columns. Retaining one under his own orders, he advanced at a sharp pace, and with loud shouts of "Long live Orange!" towards the mansion of Baron de Lamberts, the civil governor; whilst the other, under the command of a Captain de Bast, rushed towards the barracks of the fire-men (*pompiers*),* halting here and there to distribute money to the populace, and urging them to make common cause in their behalf.

All was confusion and uproar in the city. The drums beat to arms, the tocsin sounded, and yet the officers commanding the troops took no steps to arrest the progress of this handful of adventurers, who had succeeded, part in penetrating into the presence of the governor, and the others in making good their passage to the gate of the fire-men's barracks. But Van de Poel, a man of considerable energy, who commanded the latter, rallied about a hundred of his men, seized the horses from some passing vehicles, harnessed them to the two field-pieces attached to his corps, loaded them with grape, made fast his gates, distributed ammunition, and adopted every necessary preparation for repelling an assault.

Finding the conspirators waver in their intentions, Van de Poel drew up his men in column, and sallied forth with his guns. After a short parley with De Bast and Gregoire, who assured him that resistance was vain, that Duvivier, De Lamberts, the troops and regency had declared against the government, and that 6,000 men

* The *pompiers*, or fire-men, of which there is a corps in every Belgic city of note, are armed, organized, and paid by the municipalities. Independent of their services as fire-men, they are employed, in cases of emergency, to perform police duties, and aid the civil power.

were marching on Ghent to proclaim the Prince of Orange, he peremptorily rejected all overtures, and gave the word to fire. A sharp but brief conflict ensued. In despite of the efforts of the leaders, Gregoire's people soon became disheartened. Finding themselves vigorously attacked by the fire-men in front, seconded by a destructive fire of grape and musketry on their flank, in danger of being assailed by the garrison in the rear, and seeing the people perfectly passive, the majority gave up the contest, and took to flight, leaving about eighty of their number killed or wounded in the hands of the victors. Among the latter was De Bast, who had fought with signal bravery. Gregoire finding all further resistance useless, and being abandoned by his men, set spurs to his horse, and fled back to Eccloo, with the intention of escaping to France; but being recognized by the populace, he was seized, manacled, and reconducted to Ghent, amidst the revilings and execrations of the multitude. He and several others were subsequently tried and acquitted; not from lack of sufficient proof of culpability—for, being taken with arms in their hands, the law of nations justified their immediate execution—but from the utter disinclination of the authorities to imbrue their hands in blood.

The failure of this movement must be attributed entirely to the energetic resistance of Van de Poel and his fire-men, and to the firmness of De Lamberts; both ardent patriots and exalted Catholics. For not a man of the garrison moved until the struggle had terminated; and although money was lavishly distributed, the populace of all classes remained neuter. The government no sooner received intelligence of the affair, than it despatched Mr. Van de Weyer and J. Van der Linden to establish an investigation. It was soon discovered that the number of persons indirectly implicated, or other-

wise compromised, was so great, that it would be more politic to draw a veil over the transaction, and to affect ignorance of certain facts; which, had they been made public, must have created considerable embarrassment to the government, and exposed to Europe the confusion and fatal want of unity that pervaded all branches of the military and civil service.

The regency of Ghent was, however, suspended, and a commission of public safety nominated in its place; the officers commanding were recommended to be more vigilant; the troops were applauded for their patriotism in having remained faithful to the national cause; Van de Poel and his officers were promoted and rewarded with permanent army rank; and Gregoire, De Bast, and their comrades in misfortune, who had been detained in prison, were liberated and permitted to quit the country. Thus terminated the only overt demonstration that the partisans of the Prince of Orange had the courage to attempt, during the whole revolution.* For, although the subsequent conspiracy of the month of March was more extensive, and although the names of Van der Smissen, and others of equal rank were implicated, yet being attended by an utter want of unity, self-devotion, combination, or discretion, it miscarried ere it came to maturity, and terminated by the arrest or flight of the ringleaders, and without the necessity of shedding a drop of blood.†

While these events were passing at Brussels and

* Gregoire proceeded to Holland, where he was permitted to take rank in the Dutch army, and was employed in the formation of a corps of partisans.

† So indiscreet were the Orangists, that the wife of one of the principal conspirators was seen and heard, in the public walks, detailing the plans of the party, and announcing the certain arrival of the Prince of Orange upon a given day.

Ghent, an incident occurred at Antwerp that was well calculated to excite the ardour and patriotism of the Dutch, and to add one more to the many traits of dauntless devotion so often displayed by their gallant navy. The small squadron of gun-boats, which had been compelled to seek shelter from the ice in Flushing harbour, having resumed its station abreast of the city, one of these, commanded by Lieutenant Van Speyk, parted from her moorings in a violent squall, on the morning of the 5th of February, and took the ground close to the battery of St. Laurent, to the north of the commercial basins. The fruitless exertions of the crew to avoid getting ashore having been witnessed by the people on the quays, and the fate of the vessel anticipated, an immense crowd collected round the spot. Amongst these was a company of Belgic volunteers, who the instant the vessel touched the strand, darted forward, partly with the view of taking possession, and partly with that of protecting the crew from insult.

The officer commanding the volunteers having addressed a few words to the Dutch lieutenant, which were mistaken for an order to haul down his flag, the latter instantly formed the desperate resolution of sacrificing himself, his people and vessel, rather than submit to the disgrace of surrender: an extravagant and uncalled-for resolution. Without communicating his intention to any but one sailor, who had followed him below, he sprung into the cabin, under pretext of securing his papers, opened the powder magazine, placed a lighted segar on one of the sacks of powder, threw himself on his knees in an attitude of prayer, and thus awaited his fearful destiny. His terrified companion had scarcely time to rush upon deck, and cast himself headlong into the river, ere a tremendous explosion shook the whole city, and in an instant not a vestige

remained of the vessel, save a few scattered spars and fragments of wreck, that were hurled far on shore, or were seen floating down the stream. Of a crew of thirty-one hands, three only escaped; the mangled bodies of the rest were carried seaward, or stranded on the muddy banks below the city.

Justly proud of the heroic, though useless devotion of their young countryman, the Dutch raised a public monument to his memory, and, in order to perpetuate the remembrance of the deed among the navy, the king directed that a vessel of war should henceforth bear the martyr's name.

Notwithstanding the gravity of the questions that had occupied the attention of the Belgic congress during the last month, it had not neglected another subject of vital importance to the nation. After several weeks' arduous labour and discussion, it terminated its revision of the constitution, and proclaimed its final and unanimous adoption on the 7th of February. This charter, divided into eight chapters, consisting of 139 articles, is drawn up on the broadest principles of civil and religious liberty. It guarantees the freedom of the press and of worship, the trial by jury, *the abolition of civil death*,* domiciliary security, and the right of political association, without arms. It determines the nature of national representation, and defines the attributes of the crown, which, as regards the right of succession, is founded on the Salique law. It declares the inviolability of the king, the responsibility of ministers, the independence of judges, and contains a variety of provisions so eminently liberal, as to satisfy the most exaggerated pretensions.

At first sight, this code presents an aspect of extra-

* *La mort civile.*

ordinary equity, well harmonizing with the wants of the people, and the progress of reason and education in the present day. It guarantees, even to an extreme length, every species of liberty, and fully consecrates every public or private right ; but on a closer inspection, it will be found to be better adapted to a republican than to a monarchical form of government ; and to have been drawn up with such marked distrust and jealousy of kingly prerogative, as to render an extension of the royal powers, and a modification of various other articles, almost inevitable. Experience, the great regulator of all human conceptions, has already pointed out some of its evils. Time, and national consolidation, can alone effect the desired amendments.

CHAPTER VII.

PROPOSITION FOR THE NOMINATION OF A LIEUTENANT-GENERAL OF THE KINGDOM REJECTED—BARON SURLET ELECTED REGENT—HIS INAUGURATION—APPOINTS A NEW MINISTRY—THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT RESIGN—GENERAL BELLIAUD REPLACES M. BRESSON—ADVICE OF LORD PONSONBY TO THE BELGIANS—FORMATION OF PATRIOTIC ASSOCIATIONS—STATE OF THE ARMY—EMBARRASMENTS OF COMMERCE AND FINANCE—GENERAL POLITICAL ASPECT OF EUROPE—PROPOSITION FOR A PARTITION OF BELGIUM—ITS GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE GERMANIC CONFEDERATION—STATE OF THE BELGIC QUESTION AS REGARDED LUXEMBOURG—PROCLAMATIONS OF THE KING OF HOLLAND AND THE REGENT—FURTHER PLOTS OF THE ORANGISTS—VAN DER SMISSEN FLIES THE COUNTRY—BORREMANS ARRESTED—LETTER FROM BARON SURLET DE CHOKIER RESPECTING CERTAIN CHARGES AGAINST LORD PONSONBY—GENERAL STATE OF ANARCHY.

THE adhesion of France to the 14th and 15th protocols, and the refusal of Louis Philippe to accept the crown of Belgium for his son, whilst it gave a fresh stimulus to the intrigues of the Orangists, diffused general discouragement among the patriots, and excited the utmost fear lest the country should relapse into that state of confusion bordering upon anarchy, whence it had hoped to emerge by the election of a sovereign. In proportion as the provisional government had been haughty, and confident of the Duke of Nemours' acceptance, so were they embarrassed and dejected, when they discovered that their contemptuous rejection of the protocol of the 7th of February produced no other result than to fortify the great powers in their determination to adhere to its contents.*

* The protocol of the 7th of February (No. 15), was presented by Lord Ponsonby to the diplomatic committee on the 10th of February,

Placing perfect reliance on the assurances of Lord Ponsonby, that the acceptance of the French prince was impossible, Mr. Lebeau had early anticipated a rejection, and endeavoured to apply a remedy, by proposing the nomination of a "lieutenant-general, who should exercise the powers of a chief of the state, until the sovereign elected by congress should have accepted the crown, and sworn to maintain the constitution." This proposition, which no way militated against the acceptance of the Duke of Nemours, was the more worthy of deliberation, from the state of deconsideration into which the provisional government had fallen. Indeed, the majority of this body were themselves fatigued with the weight of power, and eager to escape from its responsibility. Baron d'Hoogvorst had already resigned, and others were desirous to imitate his example. Affairs wore a sinister aspect both at home and abroad. The Netherlands government, which had proceeded in the organization of its army with admirable vigour and success, had assumed a menacing attitude: The prospect of an amicable arrangement was declared by its ministers to be farther removed than ever. A collision between the two countries seemed inevitable, and the more so, since the armistice of December was daily infringed by both parties, in the vicinity of Maestricht and in the Flanders.

Yet, while the Dutch, acting as it were from one sole impulse, presented a picture of unrivalled patriotism, concord, loyalty and devotion to the throne and govern-

and returned instanter, on the plea that, "in a matter of such delicacy and importance, the committee could not receive from the Conference an act contrary to the decisions of congress; and that, having elected the Duke of Nemours, and despatched a deputation to Paris, it was to this deputation only that an official answer could be made."

ment, Belgium was distracted by clashing factions and rival systems. It was a prey to all the perils of uncertainty and intrigue. It was without government, army, or confidence. Treason was rife throughout its ranks. Its commerce, painfully struggling against the consequences of the revolution, was divided into two camps. Ghent and Antwerp sighed for a return to the old government, or the Prince of Orange; whilst many persons at Verviers, Namur, Luxembourg, Charleroi, Mons, and Liege demanded an integral union with France. It must be observed, however, that the paramount object of all parties was not to nominate this or that sovereign, but to escape from a crisis that threatened to annihilate the last remnants of their fortunes. Such a position was insupportably critical, and rendered the centralization of the executive power absolutely indispensable.

Mr. Lebeau's project was, therefore, referred to the legislative sections, where, after mature deliberation, it gave way to the more popular proposition for the establishment of a regency; a decision mainly founded on the jealousy of the representatives, lest the slightest alteration should be attempted in their infant constitution; for it was objected, that "a Lieutenant-General exercising sovereign power might effect changes in the constitution with the consent of the chambers, according to the 131st section of the same; whereas no such change could result under a regency."

In the meanwhile De Potter, who deemed the occasion favourable for introducing his democratic theories once more to public notice, addressed a petition to congress urging the establishment of a republic. "We are now suffering the penalty of our original errors," said the petitioner, "after having tried every thing to escape from utter ruin. Some of you, calculating that the surest way to terminate the ills that oppressed us was by

seeking the support of France, and a direct union with that country, voted for the Duke of Nemours. But the French government will have nothing to do with Belgium, directly or indirectly; its paramount object is peace. Like all other European governments, it only sighs for peace. *Peace at any price!* The refusal of the prince of our choice has been the consequence, and has produced a crisis that must decide the destiny of our country. You must choose between dismemberment, the Prince of Orange, and a republic. Your choice will not be doubtful!"

It was not doubtful. But Mr. de Potter seems to have been as ignorant of the political condition of Europe as he was of the sentiments of his countrymen. For Mr. Robaulx having founded upon this petition a proposition for the immediate foundation of a republic, the motion was rejected almost without a division; while several members declared that the question of a republic having been already irrevocably set aside, any proposal to that effect was as unconstitutional and insulting to the house as a recurrence to the Prince of Orange, for mentioning whose name the venerable Maclagan, of Ostend, had been called to order. This matter was further set at rest on the 23d of February, in their adopting, by an immense majority, a proposition, "declaring the throne to be vacant, and decreeing the nomination of a regent, with a monthly civil list of 10,000 florins, and a national palace as his place of abode; congress reserving to itself the exclusive exercise of the constituent and legislative power."

The day for the nomination of a regent being fixed for the twenty-fourth, the choice of the representatives fell upon Baron Surlet de Chokier. His competitor was the Count Felix de Merode, who, little ambitious of the honour that it was desired to confer upon him, had

made no effort to insure his election, or it is highly probable that the majority would have pronounced itself in his favour. Indeed, both candidates appear to have acted with the utmost disinterestedness and concord. A mutual friend of great influence having addressed a note to them, requesting their instructions as to the steps to be taken, should a second scrutiny be necessary, received the following joint reply: "Do that which you think best for the good of the country; we are perfectly of one accord."

The election of Surlet was received with loud acclamations by the public, who hailed this measure as a step towards consolidation. The nomination of a regency was in truth but a partial transition from that provisional state whence all parties were eager to escape; but it was nevertheless a symptom of progression, and the only alternative that could be prudently adopted. The refusal of the Duke of Nemours, and the excluding *votos* of the Conference, had circumscribed the number of persons eligible for the sovereignty, and rendering the Belgians more cautious, menaced them with a prolongation of that uncertainty whose baneful effects could only be modified by some intermediary measure. To proceed to a new election, without previous assurance of acceptance, would have been a dangerous perseverance in the error into which they had already fallen. To continue the *statu quo* was impossible; and as some change was unavoidable, the Congress acted wisely in establishing the monarchical principle, by "*declaring the throne to be vacant.*" Thus, while it allayed the fears of those cabinets that still dreaded the ascendancy of republican principles, it gave time for all parties to look around them, and to concert as to the person best adapted to meet the general views.

The installation of the regent took place on the 25th.

The ceremony gave an unwonted air of movement and festivity to the city, and yet the whole country tottered on the brink of a volcano. Plots and conspiracies were fomenting in every direction, and the demon of civil war stood urging on the citizens to mutual destruction. The vigilance of one party, and the pusillanimity of the other, averted the calamity.

The regent elect having quitted his humble lodging,* entered a no less modest hired carriage, and proceeded, with an escort of cavalry, to the palace of the nation; where he was received at the foot of the grand staircase by a deputation of ten members, who conducted him into the body of the house. Having made his obeisance with the air of a man little covetous of such honours, he ascended a throne of crimson velvet, over which was emblazoned the Belgic lion, *rampant passant*, holding in its paw a lance surmounted with the cap of Liberty, supported on either side by the national banner, and bearing the motto, "*L'Union fait la force*;"—a bitter satire on the utter disunion that so long cramped all the energies of government, and menaced the safety of the infant kingdom!

Here, surrounded by a numerous staff, whose varied uniforms added much to the brilliancy of the scene, Baron Surlet first gave his solemn assent to the decree, enacting that, "It was as a constituent body, that congress had proclaimed the independence of Belgium, and decreed the perpetual exclusion of the Orange Nassau family." He then took the oath "to observe the constitution and laws of the Belgic people, and to maintain the national independence and territorial integrity." Having delivered a speech containing a de-

* Baron Surlet occupied the second story of a pastry-cook's shop, in the street called Cantersteen.

claration of his principles and intentions, which was replied to by Mr. Gerlache, the new president, the regent withdrew, and was re-conducted to the peristyle of the palace, amidst the thunder of cannon and the acclamations of the populace. Rejoiced, however, to escape from his young glories, he dismissed his equipage and escort, and borrowing an umbrella from a casual bystander, proceeded on foot across the park to the mansion allotted him by the nation. A sumptuous banquet and general illumination, the first approach to conviviality or rejoicing that had been seen in Brussels since the revolution, terminated the ceremonies of the day.

The establishment of a regency was immediately followed by the resignation of the provisional government, and the dissolution of the ministry.* The majority of the latter was, however, re-appointed by the regent, whose first public act was the constitution of a regular cabinet.†

Baron Erasmus Surlet de Chokier, the individual who had been thus elevated to the highest honours that his countrymen could confer upon him, was then in his sixty-third year. Descended from an ancient and independent family in the province of Limbourg, he had passed the greater portion of his life in comparative retirement at his patrimonial estate of Gingelhom, near St. Trond, where he had devoted himself to agricultu-

* A sum of 150,000 florins was granted by congress to be divided among the members of the provisional government, "as an indemnity" for labour and loss of time.

† First Belgic Ministry :—

Messrs. Van de Weyer	Foreign.
Tielemans	Interior.
Gendebien	Justice.
C. de Brouckère.....	Finance.
Goblet.....	War.

ral pursuits. On the breaking forth of the first French revolution, Surlet had eagerly embraced the levelling theories of republicanism, and casting aside his hereditary parchments, had assumed the indiscriminate appellation then in vogue. Having received a superior education, being gifted with good natural abilities, some eloquence, and no ordinary shrewdness and humour, masked by a veil of extreme simplicity, he had early ingratiated himself into the confidence of his provincial neighbours, and had been selected to fill various stations of minor importance in the local magistracy. Being an enthusiastic partisan and admirer of France, he warmly associated himself in every measure tending to increase her moral influence amongst his countrymen ; and having been elected a member of the French *corps législatif*, as one of the representatives for the department of the Lower Meuse, he was rewarded by Napoleon with the titular distinction of a counsellor of state.

It was not, however, until the erection of the Netherlands kingdom, that Surlet first brought himself into public notice, as a member of the second chamber of the States-General ; where he distinguished himself by his liberal politics, and by an almost undeviating opposition to the government ; a hostility no way diminished by the constant intrigues of the ministry to exclude him from the national representation. Frugal and temperate in his habits, frank and affable in his manner, benevolent in his disposition, and enjoying a character of spotless integrity, he had always been esteemed by his equals ; while his lofty stature, the long grey locks that floated negligently over his shoulders, his venerable countenance, enlivened by a humour-sparkling eye, added to the impression he produced on the rural population, by whom he was regarded in the light of a patriarch. On the first convocation of the Belgic Congress he was re-elected

deputy, and chosen president of the chamber, where he rendered himself highly popular by the tact and temper he displayed in maintaining order. It was to this popularity that he owed the honour of the regency.

Although his position as president had precluded him in some measure from taking part in the debates, his political tendencies were not disguised. The sympathies of his youth, fostered during maturer years, were adhered to in more advanced age. His bias was essentially French. Being aware that a direct re-union with that country was impracticable, he ardently desired the substitution of some intermediary process that would have been tantamount in its effects. He was consequently a devoted advocate for the election and acceptance of the Duke of Nemours; and although his own elevation was the result of that prince's refusal, he would rather have sacrificed all temporary honours than have been compelled to renounce his favourite theory. Being unmarried, having a private fortune beyond his wants, and being averse to ostentation, he appeared devoid of all ambition, or so well concealed his sentiments beneath a cloak of such extreme disinterestedness, as to baffle the penetration of all ordinary observers. His acceptance of supreme power, if the circumscribed authority with which he was invested by congress could be so called, past current for an act of devotion to his country, rather than of self-interest; and although more than one circumstance indicated that he was not insensible to the charms of regal office, the public was fully convinced that he was more eager to relinquish than he had been to assume the dignities conferred upon him.*

* In conferring the executive on the Regent, the congress reserved to itself *exclusively* the legislative and constituent powers; thus rendering the regent the mere agent of their will, and incapacitating him from concurring with or opposing their acts.

The little progress made towards domestic or foreign consolidation during the regency, plainly showed that Baron Surlet, however estimable as a private individual, or however well qualified to fill the president's chair, was no ways calculated to grapple with the numerous embarrassments with which he was environed. He not only lacked the moral courage and firmness necessary for curbing the passions of the people at home, but had neither sufficient influence or political experience to inspire respect abroad. With him a union or *quasi* union with France was the cherished project, to which all other combinations were subservient. Thus, while he submitted himself entirely to the influence of the French cabinet or their agents, and laboured incessantly to give an exclusively French tendency to the acts of his government, he utterly deceived the great mass of the Belgic people, who imagined that he and his ministers were zealous champions of national independence.

Fortunately for the repose of Europe, General Belliard, who succeeded M. Bresson on the 5th March, as joint commissioner from the Conference, was more devoted to the common cause than to the hazardous aggrandizement of his native country. Had it been otherwise, had a diplomatist of the movement party, or a man less prudent and conciliating than this brave and respected veteran been employed, the results might have been most disastrous.* Belliard's influence, zealously supported

* Auguste, Count Belliard, lieutenant-general, and peer of France, a native of Picardy, and a soldier of fortune, who had raised himself to the highest honours by the sole force of his own merit. Napoleon, well knowing his talents, had entrusted him with various appointments of the utmost importance. Thus he had gained the good will of the Belgians when commanding the military division in which Brussels was included under the Empire. He was subsequently governor of Madrid, and was called from thence to act as chief of the staff to the cavalry of the grand army commanded by Murat.

by his British colleague, between whom and the French agent there existed the utmost cordiality, was a fortunate counterpoise to tendencies which were in direct opposition to the views of the great powers, and which, if long persisted in, must have led to a general conflagration.

It was this adherence to a system of diplomacy exclusively French, and consequently essentially anti-European, that soon induced Mr. Van de Weyer to resign the foreign department. This resignation produced the dissolution of the ministry, which was in fact composed of such heterogeneous elements as to render its existence impracticable. For while Mr. Van de Weyer, who was among the first to perceive the error they had fallen into, argued that in order to secure national independence, it was necessary to adopt a more divergent and enlarged basis, and to cultivate and promote a good understanding, not only with, but between Great Britain and France—Gendebien and Tielemans were averse to every inspiration that did not emanate from the French movement party, or that did not tend to embroil the two predominating cabinets. On the other hand, while Mr. C. de Brouckère, vacillating between two systems, now turned his eyes to France, and now advocated national independence, Goblet, abhorring anarchy, was said to regret the past, to tremble for the future, and inwardly to regard the Prince of Orange as the only medium for restoring prosperity to the country, or of reconciling it with the rest of Europe.

It was on the 28th of March that the new ministry*

* Second Ministry :—

Messrs. Lebeau	Foreign Affairs.
Duvivier.....	Finance.
Sauvage	Interior.
Barthelemy	Justice.
Count d'Hane.....	War.

was installed ; a change that operated favourably for the maintenance of peace. Mr. Lebeau, who had assumed the difficult and ungrateful task of conducting the foreign department, entered office with the intention of diverting the politics of the cabinet into a new channel, and of divesting it of some portion of that exclusiveness which so strongly militated against all prospect of amicable adjustment. Lord Ponsonby promptly took advantage of this alteration to encourage the new ministry in a system which, for the first time, promised to harmonize, not only with the interests of Europe, but with those of Belgium. The language held by the British envoy is a proof of his enlightened and profound view of the question. It was the echo of that of his government.

“ The error into which your diplomacy has hitherto fallen,” said the English negotiator, “ has been its partial leaning towards France, and its almost puerile distrust of other cabinets. This might have been excusable at first, as it resulted from the peculiar nature of your position. For, admitting that the germs of your revolution had been long implanted, it was that of France that brought them to maturity. The offspring was, therefore, compelled to cling for succour to the parent. The affinity of your relative positions in regard to other states, the disfavour that fell upon you in particular, may have rendered it necessary for you to cleave to each other, in order to support the principles that led to the subversion of two dynasties. But, rely on it, if you now value your nationality, and if you have any sincere desire to be admitted into the general bond that connects the great European families, you must act upon principles more large, more general, and less calculated to inspire jealousies amongst those who, in despite of your repugnance to interference, must be

the arbiters of your destiny. France may have brought your revolution into being, but, single-handed, she cannot insure your political existence. The co-operation of Great Britain and her allies is essential. However powerful France may be, she has not the strength, nor indeed the inclination, to bear you upon her shoulders against the will of united Europe. You have the proof of this in the refusal of the Duke of Nemours ; and be assured, notwithstanding all present protestations, that she will not only adhere to past protocols, but to all future equitable measures that may be proposed by the Conference.

“ The only line for you to pursue is that of conciliation and moderation. You must be firm, but not intemperate. Before you threaten to throw down the gauntlet of defiance, ponder well on the mischances that may arise if you force Europe to cast away the scab-bard. Before you talk of distrusting other powers, study to efface their want of confidence in you. If the election of the Prince of Orange be impracticable, select some other prince who offers the desired guarantees. Satisfy Europe that you hold yourselves amenable to the same social laws that bind other states ; that you are contented to assume a station co-ordinate with your weight in the general balance ; that you seek to secure your own rights, without infringing those of neighbouring nations ; that you neither aim at a re-union, direct nor indirect ; that you neither lean to the north nor to the south ; and that on whichever side public tranquillity shall be menaced, there you will be ready to interpose your good offices. Prove, by your discretion, that your permanent object is to secure your own independence on sound monarchical principles, and not to propagate the subversion of existing institutions. Above all, bear in mind that the grand object of the five powers is the maintenance of

peace; and that, unless you bring your quota of sacrifices in aid of this important object, there can be no accord between you and the rest of Europe. The consolidation of your national existence, no matter under what prince or form of government, depends on the preservation of a perfect understanding between the great powers; and, above all, upon an intimate union between France and England. Commit any act that may tend to destroy the former, or enfeeble the latter, and you will be guilty of national suicide."

The concordance between these prudent counsels, and the opinions entertained by one of the ablest publicists in Belgium—opinions fully justified by results—is too remarkable to be omitted, and the more so, since they must be invariably and essentially applicable to that country; for her situation, in regard to other states, never can undergo any serious modification. "Society," says the writer, "either considered in its aggregate or individual character, must be co-ordinate.* Belgium, instead of living for and by France alone, must assimilate her policy to the principles that regulate all other European societies. She must neither be French, German, nor English. She must amalgamate herself with and form a part of the grand total, and yet retain her peculiar destination and individuality. She is neither sufficiently powerful, nor, it is to be hoped, sufficiently improvident, to assume the character of a propaganda. If she wish for independence, she must embrace a broad, impartial, and

* These passages are extracted from an article in the *Courrier des Pays Bas* of the 30th April, 1831, attributed to Mr. Nothomb, who, having already distinguished himself by the force and logic with which he had treated the several great political questions in Congress, was appointed under secretary for foreign affairs (*secrétaire général*) upon the accession of the Lebeau ministry; an office he has continued to fill, to the latest hour, with no common talent and ability.

European system of diplomacy. Situated between France and Germany, she must act as a barrier against one or the other as circumstances may require, but she must be a gaoler to neither. She has a station in Europe ; let her maintain it ! Instead of placing herself under the patronage of any one nation in particular, let her profit by the eternal rivalries of all, to strengthen her own existence. Her position is admirable. She is destined by her situation to be the entrepôt of the world. She has a fruitful soil, two fine rivers, and the noblest port in Europe. The policy of her neighbours, especially that of Holland, has tended, for the last two centuries, to deprive her of all the natural advantages of her position. The principal cause of the evils she has endured is, that she has never possessed an exclusive reigning dynasty since the demise of the last Duke of Burgundy. She was to Charles V. what she has been to William I., a mere territorial accessory. If, therefore, her love of independence be not a vain boast, let her establish a national government and dynasty that will accord with European policy, and that will thus legitimate and give immediate maturity to her revolution ; a dynasty which, instead of consenting to any territorial concessions, as heretofore has been the case with our former sovereigns, will maintain the national unity, and thus identify itself with the people. This question of dynasty is not secondary ; it includes our whole political system, and embraces all our future prospects. But if Belgium desire a re-union with France ; if she wish to become to France what she was to Holland—that is, a mere augmentation of territory—let her continue in her present course ; let her prolong the present state of uncertainty, or come to a conclusion without consistency or prospect of durability. Let her acknowledge that her revolution was premature, and keep herself disposable until France shall

either be prepared or have the courage to come and take possession. *There can be no alternative between absolute independence and a re-union with France.*"

These observations were fully corroborated by the state of the country at this period. Its military, financial, and commercial condition was indeed deplorable. For although the establishment of a regency was the only measure by which anarchy could be averted, still it was little more than a prolongation of that precarious uncertainty which had menaced the peace of Europe during six months. The regent's government had neither strength nor consideration. Unable to combat the many factions that filled the capital and provinces with constant agitation, it saw its internal authority betrayed or counteracted by its own agents; while its external policy was exposed to premature discussion by congress, or bitterly stigmatized by the "patriotic association," which had raised itself to a level with the executive, and obtained supreme influence over the lower classes.

This association, first formed on the 23d of March, was composed of public functionaries and officers of all ranks; in short, of almost every individual who was desirous to prove the intensity of his patriotism, or who dreaded his political opinions being called into question. Its avowed object, as set forth by the fourth article of its statutes, was, "to defend and maintain Belgic nationality and independence, at the price of the utmost sacrifices; to combat the Nassaus; never to enter into any compromise with that family, no matter to what straits the country might be reduced; and finally, to repulse all foreign aggression."

If this association was mainly instrumental in defeating the efforts of the Prince of Orange's supporters, it was little instrumental to the national defence. For,

although the doctrines it disseminated might have inflated the overweening confidence of some of the people, they served but to increase the spirit of misrule that pervaded every branch of the public service—especially the army, which had hitherto baffled all attempts at organization or subordination. The civic guard, it is true, presented an imposing numerical force; but the major part were unarmed, and the whole were without a shadow of discipline. Forty-five thousand regulars existed on paper, but these scarcely furnished an effective of half that number, inefficiently commanded. Indeed, at a later period the minister of war was compelled to account for his having dismissed certain officers from the service, by denouncing them as branded convicts.* And yet, in order to blockade Antwerp and Maestricht, and to defend the long line of open frontier extending from Venloo on the Meuse, to Ecluse on the shores of the North Sea, it required at least 80,000 good troops, and above all, a corps of talented and devoted officers. In this, the Dutch could boast of an immense superiority, resulting from the system of partiality pursued by the government during the union. So completely was Belgium unprepared for defence, so divided the state of parties, so open the whole country, from Breda and Eindhoven to Brussel, that an enterprising commander, at the head of 20,000 staunch soldiers, might have sprung across the frontier, and dashing upon the capital, reduced it to instant submission.

Not only was industry and commerce completely paralyzed, but the penury of the finance department was extreme. Some provinces were in arrear with their

* Speech of Mr. Charles de Brouckère to the chambers, September, 1831. It is essential, however, to observe, that these persons belonged to the free corps, and not to the line regiments.

contributions ; the forced loan of ten millions, raised in the preceding autumn, was exhausted, and the government was compelled to borrow 600,000 florins of the bank, in order to meet the current expenses of March. Nor was it until congress sanctioned a further loan of 12,000,000, that the war minister was enabled to avail himself of the new levies of militia, which had hitherto remained inactive from want of funds. But in proportion as the horizon lowered around them, so their language was stamped with energy in all matters connected with external policy.

The inflammatory condition of Europe at this period was, however, most essentially favourable to Belgic pretensions. Standing, as it were, on the brink of a volcano, the great powers were little disposed to aggravate domestic perplexities by foreign collision. The position of the different cabinets may be traced in a few words. That of England, uncertain of the issue of the reform question, was as anxious to secure herself from continental embarrassments, by drawing still closer the growing bond of amity with France, as it was to strengthen its character for liberality at home and abroad, by adhering as much as possible to the principle of non-intervention ; although, in fact, this principle was perpetually violated, from the emission of the protocol, enforcing the strict execution of the armistice, down to the convention, sanctioning the military operations against the citadel. France, intent on giving stability to her new dynasty, and on upholding the principles by which Louis Philippe was elevated to the throne, vacillated between the policy of maintaining amicable relations with foreign states, and that of conciliating the movement party at home. To effect this, without internal troubles or external concussion, required no ordinary address. The course the French ministry pursued was doubtless tinctured with

artifice and insincerity as regarded Belgium. But Louis Philippe and Casimir Perier rose superior to the difficulties by which they were environed. By strictly adhering to the system laid down by them, France is mainly indebted for the preservation of a peace more honourable and more advantageous than the most glorious victories.

Prussia, distrustful of her Rhenish provinces, and eager to guarantee the duchy of Posen from the contagious effects of the Polish revolution, more dangerous than the fatal epidemic that was then advancing with rapid strides towards the Rhine, had little heart to plunge into a war of restoration, by which she could not obtain a foot of ground, but might have risked the loss of her territory.

The attention of Austria was engaged in suppressing insurrection in her Lombardo-Venetian possessions; whilst Hanover, Electoral Hesse, and other minor states of the Confederation, were a prey to internal disorders, which rendered the removal of their contingents a matter of difficulty and hazard.*

Finally, Russia who never for a moment contemplated the recognition of Belgic independence, and had prepared her forces for a western crusade, was paralyzed by the Polish revolution; the whole resources of her gigantic empire scarcely sufficing to replenish the gaps caused in her ranks by sickness and the sword. And herein lay the great secret of European peace and Belgic emancipation. Fatal as the Polish revolution

* The total force of the Confederation consists of 301,637 men, divided into ten army corps, giving an effective of 222,637 infantry: 11,694 light troops, 43,090 cavalry, 21,717 artillery and train, and 3,017 engineers.

The federate fortresses are Mayence, Landau, and Luxembourg. The Confederation consists of thirty-eight states.

might have been in its conduct and issue, it was the main barrier to the liberticide views of the autocrat. Had not the Poles risen, fought and struggled, war was inevitable. That valiant Polish army, the just pride of the severe Czarowitch, in lieu of spilling its blood in defence of its native hearths and altars, would then have formed the vanguard of their oppressor's hosts. The martyrs, whose bones lay bleaching upon the plains of Grochow, Dembé, and Ostrolenka, instead of sacrificing themselves as holocausts to the liberties of their country, would have been converted into instruments of Moscovite despotism. Then would have ensued that fierce struggle of opinions, so justly dreaded by all good men ; a struggle whose progress would have been marked by bloodshed and desolation, and whose results would have plunged Europe into abject slavery or immoderate licentiousness.

The issue of this complicated state of affairs tallied in some measure with the vaunting of the Belgic ultra-liberals, while it far exceeded the most sanguine expectations of the more moderate patriots. The restitution of the 11th and 12th protocols produced the revision and modification of some of the most obnoxious clauses. The daring tone assumed by congress impressed the Conference—not with an idea of Belgic power being any way commensurate with its bombast, but of its reckless determination to plunge Europe into war, rather than purchase its independence at the expense of what was considered a loss of national honour, or of any one of those elements which were held necessary to its political existence. “We have commenced our revolution in defiance of treaties,” said they, “and we will terminate it in despite of the protocols.”*

* Proclamation of the Regent of Belgium to the province of Luxembourg, 10th March, 1831. See Appendix, No. 30.

Under any other circumstances, this haughty and intemperate bearing would have exhausted the patience of the arbitrating powers, and perhaps have led to a partition, in despite of the repugnance of Great Britain ; a partition by which more than two-thirds of the Flanders, with the province of Antwerp, and the northern half of Limbourg and Brabant, including Brussels, would have fallen to Holland ; by which the eastern portion of Luxembourg, with Liege, and other territories on the left banks of the Meuse and Moselle, would have been obtained by Prussia ; by which Namur, Hainault, and a part of West Flanders would have been ceded to France, who would thereby have regained much that she had abandoned since the time of Louis XIV., and thus included within her frontiers those imposing barrier-fortresses whose construction had formed an object of urgent solicitude to Great Britain during the preceding fifteen years.

Although the intentions of the great powers in regard to this question are enveloped in mystery, it is incontestible that a proposition for partition was privately made by the French to the Prussian plenipotentiary, as the readiest and simplest mode of cutting asunder the Gordian knot of negotiation. But it is no less certain that the subject was never laid before the British cabinet in an *official* shape. The suggestion was privately hinted, but unhesitatingly rejected. The idea of occupying Antwerp, and “converting it into a second Gibraltar,” as affirmed in the Belgian chambers, and repeated by Mr. Nothomb in his essay, never existed for a moment.

Admitting, however, by way of hypothesis, that Great Britain had consented to this proposition, it was not by taking permanent possession of Antwerp that she would have sought for an equivalent. It is infinitely more

probable that she would have insisted upon the immediate demolition of all its fortifications, and its conversion into a free commercial port; that she would have obtained guarantees for the unobstructed navigation of the Scheldt, and the abolition of all duties or payments, save those essentially necessary for pilotage and the preservation of the buoys, banks and landmarks. By this plan essential benefit might have been conferred on the city, a still more favourable mart would have been opened to British commerce, and the danger arising to so important a fortress from the immediate vicinity of the French armies might have been neutralized. But the supposition is untenable. Whatever temptations or equivalents might be offered to Great Britain, they never could be proportioned to the risks and disadvantages. It requires little knowledge of the spirit of the Belgic people, not to be convinced that the cession of a part to France would be tantamount to the ultimate abandonment of the remainder. Indeed, did not urgent political motives render the adhesion of England out of the question, the distance of Antwerp from the sea; the tortuous navigation of the Scheldt, winding for many miles through a channel lying at the mercy of foreign cannon; the isolated position of the fortress, subject to be suddenly cut off and invested, together with various other strategical causes, are sufficient to render the military occupation of Antwerp utterly impracticable.

Haughty and unconciliating as was the conduct of the Belgic government towards the Conference, it nevertheless exerted itself to emerge from its isolated position, and to open direct relations with the Courts of St James's, the Tuileries, Berlin, and the German Confederation. Although both General Belliard and Lord Ponsonby had presented themselves to the regent as

joint agents from the Conference to the government, and not as envoys from their respective courts to the unrecognized *locum tenens* of the future sovereign, Mr. Le Hon, a member of the chambers, was dispatched to Paris, where he was solemnly received by Louis-Philippe as envoy extraordinary from the regent, on the 17th March—a virtual recognition of Belgic independence; for the previous mission of Count de Celles must be considered rather as a private negotiation with the government, than a direct embassy to the king. Count d'Arschot also proceeded to London with similar full powers, but was utterly unsuccessful, and, after several fruitless efforts to obtain a public reception, was recalled on the 17th of April.

Whilst Mr. de Behr met with a similar repulse at Berlin, no better fortune attended the efforts of Mr. Michiels at Frankfort, where he was accredited to the Diet, and directed to spare no pains in endeavouring to convince the representatives of the Confederation “that Belgium was not disposed to abdicate her independence in favour of any nation, and thus to destroy the opinion too prevalent in Germany, that the object of the revolution had been a re-union with France.” On Mr. Michiels presenting his credentials, Baron de Munch Bellinghausen replied, “that the Diet (of which he was president) deemed it proper to await the definitive result of the deliberations of the Conference, ere it entered into any direct relations with the Belgic government.” Having failed at Frankfort, Mr. Michiels removed to Mayence, with a view of placing himself in communication with the Rhenish Navigation Commission, assembled at that place, which, after fifteen years’ negotiation, had come to their first preparatory conclusion, upon the 30th of March.

The embarrassments that had arisen from the oppo-

sition of the Belgians, and the non-adhesion of France to the protocols of the 20th and 27th January, were enhanced by constant infractions of the armistice of the 15th December. On the one hand, the Dutch landed near Caloo, where they cut the dykes, inundated the polders, devastated several farms, and took possession of Fort St. Mary, which they subsequently abandoned, after destroying its river faces.* They made predatory excursions into the Flanders, and in the vicinity of Maestricht, and although the Scheldt had been nominally opened since the 20th January, the navigation of that river was often vexatiously impeded, while that of the Meuse continued rigidly closed. On the other hand the Dutch had to complain of the investment of Maestricht, of the encroachment of Daine troops, and, above all, of Mellinet's undisciplined bands beyond the prescribed limits; of the interruption of the communications of Maestricht with Aix-la-Chapelle and North Brabant; of the rupture of the banks of the Sud Wilhelms-Vaart Canal, at Neer Oeteren; of constant impediments offered to the arrival of vessels at the citadel of Antwerp; of infractions of the *statu quo*, as regarded the offensive works of the city, and of various other violations of the armistice, in direct opposition to the protocol of the 9th of January, and the instructions to Lord Ponsonby, and M. Bresson, of the 18th of the same month.

These instructions, while they guaranteed the free

* The *polders* are the low flat grounds in the vicinity of the Scheldt; they are formed from deposits of sand and mud, and in their early stages are called *sohorren*. When arrived at a sufficient size and height for the purposes of cultivation, they are intersected with drains and dykes, and brought to a surprising state of fertility. Nearly the whole of the isle of Walcheren, south Beveland, and Dutch Flanders are formed of artificial lands thus rescued from the waters.

navigation of the Scheldt, declared, "that unless all acts of hostility ceased, and the Belgic troops retired forthwith behind the positions occupied by them at 4 p.m. on the 21st November, 1830, and thus left open the communications by the high roads from Aix-la-Chapelle and Eindhoven to Maestricht, the great powers would instantly blockade the Belgic ports, and adopt such other measures as might tend to insure the strict execution of the armistice." These remonstrances having failed to produce any other result than a recriminative note on the part of the Belgians, fresh instructions were issued to Lord Ponsonby on the 17th of February, pronouncing the note in question "to be inadmissible in its pretensions, and evasive in its explanations," and directing him to adopt measures to ascertain from the commandant of Maestricht whether the stipulations of the protocols were duly fulfilled. In consequence of this, Mr. Abercrombie, accompanied by Mr. White, was dispatched to Maestricht on the 17th of February, with instructions to inspect the positions held by the Belgic troops, and the state of the Sud Wilhelms-Vaart canal. Having reached Tongres, the head-quarters of the army of the Meuse, and being furnished with an escort of cavalry, and flag of truce, the two commissioners soon reached the outworks of the fortress. Their arrival having been anticipated by the governor, they were quickly admitted into the body of the place, where they were received with the utmost courtesy by General Dibbets. After executing the object of their mission, and ascertaining, by ocular demonstration, that the complaints of the Dutch were in some measure well-founded—the road to Aix-la-Chapelle being intercepted by Mellinet's volunteers, who occupied Eysden, Gulpen, and other villages on the right bank, while Daine's detachments were pushed close up to the town on the left—the commissioners re-

traced their steps to Brussels, and drew up their report.*

The reckless insubordination of Mellinet's volunteers, who persisted in occupying the forbidden positions, called for a second visit on the part of the same commissioners, on the 23d of March. At the express desire of the Belgic government, they were attended from Tongres by two officers of Daine's staff; with whom, however, General Dibbets refused to hold communication. This second mission, which had also for its object to intercede for a Belgian subject, condemned to death by the military tribunal of Maestricht, was attended with successful results. The canal was repaired, the volunteers were withdrawn from the right bank of the Meuse, the communications were thrown open, and Daine's troops having fallen back to the prescribed points, all further interference in this quarter was rendered unnecessary. But General Dibbets peremptorily refused to open the navigation of the Meuse, declaring, by a letter addressed to Daine on the 17th of April following, "that so long as the fortress remained in a state of siege, he would not tolerate the passage of an enemy's vessel through the centre of the city." To have acted otherwise would have been contrary to the usages of war, and dangerous to the security of the place, which would thus have been liable to sudden surprise from an enemy, whom the Dutch could not consider bound to

* One of the coincidencies often attendant on civil war was exemplified on this occasion. The commissioners were accompanied on their ride of inspection by Lieutenant-colonel Nypels, commanding the cavalry of the garrison, whose two brothers they had left at Brussels at the head of divisions and brigades. The two latter had fervidly embraced the national cause; the former had adhered to the Dutch standard.

observe an armistice, which they themselves did not hesitate to violate in the month of August following.

Mr. Abercrombie and his companion, who were the first strangers that had penetrated into the fortress since the revolution, availed themselves of the governor's permission to inspect the most important portion of its defences, and were thus enabled to bear testimony to the judicious measures adopted by General Dibbets for its internal and external security. Notwithstanding the great extent of the place, the comparative weakness of the garrison, and the hostility of a numerous population, Dibbets, a gallant and determined soldier, succeeded in bidding defiance to treachery within, and attack from without.* The measures adopted were simple and efficacious. The gates and grand guards were transformed into blockhouses, well defended with epaulments for cannon, loop-holed palisades, and banquettes for musquetry. The principal avenues leading to the barracks, *place d'armes*, and magazines, were fenced with strong barricades. Portions of the ramparts were converted into offensive works against the city. The bridge over the Meuse connecting Maestricht with the suburb of Wyck, was mined, intrenched at both extremities, and planted with cannon commanding the stream and adjacent streets. The guns of fort St. Pierre were kept ready to play upon the city in the event of any outbreaking, and the garrison, though harassed by night duty, and restricted in a great measure to salt rations, was healthy and judiciously disposed. In fine, nothing was omitted which skill or energy could suggest for the security of a place requiring a garrison nearly quadruple that under the

* The effectives under arms were about 5,500, including a squadron of cuirassiers. The population of Maestricht may be taken at about 20,000 in round numbers.

orders of Dibbets, but which was not more numerous than that holding the citadel of Antwerp. Indeed had similar vigorous measures been adopted by General Chassé from the first moment of placing Antwerp in a state of siege, it may be safely affirmed that a few undisciplined volunteers and ill-armed rabble would never have succeeded in obtaining possession of a fortress flanked by a strong citadel and powerful fleet, and of which the great mass of the population were well-disposed.

But the most serious impediments to the pacific solution of the Batavo-Belgic question, lay in the discussions relative to Luxembourg; the pretensions of the Belgians being diametrically opposed to the views and declarations of the great powers – the former claiming this province as an integral part of Belgium, and the latter pronouncing it to belong to the Germanic confederation. The Belgians argued, that although Luxembourg might from the year 963 to 1461 have been an independent state, and have given sovereigns to the empire, to Bavaria, Hungary, and Poland, yet that on the demise of Elizabeth de Gorlitz, Philip le Bon had succeeded to her inheritance, and had united Luxembourg to the rest of his Belgic possessions, which were then included within the Burgundian circle.* From that period until its annexation to France in 1795, a space of more than three centuries, this province had invariably followed the destinies of Belgium, passing from the house of Burgundy to that of Spain and Austria, without any special reserves; while the episcopal principality of Liege, in regard to which no claim had been raised, had always formed a state totally distinct from

* Philip succeeded to the duchies of Burgundy, counties of Flanders, &c. on the death of his father, John the Dauntless, in 1419.

the Austrian or Spanish possessions, and had been placed within the circle of Westphalia.

It was further argued, that by the law of the 9th Vendémiaire, anno IV. (October, 1795), Luxembourg had been united to France, under the name of the department *des Forêts*, not as a separate province, but as an integral portion of Belgium; the law promulgating this act of appropriation being entitled, “Law regarding the union of Belgium and the county of Liege to the French republic:” whereas, had Luxembourg been considered as a separate state, the preamble would naturally have run, “Law regarding the union of Belgium, the Duchy of Luxembourg, and county of Liege,” &c. &c.

It was likewise obvious, from the wording of the 3rd section of the treaty of Campo Formio, ratified by the 2nd section of that of Luneville, by which the emperor “renounced for himself and successors all right or title to his former Belgic provinces known under the denomination of the Austrian Netherlands,” that his imperial majesty made no exception as regarded Luxembourg, but included it under the general appellation of Belgium. Moreover, by the 8th section of the former treaty, and the 4th of the latter, France took upon herself all engagements due from her new acquisitions to their ancient sovereign, charging them generally to the country without distinction of provinces. The same principle was followed by the Netherlands government, according to the treaty of 11th of October, 1815; and thence arose what was called the Austro-Belgic debt. Such were the principal arguments adduced to show the identity of Luxembourg with Belgium down to the treaty of Vienna.

Other facts were then brought forward to prove that its relations with the Diet no way destroyed its ancient

homogeneity. On the accession of King William, a royal decree, dated 22nd of April, 1815, directed a revision of the old Dutch fundamental law, and declared, Article II., that "the grand duchy of Luxembourg, notwithstanding its particular relations with Germany, must be considered as forming an integral part of the kingdom, as far as concerned its representation and legislative institutions." A royal proclamation of the 24th of August of the same year, announced the king's sanction and acceptance of the revised fundamental law, and included the votes of the Luxembourgers in the general list; whereas, had that province formed a separate state, it would have been necessary to have established a distinct classification.* Not only was Luxembourg assimilated in every respect to the other provinces by the fundamental law, but in order to guard against all possibility of dismemberment on the demise of the king, by the pretensions which Prince Frederick might raise to the grand duchy as his hereditary apanage, in exchange for the four states of Nassau ceded to Prussia—a law of the 25th of May, 1816, enacted, that in consideration of his royal highness having renounced all territorial claims, he should receive a pecuniary indemnity from the national domains in the seignory of Breda; an ancient fief of the Nassau family. It was further asserted, that under no circumstances could the duchy of Bouillon be considered as having been granted to the house of Orange, but that it had been annexed to Luxembourg as forming a part of the Netherlands kingdom.*

* By the 29th section of this fundamental law, it was enacted that the King of the Netherlands could not hold any other crown; therefore, the grand duchy could not have been held separately without a direct violation of the law.

† Note of General Sebastiani to Prince Talleyrand, dated the 1st of March, 1831.

In short, history and previous treaties proved that, for a space of 340 years, Luxembourg had been amalgamated with the other duchies or counties comprising the southern Netherlands; and, that, until the treaty of Vienna, it had never been in the remotest degree connected with Germany, save through the sovereigns which the house of Burgundy had furnished to the trans-Rhenan states.

These arguments, however strong and well-founded, were over-ruled by the great powers. Without attempting to enter into historical researches, or to controvert the principal facts advanced by the Belgians, it was objected that although the grand duchy might during a series of years have formed a part of Belgium, the position of the former had undergone a complete modification by the treaty of the 21st of May, 1815; that after the re-conquest of the Belgic-French departments by the allies, Luxembourg had not been ceded to the Netherlands on the same conditions as the other provinces, but as an exchange, and in compensation to the House of Nassau for their hereditary principalities of Nassau-Dillemburg, Adamar, Siegen and Dietz, abandoned by them to Prussia. That the grand duchy formed a separate domain, appertaining to the German Confederation, who held it as it were in trust for the agnates of the house of Nassau;* without whose consent, according to the family pact, no portion could be alienated. Finally, it was congenial with the acknow-

* The head of these agnates, or next of kin to the Netherlands family, is the Duke of Nassau-Weilbourg, in whom are centered the rights and inheritance of the Usingen and Walram branches. In default of direct issue, either in the male or female line, the Netherlands crown would pass to the descendants of the reigning Duke of Nassau, who is the son of Princess Caroline of Orange, aunt to the king.

ledged principles of equity and civil right, forming the basis of international law, that if the Nassau family were deprived of the equivalent they had received for the surrender of their hereditary possessions in Germany, they should re-enter into possession of those estates, or obtain a compensation elsewhere. These compensations might be of two kinds, territorial or pecuniary. The latter being incompatible with the interests of the Nassau family, and with the policy of the confederation, was impracticable. The former could only be effected by an exchange of equal territorial value and proximity, and of such a nature as should in no way enfeeble the political, or rather strategical position of the German Confederation. And herein laid one of the principal obstacles. For the southern frontier of the grand duchy faces a considerable part of Vauban's defensive line. The Confederation being mistress of this province, can throw its forces at a moment's notice upon Thionville, Metz, Longwy, Verdun, Givet, and Sedan. Having the key of the defiles and mountains, and being backed by the fortress of Luxembourg, it is enabled in case of necessity to pour its armies into the plains of Champagne, and thus to open for itself the road to Paris.

Grounding their conclusions on these premises, the Conference cut short the question by adhering to the first and second articles of the basis of separation, annexed to the protocol of the 27th January; peremptorily declaring that "Holland should comprise all the territories, &c. that appertained to the former republic of the United Provinces in the year 1790, and that Belgium should be formed of the rest of the territories that had received the denomination of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the treaties of 1815—except the grand duchy of Luxembourg; which, being held by a different title by the princes of the house of Nassau, con-

stituted, and should continue to constitute a part of the Germanic Confederation." Consequently, "that it was absolutely separated from Belgium, and destined to remain under the sovereignty and relations assigned to it by the treaties of 1815." The position of the duchy of Bouillon was declared to be fixed by the same treaties; but "as this question directly regarded the rights of the grand duke and the Confederation," the Conference declined deciding upon its merits. The above decision established a political antithesis of the most anomalous nature; for while the Conference legitimized the right of insurrection, as far as regarded eight of the Belgic provinces, it made an exception as to the ninth; thus invoking the solemnity of treaties, as applicable to the one, and repudiating it as regarded the remainder.

The acrimonious discussions which had arisen on this subject, combined with the avowed determination of the Belgians not to obtemperate to this decision, or to abandon their Luxembourg brethren, had long occupied the attention of the Diet, which on the previous 21st October 1830 came to the resolution, that "each state of the Confederation in case of need should lend assistance to the others, in so far as this could be effected without danger, or without compromising the safety of its own troops." Hitherto the internal condition of Germany had been such as to engross the exclusive attention of the different governments; but the aspect of affairs became so serious in Luxembourg, the menaces of the Belgians so unequivocal, and the appeals of the King of the Netherlands so urgent, that an order was issued on the 18th March, for the assembling of a confederative army of 24,000 men.* This force, consisting

* Extract from separate protocol of the ninth sitting of the Confederation, 17th and 18th of March, 1831.

of the tenth corps, and the second division of the ninth, was directed to hold itself in readiness to "act against the insurgents, and to advance upon Luxembourg; where it was destined to re-establish the grand-ducal authorities, and to occupy the country until the conclusion of a definitive arrangement."*

As a preliminary measure, the king issued a proclamation on the 15th of February, appealing to the loyalty of the inhabitants; explaining to them the peculiar position of the grand duchy in regard to the Confederation; stating that the direction of their affairs would henceforth be placed under a distinct administration, presided by Duke Bernard of Saxe Weimar, and that a new fundamental law, and system of taxation, analogous to their habits and resources, would be promulgated; promising amnesty and protection to all such as renounced their errors, menacing the refractory with severe penalties, and finally announcing the approaching arrival of a confederative army, destined to support the governor-general in all operations tending to the re-establishment of tranquillity and legal order. This proclamation was accompanied by another from the Duke of Saxe Weimar, who reached the fortress on the 4th of March, having been escorted from Treves by a strong body of Prussian troops. Neither of these documents produced any effect. Not a single inhabitant without the circle of the fortress returned to his allegiance. Far different, however, was the issue of the celebrated counter-proclamation of the regent.†

* The tenth corps consists of the contingents of Hanover, Holstein, Brunswick, the two Mecklenbours, Oldenbourg, the three Lippes, Hambourg, Bremen, and Lubeck, forming a nominal total of about 30,000. The 9th corps includes Saxony, Nassau, and eleven small principalities.

† See Appendix, No. 30.

This bold and energetic declaration, not only created an extraordinary sensation in Luxembourg, but in Holland. The result was an application from Mr. Falck to Lord Palmerston, dated the 23d of March, denouncing the regent's proclamation as "an indubitable proof of the aggressive projects of the Belgians, of their open and contemptuous opposition to the five powers, and of the imminent danger of immediate hostilities;" and further calling upon the plenipotentiaries "forthwith to advise the means of furnishing a body of auxiliary troops for the defence of the Dutch territory; and this independent of such other measures as the Conference might adopt for the prompt and entire accomplishment of the stipulations of the 12th protocol, annex A, to which the Netherlands government had already given its full and complete adhesion." The dangers that menaced Holland and the peace of Europe were, however, fortunately averted: the concentration of the confederative troops was arrested; affairs in Luxembourg were allowed to continue in *statu quo*; and though it was impossible to prevent partial infractions of the armistice, especially in the vicinity of Antwerp and in the Flanders, the general negotiation began to assume a more satisfactory aspect. This was mainly to be attributed to the check the Russians had met with before Praga on the 23d of February, the defeat of Geismar at Dembe on the 10th of March, and the gradual development of the system of the French ministry, who took office on the 13th of March.

In the meantime the Orangists were far from idle; the refusal of the Duke of Nemours, the menacing attitude of the Germanic Confederation; the more than tacit encouragement of some of the great powers; the feebleness of the regent's government; the jealousies and the venality of some superior officers; the ill-dis-

guised sympathies of others ; the prevailing insubordination of the army ; the utter want of homogeneity in the various civil departments ; the discontent of tradesmen and manufacturers ; and the receipt of large sums destined for purposes of corruption—these things combined, gave a new stimulus to the prince's partisans, and eventually led to the projected movement of March.

The ramifications of this plot were more extensive than those connected with the affair of Ernest Gregoire ; for it is unquestionable, that many wealthy nobles and some officers, with a portion of the capitalists, manufacturers, and shopkeepers of Antwerp, Ghent, and Brussels, were desirous of the prince's return—not from any individual devotion to his royal highness, but from an eager desire to free themselves from that state of anarchy and depression, from which they assumed there was no other issue than through the medium of the Orange family. They were encouraged in this idea by direct assurances from Baron Krudener, and indirect hints from the British mission, that these views coincided with those of the four great powers ; who, although they peremptorily declined all active co-operation, would gladly have availed themselves of the first successful demonstration, to recognize a selection that would have removed many of the principal impediments to a solution, and facilitated the arrangement of the Luxembourg question, as far as regarded the agnates of the house of Nassau.

The three great objects of the prince's agents were, to multiply the number of their adherents in the army ; to secure the neutrality, if not the co-operation, of the civic guards ; and to prepare the public mind for an out-breaking, by distributing anonymous placards and addresses in favour of the prince ; while the Orangist journals boldly advocated his cause in the most glowing

terms. No efforts, no means of corruption, were omitted to obtain the active assistance of the bold, and to insure the passive adhesion of the timid. These latter were by far the most numerous; for although none but Generals Van der Smissen and Nypels, with Colonel Borremans, Edeline, and a few others of inferior note, were directly compromised, strong suspicion attached to others, who, in the event of success, would have been as ready perhaps to renounce the national banner, as they had been prompt in abandoning that of the king. Less adventurous, but more crafty than their comrades, these latter held themselves prepared to turn with the tide, and either to swear allegiance to the prince, or to proclaim their fidelity to the revolution, according as the issue should determine. Thus, in most instances, the principal instigators escaped, while their tools, and amongst them Borremans, were the only victims.

The project of the Orangists was not, however, devoid of boldness; and had it been founded on just hopes of general co-operation, or untainted by the certainty of entailing the most fearful disasters, not only upon Belgium but upon Europe, would have merited all that support and encouragement which it was supposed to have obtained from British diplomacy. The directing committee, which maintained relations with the Dutch emissaries at Aix-la-Chapelle and Lisle, and with the prince in London, relied for success principally upon Van der Smissen, the boldest and most ambitious of the Orange partisans; who had been among the first to oppose the king at the first outbreaking of the revolution, and who now sought farther honours and renumerations by renewing his connexion with the house of Nassau.

It was intended that this officer, then acting as governor of Antwerp, should gain over General Nypels and the garrison, seize on the fortress, proclaim the

prince, and place himself in connexion with the citadel and fleet. This was to be the signal for the arrival of his royal highness, who had disembarked on the 20th, at Rotterdam, having ill-advisedly returned to Holland for this purpose. The lancers, with some infantry and field-pieces from Malines, were to march so as to arrive at Brussels before day-break. Here they were to be joined by Borremian's light infantry regiment, who were to be seduced by money, inflamed with liquor, and encouraged by assurances "that the garrison of Antwerp and the Meuse army had declared for the prince, and that his royal highness was on the road to the capital, supported by Van der Smissen, Nypels, and Daine, at the head of 12,000 men." It was thus hoped to effect by deception, that which could not be accomplished by argument. The regent, ministers, and principal authors of the revolution, were to be seized and conveyed to some place of security; diligences with post horses being destined for this purpose. The army of the Meuse, where a few officers wavered in their duty, and where many were disgusted with the actual state of affairs, was to be won by similar means. Detachments were to be thrown out upon Louvain and Liege, while the troops at Ghent were expected to operate a simultaneous rising. It was proposed to secure the neutrality of the Brussels civic guards, through the agency of their chiefs, and their own natural disinclination to civil war. In such case, they were to be employed in maintaining internal tranquillity, while a provisional government was to be established in the prince's name, to be composed of Van der Smissen and other influential persons. A long list of proscription was prepared, for it was considered essentially necessary to make some striking examples. Brussels was thus destined to become the theatre of the most vindictive reaction.

The day selected for this undertaking was the 24th of

March ; but through the want of accord and discretion of some of the chiefs, and the timidity and lukewarmness of others ; through the vigilance of the patriotic association, and eventually through the revelations of a staff-officer, who had been admitted into the confederacy, the secret was divulged, and vigorous measures adopted to overwhelm the conspirators. Orders were instantly issued for the arrest of Van der Smissen, Nypels, and several officers of lancers, while Borremans was given up by his own men at Brussels, and had nearly fallen a victim to the fury of the populace, whose exasperation was raised to the highest pitch. Van der Smissen, having obtained timely information, fled to Aix-la-Chapelle, where he was joined by three or four others of minor importance. Such is the most accredited outline of this plot.

Independent of the fearful consequences that must have attended its execution, even had it met with partial success, it was evident, on a close investigation, that the resources of the Orangists were inadequate to the object, and that the cause of the prince was essentially anti-national. The active co-operation of a few superior officers, and the passive adherence of others, was perhaps secured ; but nearly the whole of the inferior grades, as well as the great mass of the troops, were warmly attached to the new order of things. Indeed, so well convinced were the chiefs of this fact, that it was even thought imprudent to communicate the plot to the subalterns or soldiers of the cavalry and artillery, who passed the night of the 23d in readiness to move from Malines, until they should reach the gates of Brussels. There was neither unity, confidence, nor combination among the leaders, nor could the slightest reliance be placed upon the men. Money was lavishly expended, and promises returned ; but when the hour for action

approached, there were scarcely a dozen who were prepared to face the coming peril. Some from lack of courage, and others from a dread of civil war. The tens of thousands that were stated to be panting to draw the sword only existed in the imagination of the ring-leaders.

Every thing appeared to depend upon the influence of Van der Smissen over the Antwerp garrison, and on that of D'Hoogvorst with the Brussels civic guards. But the conduct of the one had not been such as to secure respect or confidence; while the other, whose popular name had been lavishly quoted as an inducement to inveigle others, declined all co-operation; though, from motives of generosity, he promised not to betray the propositions which had been made to him. In addition to this, the clergy, Catholic nobility, and population, urged and excited by the association, were infuriated against the Orangists, and would indisputably have risen in mass. Thus a scene of anarchy and bloodshed must have ensued, the results of which were fraught with incalculable evils. The pillage of Mathieu's house, and the destruction of other property, were fearful proofs of the facility with which the populace might be excited to deeds of violence.

The attention of the prince's partisans was also principally directed to the re-conquest of the capital. They argued, that as Brussels had given the first signal of revolt, and was the central focus of revolution, the provinces would again follow her example, in the event of any political change. An erroneous calculation. For admitting that Brussels, Ghent, and Antwerp had opened their gates, it is incontestable that Liege, Verviers, Mons, and Bruges, with the greater part of the Flanders, and the whole of Hainault and the Wallon country, would have hoisted the French tri-colour,

rather than submit to the dominion of any member of the expelled family. An inveterate civil war would thus have been the precursor of a general conflagration. But one of the most serious obstacles to the whole plan was the decided opposition of the king himself; who, far from evincing any disposition to renounce his own claims in favour of the prince, threw every obstacle in the way of his partisans, and unhesitatingly declared his determination never to recognize him.

In proportion as the plot advanced towards maturity, and the Orangists began to unfold their plans to the British envoy, it became necessary for him to sift the matter to its innermost recesses; to poise well the prospects of success or defeat, and to adopt such measures as best accorded with European interests; to which those of the House of Nassau were necessarily subservient. And here was one of the principal errors of that party. The leading feature of their policy has been invariably tainted with individuality. Their apparent aim was to identify Europe with themselves, in lieu of identifying themselves with Europe. The welfare and interests of other states were matters of too little consideration with them, and in despite of every declaration of disinterestedness, it was evident from the arguments used, and from the tenor of the negotiations, that the question of dynasty was antecedent to that of the nation.

To elicit the true position of the case from men so sanguinely blind as the Orangists, was no easy matter. For a length of time their representations and assurances were successful in misleading those who were, perhaps, somewhat the more credulous, from the accordance of such assertions with the interest and wishes of the British government. At length, however, the feebleness and inefficacy of their resources came to light. The

real state of public feeling became more apparent, and the abyss into which they were urging themselves and others was exposed in all its fearful nudity. As soon as the truth was unveiled, it became the paramount duty of Lord Ponsonby both to his government and to Europe—indeed, it was an act of humanity to the confederates themselves—to withdraw all countenance from a plot which threatened a thousand dangerous consequences, without offering a single prospect of ultimate success. Lord Ponsonby deemed it essential to address them with the candour and firmness of a statesman whose eye had penetrated through the mist that veiled their own. He consequently exerted all his private influence—official voice he had none in this matter—to induce those who consulted him to pause ere they plunged their country into inevitable civil war; or, what was of still greater moment, ere they drove her into the arms of France. The latter, and perhaps both, were otherwise inevitable.

Such was the simple and unvarnished state of the case. The moment was critical, and the slightest delay might have produced the very issue which it was the special object of Lord Ponsonby's mission to avert. For the Orangists, like the republicans, were more desirous to induce than to avert that general war, which they looked on as the surest means of producing ultimate restoration. But what were the interests of a nation or dynasty, compared with those of Europe? To have adhered to the one at the expense of the other might have suited the views of the prince's partisans, but it would have been an act of criminal imbecility on the part of a British agent. For having thus conscientiously performed his duty, and thereby preserved Belgium from anarchy and invasion, Lord Ponsonby has been exposed to the foulest calumnies on the part of both Orangists and republicans. The one, because he opened

the eyes of the Conference to the danger that menaced Europe, should they persist in supporting an impracticable project ; and the other, because he zealously fostered those moderate constitutional principles by which general peace has been maintained. Nay, so far did the former carry their disregard to fact, that they did not hesitate to accuse Lord Ponsonby of suppressing Orangist petitions ; of exposing the petitioners to the vengeance of the regent's government, by giving up their names ; and, lastly, of having betrayed the March plot.

“ It is easy, but disgraceful,” says an able German publicist,* in stigmatizing these unfounded calumnies, “ to retire to some dark corner, and thence to cast poisonous filth on that which is holiest on earth—the honour of another. This is the more odious, since no reparation can ever sufficiently compensate for the original injury. Therefore, when shameless reports are spread abroad, at the expense of truth and honour, it is the duty of honest men to step forth and expose them.”

“ ————— Absentem amicum
Qui non defendit alio culpante——
—— Hic niger est, hunc tu, Romane, caveto.”

The following letter from the Regent of Belgium, touching the two first assertions, will suffice to shew the degree of reliance to be placed on the other :—

“ *Gingelhom, near St. Trond,*
20th March, 1832.

“ SIR,—I have this instant received your letter of the 19th of March, and hasten to do myself the honour to state in reply, that I have read the letter signed Le Ch. V——, inserted in the *Lynx*, reported by the *Independant*, and of which you have forwarded me a copy.

* “ Abfall der Niederlande, Von Dr. C. M. Friedlander.” Hamburg, 1833.

I can assure you, Sir, that everything in that letter relating to a *pretended* communication made to me by Lord Ponsonby, touching a petition signed by many notables of Brussels, Ghent, and Antwerp, tending to demand of the Conference of London the return to Belgium of the Orange Nassau family, is *absolutely false*. I think, Sir, that this declaration will be satisfactory to you, both as a private individual and as the friend of Lord Ponsonby. I authorize you, Sir, to make whatever use you may think proper of the present.*

(Signed) "E. SURLET DE CHOKIER."

"To Charles White, Esq. &c. &c."

"P.S. Having been indisposed for a fortnight, it is only with great difficulty that I have been enabled to write these few lines *in favour of truth*."

During some days subsequent to the discovery of this plot, the scene of anarchy, terror and confusion that reigned at Brussels baffles all description. The patriotic association, strengthened by the adhesion of almost every individual of note in the country, issued a manifest, couched in the most ardent language, and, in fact, assumed powers that rendered government almost impracticable, by exercising a species of terrorism over men's minds, which threatened a fearful repetition of the painful scenes of the first French revolution. Fortunately, no blood was spilt; the excitement of the mob seemed to evaporate with the destruction of property; and although not only Orangists but other citizens were often menaced, the storm gradually subsided, and gave way to a state of comparative tranquillity.

* The letter signed "Le Ch. V——," alluded to by the ex-regent, contained a series of violent diatribes against Lord Ponsonby. These were not only refuted by Baron Surlet, but ably answered in several foreign journals by Dr. Friedlander.

CHAPTER VIII.

FRANCE ADHERES TO THE PROTOCOLS—CONGRESS DETERMINES TO DEFEND LUXEMBOURG, AND DECREES A GRANT OF SIX MILLIONS AND THE ENROLMENT OF 59,000 CIVIC GUARDS—THE COMMAND OF THE ARMY OFFERED TO GENERAL LAMARQUE—MR. LEBEAU ADDRESSES A LETTER TO THE DUTCH FOREIGN MINISTER—CHANGE OF POLICY ON THE PART OF THE GREAT POWERS, WHO ABANDON THE PRINCE OF ORANGE, AND ENCOURAGE THE SELECTION OF PRINCE LEOPOLD—LORD PONSONBY PROCEEDS TO ENGLAND—INFRACTION OF THE ARMISTICE AT ANTWERP—CHASSE'S MODERATION—GENERAL CONDITION OF BELGIUM—DISORDERS IN THE CONGRESS AND PROVINCES—LORD PONSONBY RETURNS—HIS LETTER TO MR. LEBEAU—THE BELGIANS REFUSE TO ADHERE TO THE BASIS OF SEPARATION—LORD PONSONBY AND GENERAL BELLIAUD QUIT BRUSSELS—SELECTION AND ELECTION OF PRINCE LEOPOLD—CRITICAL POSITION OF THE BELGIC MINISTRY—THE EIGHTEEN ARTICLES—DISTURBANCES AT BRUSSELS, AND DISORDER IN CONGRESS—THE ARTICLES ARE ADOPTED—MR. LEBEAU'S SPEECH—HE RESIGNS OFFICE—KING LEOPOLD ACCEPTS THE CROWN, ARRIVES IN BELGIUM, AND IS INAUGURATED—CONGRESS DISSOLVED.

THE change in the French ministry on the 13th of March soon wrought a salutary effect on the operations of the Conference. The cloud that had produced "a momentary difference of opinion" was dissipated by the formal announcement of Prince Talleyrand, "that France adhered to the protocol of the 20th of January; that she entirely approved the limits therein indicated for Belgium; that she admitted the neutrality and inviolability of her territory; and that she would not recognize any sovereign for Belgium, unless that sovereign fully acceded to the conditions and clauses of the fundamental basis; and that, in consequence of these principles, the French government considered the grand duchy as absolutely separated from Belgium, and as

being destined to remain under the sovereignty and relations assigned to it by the treaties of 1815." This declaration, promulgated in the protocol of the 17th of April (No. 21), was accompanied by the most satisfactory expressions of amity, and of the earnest desire of France "to remain united with her allies, and to co-operate with them in the maintenance of general peace, and the treaties that constitute its basis." A singular contradiction, when opposed to the actual violation of those very treaties consecrated by the very protocol itself. The unexpected adhesion of France, which created a profound sensation at Brussels, was officially communicated to the Belgic envoy at Paris on the 15th of April, by a note from Count Sebastiani, who availed himself of this opportunity to recommend a similar course to the Belgic government. But advice so diametrically opposed to the will of congress, was disdainfully rejected; indeed, no minister dared to introduce the proposition, at a moment when the state of fermentation and popular effervescence was such as to menace an immediate invasion of Holland. A second protocol of the 17th of April (No. 22), still further demonstrated the unanimity of the great powers, and their unflinching resolution not to swerve from the fundamental basis, which was declared "*irrevocable*." It further stated, that it was on these conditions only that the great powers would consent to recognize the independence of Belgium, and that if these propositions were not accepted, all relations between her and the five powers must cease, and that Lord Ponsonby should forthwith quit Brussels, and the Belgic envoy be required to leave Paris.

Finding that, as long as the slightest want of accord was supposed to exist between the French cabinet and the Conference, no arguments could produce any effect on the minds of the regent's ministers, or rather of the congress, both of which were controlled or intimidated

by the patriotic association, General Belliard held it advisable to proceed in person to Paris, on the 8th, in order to expose to his government the real state of public opinion, and to urge the necessity of adopting some more decided line of policy. However sincerely devoted the general might have been to the welfare of a people whose confidence and affection he had gained in earlier life, he had a paramount duty to perform to Europe. The tenacity with which they insisted on retaining the whole of Luxembourg, without compensation or equivalent to the house of Nassau, was so diametrically opposed to the decisions of the great powers and the Confederation, and so pregnant with danger, that no alternative remained but to discountenance this pretension by adhering to the 20th protocol, or to support it by the most unequivocal demonstrations. There could be no hesitation between two systems, one of which opened a vista of honourable and durable peace, whilst the other contained the germs of an immediate, and perhaps interminable war.

Nothing daunted, the Belgians prepared to meet the coming storm. In a council of ministers held on the night of Belliard's departure, it was unanimously resolved to defend Luxembourg against all aggression, and thus to sacrifice all rather than abandon a part. An extraordinary grant of six millions of florins was voted by congress for the enrolment of ten battalions of volunteer sharp-shooters; for organizing the foresters of the domains in one regiment, and for calling 50,000 of the civic guards of the first ban into active service. Notwithstanding the convention guaranteeing the *statu quo* at Antwerp, vigorous measures were adopted to arm the forts below the city, to strengthen the means of offence and defence on the river face, and to protect the interior from surprise, by a double line of barricades and intrenchments on the side of the citadel. The patriotic

association, which had doubtless been mainly instrumental in overwhelming the Orangists, and which, alike inimical to negotiation and restoration, loudly called for war, now issued another proclamation, terminating with this exciting passage "To arms! to arms! brave Belgians. Let us march in mass to Luxembourg, let our gathering cry be—*victory and father-land!*"

The want of a general in chief of acknowledged talent, and the dearth of experienced superior officers, especially in the artillery, was so intensely felt, that in defiance of the opposition of Mr. Van de Weyer, and other confident patriots, who looked upon such a measure as dishonourable to the nation, a bill passed congress on the 11th of May, authorizing government to employ a foreign commander-in-chief, three generals on the staff, four field officers, and thirty-two captains and subalterns in the artillery. Lamarque, Guilleminot, and Sir R. Wilson were spoken of. Indeed, direct overtures were made to the former and other of his countrymen, but the terms demanded by them were utterly inadmissible. This, combined with the complaints and outcries of the army, which was far from admitting its own incapacity, induced the government to limit the admission to a few officers of inferior rank; an act of improvidence, to which the subsequent disasters of August might in a great measure be attributed. For, independent of the absence of any striking military capacity, the events of March had so greatly increased the demoralization of the troops, by enfeebling the respect of the soldiers for their officers, and by filling the breasts of the latter with mutual doubts, jealousies, and mistrust, that the generals, who were themselves the objects of suspicion, had neither the necessary confidence in their own strength, or in those under their command, to enforce discipline and accelerate organization.

If ever there was a moment morally and physically favourable for Dutch aggression, it was this. "Anarchy," says Mr. Nothomb, "universally prevailed. It was in the laws, in men's minds, in the administration, and in the army." Distracted by contending parties, but still not disheartened, the nation was without a rallying point. Deprived of the internal and external influence of a sovereign, it had the mere shadow of a monarchy, cankered with all the vices of a republic. Had it been attacked sharply, energetically, it would have fallen an easy prey to its invaders, and would have been forced to yield at discretion, or compelled to cast itself into the arms of France. But the disposition of the great powers having assumed a bias essentially favourable to Holland, it is highly problematical whether France would have risked a general convulsion by accepting the gift. The dilatory proceedings of the Netherlands government were, however, destined to save Belgium, and perhaps European peace, by adding another to that long series of political and military anachronisms, which had been the leading characteristic of their movements from the earliest moment of Belgic popular discontent.

The unequivocal adhesion of France to the rejected protocols, the increasing amity and unanimity of the five great powers, combined with the urgent remonstrances of Belliard and Lord Ponsonby, at length began to temper the belligerent ardour of the Belgic government, and to open its eyes to the absolute necessity of a more conciliatory system. The principle of intervention, which had been the constant source of demurring, in despite of the adoption of the armistice by which that principle was directly recognized, had been explained and admitted on the 2d of April, by Mr. Lebeau. In defending his own policy, he skilfully turned the *onus* of primitive admission on his predecessors, who had ac-

cepted the suspension of arms, and bound themselves to execute the conditions imposed upon them ; conditions immediately emanating from the two first protocols. Not satisfied with thus indirectly admitting the arbitration of the great powers, and with endeavouring to give the diplomatic relations a more extended sphere of action, Mr. Lebeau was desirous to establish direct negotiations with Holland, by which he hoped to facilitate the march of affairs, and to determine many points at issue more speedily than by the circuitous medium of the Conference, whose members were comparatively ignorant of the precise bearings of many questions directly concerning the mutual interests of the two parties.

With this view, Mr. Lebeau addressed a letter to Mr. Verstolk Van Soelen, on the 9th of May, setting forth " that the Belgic revolution had nothing hostile to the true interests of Holland, or the general feeling of Europe ; that the separation of the two countries was accomplished *de jure* and *de facto* by the will of the two people, and the *fiat* of the States-General ; that according to the very declaration of Mr. Verstolk in 1826, the union of the two nations did not originate from any anticipated advantages likely to be derived by Holland, or in a desire to flatter that country, but from the necessity of finding a new guarantee for European equilibrium ; and that they were placed on the same line, neither of them being intended to be considered as an accessory to the other ;" an assertion that sanctioned both the past and eventual independence of both. After pointing out the impolicy of continuing an armed *statu quo*, and of increasing the chances of war for the sake of a few points, which might probably be arranged by direct negotiation, and arguing that, under every circumstance, whether of peace or war, the principal parties must ultimately be compelled to treat with each other, Mr. Lebeau proposed that " three commissioners

from Holland, and an equal number from Belgium, should be directed to meet at Aix-la-Chapelle, Valenciennes, or some other neutral town, in order to draw up such a project of arrangement as might be submitted to the approval of the irrespective legislative chambers."

This communication reached its destination on the 13th, but remained unnoticed. Indeed, it was not probable that the Dutch government would take cognizance of propositions which omitted all allusion to the basis of separation, and the conditions attached to the independence of Belgium by the Conference, and which would have entailed an interchange of full powers as between two co-equal nations, and thus elicited a virtual acknowledgment of that independence which the cabinet of the Hague was secretly resolved to refuse, unless upon conditions utterly incompatible with the vital interests of Belgium. A note on this subject was, however, subsequently addressed by the Dutch envoys to the plenipotentiaries, wherein they declared, "that it was the fixed determination of their government to adhere to the reciprocal engagements entered into with the five powers on the principles laid down by the 12th protocol," and artfully complained of the delays thrown in the way of definitive arrangement, being further augmented by the tenor of the 23rd protocol of the 10th of May, whereby the Belgians were allowed until the first of June to consent to the proposed stipulations. They earnestly dwelt upon the desire of the king "to insure the prompt solution of a state of affairs onerous to his subjects, and dangerous to the repose of Europe; and stated that, from the 1st of June, his majesty would consider himself free from all engagements, and at liberty to act as he might judge most salutary for the attainment of the general object." In a second note of the same date, Messrs. Falck and Van Zeulen de Nyevelt denounced various acts of direct aggression committed by the Bel-

gic troops on Dutch vessels navigating the Scheldt, which had necessitated reprisals on the part of General Chassé ; and they warmly protested against the perpetual menaces of the Belgians to renew those hostilities, "*the cessation of which was placed under the immediate guarantee of the five powers.*"*

In the meantime three most important facts had become apparent to the French and British envoys at Brussels—namely, the utter impracticability of attempting to bring back any member of the Nassau family without civil war, and the aid of foreign bayonets, in which France would have found the *casus belli* ; the equal impossibility of obtaining the consent of congress to the territorial arrangements laid down by the basis of separation, wherein the confederation would have found the *casus fæderis* ; and finally, the urgency of proceeding forthwith to the election of a sovereign, as the sole means of arresting that career of anarchy, into which the nation was being rapidly propelled by intemperate patriots at home and adventurers from abroad. It was no easy matter to bring the great powers to feel the force of this syllogism ; but facts, more powerful than arguments, at length tended to overcome their scepticism, and entailed a change of policy. Thus, ere long the tide that had set strongly against Belgium, turned in its favour, and her independence and European peace were guaranteed. The imminence of the peril was such, that no time was lost by the different courts in instructing their plenipotentiaries to give full encouragement to the acceptance of Prince Leopold, on whom Mr. Van de Weyer, and, on his resignation, Mr. Lebeau, had skilfully fixed their eyes, as the only prince who offered all the necessary qualifications. The abandonment of the Prince of

* Notes of the Netherlands plenipotentiaries, dated the 21st of May, 1831.

Orange, and the adoption of Prince Leopold, was one of the most extraordinary acknowledgments of the force of events over previsions, and of their own impuissance, that could have been given by the three absolute powers.

This concession, reluctantly wrung from them at the eleventh hour, was, however, more easy to be obtained than the total cession of Luxembourg from the Belgians. On this point they rejected all amicable suggestions, and defied all hostile menaces. Nor was it without the utmost difficulty that Lord Ponsonby and his colleague were eventually enabled to induce them to listen to a species of compromise. Seeing no prospect of deterring them from their hostile intentions, and fearing that the communication of the 22nd and 23rd protocols might still further irritate the public mind, and urge the association, or rather the government, to some irretrievable act of indiscretion, Lord Ponsonby determined to proceed to London. The object of his journey was, firstly, to portray the reckless exasperation of the public mind, and the incapability of the government to stem the tide of national will, which daily betrayed itself by acts of riot, outrage and cries for war; and secondly, to assure the Conference of the impossibility of obtaining the Belgian adhesion to the 22nd and 23rd protocols, without some modification of the stipulations, and thereby to endeavour not only to prepare the powers for the election of Prince Leopold, but, if possible, to obtain their sanction to the cession of the whole or part of the grand duchy, in return for a just compensation. The representations of Lord Ponsonby, who quitted Brussels on the 13th of May, corroborated by General Belliard's reports to Prince Talleyrand, and those of Mr. Devaux, who had been sent on a special mission to England, so far produced a favourable result, that the plenipotentiaries pronounced their readiness to open a negotiation with the king, grand-duke, in order to procure his majesty's

consent to the cession of the grand duchy in the manner proposed. At the same time they insisted (by their protocol of the 21st of May, No. 24), on the preliminary adhesion of Belgium to the basis of separation ; and in the event of farther opposition, Lord Ponsonby and General Belliard were directed to execute the instructions consigned in the 22d and 23d protocols, to break off all farther relations, to quit Brussels forthwith, and to declare that the slightest infraction of the armistice would be considered as an *ipso facto* act of hostility against the five powers.

During the absence of Lord Ponsonby, various infractions of the convention of November took place at Antwerp, which excited the just indignation of General Chassé, and the terror of the inhabitants. Indeed, had not that officer evinced a more than ordinary degree of moderation and forbearance, inevitable destruction must have fallen upon the city. Independent of the Belgians having repeatedly fired on the boats of the squadron, and other Dutch vessels ascending the Scheldt, they had opened new embrasures in the ramparts, added to the guns in fort Montebello, and commenced throwing up and arming a range of batteries on the prolonged faces of St. Laurent and its adjacent bastion. These and other violations of the *statu quo* having been the subject of constant but ineffectual remonstrances on the part of General Chassé, he ordered his people to occupy the Lunette St. Laurent, on the 12th of May, and immediately commenced connecting that outwork with the salient angle of the raveline in its rear, by means of a double covered way.

Although, according to the capitulation and armistice of the 1st of November,* Chassé had an undoubted

* See Appendix 26.

right to the possession of the Lunette, and ground in front to the distance of 300 yards, he had abstained from occupying it, and had permitted free intercourse between the city and country, by the road leading from the Beguine's-gate to Boom. The aggressive works of the Belgians not only being carried on within the limits of the fortress, but endangering the safety of the Lunette, Chassé first threw in a small detachment, and then occupied it in force, in order "to guarantee himself from attack, and not with the slightest hostile intentions."* Intercourse between the city and its vicinity, by the Boom road, being thus interrupted, the country people, populace and soldiers, especially the undisciplined volunteers, over whom their officers had but little control, expressed great discontent and irritation. Even the authorities themselves questioned General Chassé's right, and raised difficulties as to the meaning of the convention. Great excitement consequently prevailed amongst the lower orders. Groups issuing from the gates assembled within a few yards of the Dutch working parties. Insults were offered, and stones thrown. The soldiers of the citadel at first remonstrated, and this failing, a few shots were fired in the air, which were replied to by renewed insults. Amongst others, a body of armed individuals rushed forward, and planted the Belgic tri-colour within a short distance of the fort. A serjeant and four men then fired; the Belgian volunteers and sentries immediately returned the shots, and in a few seconds a general discharge of musketry commenced, and was maintained from the citadel and ramparts, until night and the exertions of General Dufailly, the military commandant of Antwerp, put an end to an affair that

* Extract of General Chassé's letter, 17th of May, 1831.

had nearly produced a second and still more terrible bombardment than that of 1830.

Such was the substance of the report made by General Belliard and Mr. White, who proceeded to Antwerp at the pressing solicitation of the Belgic government, in order if possible to deprecate the just wrath of Chassé, and to employ their exertions in obtaining a cessation, not only of all farther hostilities, but of those offensive works, that were an incontestable violation of the rights of nations and of military laws.* “We have admired your prudence,” said the commissioners in their despatch to Chassé of the 19th of May, “and will make known your noble conduct under these difficult circumstances; and further, we shall owe it to your prudence that peace has not been disturbed.” The compliment was well merited, for such was the unwarrantable conduct of the Belgians on this occasion, that General Chassé would have been fully borne out by the laws of war, had he forthwith employed the terrible means of repression at his disposal. General Chassé’s conduct has been hitherto criticized with severity; but on this occasion he certainly deserved the gratitude of Antwerp for his humanity, forbearance, and the readiness with which he assented to the pacific intervention of the French and English commissioners.

A passage from one of his letters written on this occasion, will place his conduct in a still more meritorious light. “This present morning, the 27th of May, the Belgians have been seen working with activity on a dépôt of fascines within musket-shot of St. Laurent, and within the enclosure of a small property belonging to me, of which I was the first to consume the habitation when the citadel was originally placed in a state of

* Recueil de Pièces Diplomatiques, p. 194. La Haye, 1831.

siege. This fresh devastation is indifferent to me. I wish that all those that may arise from this state of affairs, could be concentrated within that spot." A noble sentiment, and a fair ground for arguing that, if the bombardment of 1830 was barbarous and uncalled for, it is highly probable that General Chassé acted under the influence of superior orders, and not from any vindictive impulse of his own.

The intervention and remonstrances of General Beliard, though they caused an immediate cessation of actual hostilities, were insufficient to obtain a discontinuance of the aggressive works. So powerless, or so insincere were the authorities, that in despite of a proclamation appealing to the honour of the Belgic troops, and in defiance of the assurances and apparent exertions of the officers, the batteries were completed and armed. General Chassé on his side, therefore, continued his own labours, and the subject was allowed to fall into abeyance. One circumstance attending the negotiation remains to be noticed ; the more so, since it is indisputable that the safety of Antwerp depended on the will of the Dutch general ; and consequently, that any attempt made to intercept the pacific exertions of the commissioners, was a perilous act, pregnant with destruction to the city. In consequence of a pressing dispatch from General Chassé, denouncing the continued aggression of the Belgians, and his resolution to employ the most vigorous means of retaliation, General Beliard and Mr. Abercrombie again waited on the regent, and energetically insisted on immediate orders being issued to put a stop to this violation of the rights of nations, and holding him and his government responsible for any misfortunes that might befall Antwerp. The regent having readily acceded, a dispatch acknowledging General Chassé's rights, and communicating the

intentions of the Belgic government, was written by the commissioners, and forwarded at midnight on the 19th of May by a staff officer, with strict injunctions to look to its delivery before daybreak. Four days elapsed, when a courier from Sir Charles Bagot, at the Hague, announced that this letter had never reached its destination. Immediate inquiries were set on foot by Mr. Abercrombie,* but no explanation could be obtained ; and it was not till many months subsequent, that it was discovered that this dispatch, on which the safety of a populous city might have depended, had been intercepted by the military commandant, and detained by the order of the very government that had so anxiously demanded the interposition of the commissioners.

To offer a graphic picture of the internal condition of Belgium at this period, would be nearly impossible. Confusion, misrule, and distrust were rife throughout the land. The sacred name of liberty was a cloak for repeated excesses. At Brussels the inhabitants were kept in a constant state of alarm, from anticipated riots, or from actual violation of the law ; now got up under the pretext of striking terror into the hearts of the Orangists, and now fomented by native anarchists or foreign propagandists, many of whom flocked to the city, invaded the press, and introducing themselves into the galleries of the chamber, attempted to overawe the legislative proceedings by the most vociferous outcries.† The hall of congress was often the arena of the most extravagant and boisterous discussions ; rendered still more disorderly by frequent appeals to the passions of the

* Who acted as charge d'affaires in the absence of Lord Ponsonby.

† A letter was addressed at this time to the Belgic congress by a French half-pay officer, offering, in the name of General Gustave Dumas, a legion of from 3,000 to 20,000 men, to be called the Legion La Fayette.

public from various leading members of the movement party. Every proposition, indeed every sentence tending to moderation or concession, was met with clamour and interruption. The demon of convulsion and recklessness appeared to possess a portion of the deputies and their auditors. To adopt the maxim "aid thyself, and heaven will aid thee,"—to exclaim, "in fifteen days a king, or war with Holland; no more negotiations!"—and to threaten annihilation to the old Netherlands, was nothing. Relying on being able to drag France into the same vortex with themselves, they proposed to summon the Conference to fix a definite period for arrangement; and this failing, to bid defiance to united Europe. They read of the glorious deeds of the Poles, and fancied that their own declamations would produce the same effect; utterly forgetting that the mighty and unequal struggle carried on by the former was based on unity of purpose, if not on unity of action, and above all, on the most heroic devotion, patriotism, and self-abnegation of all classes, from the illustrious Czartoryski down to the lowest Masouri. On the banks of the Vistula the cry for liberty was universal. The noblest and best of the nation eagerly offered up their blood and treasure as holocausts at her shrine. Even young and lovely women seized the lance, bestrode the war-horse, and rode forth to battle. On the borders of the Scheldt, with few exceptions, the wealthiest closed their coffers, the noblest shrunk from their country's cause, and the fairest cried aloud for chains. In this struggle, the people, though often misled, almost alone stood pure.

The regent, though possessing many private virtues, was inexperienced and feeble as a public man. The good intentions of the ministers, who strove to introduce order into this chaos, were frustrated by the

counteraction of the patriotic association, of whom their greatest enemies were the chiefs. Tossed here and there at the mercy of the elements, the vessel of the state plunged heavily through the billows, and was indebted for salvation to the force of events, rather than to the skill of her pilots and the efforts of her mutinous crew. At Ghent the misguided populace not only devastated the factories whence they drew their diurnal subsistence, but exercised acts of personal outrage upon respectable citizens, one of whom, a declared partisan of the house of Nassau, had nearly shared the fate of the unhappy Galliard.* Yet the authorities had the boldness to publish a proclamation palliating this abomination, and openly defied the delegates of government, who were sent down to admonish and supersede them. At Antwerp, Malines, Ypres and Mons, pillage and violence stalked abroad with impunity in open day. At Namur, a body of volunteers, under the command of General Mellinet, whose insubordination had caused so much discontent and embarrassment in Limbourg, attempted a republican movement, but being vigorously attacked by the lancers and civic guards, were overpowered, disarmed, and subsequently disbanded. In short, the whole country, inflamed to a pitch of the wildest excitement, stood reeling on the edge of a precipice. The moment was critical, and admitted of no delay. It was essential for diplomacy to stand forward. Its object was, not so much to save the Belgians from destruction, for they then awakened but little sympathy, as to prevent their involving others in the impending ruin. The only plan that presented itself was to encourage the

* The fate of Major Galliard was alluded to in the first volume. This unfortunate officer was seized by the mob on his return to Louvain in October, 1830, and put to death amidst the most excruciating torments.

immediate election of a sovereign, without materially deviating from the stipulations to which the recognition of independence was attached.

Eager to avail himself of every incident calculated to calm the excitement of the Belgic nation, Belliard no sooner received advices of the favourable manner in which the proposition regarding Luxembourg had been received by the Conference, than he transmitted the intelligence to the foreign minister, who communicated it to congress on the 23d. It was, therefore, with intense anxiety that Mr. Lebeau and his colleagues awaited Lord Ponsonby's return from England, to which epoch they postponed all explanations. More politic, though not less patriotic than their opponents, the ministers were aware that, although congress would never submit to the proposed conditions without some material modification as regarded Luxembourg, the only prospect of consolidating Belgic nationality, was by uniting with the great powers in their endeavours to prevent hostilities. Peace and independence—war and national annihilation, were the synonymous alternatives. In despite, therefore, of menaces, diatribes, insults and personal danger, they boldly adopted the former, and thus saved themselves and Europe.

It was in the midst of a diplomatic banquet given by Count Felix de Mérode on the 26th of May, that Lord Ponsonby's return was announced. Hastening to the abode of the foreign minister, his lordship passed several hours in developing the results of his mission, and in urging Mr. Lebeau to exert his utmost powers to overcome the scruples of the chambers, encouraging him the while with assurances that the selection of Prince Leopold had met with the approbation of all the powers; that little doubt was entertained of his royal highness accepting the proffered throne, under certain con-

ditions, dependent on the prudence of the Belgians and the moderation of the Conference; and finally, that if the government consented to adhere to the basis of separation, there was every prospect of their obtaining the whole, or a part of Luxembourg, but that a refusal would lead to the inevitable rupture of all negotiations, and that any act of aggression would be followed by reprisals.

Although Lord Ponsonby had no objection to the publication of the substance of this *private* conversation, it was his desire to avoid putting his pen to paper. But Mr. Lebeau, harassed and assailed on all sides by the opposition and press, had unfortunately pledged himself to the production of some satisfactory document. He, therefore, induced Lord Ponsonby to embody his observations in a note, that might be laid before Congress. Being persuaded that the existence of Lebeau's ministry depended upon his consent, and that its overthrow would be the signal for the triumph of opinions essentially adverse to the real interests of Belgium, and dangerous to the maintenance of peace, Lord Ponsonby at length complied, and retiring to his hotel, rapidly composed the celebrated letter which caused so much excitement in the political world, and produced the strongest protestations from the Netherlands cabinet. Although this document spoke the undoubted sense of the Conference, and was in perfect accord with the views of the powers, being founded on memorandums taken at the moment of Lord Ponsonby's consultation with the plenipotentiaries, yet being private and unauthenticated by them, it was of course disavowed. But, independent of its containing political definitions of the highest order, definitions in perfect keeping with the spirit of the protocols, it was the undoubted means of opening the eyes of the Belgic people, and of producing a return to

greater moderation in the many, however it may have excited the choler of the few. It was one of those irregular, yet skilful strokes which, whether in war or diplomacy, are often productive of important results. It was necessary, however, to have been upon the spot—to have watched the progress of opinions—to have witnessed the boiling effervescence and reckless indifference to reason that pervaded almost all classes, to be enabled to judge of the efficacy of this step. Moments were then more pregnant with events than months in ordinary times, and trifles of greater influence than the most important occurrences in other days. Although no argument, no sense of danger, could induce the Belgians to adhere to the stipulations, yet the question of compensation being thus thrown forward, it placed the subject in a new light, and most indisputably paved the way to the election of Leopold and the acceptance of the eighteen articles, on which depended that of his royal highness himself.

In the meantime, two notes were put in by the Dutch plenipotentiaries; the one dated the 5th of June, urging the Conference to execute the menaces laid down in the last three protocols; the other, dated the 6th, deprecating in energetic terms all that Lord Ponsonby had advanced relative to Luxembourg, and forcibly disavowing all intention on the part of the king to enter into negotiations for the cession of any part of the grand duchy, “which formed for his majesty and the princes of his house, a substitute for their hereditary possessions, of inestimable value in their eyes.” In reply, the Conference instantly issued the twenty-fifth protocol, accompanied, first, by a letter to the British envoy, requiring him and his colleague to quit Brussels without a moment’s delay; and, secondly, by two notes to the Dutch plenipotentiaries—the one announcing this

resolution, and the other disavowing Lord Ponsonby's "*confidential*" letter, and offering some explanation as to the views of the Conference regarding the grand duchy. Three principles were declared to be the basis of this proposition. First, that all arrangements should be mutual ; secondly, that the possession could only be obtained by Belgium by means of a just compensation ; and thirdly, that the great powers would not make this proposition formally, until after the adhesion of the Belgians to the basis of separation. The last condition was of itself sufficient to destroy all prospect of the desired adhesion ; for the Belgians were too well acquainted with the tenacious character of their former sovereign, and of the immense value he attached to the grand duchy, to think of solemnly consenting to stipulations by which they would have cut themselves off from all prospect of ever obtaining an inch of the disputed territory. They were equally aware that the King of the Netherlands had only adhered to the twelfth protocol and its annexes, because his majesty was satisfied that no bilateral treaty could ever be grounded on conditions that were at variance with the welfare, indeed with the very existence, of one of the parties. The cession once made, all recovery was deemed impossible. The result was a negative answer from Mr. Lebeau. This reply was followed by the presentation of the four last protocols (Nos. 22, 23, 24, and 25) ; and on the 10th of June, Lord Ponsonby and General Belliard simultaneously quitted Brussels, thereby giving a further proof of the unity and perfect accord existing between their two courts. Here terminated all direct negotiations, and here commenced that diplomatic *hiatus*, which lasted from the 10th of June until the arrival of Sir Robert Adair, on the 9th of August—an *hiatus* that formed one of the most interesting and important periods of that epoch ; for it embraced the acceptance of

the eighteen articles, and that of King Leopold, with the arrival and inauguration of his majesty, and the inroad of the Dutch army.

While the anarchists and their foreign coadjutors loudly rejoiced at the prospect of confusion and war, Mr. Lebeau and all moderate men witnessed the departure of the two envoys with deep regret. Belliard, on the arrival of the king, was re-appointed, and remained until he terminated his valuable life, early in the ensuing year; but Lord Ponsonby being called to higher employment, was deprived of the satisfaction of returning to co-operate in the consolidation of a throne, which, in some measure, owed its foundation to his exertions. Belgium lost in him a sincere and enlightened advocate. The sum of her gratitude is not the measure by which to calculate the services of Lord Ponsonby.

The Belgians were now abandoned to themselves; for although Mr. White, who had been employed on several occasions, continued to reside at Brussels, he had no official character. Indeed, so strictly did the British cabinet adhere to its resolution of breaking off all communication, that no direct interchange of correspondence took place between them and Mr. White, who acted solely upon his own responsibility.

Having thus brought down the general state of affairs to the end of the first period of the negotiations, it is necessary, for greater perspicuity, to retrace our steps, in order to explain the whole progress of the different incidents attending the selection and election of Prince Leopold.

The exalted moral character, liberal principles, tolerance and prudence of that prince, not less than his acknowledged talents, courage and connexion with the British royal family, had brought him to the notice of many eminent Belgians at an early stage of the revolu-

tion, as a most suitable person to fill the projected throne. But the internal state of France, and the attachment of the great powers to the Prince of Orange, forbade any of those to whom the prince's name was mentioned from lending a favourable ear to the project. It had been mooted by Mr. Van de Weyer and others, in November, 1830 ; but it was then met by a decided negative, and was consequently abandoned, until the refusal of the Duke de Nemours, when Prince Leopold's name was again brought forward by the Belgic foreign minister, and instructions given to his agents to sound foreign cabinets upon the subject. It was not, however, until after the accession of Lebeau's ministry, that the question was reproduced in a tangible form.

On the 12th of April, after a consultation with Mr. G. de Jonghe, H. Villain XIV., and other members of congress, a renewed communication on the subject was privately made by Mr. White to Sir Edward Cust, one of Prince Leopold's equerries ; for Lord Ponsonby declined being the vehicle of any direct communication until he had submitted the matter to his own government, and received their instructions. In order to avoid exciting the jealousy of other powers, the latter determined to decline all positive interposition at home or abroad ; and, although no doubt existed of their earnest wish to support a combination, on which depended the maintenance of peace, their instructions were by no means precise or imperative. From this moment, however, the negotiations proceeded more rapidly, and although Prince Leopold strictly abstained from giving any authority to the exertions that were being made in his favour, and on no occasion wrote, or allowed a single word to be written in his name on the subject, he was well informed of all that was passing, and was convinced, long ere his election,

that an immense majority of deputies would vote in his favour, and that he would have the full assistance of the clergy and high Catholic laity. His principal opponents were confined to the French and movement party, and a few Orangists, who still retained their seats in congress. In the meantime, Lord Ponsonby being left at liberty to act as he judged expedient, warmly entered into the spirit of the combination, and gave his support to Mr. Lebeau with zeal and candour. In this he was cordially aided by General Belliard.

Belgium having no representative in London, it was deemed advisable to dispatch a deputation of four members, to negotiate directly with Prince Leopold, and, if possible, to obtain from his royal highness some positive declaration that might guide the conduct of the government.* The mystifications that had been practised upon them in the case of the Duke of Nemours, rendered this precaution the more necessary. This deputation arrived in London on the 20th, and, after a preparatory conversation with Baron Stockmar, the enlightened and tried friend of Prince Leopold, they were admitted to an audience of his royal highness on the 22d. After exposing the object of their mission, and explaining the conditions on which they were authorized to offer the crown—conditions inseparable from the preservation of the territorial integrity—they entered into other details connected with local matters, and then awaited the prince's reply. Among various observations that fell from his royal highness on this occasion, none are more deserving of record than the passage

* Mr. Jules van Praet, who had accompanied the first Belgic mission to England, remained in London, but without any official character. This distinguished publicist was subsequently appointed private secretary to King Leopold.

quoted by Mr. Nothomb. It is tempered by a noble simplicity and frankness that shews the elevated sentiments of the speaker, and his just appreciation of the true condition of Belgium. "All my ambition," said he, "is to contribute to the welfare of my fellow-creatures. When yet young, I have found myself in so many difficult and singular situations, that I have learned to consider power only with a philosophic eye. I never coveted it but for the sake of doing good—durable good. Had not certain political difficulties arisen, which appeared to me essentially opposed to the independence of Greece, I should now be in that country; and yet I never attempted to conceal from myself the difficulties of my position. I am aware how desirable it is that Belgium should have a sovereign as soon as possible. The peace of Europe is interested in it."

However flattering and tempting might have been the propositions of the deputation—however gratifying to the prince's private feelings, motives of high policy and sound reason at first presented a series of embarrassments and obstacles to his acceptance, and had well nigh produced a refusal. These objections were founded on the peculiar situation in which the Belgians were placed, in regard to the great powers, and the Germanic confederation. On the one side, the Conference required the adhesion of Belgium to the unconditional abandonment of Luxembourg; to which Prince Leopold could not assent without proposing to violate the 1st and 8th articles of the Belgic constitution, and thus destroying all prospect of his elevation. On the other, the Belgians insisted on their sovereign's unequivocal adherence to the constitutional oath, which, from its guaranteeing the territorial integrity, Luxembourg included, would have been tantamount to a direct declaration of hostilities, and would have exposed the sovereign *ab initio*

to all the risks of war, to avert which was the principal—the only inducement with some of the powers to support his nomination. To sacrifice the happy tranquillity and dignified enjoyments of Claremont, together with all the noble prospects and political advantages attendant on its illustrious owner's position in Great Britain, for the Belgic throne, even under its most brilliant aspect, was a matter of doubt and hazard, and required the deepest and most mature consideration. But to renounce all the splendid concomitants of such a situation, merely to place himself at the head of a disorganized nation, that were generally regarded as political *parias*, for the mere glory of springing first into the gulph, would have been an act of the most extravagant imprudence.

A modification of the exigencies of appellants and arbitrators was, therefore, the essential preliminary to acceptance. It was this flagrant necessity, or rather the imminent danger to the repose of Europe likely to arise from a prolongation of the state of affairs in Belgium, that operated upon the great powers, and thus eventually led to the 18 articles. The Belgians, mistaking the real cause of this change, attributed it to a dread of their own prowess. It is true it did proceed from dread, but it was the fear inspired, not by the courage of an excited man, but by his loss of self-command. The Dutch, on the other hand, exclaimed against it as a proof of the subserviency of the British ministers to French influence, to the preponderance of democratic principles in the government, to a flagrant partiality for the Belgians, and to a desire to insure the election of Prince Leopold, and thus to be able to convert Belgium into a British province. Although this accusation is too absurd to merit refutation, yet it may be proper to mention that the election of King Leopold was known to the Conference before the recall of Lord Pon-

sonby, and that up to that time no change had taken place in the undoubted bias of the great powers towards the Dutch monarch. A modification of this tendency did, however, then take place, and then arose a remarkable interchange of conduct between the Dutch and the Belgians. The former, who had hitherto evinced an eager anxiety to press the Conference to intervene by force of arms, now declined the competency of their arbitration; while the latter, who had previously rejected all interference, now as loudly called for absolute intervention.

What the Belgians required was, not an adventurous chief to rally and lead them on to battle, but a prudent sovereign, who might cast the halo of his name around their discredited revolution, and reconcile it and their country with the rest of Europe. However blind the turbulent mass might have been to their own real interests, the men at the head of the government were well convinced that their only prospect of admission into the great European family, must be under the shadow of the olive branch, and not beneath the flash of the sword. To draw the latter was equivalent to applying the axe to their young tree of liberty. The politic prince to whom they addressed their vows, was fully alive to this fact, and wisely resolved to decline the throne, unless he were certain of reconciling the independence and welfare of his future kingdom with the general interests of Europe. This could only be effected by concessions on the part of the Conference, and by the withdrawal of incompatible pretensions on that of the Belgians. The favourable manner in which the Conference had listened to Lord Ponsonby's proposition relative to Luxembourg, offered some chance of approximation; but the impediments were not so much on the side of the London plenipotentiaries, who were anxious for peace, as on that of the Belgians, who thirsted for war. The dif-

difficulty was, to induce the latter to listen to concessions of any kind. This desirable object was, however, at length effected. After a most stormy discussion, the eloquence of Lebeau, Le Hon, Nothomb and others, prevailed, and government was authorized to "terminate the territorial contestations by means of pecuniary sacrifices." Mr. Lebeau availed himself of this opening to endeavour to effect various modifications to the basis of September. Two of the ablest of his colleagues, Messrs. Devaux and Nothomb, were dispatched to London, where, after mature deliberation with Prince Leopold, Lord Durham and Baron Stockmar, a note was drawn up and submitted to the Conference. It was this note which immediately led to the compilation of the eighteen articles.

Although the consent of congress to negotiate on the principle of pecuniary indemnity differed essentially from the territorial compensation intended, though not specified by the Conference, it was yet a great step gained; for it prepared the public to contemplate the possibility of concession; it placed the necessity of sacrifices more fully before them; and although the annals of parliamentary discussion never presented scenes of greater confusion and disorder than those that occurred during the debates, the majority plainly demonstrated that they were inclined to a system of pacification. The government and diplomacy thus obtained an opportunity of weighing the strength of the opposition, and of calculating their own chance of success.

In the meantime, the formal proposition for proceeding forthwith to the election of Prince Leopold, signed by ninety-six members, was laid upon the table of the house on the 26th of May, in despite of the efforts of the opposition, the most logical of whom wished to postpone the election of a king until the final adjustment of all territorial contentions, while others demanded a decla-

ration of war against Holland, and others again called for an indigenous sovereign ; the former proposition was carried on the 31st of May, by a majority of 137 to 48 voices, and the time for opening the discussion definitively fixed to the ensuing day. On the afternoon of the 4th of June these debates closed, and His Royal Highness Leopold George Christian Frederick, of Saxe-Cobourg, was proclaimed King of the Belgians, by a majority of 152 out of 196 votes ; under the express proviso, " that he should accept the constitution, and swear to maintain the national independence and territorial integrity." Of the minority of 43, 14 voted for Baron Surlet de Chokier, 19 abstained on the ground that the election was premature, and 10 directly opposed, because they considered it tantamount to a recognition of the rejected protocols. The first fraction was composed of the most uncompromising French re-unionists, who selected the regent partly from a knowledge of his devotion to France, and partly as a cloak to conceal other purposes.

Although the British government, and the monarch elect had been in some measure prepared for the issue, Lord Ponsonby deemed it expedient to dispatch a confidential person to communicate this important intelligence to both. The prince, who had left town for Claremont, was, therefore, apprised of the honour conferred on him at an early hour on the 6th. The impression that such an event would otherwise have been calculated to make, was in some measure neutralized by previous anticipation ; but his royal highness, nevertheless, manifested deep emotion on being informed of the various circumstances attending the election, and on being assured that the dissentient votes were political—not personal ; and that the mystification, of which they had lately been the dupe, had rendered the whole congress distrustful, and thus diminished the majority. In con-

formity with the plan adopted in the case of the Duke of Nemours, a deputation, consisting of the president and nine members of congress, proceeded to London, bearing a letter from the regent to Prince Leopold, officially announcing the election, and offering him the crown.

The intelligence of an event that was likely to deprive the household at Claremont, and the poor of the neighbouring district, of an indulgent master and benevolent protector, was received with tokens of profound regret. The prince had endeared himself to all around. The tears that had been shed on the demise of the young and beautiful princess, whom it was the will of Providence to tear from the adoration of a mighty nation, were renewed at Esher and its vicinity, at the prospect of losing her illustrious consort. But this departure depended on so many contingent circumstances, that the election may be said to have been the least difficult of all the attendant operations.

Much has been said by the enemies and opponents of this combination, of the artifices and intrigues employed by the British government, their agents, and those of Leopold, to ensure success. Never was an accusation more utterly groundless. It is incontestable on the one hand, that the conduct of the government, and the language of Lord Ponsonby, were straightforward and candid. The latter, obeying his instructions, advocated the prince's cause, with zeal and ability; but neither he, nor any person connected with him, diverged from the general tenor of the protocols. Their arguments had more in them of exhortation, than of persuasion or cajoling, and were based wholly and solely on the territorial arrangements of 1790. Nothing was ever said to induce a single deputy to believe, that the prince would accept the crown, unless the Belgians consented

to moderate their pretensions to the left bank of the Scheldt and Luxembourg, or to circulate an impression that the king grand-duke was disposed to consent to the cession of either the one or the other without a full equivalent. At the same time, no effort was omitted to temper the ardour of the nation, and to convince them that the election of Prince Leopold was the most efficacious, perhaps the only means of their ever obtaining the recognition of their independence. These provisions were fully borne out by subsequent events.

On the other hand, it was impossible to be more strictly passive in the affair than was Prince Leopold. Not a line was written by his royal highness, or by any one in his behalf, until he had become sovereign elect, Not a shilling was expended in gaining over the people; not a single article was inserted in the journals; nor was recourse had to any of the various artifices of songs, busts and portraits, that had been employed on previous occasions by the supporters of other combinations. The selection of Prince Leopold was founded on political and moral grounds of the highest order, and it was carried to maturity without the smallest effort or interference, direct or indirect, on the part of the august personage most interested in the issue. History does not furnish an example of the election of a sovereign, so utterly devoid of all intrigue, or so essentially and unequivocally spontaneous, as that of Leopold. Fortune, who had so often deviated from her path to cast her richest gifts before him, again stepped forward bearing still more brilliant honours. The diadem arose before him unbidden and unsought for; not such a one as that of half-savage Greece, but one that might excite the envy of the mightiest potentate. Too prudent, however, to grasp the tempting jewel, he paused; and by this caution increased his claims to the respect of his future

people, and to that of Europe in general. Nay, so little did he court power, that he would have preferred the tranquil joys of Claremont to the glories of the proffered throne, had he not been persuaded that his refusal would be the signal for general war.

Nothing, in fact, could more distinctly prove the critical situation of Europe, than the eagerness with which the northern powers urged Prince Leopold to consent. Nothing can more plainly demonstrate the embarrassment and insincerity of Russia, than the conduct of her plenipotentiary in London. Dreading the bursting forth of that war which she had recently intended to kindle throughout Europe, no assurances of support and recognition were spared in order to press the prince's acceptance *per fas et nefas*, and this with the distinct foreknowledge that the Czar's promises were mere diplomatic artifices, that his object was to gain time, and that if he succeeded in overwhelming Poland, there was not the slightest intention on his part to realize the amicable professions so lavishly poured out by Prince Lieven and Count Mastuzewiz. In fact, scarcely had the groans of expiring Poland reached the imperial ear, ere the mask was thrown off and the real nature of the autocrat's policy became manifest.

While the Belgic commissioners and deputation were zealously endeavouring to remove some of the difficulties that were opposed to the prince's acceptance, the movement party at Brussels were doing all in their power to frustrate this desirable consummation. The departure of Lord Ponsonby and his colleague, instead of producing intimidation, appeared to add fuel to the flame of irritation and irreflexion. This irritation was further augmented by the surreptitious publication of the memorandum of the 29th of May, which Lord Ponsonby had deemed it expedient to withhold ; not only from a

conviction that it would produce no good effect, but from a desire to spare the Conference the insult of restitution. Indeed, the inutility and danger of presenting the last four protocols, at a period when it was necessary to employ conciliation, had been so evident, that the Dutch cabinet artfully availed themselves of the moment, and despatched copies to Brussels, which being placed in the hands of their partisans were communicated to Congress during the sitting of the 2d of June. The effect produced was precisely that which had been anticipated by Lord Ponsonby. A universal cry for war, as the only mode of terminating the territorial question, burst forth from the press and public. Congress, actuated by the same spirit, fixed the 30th of June as the last day of negotiation.

Whatever might have been the sentiments of the regent, who secretly coincided with the movement party, those of his ministers were essentially pacific. But their situation was precarious, and their influence inconsiderable. Persecuted and harassed on every side; deprived of the support and experienced advice of the two foreign envoys, it required the utmost tact and firmness to resist the efforts of the various parties that were struggling to overthrow them, with the view of substituting a system of action and violence for that of moderation and negotiation, which could alone lead to a favourable issue. The great object, therefore, was to assist the ministry in stemming the torrent of popular feeling—to induce all the deputies that had voted for Prince Leopold to continue their support; and, lastly, to prepare their minds for the modifications that were in progress of arrangement in London.

To effect this, it was necessary to employ no trifling activity, and some address. It was requisite to abandon all ordinary routine; to carry on a species of guerilla

tactics ; to exchange the mysteries and reserve of the closet for the hardy declarations of the open square ; to adopt language suited to the men and the situation ; to watch the feelings of the people ; now to cajole, now to threaten, and often to assume a responsibility not borne out by authority. It was necessary to encourage some, to rally others, and, in short, to adopt a system that would in other times be looked on as an utter derogation from the ordinary walks of diplomacy. This was rendered somewhat more easy from the situation in which the person acting in this business found himself after the departure of Lord Ponsonby. For, although he had no official mission, and lost no opportunity of impressing this upon the minds of the public, yet this was looked upon as a mere diplomatic artifice, and due credit was given to his assurances by many deputies, over whom he obtained an influence that was highly beneficial at the critical juncture of the eighteen articles. These efforts, and those of Mr. Sole, secretary to General Belliard, who had been directed to return from Paris to Brussels, were unexpectedly and powerfully aided by the arrival of the Polish agent, Count Ramon Zaluski. Calculating that the consolidation and recognition of Belgic independence would operate favourably on the conduct of the great powers towards his own country, Zaluski zealously exerted himself in preaching reason and moderation, and often succeeded in making an impression on those who had shown indifference to all other remonstrances.

At length the important period arrived that was to decide the acceptance or rejection of Leopold, or in other words, the great question of peace or war. The deputation having returned to Brussels on the 27th, the president publicly announced to Congress the issue of their mission. After communicating the prince's reply, containing his conditional acceptance, Mr. de Gerlache read

his royal highness's letter to the regent, in which, after dwelling upon his own efforts to co-operate in bringing the negotiations to a happy end, Leopold added, that "as soon as congress should adopt the articles proposed by the Conference, he should consider all difficulties as set aside, and be prepared to proceed immediately to Brussels."* Thus making his definitive acceptance dependent upon the adhesion of Belgium to the treaty of the eighteen articles, the compilation of which had occupied the Conference during the preceding ten days.† This celebrated act must not be passed over without a few observations, relative to its origin, and its divergency from the twelfth protocol, to which the Dutch had adhered as the sole basis of negotiation.

"The Conference," as observed by Mr. Nothomb, "in fixing the basis of separation, having adopted the principle of equity, that, 'upon a dissolution of partnership, each party shall resume possession of the portion originally belonging to himself,' its next object was to ascertain and define the respective property of each before their union." It was decided, therefore, that Holland, which had re-established her independence in 1813, should be re-constituted as she was in 1790; whilst Belgium, having no other immediate antecedents than those she derived from the Austrian Netherlands, was to be formed of all the rest of the Netherlands kingdom, as limited by the treaty of Vienna, including Liege, Philippeville, Bouillon, and Marienbourg, but excepting the grand duchy, which was declared to belong to the Nassau family and the Germanic Confederation. By this latter clause, the negotiation was rendered more complex; for the Belgo-Luxembourg was confounded with the Belgo-Dutch question, which ought to have

* See Appendix, Nos. 31 and 32. † See Appendix, No. 33.

been kept totally distinct. For it is evident, that while the Belgians were vitally concerned in the retention of this contiguous province, the Dutch people could have no more interest in it, either in a military or financial point of view, than the English in the preservation of Hanover. It was, therefore, a question between Belgium and the House of Nassau, and not between the former and the subjects of the latter. It was consequently suggested by the Belgic commissioners, in the note before alluded to, that it would be advisable to separate the Luxembourg question from the rest, to maintain the *statu quo* in that province, and that this *statu quo* should be no bar to the recognition of their king. This important suggestion led to the modification of the second article of the basis, and to the insertion of the third of the projected preliminaries.

The Belgians had laid claim to the left bank of the Scheldt; and certainly both nature and policy pointed out the importance and even justice of its appertaining to Belgium, from which it had been separated in 1648.* But although it had been united to France by the treaty of the Hague in 1795, the acts of France during the war were declared void, and Holland resumed possession in 1814. This pretension, mainly founded on French conquest, was considered untenable, both according to the *jus postliminii* of 1790, and that of actual possession. It was, therefore, prudently abandoned by the Belgians, who however obtained a stipulation (Art. 17), guaranteeing the free use of the Terneuse canal, and the adoption of effective measures to secure the Flanders from inundation by a regular discharge of the internal waters.

On minutely scrutinizing the basis of separation established in favour of Holland, on the principle of the

* Treaty of Munster.

postliminii of 1790, the Belgians imagined they had discovered two or three important circumstances relative to the enclaves in Limbourg, that might be converted to their advantage.* For, whilst they admitted the right of Holland to Venloo, the half of Maestricht and the fifty-three villages, known as the *pays de la generalité*, of which latter thirteen were on the left, and forty-one on the right bank of the Meuse, with a population of 59,000 souls, they themselves advanced certain counter-claims. These were, 1st, to the half sovereignty of Maestricht and Bergen-op-Zoom; the first in right of the Prince-Bishop of Liege, and the second in that of the Elector Palatine; 2d, to the small towns of Huysen, Malberg, and Sevenaar, in Guelder-land, formerly belonging to the duchy of Cleves; 3d, to the villages of Æffelt and Boxmeer, Helverinbeek, and others in North Brabant; together with the county of Meghen and Gemert, an ancient commandery of the Teutonic order. By a subtle sophism the Belgians founded their claims on the text of the first article of the basis, by which they argued that Holland was only entitled to such territory as actually belonged to her in 1790, and consequently that all such portions as did not own her sway at that period must fall to their share. "It is the business of the Dutch," said they, "to prove what they did possess—ours to show what they did not. Their proofs are affirmative, ours negative." Though extremely specious, nothing could be more ill-founded than this pretension. For although it might be proved that the enclaves in question did not belong to Holland, there was nothing to shew them to be the pro-

* The word *enclave*, having no immediate equivalent in English, has been adopted in the maps of the Conference. Its literal meaning is an isolated or detached portion of territory completely surrounded or enclosed by another. Instances of this still exist in England, as, for instance, a patch of Wiltshire is enclosed in Berkshire, &c.

perty of Belgium. Some discussion might certainly have arisen as to the moiety of Maestricht, in right of the representatives of the Prince Bishops of Liege, though the Dutch exclusively garrisoned that fortress in 1790; but if the other enclaves were to be separated from Holland, the heirs of the original proprietors were the lawful claimants. It might have been equally reasonable to argue, that if West Friesland had not belonged to Holland in 1790, the first article of the basis intended it to fall to the share of Belgium. The claim was, however, admitted by the Conference, and gave rise to the fourth and fifth articles of the new treaty.

The next modification of importance was that of the debt, which it had been proposed to divide between the two countries in the proportion of sixteen to fifteen, the larger division appertaining to Belgium. In lieu of this most inequitable distribution, the twelfth article declared that each state should assume the responsibility of its original debts before, and equally divide those contracted during their union. Such were the principal features of the new preliminaries, in which the deviations from the original basis of separation were so remarkable, as to afford strong grounds for anticipating their acceptance by Congress—the *sine quâ non* now attached to that of Prince Leopold.

The discussion of these articles, which were communicated to the chambers on the 28th of June, was fixed for the 1st of July. In the meantime every effort was made, in and out of doors, to throw disfavour on the ministry, and to excite popular prejudice against the preliminaries. They were declared to be a mere summary of the hated protocols, artfully disguised. The press fulminated the most violent articles against them, and the opposition and patriotic association placed no bounds to their expressions of discontent. Thirty-nine deputies,

the most active of the extreme opposition, drew up a violent protestation to congress, the galleries of which were constantly filled with individuals, whose vociferous clamours often portended a renewal of the worst scenes of the convention. Placards were distributed, anonymous threats were addressed to the supporters of the propositions, and the walls were scored with inflammatory appeals. The ministers were assailed with gross diatribes, and in more than one instance subjected to personal insults, from the emissaries of the propaganda, or others, whose mission it was to promote anarchy. Irresolution and tumult reigned within the chambers, riot and distrust without; plots and conspiracies were actively carried on; Orangists and republicans made their last death struggle. Amongst others, General Hardi de Beaulieu, who was said to cloak the most ambitious projects beneath a veil of extreme liberalism, availed himself of this desperate state of affairs to attempt a republican movement; but the government, or rather the good sense of the people, prevailed; and the general, with the few adventurers who had followed him from Grammont and other provincial towns, were met and dispersed without bloodshed.

That the secret vows of the majority leaned towards the acceptance of the preliminaries, was not doubtful; but such was the dread of popular odium, so great the intimidation under which they laboured, that when the hour for discussion arrived, they were inclined to shrink from the task, and during some time no one had sufficient courage to propose the obnoxious preliminaries. At length Mr. Van Snick of Mons, rose, and boldly exclaimed, "it has been asked, who among the deputies would dare to assume the moral responsibility of proposing to adopt the 18 articles. Sirs, I am that deputy, and in so doing, I conceive that I am performing a good

action.”* A seconder having immediately presented himself, the proposition was read by the president ; and after the rejection of sundry amendments, the chamber decided on proceeding to the general discussion.

To follow the nine days’ debates that ensued, would be to retrace scenes of disorder and uproar never exceeded in any legislative assembly. Every word tending to produce war ; every sentiment of an exaggerated character, was hailed with acclamatory thunders, no matter how inconsistent with reason and policy, no matter how replete with extravagant bombast ; while groans, hisses, and the most appalling yells, invariably overwhelmed the voices of those whose language was tempered with moderation, or who had courage to expose the perils by which they were environed. The two parties presented a striking contrast. On the one side, the opposition, active, bold, and passionately eloquent, backed by the applause of the galleries, held firmly together, with an air of preconcerted arrangement. On the other, the friends of peace, languid and discouraged, had scarce sufficient energy to avow their opinions, and neglected all ordinary parliamentary tactics, or efforts to rally and encourage each other by preparatory meetings and the adoption of a settled system. It was not without difficulty that they could be finally persuaded to assemble at the house of Baron Coppin, the civil governor, in order to marshal their forces, and to prepare a uniform plan of action.

The great difficulty was to sustain their resolution, by impressing upon them a conviction that the preliminaries were not a new diplomatic deception, and that the arrival of the king would be the instant and indubitable result of their acceptance. Notwithstanding

* This courageous deputy fell a victim to the cholera in 1834, at Ghent, where he was appointed to high judicial functions.

this, their courage had nearly forsaken them towards the close of the second day. And truly the scene that occurred was enough to shake the nerves of firmer and more experienced men than the majority of the national representatives. The excitement which had prevailed during the previous fortnight, and which appeared to be gradually drawing to a crisis, at length broke forth into an open storm. "Away with the protocols! War! Death to the ministers! To the lantern with the majority!" resounded in tremendous echoes from the galleries. The president vainly sought to allay the tempest, and the civic guards no less vainly endeavoured to expel the rioters, who threatened to spring into the body of the house, and to reek their vengeance upon the supporters of the measure; some of whom sat in pale and mournful resignation; while others, abandoning their places, rushed in a state of indescribable consternation into the adjoining committee-room. It was at this juncture, that Mr. Van de Weyer bethought himself of a stratagem that indisputably stemmed the current of frenzy and demoralization, and gave time for reflection. After a few moments' conversation with some of his party, he flew to the tribune and proposed the following amendment:—"1st, the enclaves in Holland acknowledged to belong to Belgium by the 2nd article of the preliminaries, shall be received as an equivalent for Venloo and the right of Holland to a part of Maastricht. Until the final conclusion of the arrangement, no part of the territory shall be given up; 2nd, the *statu quo* of Luxembourg shall be maintained, under the guarantee of the great powers, until the termination of the negotiation for an indemnity."

Doubtless, had it been Mr. Van de Weyer's intention to push this amendment to a division, or even to have proceeded to its immediate development; and had the

opposition instantly turned round and supported it, in conjunction with a few of the most timid of the majority, its effects would have gone far to neutralize the acceptance of the rest. But this was not the mover's object; he saw the demoralized state of a large portion of his colleagues, and was convinced that all would be lost unless some intermediary measure was put forward as a rallying point. He, therefore, threw in the amendment as the only means of obtaining a few hours' respite, and thus arresting the prevailing panic. The policy of this measure has been severely criticised, but impartial persons who witnessed the scene, and were fully aware of the critical state of the question, were inclined to regard Mr. Van de Weyer's amendment as one of the principal accessaries to ultimate success.

The most remarkable incident of this long and stormy discussion was the celebrated speech of Mr. Lebeau. Never was the triumph of eloquence and talent over sophism and declamation more powerfully demonstrated. To the most conclusive reasoning and enlightened political argument, the orator added a fluency and purity of diction not unworthy of the best days of the English Commons. The effect was almost magical—the hitherto turbulent galleries were lulled and fascinated—the whole house listened with profound attention, and if the minister was interrupted, it was only by gratulatory plaudits. To analyze this remarkable speech would be nearly as difficult as to depict the sensation it produced in the assembly. The last passage must not, however, be omitted:—"I adjure the deputies who this day hear me," said Mr. Lebeau, "to offer an example of union! If the preliminaries be rejected, I will still endeavour to serve my country within these walls, and will cordially stretch out my hand to support those who have opposed me. But you must admit that if

they be accepted, we shall be entitled to say to you, if you do not wish to give an example of anarchy to the nation; if you would not draw down incalculable mischiefs on the country—unite unhesitatingly with us! Come, let us all support the King of the Belgians! The nation has pronounced—there is no longer any division among us. We are all brethren—we have no other object than the honour and happiness of our country.”

No sooner had Mr. Lebeau terminated, than universal thunders of applause burst forth from all corners of the chambers. The men shouted, the women waved their handkerchiefs, and the deputies, even the bitterest foes of the ministers, hastened to the foot of the tribune to congratulate him; many even wept from emotion. Exhausted by his exertions, and deeply affected by these marks of sympathy and admiration, Lebeau hastily withdrew to the foreign-office, and the house broke up. For no one had patience to listen, nor indeed had any one courage to mount the rostrum while the assembly was still palpitating with the vivid impressions of the previous speech. Such a moment of unalloyed and grateful triumph rarely falls to the lot of statesmen, and must have consoled Lebeau for the many hours of anxious bitterness, for the many insults he had previously endured.

From this hour the debates were divested of all interest. It was evident that, unless some fatal accident intervened, the cause was gained. At length a division was demanded, and on the 9th of July, Mr. Van Snick's proposition was carried by a majority of 126 to 70 votes. By one of those caprices which so often mark the fickleness of public opinion, the loudest acclamations hailed the announcement. The agitators vanished, the opposition shrunk back, the press became more moderate, the capital was overjoyed, and general satisfaction was

diffused throughout the provinces. For the first time since the outbreking of the revolution, a vista of tranquillity and independence opened before them. Inasmuch as Lebeau had heretofore been the object of public sarcasm and vituperation, so did he now become the idol of popular incense. He was complimented, serenaded, and lauded to the skies, as a mirror of eloquence and the saviour of his country. He could not obtain this triumph however, without attracting the undying hatred of the republican, Orange and French party; for he thereby tore down the black banner of discord, and grafted the olive-branch upon the tree of liberty. The successful issue of the measures he advocated placed an insuperable barrier to a republic, to restoration, or re-union. True to their professions, no sooner had he secured a sovereign to their country, than he and his friend and colleague, Mr. Devaux, resigned office, and retired into private life, without carrying with them a single shilling of the public money.

The decision of congress was instantly followed by the selection of a deputation of five members, who were directed to proceed with all speed to communicate the result to Prince Leopold. These gentlemen, among whom was the ex-minister himself, started on the 10th, and on the 14th, official information reached Brussels, which placed the immediate arrival of his royal highness beyond a doubt. Faithful to his promise, the prince bade adieu to Marlborough-house on the 16th, and leaving behind him the whole of his British establishment, with the exception of one aid-de-camp (Sir H. Seton), and a few domestics, reached Ostend on the 17th. In despite of the advice of some timid counsellors, who feared lest Leopold's passage through Ghent, should be the pretext for Orange demonstrations, he proceeded to that city, where he slept on the 18th, and on the following evening reached Laeken amidst the glare of a thousand

torches, the shouts and acclamations of the multitude, and the roaring of artillery. His progress from the frontier had been one uninterrupted scene of festivity. Every thing being prepared for the ceremony of inauguration, the monarch elect left Laeken soon after mid-day, on the 21st, and entering the city on horseback, proceeded amidst the ringing of bells, the hurrahs of the people, the waving of banners, garlands, and characteristic devices, to the Place Royale. Here, upon an elevated platform, splendidly decorated with national and royal enblems, Leopold was received by the regent, the members of congress, and the various constituted authorities; while dense masses of the people filled the square, the windows, and the house-tops, rending the air with joyful acclamations. The whole together formed an animating and splendid spectacle. After a short pause, the regent addressed the royal stranger in an impressive speech, and terminated by resigning his authority into the hands of congress.* The prince then rose, and replied in brief but impressive language; and the constitution having been read aloud by one of the attendant secretaries, a salute of a hundred and one guns announced that the prescribed oaths had been taken and that Leopold was inaugurated king. This ceremony being ended, the monarch descended from his throne and proceeded on foot to the palace, escorted by the whole of the authorities. Having appeared for a while at the balcony, his majesty retired a few minutes to recover from the many emotions that agitated his heart, and then returned to give his first public audience. The reputation for prudence and valour that

* A decree of congress of the preceding evening declared that the regent had deserved well of his country; that a medal should be struck to commemorate his administration, and that he should enjoy a pension of 10,000 florins annually.

preceded him was by no means diminished on witnessing his noble carriage, his dignified manners, and the firm yet benevolent expression of his fine features. Banquets, illuminations, and other manifestations of rejoicing terminated this memorable day, which secured to Belgium her first exclusive sovereign, and raised her to an independent grade in the great family of European nations.

The mission of congress being now at an end, they adjourned indefinitely, and the necessary instructions were issued for the election of their constitutional substitutes, under the denomination of "the Senate," and "Chamber of Representatives."* On the 24th a royal decree announced the recomposition of the ministry: and on the 28th the king left Brussels with the intention of visiting Antwerp, Liege, and other parts of his new kingdom.† The manner in which he was everywhere received promised a durable popularity. Of the various personages who pressed forward to greet their new ruler, none were more conspicuous than the clergy. Bishops and priests were unanimous in the warmth and sincerity of their congratulations; and, certes, none have been more consistently loyal than this body.

* The senate consists of fifty members. The conditions of eligibility are, that a candidate must have attained his fortieth year, and pay 1,000 florins direct taxes. The election is for eight years, renewed by halves every four years. The second chamber consists of 101 members, in the proportion of 1 for 40,000 inhabitants. The conditions are the payment of 100 florins direct taxes, and being twenty-five years of age. The members of the second chamber receive a monthly salary of 200 florins during the session. They are renewed by halves every two years.

† Ministry of the 24th of July, 1831 :—

Foreign affairs	Mr. De Muelenaere.
Home	Mr. Sauvage.
Justice.....	Mr. Raikem.
War.....	Mr. De Faily.
Finance	Mr. Cughen.

CHAPTER IX.

BARON DE WESSENBERG'S MISSION TO THE HAGUE—THE DUTCH REGRET THE EIGHTEEN ARTICLES—NOTES OF THE PLENIPOTENTIARIES—THE DUTCH MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR INVADING BELGIUM—DISPOSITION OF THEIR FORCE—THEY ADVANCE—PLAN OF THE CAMPAIGN—DISPOSITION OF THE BELGIAN ARMY—CHASSE RESUMES HOSTILITIES—DAINE DEFEATED AT HASSELT—KING LEOPOLD RETIRES FROM AERSCHOT TO LOUVAIN, WHERE HIS ARMY IS ROUTED—THE FRENCH ARMY OF THE NORTH INTERVENES—SIR R. ADAIR ARRIVES—CAPITULATION OF LOUVAIN—THE DUTCH RETIRE—CONVENTION BETWEEN THE PRINCE OF ORANGE AND MARSHAL GERARD—THE FRENCH TROOPS WITHDRAWN—DUKE OF SAXE WEIMAR—LORD WILLIAM RUSSELL—CONFUSION AT BRUSSELS—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS UPON THE EXPEDITION.

IN the meantime the gathering tempest was preparing in Holland. These fêtes and rejoicings were soon destined to be converted into lamentations and mourning ; and the triumphal march of the monarch into a painful and unexpected discomfiture. Confident in the virtue of treaties, and the solemnity of an armistice guaranteed by the Conference, the Belgians abandoned themselves to a fatal security, from which they were about to be roused by a blow that mortally wounded their national pride, and endangered their infant nationality.

It is necessary to return to an earlier epoch, in order to explain the causes which immediately led to the events of August. Influenced by a dread of general war, but not by the slightest yearning towards the Belgians, the Conference had adopted the modified preliminaries, and spared no efforts to induce Prince Leopold to exchange the ease and enjoyment of his brilliant existence in England for the cares and hazards of a re-

volutionary throne. Bending to the force of circumstances, the five powers had reluctantly sacrificed the claims of legitimacy to those of insurrection: whilst Prince Leopold, influenced more by the noble desire of co-operating in the maintenance of peace than by motives of ambition, generously cast himself into the yawning chasm, and devoted himself to the general good.

The Conference having strong grounds to assume that the eighteen articles might be carried in Belgium, it was of the utmost importance to render this adhesion bilateral, by exerting every means to overcome the sturdy tenacity of the Netherlands cabinet; for up to the latest moment the Dutch plenipotentiaries had insisted on the maintenance of the basis of separation, according to the letter of the twelfth protocol, as the *sine quâ non* of all farther negotiation. Nor had they paused there, but had hinted at the renewal of hostilities. On the 22d of June, a note was addressed by them, calling energetically on the Conference to execute the engagements consigned in its former acts, and declaring that if they refused, "no alternative would remain for the king but to have recourse to his own measures, and to put an end to condescensions that were no longer compatible with the internal or external safety of his kingdom, nor with the interests of his faithful subjects, already so gravely compromised, and whose absolute ruin would be the result of a prolongation of the existing crisis" *.

With a view of rendering the mediation of the great powers more effective, instructions were forwarded to the various diplomatic agents at the Hague, to press the subject with all the weight and influence of their re-

* "Recueil des Pièces Diplomatiques." The Hague, 1831.

spective courts ; and it was resolved that the Baron de Wessenberg, the Austrian plenipotentiary, should proceed to that capital, "in order to bring the eighteen articles to the knowledge of the King of the Netherlands, and afford any explanation that might be deemed necessary."* Baron de Wessenberg was likewise the bearer of a letter to the Dutch foreign minister, signed by the members of the Conference, in which, after expatiating upon the difficulties and embarrassments that had led to the new preliminaries, hopes were expressed, "that the king in his wisdom, equity, and amity for the powers, would not refuse to weigh these considerations, the only object of which was to conciliate, as much as possible, his rights and interests with the maintenance of general peace."

But every effort proved abortive. Neither the fear of entailing that frightful scourge which all Europe was anxious to avert, nor that of prolonging a crisis said to be so pregnant with evil to Holland, could shake the unalterable firmness of the king. A despatch to this effect was addressed by Baron Verstolk to the Conference, on the 12th of July, which declared, "that the new preliminaries deviated so materially from the twelfth protocol, as to render their acceptance inadmissible ; that the possession of the grand-duchy was of vital importance, not only to the house of Nassau, but to Holland, whose military position it efficaciously guaranteed ; that the proposed *statu quo* was one of the positive grievances of which the king had long reclaimed the redress ; that as to any exchange, admitting its possibility, this was the exclusive competency of the king and the German Confederation ; that if any doubt should arise as to the entire right of Holland to Maestricht in 1790,

* Protocol, No. 27, 26th of June.

the Belgians were no more entitled to any portion of the ancient bishopric of Liege than the Dutch; that they had no enclaves in Holland, and, therefore, could make no exchanges; that the clause stipulating the immediate and reciprocal evacuation of territory, would deprive Holland of its principal guarantee for security, and for the execution of the proposed conditions; and that it was contrary to the dignity of the king and the independence of his people, to listen for a moment to the seventh article concerning the internal navigation between the Scheldt and the Rhine." Similar objections were made to the twelfth and thirteenth sections, relating to the debt, without, however, contesting their equity. This document then proceeded to criticise the vagueness and dangerous want of precision that pervaded several essential clauses. It stigmatized the whole as calculated to impede, rather than promote, a solution, and as evidently got up, in collusion with the Belgic commissioners, against the interests and honour of Holland. It terminated by declaring that, "if the prince who might be called to the Belgic sovereignty should accept and take possession without having previously adhered to the arrangements consigned in the twelfth protocol, his majesty could only consider him as placed thereby in a hostile attitude towards himself, and as his avowed enemy."

The reception of this manifest, combined with the previous declarations and actual preparations in Holland, ought to have left little doubt as to the aggressive intentions of the Dutch, and was calculated to produce hesitation in the mind of Leopold; but relying on the protestations of the powers, and having pledged his word, he bid defiance to difficulties that might have deterred a less determined mind. This manifest was replied to by the Conference on the 25th of July. Dis-

regarding or misunderstanding the king's declarations, (a circumstance the more remarkable, since the Dutch troops had already commenced concentration, and only awaited the word "forward," to dash across the frontier), the plenipotentiaries, in lieu of insisting upon the maintenance of peace, again spoke of their hopes of adjustment, and proposed that full powers should be transmitted to the Dutch plenipotentiaries to determine and sign a definitive treaty. "The hopes," said they, "that we derive on this head (the maintenance of peace) from the dispositions of his majesty, are the more accordant with those of the five powers, as being *guarantees of the suspension of arms*, concluded in November, the five courts are bound by solemn engagements, *which subsist in all their force*, to prevent a renewal of hostilities."

A rejoinder to this was put in by the Dutch minister on the 1st of August, stating that, "The king, who had never ceased to afford proofs of his sincere desire to co-operate in an arrangement, and to assure, as much as possible, the benefit of peace to Europe, had forwarded instructions to his plenipotentiaries in London to determine and sign a definitive treaty destined to regulate the separation between Holland and Belgium; but that his majesty had determined to support the negotiation by his military means (*ses moyens militaires*); a resolution doubly imperative, since a prince had taken possession of the Belgian throne, without previously satisfying the prescribed conditions of the Conference, and had sworn to a constitution injurious to the territorial rights of Holland." As a justification for this development of force, which the Conference at first interpreted as a mere demonstration, the Dutch minister added, "that the desire to conclude an armistice had not been realized; that a cessation of hostilities alone

existed ; that the king had already declared that he could not subject his kingdom to an indefinite prolongation of the *statu quo*, and that from the first of June he should hold himself at liberty to adopt such measures as best suited his own interests ; but only with the view of attaining that state of things which the act of separation had acknowledged as just and reasonable." A circular was addressed under the same date to the Dutch ambassadors at the five great courts, directing them to announce the king's intention of adopting coercive measures, and consequently to demand the assistance of those courts.

The sophistry and contradictions of the Netherlands cabinet on this occasion, could only be equalled by the apparent incredulity and apathy of the Conference. It is true that the Dutch had contrived to evade the execution of the armistice to which the Belgians had bound themselves on the 15th of December, and not less true that repeated partial infractions of this armistice were committed on both sides. But, although this convention was incomplete, an indefinite suspension of arms existed, under the immediate guarantee of the Conference ; which the Dutch had repeatedly acknowledged and appealed to, especially in their note of the 21st of May. According to the rights of nations, and the admitted laws of war, such suspension could not be broken without previous notice. Wherever history offers an example of sudden infractions of a truce, they are invariably stigmatized as acts of treachery and bad faith, incompatible with the usages of civilized nations. The observations of the Conference on this subject, though mild and dignified, plainly expressed their surprise and disapprobation. In their note of the 5th of July they declare, " that they could only construe the intention of the king to have recourse to *military measures*, as

applicable to the *interior* of Holland, for they could not believe that at the very moment when his majesty had communicated his anxious desire to negotiate for a definitive treaty, he should resolve to rekindle war, and to order the destruction of a great commercial city." The whole transaction was, in fact, tainted with an appearance of duplicity; for at the very instant the Dutch cabinet was boasting of its pacific intentions, and of its having forwarded full powers to its plenipotentiaries to draw up and sign a definitive treaty, secret orders were issued to the general commanding the army to commence a war of surprise, aggression and re-conquest, the ultimate object of which was only frustrated by French intervention.

Another extraordinary fact attending this business, was the admission by the Conference that it was only apprised of these movements by the public journals, and that no explanation could be obtained from Baron Falck or his colleague. The latter is readily accounted for; but it is not easy to imagine that the British government should have been so ill-informed of what was passing in Holland, or, if informed, that it could have mistaken the object of the concentration and preparations of the Dutch army. It might perhaps have been foreign to the probity of the plenipotentiaries to anticipate so remarkable a violation of international usages; but although every precaution was taken to conceal the intended operations, in order to render the surprise the more effective, it is hardly possible to conceive that the British ambassador at the Hague should have been so completely misled as to remain ignorant of what was passing on the frontier.

During many weeks the most active preparations had been making for this expedition. The organization of the army had been carried on steadily and success-

fully under the direction of Prince Frederick, who, however feeble as a strategist, possessed talent of the first order as an administrator. Having preserved the whole of its staff, artillery, engineers, hospital and commissariat departments; having an abundant supply of experienced officers, and having recruited the line regiments with a considerable number of Swiss and Germans, for the most part old soldiers; and being, above all things, inspired with unanimous sentiments of patriotism, obedience and devotion to the throne, the Dutch had succeeded in remodelling their army, which presented a general total of nearly 80,000 men, including 30,000 communal guards and volunteers. Of this force about 40,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry, and seventy-two field pieces, exclusive of the garrisons of Antwerp and Maestricht, were disposable between the Scheldt and the Meuse, and were formed into four divisions of infantry, and one of cavalry. The first division (Van Gheen) held the right, the second (Duke Bernard of Saxe Weimar) the right centre and advance, the third (Meyer) the left centre, and the fourth (Cort-Heiligers) principally composed of *schutters*, the extreme left. The cavalry, under Lieutenant-general Trip, was divided into two brigades, the one of heavy and the other of light horse; the former in reserve, the latter in advance. The whole continued under the command of Prince Frederick, until his elder brother, having been promoted to the rank of field-marshal, assumed the command on the 31st of July. The strategical position of this force, whether for offence or defence, was admirable. Its right rested on the Scheldt, and was flanked by the citadel; its left leaned on the Meuse, and was protected by Maestricht. In its front lay a fine champaign country, without fortresses or formidable rivers; while its rear was shielded by Breda,

Bergen-op-Zoom, and impracticable marshes, offering imposing barriers and places of refuge in case of retreat.

The Dutch, who were well informed of the state of insubordination, inefficiency, and numerical weakness of their adversaries, and also knew the extreme facility of making a dash upon the Belgic capital, which was not above four easy marches from their outposts, secretly accelerated and extended their preparations during the month of July. The troops were encamped and manœuvred in large bodies. They were habituated to patrol and field duty; they were frequently reviewed, and encouraged by the presence of the king and royal family; and abundant magazines, hospitals, and means of transport were collected and attached to each division. The object of these preparations had long been known to the generals; and at length an order of the day, of the 26th of July, plainly indicated approaching hostilities, the news of which was enthusiastically received by the troops, who were eager to efface the stain of former reverses. Every thing being ready, the prince-generalissimus arrived at Breda on the 1st of August. A general order was immediately issued by him, in which he stated that the king had pronounced the word "*forward*;" that he appealed to the valour and loyalty of the troops, and, after offering a brief explanation of his political conduct in Belgium, terminated by saying that he hoped to prove, sword in hand, that the blood of the Nassaus flowed in his veins, and that his only object had been the good of his country. A second general order called upon officers and soldiers to enforce and maintain discipline.

Before dawn on the 2d, the different corps broke up from their cantonments, and pressed towards the Belgic frontier. The first division penetrating by Baerle-Hertog and Sonderegen, drove back the Belgian outposts upon

Merxplas. The second, advancing to Peppel and Weelde, established itself at L'Ele and Raevens, after a smartish encounter with General Niellon's advance guard. The third, debouching from the vicinity of Eindhoven, bivouacked at Arendonck and Rethy; while the corps of Cort-Heiligers moved upon Limbourg, and occupied Heusden. General Trip's heavy cavalry and three batteries of artillery remained in reserve at Alphen; and Boreel's light horse, and eighteen field pieces, were pushed on to their proper stations in advance. On the 3d, the prince followed up his successes, and carried Turnhout, his right being thrown across the Chaussée, near Vorslaer, menaced Antwerp, his centre threatened the high road to Brussels by Lierre, and his left that by Diest and Louvain. Two small flying columns issuing from Bergen-op-Zoom, simultaneously pressed forward on the extreme right by Calmpthout, Capelle and West Wezel; and while General Kock, commanding the troops in Zealand, made an attack on the Capitalen Dam, a detachment of marines and infantry, supported by the fleet, threw themselves on the half-ruined fort St. Marie, which was taken possession of after a trifling resistance. During this time Dibbets was not idle. Strong columns sallied from Maestricht, with directions to feel the flanks of the enemy's position, and to distract the attention of Daine's corps from its front. The first operations of the invading army were eminently successful. The grand object of the manœuvre on Turnhout was to impress the Belgian generals with an idea that it was the intention of the Dutch to make an attempt upon Antwerp, and to advance on Brussels by the road to Lierre; and for two or three days the stratagem succeeded.

Three plans were in fact open to the invaders, all offering prospects of success. One was to attempt a *coup de main* on Antwerp, seconded by the citadel and the flotilla. The second was to attack and overpower Tieken's

corps, and then to throw themselves on that of Daine, and after beating both in detail, to rush on Brussels,—a project of easy execution. The third was to spring in between both, to turn their flanks, to envelop Daine, and then to press forward, by St. Trond and Louvain, upon the capital. The latter plan was adopted, and had it been executed with vigour and celerity, the Dutch might easily have arrived at Brussels on the 7th, after annihilating Tieken and Daine, whose corps were utterly unable to resist any serious attack. On the morning of the 4th, the first and second divisions made a left flank movement by Gheel and Diest, and the third by Moll and Hasselt, with a view of establishing themselves on the Demer, and thence gaining the high road from Liege to Louvain; thus to cut off the communication between the former and the capital; while Cort-Heiligers watched Venloo and Limbourg, and Dibbets protected the rear by Tongres. But the movements of these troops were slow and undecided. Much valuable time was wasted in feeling the ground, in halting and reposing the troops, who moved with a degree of drowsy precaution utterly inconsistent with the object of the operation. Thus, three days had elapsed ere the advance had penetrated as far as Diest, the distance of a few miles only; and yet, with the exception of a trifling affair between a detachment of the Meuse army and Meyer's division, near Beringen, where the Belgic detachment displayed great gallantry, they met with little opposition. In lieu of boldly dashing forwards, so as to overwhelm Daine before he could collect his scattered division, the 5th was frittered away in patrolling and reconnoitering; and “on the 6th, the whole army maintained its positions, and halted to repose.”* These forty-eight hours might have

* Despatch from his Royal Highness the Prince of Orange to the king, dated head-quarters, Gheel, 5th of August, 1831.

sufficed to bring the invaders nearly to the heights of St. Josse-ten-Noode.

It was not until the receipt of General Chasse's letter, announcing his determination to renew hostilities at half-past nine p. m., on the 4th, that the Belgians were aroused from their dream of security ; for although vague rumours of hostilities had been circulated, no violation of the suspension of arms, without previous notice, was deemed possible. Copies of this letter, dated the 1st, reached the king at Liege, and the government at Brussels in the afternoon of the 2d. This was followed by a despatch from Ticken, reporting the actual advance of the Dutch army. No sooner was this intelligence communicated to Leopold than he made instant preparations to return to his capital ; and having consulted those near his person, directed Mr. Lebeau to address a letter to Mr. Le Hon, to solicit the eventual assistance of France, whilst Mr. de Muelenaere, the foreign minister, also dispatched a letter to the same diplomatist at Paris. On the receipt of these despatches, telegraphic orders were issued for the instant concentration of the army of the north ; and Marshal Gerard, with the Dukes of Orleans and Nemours, prepared to leave Paris at a moment's notice. Utterly deceived as to the strength and efficiency of their own army, and having full confidence in its being able to protect the country from invasion, especially when aided by the civic guards and the levy *en masse* ; being misled themselves, and therefore induced to mislead others, De Muelenaere and his colleagues at Brussels repudiated all idea of admitting foreign succour, both as unconstitutional, uncalled for, and derogatory to the national honour. Indeed it was not until a copy of Mr. Lebeau's letter to Mr. Le Hon was returned from Paris on the 5th, that the Belgic foreign minister was informed that the former had assumed the grave but necessary re-

sponsibility of urging the French government to dispatch instant succour in the direction of Antwerp and Maestricht. This was no sooner known to the cabinet than it addressed a dispatch to the king, who had established his head-quarters at Malines, imploring his majesty to lose no time in endeavouring to prevent the entry of the French troops.

This request was conveyed to the king through another channel. Sir Robert Adair, who had been appointed successor to Lord Ponsonby, not having arrived, Mr. White again assumed the responsibility of proceeding to Malines in order to enable him to communicate the real state of affairs to his government, and having previously waited on the minister of foreign affairs, was desired "to implore his majesty on his knees to prevent the execution of a measure that would compromise the military character of the country." The message was speedily communicated to the king, who replied, "that the demand for assistance was intended to be *contingent*, not *absolute*; and that the letter to Mr. Le Hon was in substance similar to that which he had himself addressed to Lords Grey and Palmerston." This point must not be lost sight of; for it proves that the call for succour was only in case of need, not immediate. Of this sorrowful necessity, a few hours furnished abundant proofs. Great as the confidence of the king might have been in his own resources, and in the courage and enthusiasm of his troops and subjects, his recent inspection of the corps of Tieken and Daine, and the inefficiency of the staff, sufficed to shew that the forces were inadequate to resist the imposing masses advancing against them, and that it was of vital importance to be prepared for a reverse. The Belgian army was not, in fact, in a situation to offer resistance; and its defeat, instead of being a matter of extraordinary military glory to the Dutch,

could only have been averted by unpardonable want of skill on their part, or by the interference of the French.

At the moment when the Dutch troops passed the frontier, the Belgian force was distributed nearly as follows. The right, or army of the Meuse, under Lieut.-general Daine, an officer more distinguished for personal courage than for any great conversancy with the art of war, consisted of about 9,000 infantry, 800 cavalry, and 24 guns, the latter but half-horsed. Its head-quarters were at Hasselt, and it was echeloned from that place to Venloo and Ruremonde, covering an extent of twenty-five leagues. The left, or army of the Scheldt, under Lieut.-general Tieken, an old soldier, but of inferior merit, was composed of about 13,000 men, of which 3,000 were civic guards, with 12 field-pieces. The advance, under Major-general Niellon, who on this occasion evinced considerable military talent, was thrown out in front of Merxplas. Besides being charged with guarding the frontier, this latter army invested the citadel, held the fort Du Nord, and was disseminated over the country, from the Scheldt to Turnhout and Gheel. The centre being left unguarded, there was an hiatus of several miles, between the left of one of these corps and the right of the other, and thus the most important point of the whole line was left defenceless. In Flanders a body of 8,000 men occupied Ghent, Bruges, and Ostend; but including civic guards, the whole disposable force did not exceed 22,000 effectives between the Meuse and the Scheldt.

Some idea of the utter state of disorganization and unfitness of these troops for field duty, may be formed from the following extracts, from official letters and reports, addressed by Daine to the minister of war, which are of themselves sufficient to account for the disasters that ensued. "I can prove," said he, "that my division

was the only one that possessed *a shadow of organization or discipline* ; that it was the only point of support to the government ; and that since the commencement of the war of independence, it has not given to the nation those fatal examples of *revolts, treasons, and scandalous mutinies* that have so often spread alarm. The chambers have resounded with exaggerated praises of the volunteers, lavished on them by imprudent orators, who foolishly apologized for their indiscipline and mutinous conduct, while they depreciated the services of the regular troops, and thus fomented the mistrust and jealousy which exists between those corps. Organization proceeded slowly. The provisional government appealed to the old Belgian officers in the Dutch army ; almost all hastened at the call of their country, and abandoning rank and honours acquired by long service, joyfully embraced the national cause. How were they rewarded ? A set of young men, who had behaved well during the revolution, now arrogated to themselves the sole possession of military capacity, and divided amongst them the best appointments. Some became majors, colonels, chiefs of staff and generals—all were determined to be at least captains. Attachments to oaths, to honour, and one's colours counted for nothing. Under the pretext of patriotism, disloyalty and desertion were recompensed ; even fortresses were sold for a step of rank. Seeing the necessity of bringing my division gradually into a state of discipline, I demanded the ministers' permission to encamp. I received no answer. I also applied for a quarter-master general and some experienced staff officers, to command my brigades of infantry and cavalry. No reply was vouchsafed me. All this was subsequently promised, but has never been accomplished. I asked for a commissariat establishment, infantry tumbrils, camp kettles, mess-tins, canteens, axes,

picks, spades, and various objects of field and camp equipage. No answer. It had been agreed that my corps should be reinforced, but it was never augmented by a single man. In lieu of the efficient battalion that I sent to Brussels, to maintain internal tranquillity, I received a horde of volunteers, who, on their arrival at Hasselt, commenced by giving to my line troops a most outrageous example of indiscipline, and to the inhabitants of Limbourg a specimen of the anarchy reigning in other provinces.* If hostilities commenced," continues the general, "it is my duty to inform you that *I am not in a situation to make war in a manner likely to insure success or honour to our arms.* I have been promised every thing,—no promise has been fulfilled. My field hospital waggons are not horsed, and reinforcements do not arrive; I have neither provisions, ammunition, nor magazines."†

"It was in the midst of this state of affairs that hostilities commenced. My troops were cantoned and disseminated by order of the war minister, in various places, many of them eighteen leagues distant from my headquarters. My position was critical. I was abandoned with 9000 men, without generals, staff, stores, provisions, commissariat, hospitals, or spies, and deserted by the population. In order to obey orders, it would have been necessary for me to cut my way through 40,000 men, commanded by the princes in person, having ten generals under their orders."‡

* The misconduct of these volunteers was carried to such a pitch in this province, that the governor, Baron de Loe, having vainly demanded the interference of government and the punishment of the criminals, resigned office.

† Extracts from Lieutenant-General Daine's correspondence with the minister of war, dated May, June, and July, 1831.

‡ Memoir of Daine to King Leopold. This memoir was written to justify his conduct in having disobeyed the king's orders to join the Scheldt army.

Conscious of his own weakness, and of the importance of strengthening the centre of the line of defence, and of keeping up a communication with Tieken, Daine applied to the former, to make a lateral movement, so as to place their flanks in contact, and thus to cover the high road from Diest to Louvain. The following extract of a letter from the former, dated Schilde, 8th of July, will farther demonstrate the deplorable state of the army: "I have received no reinforcement; you know that a corps of observation of 10,000 men—2000 of the line, and 8000 civic guards—was to be sent to me, to blockade the citadel and guard the city and banks of the Scheldt; and that, independent of this, you and I were each to have a disposable force of 15,000 effective combatants. Well! not one man of the promised 10,000 has reached me, and I am far from having the other 15,000. Thus, with these feeble resources, I garrison Antwerp, and occupy three villages on the left bank. I hold the batteries on the right, and blockade the citadel. I extend from hence to Turnhout. The high road from Antwerp, and from thence along the frontier to Gheel, is echeloned by my troops. Thus, my dear general, it is not possible for me to consent to your request, in regard to the positions you desired me to occupy. You must, therefore, occupy them yourself. I must add, that I have only two batteries of artillery, and that the enemy's principal forces are concentrated at Tilburg, Breda, Bergen-op-Zoom, and Roosendaal; and it is probable, if he attempts the slightest movement, that it will be upon Antwerp, in conjunction with the fleet and citadel."

When the successful progress of the Dutch was known, and the real condition of the army discovered, universal indignation fell upon the war minister, Defailly, who, unable to resist the general clamour, resigned office on the 4th, and was succeeded by Major-General D'Hane.

But although this blame was partly merited, and although neither he nor any of his predecessors possessed sufficient energy or experience for re-creating an army composed of such crude and disjointed materials as those at their disposal, there existed many palliative causes; and, under existing circumstances, the task might have baffled the capacities of the ablest and most practised soldier. It was to the extravagant bombast of a portion of the press and deputies; to an exaggerated confidence in their own courage; to a disregard of the rules of war; to the interference of the association; to the constant attempts to suborn officers, now by the agents of one faction, and now by the emissaries of another; to the encouragement given to insubordination; to the preference accorded to the volunteers over the line troops; and to the want of good officers, combined with the general uncertainty and demoralization that every where prevailed, that the state of the army must be attributed. The war ministers might have done more; but hitherto none of them had a fair chance. It was impossible to enforce obedience. Indeed, the press and the chambers were commanders-in-chief, and exercised their authority over every branch of the service, counteracting and intimidating the minister and his staff.

Ignorant, however, of the perils of their situation, and the inefficiency of their army, the nation hailed the announcement of hostilities with universal bursts of joy. A general shout of "To arms! Liberals and Catholics! to arms!" re-echoed from the remotest corners of the country. Elated with the remembrance of their former successes, similar triumphs were eagerly anticipated. Men put on the blouse as though it were a talisman destined to strike terror into the hearts of the invaders. The streets and highways resounded with songs of vic-

tory, and the captive hosts of the enemy were already led in anticipated triumph to the capital.

Whatever might have been the feelings of the monarch at this unlooked-for intelligence, he concealed them beneath an air of perfect coolness and self-possession, which never once forsook him during this arduous and critical period. Hastening from Liege to Brussels, he summoned a council of war, and adopted every possible precaution that prudence suggested, or the resources of the country would permit. While the regulars and reserves were everywhere put in motion, Charles de Brouckère, who had replaced De Sauvage at the home department, directed the instant assemblage of the civic guards; to whom their commander in chief, Emanuel D'Hoogvorst, issued a general order, designating the different points of rendezvous, and announcing his intention to await them upon the frontier. Being resolved to share the fate of the inhabitants of Antwerp, should the interruption of the armistice lead to any serious misfortune, Leopold removed his head-quarters to that city on the afternoon of the 4th; not, however, without issuing a proclamation, appealing to the courage of the nation, and summoning them to follow him to the post of danger.* This appeal was promptly, enthusiastically responded to. The streets of Brussels, and the roads leading to the frontier, were crowded with volunteers, loudly demanding to be led to battle. There was no lack of courage or good-will amongst them. But being without organization, necessities, or provisions; being, in fact, a mere motley congregation of armed men, without unity or a shadow of discipline, their presence was more detrimental than beneficial to the defence of the country. They might have been of some value for bush

* See Appendix, No. 34.

or street fighting, but to employ them in the open field was but to lead them to certain defeat. Five thousand well organized troops would have been of more value than these myriads of willing but useless auxiliaries. But the moment was now passed, it was too late to apply the remedy. The gangrene of insubordination and confusion had penetrated to the very marrow. Never was a country surprised in a situation so utterly defenceless; never was victory more certain, or more easily obtained.

An attempt having been made by Major-general Tabor, the commandant of Antwerp, to induce Chassé to consent to the neutrality of the city, the latter declined; more, however, with the view of augmenting the general panic and confusion, than with any serious intention of injuring the inhabitants. The consequent terror of these poor people was intense. The horrors of the former bombardment recurred in all its freshness to their minds. Such as could move, again fled, carrying with them their lightest valuables. The suburbs and roads towards South Brabant were crowded with weeping fugitives of all ages and sexes, intermingled with peasants and droves of cattle escaping from the inundated polders. The alarm of those that were compelled to remain, though somewhat allayed by the presence of the king on the night of the 4th, was vividly increased on the following morning; for Chassé, being determined to destroy the Belgic batteries erected in front of St. Laurent, had ordered a sortie in that quarter, which he supported with his heavy guns. This enterprise was successfully executed by a detachment of 800 men, who, filing round the covered way behind the Lunette Kiel, gallantly sprang into the Belgian trenches, and after routing a battalion which fled in confusion, spiked the guns, and then withdrew in good order into the citadel.

General Belliard, who had returned to Brussels as minister plenipotentiary to the court of Leopold, and had followed the king to Antwerp, had also attempted on the previous evening to obtain a prolongation of the convention; but having failed, renewed the negotiation on the 5th, declaring that France and the great powers had taken the city under their protection, and that Chassé would be held responsible for the consequences. The veteran governor having succeeded in his sortie, and being no way disposed to injure the city, consented to suspend operations until he should receive instructions from his government. And although the latter refused to ratify the renewal of the armistice, it was eventually settled that there should be no resumption of hostilities unless provoked by the Belgians. The security of Antwerp being thus in some measure guaranteed, the king removed his head-quarters to Malines on the 5th, and having quickly penetrated the designs of the Dutch, issued pressing orders to Daine to make a left flank movement, so as to unite himself with the army of the Scheldt in the neighbourhood of Westerloo, on the Nethe. Instructions were at the same time sent to Tieken to move by his right in the same direction. Daine, however, thought proper to disobey, and thus destroyed the only possible chance there was of concentrating the whole army, and perhaps of arresting the progress of the enemy by forcing him to give battle in a disadvantageous position. It was the disobedience of these orders, which might and ought to have been executed on the night of the 6th or the morning of the 7th, that mainly contributed to the subsequent disasters. General opinion severely censured Daine's conduct, not so much for the loss of a battle, but because, in despite of reiterated commands, he assumed the responsibility of maintaining his position, and thus exposed, not only his own

troops but those under Tieken, to inevitable destruction.

In the meantime the confusion of the military authorities at Antwerp, and indeed in every other part of the country, was only to be equalled by the storm of indignation that burst upon Defailly for the miserable state of inefficiency into which the army had fallen. Shouts of treason and Orangism assailed him from every quarter. For the people, ignorant and unreflecting, attributed to treachery that which in fact emanated from causes beyond the control of Defailly, or of any previous minister. Such was the fury of the populace both at Antwerp and Malines, that he was more than once exposed to imminent danger; and it is probable that his life would have fallen a sacrifice to the exasperation of the multitude, had he not escaped from Antwerp to Malines, and been dispatched by the king from the latter place on the evening of the 5th, with orders to accelerate the junction of Daine's corps.

Thus matters stood until the 7th, when the Dutch recommenced their forward movement, with the intention of surrounding and cutting off Daine, who, as if he had been playing his adversary's game, persisted in keeping his ground in front of Hasselt, and even allowed the Duke of Saxe Weimar to turn his left flank, and to penetrate to St. Trond, and thus to intercept the high road to Brussels. The plan of the invading army was simple, and well adapted for success. Van Gheen threw himself into Diest. Meyer, after a sharp affair of outposts, took up a position near Herck; Cort-Heiligers advanced in the direction of Sonhoven, and a detachment from Maestricht moved upon Tongres, whilst the Duke of Saxe Weimar made himself master of St. Trond. On the following morning, the various dispo-

sitions being completed, the Prince of Orange, at the head of the first and third divisions, with forty-eight field-pieces, advanced upon Curingen and Hasselt, supported by the whole of his cavalry and reserves, with the exception of one brigade left at Diest; while Cort-Heiligers moved from Sonhoven, and the whole now fell upon Daine's corps. The latter, without scarcely waiting for the attack, threw down their arms, and fled in a state of unparalleled disorder to the gates of Liege; leaving behind them nearly seven hundred killed, wounded, and missing, and abandoning five field-pieces, seven ammunition waggons, and the greater part of their baggage and camp equipage. Successful opposition against such overwhelming numbers was not to be expected, from a force so inefficient; but the panic and rout that took place rendered this affair one of the most painful that ever occurred to any body of troops arrogating to themselves the name of an army. There were doubtless several instances of distinguished valour on the part of isolated detachments and individuals; but, regarding the affair as a general action, nothing could be more deplorable. Ignorant of the full extent of his triumph, the Prince of Orange ordered the Duke of Saxe Weimar to rejoin the main body, and maintained his head-quarters at Curingen on the 8th, and only removed as far as Hasselt on the 9th, with the intention of pursuing an enemy whom he still expected to find in position near Tongres. Having at length received information that he had no opponents in his front, and that Boecop, with a detachment from Maestricht, occupied Tongres, it was resolved to bring up the left shoulder, and to march upon Louvain on the 10th. Therefore, while the second division, with the light cavalry, pushed on to the banks of the Geete, within a league of Tirlemont, the third division and heavy ca-

valry occupied St. Trond, and the whole of the first division united at Diest. Cort-Heiligers remained at Hasselt, and the heavy cavalry and reserve artillery were cantoned at Looz. On the 11th, the whole army, with the exception of Cort-Heiligers and Boecop, who were left to watch Venloo and Liege, advanced slowly on Louvain, and established their outposts near Boutersem. By this movement Tieken's right flank was endangered, and a retrograde movement became necessary.

In the meantime king Leopold, having removed his head-quarters to Aerschot on the 8th, ordered Tieken's corps to assemble in front of that place, in the direction of Westmerbeek, with the intention of driving the Dutch out of Montaigu, and meeting Daine, who was expected to execute his movement of junction at latest on the evening of that day.

On joining the troops, Leopold was received with loud acclamations, and appears to have been so well satisfied with the ardour and good disposition of the different regiments, that he forthwith addressed a letter to General Belliard, in which, after alluding to this subject, he says, "the circumstances are so favourable, that I think it urgent to stop the movement of Marshal Gerard. This feeling strongly prevails throughout the whole army, and I think we ought to fight without foreign assistance. I also think, that for the sake of a good understanding between the powers, it is absolutely desirable not to let the marshal advance until urgent circumstances shall require it."*

A despatch from Mr. Van de Weyer, the Belgic envoy in London, which reached Brussels on the 7th, served to

* Letter from Leopold to General Belliard, dated Aerschot, 8th of August, 1831. This letter was of course written under the impression that Daine would execute the king's orders to form a junction with Tieken

augment the confidence of the king, and to exhilarate the spirits of the soldiers, to whom its substance was immediately communicated. Circumstantial reports of a revolt among the Belgian troops in the Dutch service in Batavia, and of the consequent occupation of that valuable colony in the name of the revolutionary government, having reached London from Java, Mr. Van de Weyer lost no time in communicating the intelligence to his government. This report, though much too lightly credited, was not altogether devoid of probability. For although the utmost vigilance was exercised by the Dutch government in preventing intelligence of passing events from being spread among the Belgic and French soldiers, who composed at least two-thirds of the general total of the colonial force, yet sufficient was known amongst them to create an ardent desire to espouse the national cause, or at all events to escape from a service where they had become the objects of suspicion and injustice, while their juniors at home were reaping rewards and rapid advancement. The Belgian government is accused of having invented this intelligence for the purpose of sustaining the drooping courage of the people. This accusation is unjust; but even admitting that it were not so, the stratagem at the moment would have been excusable.

The king, having concentrated Tieken's corps, and assembled a numerous body of civic guards, which swelled this force to 15,000 men, was already advancing upon Montaigu, when the intelligence of Daine's discomfiture reached head-quarters. This unlooked-for misfortune rendered an instant change of operations imperative. It was evident that the Dutch would not, or rather *ought* not, to lose a moment in pressing upon Brussels; and consequently the only chance of saving the capital was to fall back with all possible speed on Louvain, and by taking

up a position before that place, to endeavour to arrest the enemy's progress until the arrival of the French auxiliary force, which General Belliard had sent for the moment he became acquainted with the defeat at Hasselt. Consequently, the Scheldt army, which had now dwindled away to little more than 8,000 regulars, with eighteen field pieces, retired upon Aerschot, and on the evening of the 10th bivouacked in front of Louvain, with their outposts at Boutersem.

To describe the confusion that reigned at Louvain at this moment would be as difficult as to account for the tardy advance of the Dutch. With the exception of the king, Mr. de Brouckère, and a few others, the whole staff appeared to be overwhelmed by the danger of their position. A mournful foreboding enfeebled the energies of the officers; but the men, ignorant of their peril, and indifferent to moral results, seemed but little discouraged. Crowded with volunteers, artillery waggons, and baggage, Louvain presented an indescribable chaos. There was no regularity, no order—all commanded, none obeyed. The profoundest inattention to the ordinary rules of defence was exhibited, and the most necessary precautions neglected. Many of those who had started from Brussels armed to the very teeth, and vexing the air with bombastic shouts of defiance, were now seen anxiously retracing their steps, crest-fallen, dejected, and fully aware that if the French army did not arrive promptly, Brussels would be lost. Some of them were so satisfied of this fact that they deemed it prudent to seek safety in the distant provinces. Indeed, had the Prince of Orange, in lieu of wasting valuable time in making reconnoissances and collecting information, boldly pushed on with the second and third divisions and light cavalry by the high road, while Van Gheen and the heavy brigade manœuvred on his right, he might easily

have reached the heights commanding Louvain on the evening of the 10th, and would have surprised Clump's brigade of Belgians, harassed and fatigued, in the act of filing through the long narrow streets, and either have cut them to pieces as they debouched from the city, or forced them to fly in confusion towards Malines ;—an operation the more easy, since, until dusk on the evening of the 10th, there was not a man between Louvain and St. Trond, save a few weak detachments of civic guards and a score of mounted gendarmes, who must have retired at the first serious approach of his advanced guard. But the afternoon of the 8th, the whole of the 9th, 10th, and 11th were frittered away in feeling the ground, and in advancing about twenty-eight miles ; so that it was not until the evening of the latter day that the heads of the Dutch columns reached Boutersem, whence they were subsequently withdrawn to Roosbeek, after a sharp skirmish with the Belgian outposts, whose main force had taken up a position on the heights behind the former village.

Finding their adversaries weak and demoralized, without cavalry, and with a comparatively insignificant artillery, the Dutch generals at length roused themselves from their lethargy, and prepared for more vigorous action. A general attack was determined upon, but, though ably planned, it was feebly and slowly executed. At day-break the first division and heavy cavalry, advancing from St. Jorres Winghe, moved round the heights of Pellenberg, and menaced the Belgian left flank. The third division, holding to the Tirlemont Chaussée, manœuvred on the centre ; and the Duke of Saxe Weimar, with the second division and light cavalry, obliquing to the left, crossed the Dyle between Corbeek and Heverlé, and thus completely turning the Belgian right, threw himself in their rear, and taking possession of the Brussels road, cut off the

communication between Louvain and the capital, and pushed on his vedettes in the direction of Cortenberg and Terveuren. In the event of defeat—and defeat was inevitable—the only prospect of escape for the Belgians was by the narrow road on the banks of the Malines canal; and this could only be effected under a heavy fire, and amidst the confusion resulting from retreating through the long and tortuous streets of a city, encumbered with baggage and artillery.

This affair has been dignified by the Dutch with the name of a battle. It was at best but a severe skirmish; executed, it is true, on the part of the assailants, with the steadiness and precision of a sham-fight, and on that of the Belgians with all the courage that circumstances admitted.—But the latter, though full of ardour at first, were soon discouraged, and lost confidence in themselves and their officers, especially when they discovered the desertion of the civic guards, who, with few exceptions, fled in every direction, casting away their arms and accoutrements. The effective force was thus reduced to little more than 7,000 men. Disheartened and outnumbered in every direction, these successively fell back from position to position, until being completely outflanked, they were compelled to take refuge behind the walls of the city. It was in vain that Leopold and his staff rode into the hottest of the fire, and with admirable coolness and self-possession, endeavoured to supply the deficiency of numbers by the ability of his dispositions.—It was in vain that he multiplied himself in every direction, and performed the united duties of king, general, and subaltern. The odds were too powerful, the discouragement too great. Flight or surrender were the only alternatives. His situation was most critical; but the inertness of his opponents saved him. Had the Prince of Orange availed himself of his numerous and brilliant cavalry;

had he dashed forward with that daring spirit which was once his characteristic on the field of battle, and had he not been shackled by the drowsy routine of Dutch tactics—neither the king nor a man of his army ought to have escaped. It is true that his royal highness, who had a horse shot under him, displayed his wonted gallantry and indifference to personal peril; but his movements were not sufficiently accelerated, and although his enemies retired before him in confusion, there was an utter want on his part of that rapidity and decision which are essential to decisive actions. The manœuvres ought to have been executed at the charge step—they were performed at funeral pace. He was, however, moving forward and preparing to follow up his successes, when a flag of truce appeared upon the high road, and arrested him in his career.

The bearer of this was Lord William Russell, charged with a letter from the British ambassador, Sir Robert Adair, who having reached Brussels on the afternoon of the 9th, lost no time in hastening to the royal headquarters. The purport of this letter was to demand a suspension of arms, and to inform the Prince of Orange that the French advanced guard had already reached Wavre on his flank, and Brussels in his front. The victorious general, bitterly disappointed at an intervention which threatened to rob him of the fruits of victory, was little disposed to consent; but knowing the inutility of opposing Marshal Gerard, and feeling that enough had been done to humiliate his enemy, if not to re-establish the character of the Dutch army, he directed his aide-de-camp, Count Stirum, to return with Lord William Russell, in order to verify the fact of the French advance. In the meantime, however, his troops continued their forward movement.

Finding that Lord William Russell had failed in the

principal object of his mission, and that not a moment should be lost in relieving Leopold from his hazardous position, Sir Robert Adair determined to proceed in person towards the prince. Hastily throwing himself across the first horse he could procure, the veteran diplomatist galloped through the confused masses which encumbered the streets and suburbs of the city, and reckless of all personal danger, gallantly traversed the fire of the contending parties, who utterly regardless of the flag of truce, borne by the ambassador's attendant, continued a sharp but irregular combat. Having reached the prince, whom he found advancing at the head of his skirmishers, Sir Robert earnestly insisted on a suspension of arms ; which, after considerable discussion, was acceded to, on condition that the Belgic troops should evacuate Louvain, and deliver up the city to the Dutch. These preliminaries being determined upon, a convention was drawn up, and signed by General Goblet on the part of the Belgian government ; and, after an accidental renewal of the cannonade, to which a few Dutch officers and soldiers fell victims ; orders were sent to the Duke of Saxe Weimar to halt, and thus hostilities terminated.

In the meantime, General Belliard, who had remained at Louvain on the 9th, no sooner heard of Daine's derout, an event which he had probably foreseen, than without waiting to consult the king, he dispatched a courier to Marshal Gerard, urging him not to lose a moment in pressing the march of his troops both on the front and flank of the advancing enemy. In consequence of this, the army of the north, which had already drawn close to the frontier, broke up from its cantonments in three columns early in the morning of the 10th. The right debouching from Givet on Namur ; the centre from Maubeuge and Valenciennes on Wavre and Brussels ; and the left entering

from Lille by Tournay, directing itself upon the Flanders. The march of these troops was so rapid, that the leading brigade under the Duke of Orleans reached Brussels before mid-day on the 12th, while that of General de la Woesteen, simultaneously traversed Wavre; thus performing a distance of more than sixty miles in little more than two days. On the morning of the 13th, the French vedettes were pushed on to Cortenberg, Terveuren, and Grez, within sight of those of the Dutch. On the same day the Prince of Orange and Marshal Gerard concluded a convention, by which it was stipulated that the Dutch army should forthwith commence its retrograde movement, by Tirlemont, St. Trond, and Hasselt, followed by the French, who were to escort them to the frontiers. By the 20th, the whole of the former had regained the limits of North Brabant, and on the following morning, the French troops falling back upon the positions they had occupied on the 13th and 14th, remained in cantonments until final arrangements were completed for their evacuating the Belgic territory. Some difficulties and discussions had arisen as to this point; discussions that for a moment cast a shade over the amicable relations of the British and French diplomatists at Brussels. But, through the discretion and temper of both parties, these difficulties were speedily removed, and the French gave another convincing proof of their good faith and anxious desire to maintain peace, first by withdrawing 20,000 men, and then by recalling the whole of their forces; the last of which recrossed the frontier on the 31st.

The panic and confusion that reigned at Brussels, at the near approach of the Dutch forces, was augmented on its being known that the advanced guard was commanded by the Duke of Saxe Weimar, the man of all others most dreaded by the patriots. The insults that had been so lavishly cast upon that prince, were expected

to be repaid with ten-fold interest. No mercy was awaited at hands so embittered. In truth, the ungracious language of the duke in the presence of Lord W. Russell, and his still more intemperate treatment of Colonel Prisse, the Belgian officer who had been entrusted with a flag of truce, afforded some grounds for sinister apprehensions.* Violent and hasty, however, as his highness might have been, some allowance must be made for the irritation of his feelings. The defeats of September and October, and the calumnies heaped on himself by the Belgic press and people, had long rankled in his heart. The time for avenging these injuries, and for retorting upon a hated enemy the humiliation he had received, had arrived. Flushed with success, and having nothing between him and the capital but a flying, terror-stricken foe, he found himself suddenly arrested by the fiat of diplomacy—forerunner of the strong arm of French intervention. The sword which he had hoped to sheathe in the hearts of those whom he designated as rebellious traitors, was thus doomed to return half blooded to the scabbard, and all farther dreams of revenge and glory vanished.

The alarm of the people on receiving the intelligence of Daine's defeat, and the consequent retreat of Tieken's corps, was only to be equalled by the confusion which pervaded every branch of the administration. The most

* The manner in which the duke permitted himself to speak of the King of England was such as to call forth the utmost indignation on the part of the gallant and loyal soldier in whose presence it was uttered. A Russell, and of all Russells perhaps Lord William, was the last man to allow any one, no matter what his rank, to speak in unbecoming terms of his sovereign. A personal encounter would probably have been the result of this affair had not the British government, at the suggestion of Sir Robert Adair, taken the subject in hand, and preferred a formal complaint to the cabinet of the Hague.

prominent personages of the revolution, especially such as held themselves liable to the re-action of Dutch vengeance, either fled or took measures to secure a hasty retreat. The streets were almost deserted ; the shouts of triumph and defiance that had hitherto rent the air, were hushed. Anxiety and dejection were depicted on every countenance, save here and there where a few partisans of the old government were seen, maliciously sneering at the discomfiture of the patriots, and eagerly looking towards the roads by which they expected the arrival of their ancient masters. Some even went so far as to prepare congratulatory addresses and banquets for the prince, whose victorious entry was regarded as inevitable ; for the city lay at his mercy, disheartened and defenceless. Any attempt at resistance would have been in fact preposterous. Grown wise by experience, it could not be supposed that the Dutch generals would again compromise their honour and the lives of their men by an assault. A bombardment was looked on as inevitable. Indeed, had cannon or howitzers not been employed, there would have been no opposition. The spirit and energy that characterized the defence of September, had ebbed away. The blouse had lost its infallibility ; it had become an object of derision to the enemy. The cabinet council met, but could advise nothing. The regency also assembled, but was equally at a loss how to act. To do them all justice, their own distress was considerably augmented by their regrets for the painful position of the king, whose flight or capture was deemed inevitable. The sturdy old burgomaster, Rouppe, proposed sounding the tocsin, and making an appeal to the spirit of the people ; while the few military men remaining in the capital made a demonstration of defence, by placing four or five cannon at the Louvain and Namur gates, and posting the sedentary civic guards

upon the boulevards. But the futility of resistance was so evident, that the more prudent, and those were the majority, held it advisable to consider the best means of deprecating the wrath of the enemy, and thus, by timely capitulation, to secure the city from the disasters which threatened it, should the Dutch reach its walls before the expected succour from France. Such was the state of affairs, until positive intelligence was received of the approach of the army of the north. Indeed, it was not until the bayonets of the French advance guard were seen glittering on the heights leading from Hal, that confidence was perfectly restored, and the citizens and government once more breathed freely.

The policy or utility of an expedition undertaken with the foreknowledge of Prussian neutrality, and in the face of British and French armed intervention, has been much questioned. It is true that the invaders were far from reaping all the advantages which might have been derived from their own superiority, and the weakness of their enemy, had they exerted greater activity and energy; but there can be little doubt that essential moral benefits were produced by the short campaign, the plan of which had been long digested, and even submitted to the judgment of some of the ablest foreign strategists, one of whom, the Prussian Colonel Scharnhorst, accompanied the Dutch head-quarters. In the first place, the expedition roused and animated the Dutch nation and army, and rallied them more firmly than ever round the throne. Secondly, it replaced the heir apparent in the confidence of the troops, and affection of the people, who had nether pardoned him his long predilection for the Belgians, nor his proceedings when at Antwerp. Thirdly, it restored the honour of the Netherlands soldiers, which had been so cruelly wounded by the deplorable failure at Brussels, and the no less in-

glorious defeats of Walhem and Berchem. Not that this was strictly just, for although there may be much glory in successes obtained by a handful of undisciplined volunteers, over regular troops provided with cavalry, efficient artillery, and all the proper appurtenances of war—yet no great honour can be acquired when the tables are reversed, and the victory is gained by disciplined and well-appointed troops over a mere armed multitude. Fourthly, it turned the tide of general sympathy more strongly than ever in favour of Holland, while it covered their adversaries with contempt and ridicule; a contumely rendered still more galling from the previous vauntings and bombastic bravadoes of the Belgic press and congress. Fifthly, it operated so favourably in a political point of view, as to lead to the retraction of the eighteen articles, and to a nearer approach to the original basis of separation. In short, had not France intervened, the Dutch might have fulfilled their intentions of dictating their conditions from the capital of Belgium. However liable to criticism the military operations might have been, as regarded the impetus of execution, still the plan was admirably adapted to ensure success, and afforded convincing proofs of the irresistible superiority of unity and subordination over dissension and anarchy. The expedition produced another benefit, since it demonstrated to Europe the utter inefficiency of disorganized bodies, when acting in the open field against regular troops. The extraordinary successes gained by the patriots in 1830 had gone far to subvert the established tactical maxims derived from the experience of ages; the disaster of 1831 restored the question to its proper footing.

CHAPTER X.

MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE—SUSPENSION OF ARMS—
 PROTOCOL RELATIVE TO THE DEMOLITION OF CERTAIN FOR-
 TRETTES—NEGOTIATIONS RENEWED—NOTES OF THE CONFER-
 ENCE, RELATIVE TO THE CELEBRATED TREATY OF THE TWENTI-
 FOUR ARTICLES—DISCUSSION AND ACCEPTATION OF THIS TREATY
 BY THE BELGIANS—ITS RATIFICATION BY THE GREAT POWERS—
 RESERVES OF RUSSIA, AUSTRIA, AND PRUSSIA—REMONSTRANCES
 AND REJECTION OF THE HAGUE CABINET—REPLY OF THE CON-
 FERENCE—MEASURES OF MILITARY ORGANIZATION ADOPTED IN
 BELGIUM—C. DE BROUCKERE, EVAÏN, DESPREZ—FOREIGN OF-
 FICERS ADMITTED INTO THE BELGIAN SERVICE—ORGANIZATION
 OF KING LEOPOLD'S HOUSEHOLD—BARON DE STOCKMAR—MEA-
 SURES ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE TO INDUCE THE KING OF
 HOLLAND TO EXECUTE THE CONDITIONS IMPOSED UPON HIM—
 LORD PALMERSTON'S THEME—MARRIAGE OF LEOPOLD WITH THE
 PRINCESS LOUISA OF ORLEANS.

WHILE these events were passing in Belgium, the Con-
 ference lost no time in adopting measures to arrest the
 further progress of hostilities. Their note of the 5th of
 August was immediately followed by the protocol of the
 6th (No. 31), sanctioning French intervention by land,
 and accepting the offer of a British squadron, destined
 to blockade the Dutch ports. It was stipulated, how-
 ever, that the French troops should confine their opera-
 tions to the left bank of the Meuse, that neither Maes-
 tricht nor Venloo should on any account be invested,
 and that the auxiliary army should retire within the
 French limits as soon as the armistice should be re-es-
 tablished on the previous footing. This protocol was
 backed by an energetic remonstrance on the part of the
 French government, denouncing the rupture of the ar-
 mistice "as an unjust aggression," and direct violation of
 Belgic neutrality and independence "*recognized by the*

great powers ;” and stating that, “ if the Dutch troops did not immediately retire within the line of the armistice, they would have to encounter a French army.” This was replied to by the Dutch cabinet in a note of the 9th, in which, while it very justly declared that it was ignorant that the independence of Belgium had been recognized by the great powers, it speciously pretended that “ the march of the Dutch army, far from concerning or compromising the independence or neutrality of Belgium, had no other object than to realize the coercive measures announced by the five powers, in the event of Belgium not accepting the annex A of the 12th protocol, and consequently that it was impossible to qualify this movement as ‘an unjust aggression,’ without admitting that the five powers had committed an act of injustice in establishing the basis of separation. Such being the case, it was hoped that a French army would not be sent into Belgium, but that if the French government persisted in its intention, the Dutch troops should forthwith be recalled within their own territory.” The forward movement of the Prince of Orange on the 10th, 11th, and 12th, and the disbelief evinced by his royal highness of the arrival of Marshal Gerard’s army, sufficiently prove that these operations were undertaken under the erroneous impression that, although the Conference had often menaced intervention, the mutual jealousy of the great powers was too great ever to admit the actual entry into Belgium of a French army. Indeed, the clamours that were raised in England, and the doubts that were thrown upon the loyalty and good faith of the French government, were sufficient to corroborate this supposition. It is true the powers had menaced coercive measures ; but in so doing they never intended either that Belgium or Holland should take the law into their own hands. On the contrary, their threatened interference was expressly intended to prevent any col-

lision between the principal parties. This was the principle acted upon in August, 1831, and at the subsequent siege of the citadel in 1832.

The retreat of the Dutch troops having been communicated to the Conference, the plenipotentiaries issued the 32nd and 33rd protocols, certifying this event, and urging a six weeks' suspension of arms, and an immediate renewal of the negotiations. This proposition was accepted by Holland on the 29th, but was not unreservedly acceded to by the adverse party. The Belgic government demanded sundry preliminary explanations:—1st, As to the nature of the guarantee to be given by the powers to prevent a renewal of hostilities; and 2ndly, whether, at the expiration of the given period, each party would be at liberty to have recourse to arms without further notice. This hesitation on the part of Belgium, was the natural result of the late aggression, effected in the midst of a suspension of arms which had also been *guaranteed* by the great powers. Its sudden violation rendered it imperative on the government to secure themselves as far as possible from all chance of a similar surprise. The discussions consequent upon this subject, and those relative to the payment of the expenses which France was disposed to saddle on Belgium, were the principal causes that prevented the immediate withdrawal of the French army. To these reclamations the Conference returned a brief and vague explanation—but preremptorily declared that they considered “the renewed suspension of arms as reciprocally accepted, and consequently that an armistice subsisted and would subsist from the 29th of August to the 10th of October, under the guarantee of the five courts.”*

The inability of the powers to restrain Holland from

* Protocol 37, 30th of August.

its former aggression, naturally awakened general scepticism as to the efficacy of their present guarantee; therefore the Belgic government considered it their duty to protest in the most forcible manner against the faculty of either party to recommence hostilities at the expiration of the original term. However, when this term arrived, it formally acceded to a prorogation of the armistice until the 25th. This period being expired, no farther renewal took place; and thus, according to the strict letter, each party was at liberty to attack the other without the formality of a preliminary declaration. In the meantime, and in virtue of the protocol of the 10th of September (No. 40), the whole of the prisoners were exchanged without regard to rank or number on either side; a circumstance not unworthy of remark, since the amount of Dutch detained in Belgium far exceeded that of the Belgians who were captive in Holland.

In the meantime an underplot, subsidiary to the grand political drama, had long occupied the attention of Great Britain and the northern powers, and given rise to important negotiations; which, however, had nearly fallen to the ground, not so much from any hostility to the principle, as from difference of opinion as to the minor details and mode of execution. As early as the beginning of April, the plenipotentiaries of Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia had deliberated on the measures necessary to be adopted at some future epoch in regard to such Netherlands fortresses as had been constructed at the expense of these four countries. or, more properly speaking, at that of Great Britain. Consequently, on the 17th of April, a protocol was drawn up, stating that the novel position of Belgium and her "neutrality, acknowledged and guaranteed by France, would be such as required a modi-

fication of the defensive system adopted for the Netherlands kingdom: that the fortresses in question were too numerous for the resources of Belgium, and unnecessary for her defence as a neutral state; consequently, that a part of these fortresses erected under different auspices, might henceforth be dispensed with."

This document was officially withheld from Prince Talleyrand until the 14th of July, and was not intended to be communicated to the Belgic government until a later period, but a demand for the production of papers relative to the Belgic question having been made in parliament, Lord Palmerston was unwilling that the first intelligence should reach the cabinet at Brussels through the ordinary public channels, and consequently forwarded the protocol to Mr. Lebeau on the 26th of July with a letter of envoy and explanation. After consulting the French cabinet, who dispatched the Marquis de la Tour Maubourg to Brussels in order to assist General Belliard and Sir R. Adair in conducting a negotiation eminently calculated to excite French susceptibilities, the Belgic government charged General Goblet to proceed to London early in September, on a special mission to the same effect. In despite of the numerous difficulties that presented themselves, a definitive convention was unanimously and cordially concluded on the 14th of December, by which it was stipulated that "the fortifications of Mons, Ath, Menin, Philippeville, and Marienbourg, should be demolished as soon as the entire independence and neutrality of Belgium was so fully established and guaranteed by the five powers, as to constitute an identical connexion between her and those fortresses."

The policy of this measure as severally regarded the contracting parties has been much questioned. Powerful strategical and political arguments have been ad-

duced to shew the danger of thus annihilating one of the proudest results of the Vienna treaty. These arguments, principally founded on the anterior condition of the Netherlands kingdom, would doubtless be incontrovertible, supposing the reconstruction of that kingdom, and the permanent union or amalgamation of the two people, were again possible. But without this, the object and advantages of preserving the fortresses must be completely neutralized. Firstly, as regards Belgium, their maintenance would only be a source of extraordinary expenditure during peace, and of devastation and permanent military occupation during war. They could only serve as objects of jealousy and discussion ; as a rallying point for foreign armies, and as an additional pretext for the adoption of various measures incompatible with the interests of a neutral state. In short, while they could in no way conduce to her defence, they might be instrumental to her subjection. For, supposing the aggression to come from the south, a French army could at any moment step in and take possession, many days before a Prussian force could arrive to garrison or relieve them ; whereas, supposing the inroad to come from the north, they might tend to maintain the theatre of war in Belgium, but could in no way operate as a protection. Secondly, it is evident under existing institutions that most of the latter observations are applicable to the northern powers, and that these fortresses, intended as a barrier against France, would now be an additional obstacle to her enemies ; for being placed astride on the great roads leading from Brussels to Valenciennes and Lille, their investment and possession would become indispensably necessary ere an army could attempt to penetrate into the department of the north. To mask or leave them behind, if well provisioned and garrisoned, would be too dangerous. To attack them would involve an immense

loss of time and life, and would most probably defeat the object of a campaign requiring the rapid movements that are essential to the success of all aggressive operations against France. It must also be remarked, that although they may be considered as forming an integral part of the French line of defence, yet, that not being actually within the French territory, their downfall would produce no moral effects in France, and would still leave the French triple line of strong holds intact: while, on the other hand, their defence would give time for strengthening and arming these strong holds for concentrating troops, for organizing the national guards, and for taking other powerful measures to insure the integrity of the French soil. Whether France is equally interested in the demolition, is somewhat more problematical. If victorious, she certainly would require no extraneous addition to her numerous frontier defences. Moving with her wonted celerity, her generals would at once carry their arms beyond the Meuse and Rhine, so as to remove the theatre of war as far as possible from her own limits. But if unsuccessful, the very arguments that are prejudicial to the northern allies, are applicable in an inverse sense to France. On the other hand, supposing these fortresses to follow the inevitable destiny of all fortified places, if not relieved from without, their surrender would entail the loss of many thousand chosen troops, and they would then become eminently dangerous, by forming a point of support to an enemy in case of advance, and of retreat and refuge in case of defeat.

The convention relative to the fortresses having been carried on and concluded without the privacy of Holland, that power protested against this omission, in its note of the 12th of December, 1831; in which it declared that the rights of the king to co-operate in their negotiation were insured to him both by the barrier

system and by the 7th article of the treaty of London, which stipulated that this object interested the safety and independence of his whole kingdom. But this objection was over-ruled by the Conference. The barrier-system was declared to have become invalid—the eight articles of the London treaty were stated to be applicable to the Netherlands kingdom, and not to the two countries now detached and independent of each other, and it was said that the bulwark formerly derived by Holland from the barrier-system would be replaced by the neutrality of Belgium, without the expensive obligation of maintaining garrisons for the defence of the fortresses.

To resume—the Dutch and Belgic plenipotentiaries having received the necessary powers to treat for a definitive solution, the renewal of the negotiations placed the Conference in a situation of no ordinary embarrassment—embarrassments that could only be overcome by perfect unity and firmness ; by the revocation of resolutions declared to be irrevocable ; by construing various stipulations, in a sense essentially different from that in which they had hitherto been interpreted ; by undoing the provisions of 40 protocols, and in short by adopting such a system as might have the effect of depressing the extremities of the two parallel lines on which Holland and Belgium had hitherto been moving, so as to form an angle of junction—no matter how distant. This was no easy matter, either as regarded the consistency of past reasoning, or the legality of future acts. The ground on which both parties moved, was so totally opposed as to offer no prospect of convergency unless the Conference boldly and unhesitatingly took the law into their own hands. For on the one side, victorious Holland insisted on the execution of the basis of separation according to the 12th protocol ; while on the other, Belgium defeated, but not less tenacious,

demanded the strict execution of the eighteen articles, to which they had adhered purely and simply, and with perfect confidence in the good faith of the great powers. It was, in fact, this confidence in the assurance of the five courts which had solely induced Leopold to waive all objections, and to proceed forthwith to Brussels:—
 “Will the great powers immediately recognize me,” said his royal highness, to the plenipotentiaries who had assembled at Marlborough house on the 12th of July.
 “Will they recognize me if I proceed to Belgium without awaiting the adhesion of the King of Holland?”
 “In despite of all” (*quand même*), replied Count Matuzewiz, “and in the event of his refusing, *we will discover means to compel him to consent.*”

Any attempt to reconcile interests so divergent as those of Belgium and Holland, or even to assimilate the two systems, appeared almost impracticable. As related to the question of limits, the basis of separation started by positively refusing the cession of Luxembourg, while the eighteen articles removed the *reto*, and suggested the possibility of exchange and compensation. As concerned the debt, the one, without regard to the commonest principle of equity, proposed a division in the proportion of $\frac{1}{4}$; whilst the other, annulling these unfair propositions, established that division according to the origin and amount prior to and during the union of the respective engagements. The position of the litigants has been thus clearly and concisely defined by Mr. Nothomb. Holland exclaimed, “I will have my ancient boundaries, but I will not take upon myself the whole of my ancient debts.” Belgium said, “I intend to appropriate to myself a portion of the ancient Dutch territory, but will not be saddled with any of the ancient Dutch engagements.” Thus Holland demanded the division of territory on the basis of 1790,

and that of the debt on the footing of 1830. Belgium, per contra, called for the latter according to the footing of 1790, and the former according to that of 1830." These few words fully demonstrate the difficulties of the negotiations, and the false ground on which both parties founded their pretensions. It was as unjust in Holland to desire to impose on Belgium any part of her ancient debt, as it was in Belgium to claim any portion of the ancient Dutch territory. But as neither could be induced to abandon its claims, all that remained for the Conference was to seek for an intermediary process that might harmonize with the wants, though it fell short of the pretensions of both. To think of submitting to the exigencies of either, without endangering the repose of Europe, was chimerical.

After six weeks' mature deliberation, the plenipotentiaries came to the resolution of retracting the greater part of their former conclusions by assimilating the principles of limits and debt; that is, by fixing the *postliminium* of 1790 as the point of departure for both. This was less unfavourable to Holland than the eighteen articles, and more advantageous to Belgium than the 12th protocol. The result of this resolution was the treaty of the twenty-four articles, commonly known as that of the 15th of November, 1831.* This important treaty, which has occupied so much of European attention, and which is destined to form the basis of Belgic independence, was accompanied by two prefatory notes, sufficiently indicative of the utter dissonance of the views and objects of the Dutch and Belgic governments, and the absolute necessity for the Conference to adopt its own line.

“The undersigned,” says the first of these documents,

* See Appendix, No. 35.

“regret to find that there is no approachment between the desires and opinions of the parties directly interested.* It being impossible, however, to abandon to further uncertainties, questions whose immediate solution has become a European necessity—compelled either to solve or to see them give rise to general war; and being fully enlightened upon all the points in discussion, the undersigned have merely obeyed a duty which their courts have to fulfil towards themselves as well as other states, a duty the more imperative, since all direct efforts at conciliation between Holland and Belgium have hitherto failed. In fixing the conditions of that definitive arrangement, the powers have only respected the supreme law of European interest, and yielded to the most imperious necessity.† In the conditions embraced by the annexed twenty-four articles, the Conference has only had in view the strict laws of equity. It has been actuated by an ardent desire to reconcile rights with interests, and to insure to Holland and Belgium reciprocal advantages, good frontiers, a territorial possession exempt from dispute, a liberty of commerce mutually beneficial, and an allotment of debt, which, resulting from an absolute community of charges and benefits, may henceforth separate these debts, less according to minute calculations, for which materials have not been furnished; less according to the rigour of treaties, than according to the principles of equity, which have been taken by them as the basis of every arrangement, and with the intention of relieving the burdens and promoting the prosperity of the two states.”

* Similar reflections were addressed to Barons Falk and Van Zeuyl de Neyevelde.

† The length, diffuseness, and even obscurity of the original has rendered curtailment and deviation from the literal language absolutely necessary.

The second note, which plainly shows that the Conference anticipated greater opposition on the part of Belgium than Holland : runs thus :—" The five courts, reserving to themselves the task, and *assuming the engagement of obtaining the adhesion of Holland to the articles in question, even though she should commence by rejecting them ; guaranteeing, moreover, their execution*, and convinced that these articles, founded on principles of incontestible equity, offer to Belgium all the advantages which she is entitled to reclaim, are bound to declare their firm determination to oppose, by all the means in their power, any renewal of a struggle, which, having no attainable object, would be a source of great misfortune to both countries, and would threaten Europe with that general war, which it is the paramount duty of the five powers to prevent. But the more this determination is calculated to tranquillize Belgium, as to her prospects and as to those circumstances, that now excite vivid alarm, the more do they authorize the five courts to employ all the means at their disposal to insure the consent of Belgium to the above-mentioned articles, in the unlooked-for event of her rejecting them."

It was on the 20th of October that this celebrated treaty was communicated, by the minister for foreign affairs, to the Belgic chambers, where it produced the most profound sensation of surprise and irritation. On the following day, Mr. de Muelenaere presented a royal ordonnance, countersigned by all the ministers, purporting that the king should be authorized to conclude and sign the treaty, but declaring in the preamble that it was *imposed* on the country. The project was ordered to be taken into consideration on the 26th, and, in despite of the clamours of the press and the exertions of the opposition, was carried affirmatively on the 1st of November, by a majority of fifty-nine to thirty-eight

in the lower, and thirty-five to eight in the upper house. Placed between the only two systems that governed Europe, having to choose between diplomacy and the sword, the Belgians wisely leaned to the former, and submitted to the sacrifices imposed upon them ; the most bitter of which was the abandonment of their fellow-countrymen in Limbourg and Luxembourg. In this pacific conduct they followed the good example of France, who had wisely renounced the hazardous glories of war, for the more durable advantages of peace. M. Van de Weyer, who had been charged by the king to support the bill in the chambers, having returned to London, the treaty, with three additional articles, was signed by him and the plenipotentiaries of the five powers, on the 15th of November. The unconditional ratification of the Belgic and French sovereigns bears date respectively on the 20th and 24th of November, 1831 ; that of Great Britain, on the 6th of December. But the courts of Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Vienna not having proceeded to ratify within the prescribed two months, their plenipotentiaries requested that the protocol of adhesion should remain open.* It was not until after the failure of Count Orloff's mission to the Hague, whither he had been sent from St. Petersburg, with the view of obtaining the adhesion of the Dutch monarch, and after the no less unsuccessful efforts of the other two northern powers to overcome the king's resolution, that the Austrian and Prussian plenipotentiaries exchanged ratifications on the 18th of April, and that of Russia on the 4th of May.

The two former, which had been signed by the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, the one on the 7th January, and the other on the 18th of March, were accompanied by the following observations :—

* Protocol 55, 31st of January, 1832.

"That the treaty was fully approved, excepting the reserve of the rights of the serene Germanic Confederation as to such articles as regarded the cession and exchange of the grand duchy." To the Russian ratification, signed by the emperor on the 18th of January, was adjoined the following reserve :—" We accept, affirm, and ratify the treaty, save and except such modifications and amendments as may be called for by the definitive arrangement between Holland and Belgium to the 9th, 12th, and 13th articles." A reserve in direct contradiction to the formal declaration of the note of the Conference of the 12th of November ; for this note, resulting from the promise made by the Belgic ministers to the chambers not to give their adhesion to the treaty until they had obtained, or attempted to obtain, sundry modifications, stated, that " neither the spirit nor letter of the twenty-four articles could undergo any modification, and that it was no longer in the power of the five courts to consent to a single one."

These ratifications being duly exchanged, the protocol of the 24th of May (No. 59) declared that the treaty of the 15th of November must henceforth be regarded as the invariable basis of separation, independence, and neutrality ; and that, while the Conference was resolved to spare no pains to induce the kings of Holland and Belgium to consent to a definitive transaction, " by which the treaty might receive full execution, they were equally determined *to oppose, by every means in their power, the renewal of hostilities between the two countries.*" This avowal was the more essential, as Lord Palmerston had been officially apprised by the Dutch foreign minister, that his sovereign had directed him to state " that the powers were at liberty to arm themselves against his measures or against his silence. That his majesty did not consider himself bound to advise them

of his intentions at the expiration of the armistice ; and even if he were so compelled, that many circumstances might arise before that period which might alter his intentions."* The tone of defiance and haughty contempt which the Netherlands government assumed, in regard to the Conference, not only betrayed its conviction that general war was inevitable, but afforded grounds for affirming that it was secretly supported and encouraged by some occult power. Even the final declaration of Count Orloff's note does not appear to have removed the delusion, as regarded the first, however much it may be calculated in appearance to disprove the prevalent opinion of the insincerity of the cabinet of St. Petersburg. "Although his imperial majesty," says Count Orloff, "will not associate himself in the employment of coercive measures, the object of which may be to force the king to subscribe to the twenty-four articles, he will not oppose any repressive measures adopted by the Conference to guarantee and defend Belgic neutrality, should it be violated on the part of Holland by a renewal of hostilities. Not being in the present conjuncture in a position to offer to the king of the Netherlands any more direct or useful proofs of amity and interest, the emperor leaves to the wisdom of the Hague cabinet the consideration of the consequences of a state of things that in his sincere and disinterested friendship he was desirous to avert."

In despite of every remonstrance, the refusal of the Dutch cabinet was peremptory and unequivocal. The memoir, in reply to the note of the Conference accompanying the treaty, contained a formal protestation against the twenty-four articles, as being essentially opposed to the twelfth and nineteenth protocols, to which it still

* Protocol 50, 21st of August, 1831.

declared its resolution to adhere. This document, like all other state papers emanating from the same source, was remarkable for its subtlety and powerful dialectic, but utterly incompatible with the new order of things. It commenced by complaining of the violation of the protocol of Aix-la-Chapelle,* by the exclusion of the Dutch plenipotentiaries from the deliberations of the Conference; it declared that it was not inclined to participate in the pacific views of the great powers, or to abandon its right of renewing hostilities; and that the twenty-four articles, so far from insuring advantages to Holland, imposed sacrifices to which no independent nation ever submitted. After objecting to every article in detail, it proposed various modifications, which were in fact but a mere return to the annex A. To this communication the Conference replied by a memoir of considerable length and ability. In this it defended its conduct from the charge of violating the protocol of Aix-la-Chapelle, by stating that although that protocol did expressly accord the right of participation to the plenipotentiary of any appealing power, it did not prescribe the forms of participation, and consequently left the Conference at liberty as to the mode of communication it might choose to select. It had, therefore, availed itself of this latitude by engaging the Dutch plenipotentiaries to expose their communications in writing. The memoir, after combatting each objection individually, proceeded to observe that the whole treaty was but the development of the "basis of separation" of the 27th of January, 1831; that the question of the grand duchy was sanctioned by the authority of the Germanic Confederation, in virtue of the resolutions of the Diet of the 9th of September, 1831, announced in its protocol, and this at the express

* 25th of November, 1818.

desire of the king of Holland. The concluding paragraph of this memoir, the greater portion of which is ascribed to the pen of Lord Palmerston, must not be passed over ; the arguments it puts forth are no less logical than just. By the twelfth protocol it was settled that the Belgic sovereign should accept the arrangements resulting from that protocol ; by the nineteenth, of which the Netherlands government invokes the authority, this acceptance was limited to certain fundamental arrangements—that is, to the territorial stipulations of the 12th.

“The letter addressed to the Conference by the Netherlands foreign minister on the 12th of July, declared that his majesty only had recourse to arms for the purpose of obtaining equitable conditions of separation, and that he treated as an enemy the sovereign that Belgium had elected, because that sovereign had not accepted those conditions which, according to this letter, were all founded upon the principles of the twelfth protocol and the dispositions of its annex A. Such being the engagements, and consequently the duties of the Conference, was it possible, without violating the faith of these engagements, to avoid the determination it had adopted ? Could it act otherwise, when such were the declarations of the Hague cabinet ? Especially as those declarations unequivocally admitted a change of sovereignty in Belgium, on equitable conditions ; and finally, as the new sovereign of Belgium, in subscribing to the twenty-four articles, accepted the territorial and personal stipulations, which have been shown to be conformable to the principles of the twelfth protocol, and the dispositions of the annex A.”

Between the 14th of September—on which day the Conference issued its fortieth protocol, relative to the exchange of prisoners—and the 4th of May, nineteen other

protocols saw the day. Of these documents, that of the 24th of September (No. 42), relative to Luxembourg ; and that of the 6th of October (No. 48), concerning the debt, are the most remarkable. These were the two great points on which the whole difficulty might be said to hinge. The first of these, while it admitted the adhesion of the Germanic Confederation to the negotiations for the cession of a part of the grand duchy, on the express condition that this cession should not include any portion of territory by which the line of defence should be altered to its disadvantage, formally protested, in the name of the Diet, against various acts of the Belgic government, as being essentially hostile to the principles of the thirty-sixth protocol ; and denounced the convocation of the representatives of the grand duchy, and the nomination of a military governor, as opposed to the authority of the Confederation. The principal points contained in the forty-eighth protocol, relative to the debt, having been explained in a former chapter, it would be superfluous to recur to that subject. Such is the rapid outline of the state of the negociation, up to the period in question. It is time to return to King Leopold, and to offer a sketch of the arrangements adopted by him to shield the country from a re-occurrence of the disasters of August.

These disasters, which had fully brought to light not only the insubordination of the army, but the extreme dearth of officers capable of conducting its administrative organization, contributed to overcome the repugnance of the chambers to the employment of foreigners, and taught them to be more discreet in upholding the volunteer system, and in protesting against those measures of rigour without which all discipline is impracticable ; consequently, a bill passed the chamber on the 22d of September, by which the king was authorized to

take into his service as many foreign officers as he might judge expedient "for the duration of the war." In consequence of this, Generals Desprez, Evain, Belliard, Petit, and Gründler were ordered by Marshal Soult to place themselves at the disposition of M. de Brouckère, the Belgic war minister, in order to organize the respective departments of the staff, artillery, cavalry, and engineers; while several colonels and officers of inferior rank were either attached to these generals, or disseminated through the different corps. This measure was not effected, however, without exciting the jealousy and dissatisfaction of the nationals, who, although they had recent and deplorable proofs of their own want of organization, and were constrained to admit the inefficiency and demoralization of every branch of the army, could not be induced to acknowledge the absolute necessity of the measure adopted by the government. Indeed, to such extremes did they carry their jealousy in some instances, that on a French major being posted to a regiment of lancers, all the officers determined to challenge him; and it was considered prudent to remove rather than expose him and the corps to perpetual dissensions. The total amount of foreign officers of all countries thus admitted into the service amounted to about 350. The causes that led to this necessity have been explained elsewhere; it is not possible, however, to touch on the subject without noticing the tact and discretion of Marshal Soult in the selection of the greater part of the persons destined for this service. The reputations of General Evain, and the virtuous and lamented Desprez, are European. In the first, Belgium has made an acquisition which her enlightened monarch knows well how to appreciate; and when a premature death deprived the country of the services of the latter, public grief was only to be ex-

ceeded by private lamentation.* At the period these officers arrived in Belgium, the state of the army could not be more deplorable—six months had not elapsed ere it presented an entirely new aspect.

General Defailly having resigned the war department, he was succeeded for a few days by Count D'Hane; but this officer, who behaved with great gallantry at the affair of Louvain, having received a wound while riding at the king's side, Mr. Charles de Brouckère, who had replaced De Sauvage at the home department, consented to take the war portfolio, and to attempt the gigantic task which had baffled the exertions of his predecessors. Although this officer was deficient in experience, he was pre-eminent for his indefatigable application to business, his activity and energy; and he, therefore, commenced the work of purification with an unflinching hand.

A new system of general organization was adopted. The undisciplined free troops were disbanded, and the men incorporated in the regiments of chasseurs. Some superior officers were superseded, and many subalterns dismissed;† all staff officers were submitted to the ordeal of an examination. Those who possessed sufficient ac-

* Lieutenant-General Desprez died on the 6th of August, 1833. Grief at the loss of a beloved wife, who preceded him but a few months to the grave, was said to have contributed to his death. Desprez left an only daughter, who was subsequently on the eve of marriage to Mons. de Baillot, an officer of the French national guard, who was killed in the Parisian riots of June, 1833. Madlle. Desprez has since married the Marquis de Dalmatie, son of Marshal Soult.

† "I will tell you more," said the minister of war to the chambers, upon discussing his conduct in regard to these dismissals; "we have received from Holland several men condemned to perpetual imprisonment. The gates of the prisons were opened on purpose that they might come and ask for officers' commissions from us. It is to a colonel who had sufficient energy to make his whole regiment take a bath, that we are indebted for the discovery of the marks on the shoulders of some of those officers."—28th of September, 1831.

quirements were confirmed in their functions ; those who failed, were posted to line regiments, or dismissed. A military school, on the model of that of France, was established. The artillery was re-composed, and the number of guns in each brigade augmented from six to eight. A corps of sappers, miners, and a pontoon brigade was raised ; and 20,000 of the first class of civic guards were called out and disciplined. Two new regiments of chasseurs were formed from the disbanded volunteers ; the squadrons of cavalry were augmented from four to six, and comparative subordination was generally introduced. In short, ere four months had elapsed, new life was imparted to every branch of the service, and the army began to assume an appearance of amelioration that promised the best results. Even thus early in De Brouckère's ministry, a force of 45,000 bayonets, 3,600 sabres, and 80 field-pieces were ready to take the field, exclusive of the first class civic guards and reserve battalions.

To re-form a revolutionary army—to introduce discipline in lieu of insubordination, and economy and regularity in lieu of the grossest mismanagement and disorder :—to weed out the inefficient, and to replace them by more deserving men :—to raise an efficient force from the wreck of a chaotic mass, discouraged by recent disasters :—to establish a wholesome, but not exaggerated confidence, and to place the whole body on a respectable footing :—to treat with contempt the diatribes of the journals, the personalities of the opposition,—and, lastly, to pursue the line he had traced out for himself, in despite of anonymous threats and open insults, was a task that could only have been accomplished by a man of more than ordinary abilities and energies. The latter quality De Brouckère certainly possessed in an eminent degree ; but his naturally ardent temper and abrupt manners which he could not always control, combined

with the hostile intrigues of the ultra catholics, the petty jealousies of political adversaries, and above all, his bold efforts to purge the army of the many cankers that impeded its healthy constitution, raised against him a host of virulent and ungenerous assailants. Thus, no effort was spared, either in the chambers, through the press, and in the royal anti-chambers, to vilify and degrade him in public estimation. All, however, were constrained to admit that he had rendered important services to his country; that he was a man of no common abilities; that he possessed rare talents for administration, combined with a most ardent mind and zealous devotion to the interest of the service. At length, worn out with the virulence of his opponents, who dreaded his influence and talents, and were above all desirous to see him removed from court, De Brouckère gave in his resignation, and was succeeded by the French general of artillery, Baron Evain, who, having accepted letters of grand naturalization, was appointed "minister director of war," but without a seat in the cabinet.

It would have been no easy matter for the Belgic government to have selected an officer better qualified to undertake such a charge, than this honourable and experienced soldier, whose long and meritorious services had been fully appreciated by that great master of war, Napoleon, as well as Louis XVIII and Charles X. To an intimate acquaintance with all the intricate details of military economy, and an extraordinary facility of availing himself, in the most effective and advantageous manner, of the means placed at his disposal, Evain added a passionate fondness for business, great method and clearness, and a reputation of exemplary probity, combined with the utmost impartiality and mildness of manner. Indeed, this mildness might be said to have amounted to a defect; and it would have been better for

the interests of discipline had he possessed more severity and resolution of character. On coming into office, Evain acknowledged and ably profited by the judicious arrangements of his predecessor. The seeds that had been sown by the one, were rapidly brought to maturity by the other; so that, in the course of a few months, the army, which had already made essential progress, was placed on a footing of great efficiency and respectability; presenting a general total of effective combatants exceeding 72,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry, and 122 field-pieces. Time and instruction were alone requisite to render this force equal in almost every respect to the finest continental armies.

In the meantime both De Brouckère and Evain had been ably and judiciously assisted by the king. His majesty daily worked for several hours with the minister and the chief of the staff, and made repeated excursions to inspect camps and garrisons. Divisions and brigades were frequently reviewed by him, and there was scarcely a battalion, squadron, or brigade of guns, of which he had not personal knowledge. This had the effect of stimulating the officers and encouraging the men, who now anxiously devoted themselves, the one to instruct, the other to profit, by the lessons they received.

If the army owed much to De Brouckère for its resuscitation and organization, and to Evain for his indefatigable exertions to complete that which his predecessor had so ably commenced, it was no less indebted to the talents and judicious arrangements of General Desprez, the chief of the staff. This accomplished gentleman and brave soldier held a similar situation in the African campaign. Moderate in politics, unassuming in his manners, intimately versed in the theory and practice of strategy on the most extensive scale, experienced in all the details of organization, combining a highly cultivated

and scientific mind, with undaunted courage and indefatigable activity, Desprez, with the assistance of the French lieutenant-colonel, Chapelié, soon succeeded in establishing an efficient staff, and, with the king's co-operation, gave that formation and consistency to the different corps that was best calculated for convenience, concentration, and rapidity of field movement.

In order to effect this, the whole force was divided into two armies—one “of observation,” the other “of reserve.” The active army consisted of five divisions, including one of cavalry. The reserve was formed of the sixth and seventh divisions; the former stationed in the Flanders, the latter in garrison at Antwerp and the neighbouring forts. The whole upon paper formed a general total of 117,000 men, including the moveable civic guards. The system of military divisions or governments was maintained: each province having its commandant, charged with the military police and distribution of garrisons.

The organization of the royal household, a subject of extreme interest to the domestic comfort and public character of the new sovereign, early occupied his attention,* but he wisely resolved to adapt this, both as to extent and qualification, to the nature of circumstances, and the spirit of the times. In lieu of appointing a host of chamberlains and other of the ordinary appendages to a throne, he confined his nominations to a grand marshal, a master of the horse, a comptroller of the privy purse, and private secretary. To these were added four aides-de-camp, and two extra aides-de-camp, who being placed under General D'Hane, composed what was called the king's military household—and performed the

* It has been stated that the whole of the British establishment, excepting Sir H. Seton and a few domestics, were pensioned off in England.

functions of lords in waiting and grooms of the chamber. These officers having the emoluments of their respective grades, did not receive double pay; an example worthy of imitation in England, where staff officers are most improperly permitted to accumulate both regimental and staff allowances. The remainder of the royal household was formed on a similar footing, and with a strict regard to a wholesome but not unseemly economy.* The rapid progress that was made, both by the grand marshal, Count d'Arschot, a nobleman eminently qualified by his courtly manners for the post he occupied, and by the master of the horse, Marquess de Chasteler, in their respective departments, kept pace with the exertions of the more important branches of administration, and was no less praiseworthy. For, until a few hours previous to the arrival of the king, not a single domestic was engaged—not a horse purchased; and, although a portion of the linen and porcelain of the former sovereign had been rendered available, there was neither plate, ornaments, nor any of the essentials to the splendour of a palace. The grand marshal and master of the horse were assisted by the experienced councils of Baron de Stockmar. To the talents of this faithful and enlightened friend, Prince Leopold had been indebted, not only for those admirable arrangements which rendered the Claremont household a model of comfort and splendour, without waste or extravagance, but for advice and consolation in the many trying circumstances in which his royal highness had been placed. Baron de Stockmar's advice

* The civil list fixed for the duration of the king's reign amounts to 2,741,340 francs. From this sum the king is bound to defray all repairs for the palaces at Brussels, Laeken, and Antwerp, as well as the expenses of his own cabinet.

was no less valuable when the prince was raised to the throne. His talents as a politician, and his profound knowledge of human nature, his integrity and noble disinterestedness, qualified him for the highest post in the king's councils; but, although the most pressing offers were made to him, he rejected every overture, and contented himself with the honourable but simple qualification of "the king's friend."

Discontented as the Belgians were with the treaty of November, that treaty had now become the political charter of the land—the narrow circle around which their diplomatic relations were destined henceforth to revolve. The Russian ratification, the least favourable of all, having stipulated that all eventual modifications should be effected by mutual consent, the Belgians insisted that no new negotiation could be undertaken without their direct participation. Their first condition, their absolute *sine quâ non*, was, that the treaty should receive a commencement of execution; that is, by the preliminary evacuation of Antwerp and the other Belgic territory. This was the groundwork of the minister's instructions to his envoys; instructions coinciding with the address of the chambers, and with the king's reply. In fact, this was the line of conduct pointed out by the Conference itself, which not only declared that, as the treaty was solemnized by the common sanction of the five courts, their duty was to look to its execution; but in their note of the 11th of June, 1832, they stated, in reply to the pressing solicitations of the Belgic government, that they were "engaged in urging the King of the Netherlands to bethink himself of the speediest means of evacuating the Belgic territory, of assuring the immediate freedom of the Scheldt and Meuse, and of establishing negotiations for the amicable arrangement of such articles of the treaty as

presented difficulties, *as soon as the territory should be evacuated.*" Thereby unequivocally sanctioning the demand of the Belgians.

Not satisfied with these pressing remonstrances, Mr. de Muelenaere again dispatched General Goblet on a special mission to London, with orders to unite with Mr. Van de Weyer in pressing the question to an issue. Consequently, on the 29th of June, a note was presented to the Conference, in which it was proposed, first, that "from the 1st of January preceding, until the final ratification of peace, the Belgian war expenses, solely resulting from the refusal of the Dutch, should be placed to the charge of that power, at the rate of three millions of florins per month; this sum to be deducted from the arrears of interest that might eventually be due to Holland." And, secondly, "that, as the Dutch government had not thought proper to evacuate the Belgic territory, or to consent to the free navigation of the rivers, the Conference should forthwith order the employment of such coercive measures as might be necessary to attain this object." The former portion of the demand, though founded on equity, was not admitted; but the embargo of Dutch vessels, the blockade of the ports by the combined squadron, and the siege of the citadel of Antwerp, were the result of the other.

A striking phenomenon, already alluded to in a preceding chapter, was the complete exchange of position between the two litigating parties. On the one hand, Holland as pertinaciously rejected the twenty-four as she had the eighteen articles, and replied to the solicitations and remonstrances of the five courts by proposing new treaties, by defying their armaments, by denying the competency of the Conference, and by protesting against the employment of coercive measures;

although, as late as August, 1831, she had eagerly coveted armed intervention, and defended her own aggression on Belgium, on the ground that it was the mere development of the coercive measures announced by the Conference. On the other side, Belgium, who had hitherto cast back the protocols, and protested against all forcible interference, now intrenched herself behind the treaty of November, and eagerly demanded absolute demonstration of force on the part of the powers. For a length of time these efforts failed, but De Muelenaere having given in his resignation, General Goblet replaced him at the foreign office, and by an artful stroke of diplomacy, succeeded in obtaining that which had been denied to the more rigid pertinacity of his predecessor.

The discussions attendant on this period of the negotiation produced the celebrated propositions, known as Lord Palmerston's Theme, together with eleven additional protocols. That of the 11th of June (No. 65) was the vehicle for six notes, the principal object of which was to overcome the resistance of the parties to that direct negotiation, without which all progress was impracticable. It was proposed to adjoin these supplementary articles to the original treaty, stipulating that the territorial evacuation should take place before the 25th of July, 1832; "that this evacuation being once effected, the two states should depute commissioners to Antwerp, to negotiate and conclude an amicable arrangement, relative to the execution of the 9th and 12th articles of the treaty; and that another commission of liquidation should meet at Utrecht, for the purpose of discussing a plan for the capitalization of the debt of 8,400,000 florins, charged to the great book of Belgium." The efforts of the Conference to bring the parties to an understanding proved abortive. Notes,

memoirs, themes and propositions, were alike unsuccessful. Like the buckets of a well, doomed for ever to pass each other, the one no sooner advanced than the other receded, alternating their position according to the impulse they received from the Conference. For the moment the Dutch cabinet consented to negotiate, their opponents receded; and no sooner did Belgium wave her objections, than Holland retracted, so that all chance of approximation fell to the ground. The paramount object of Belgium being to overcome the objections of the Conference to the actual development of coercive measures; this could not be effected, unless she should consent to negotiate, and the Dutch decline all direct intercourse. The final refusal of Holland at length gave the advantage to Belgium, who, on the 20th of September, furnished her envoys in London with full powers to treat directly. This might have been done with safety at an earlier period. The tenacity with which the Dutch cabinet persisted in clinging to the chimera of restoration, was a sufficient guarantee that they would decline direct negotiation, which would have been tantamount to a virtual recognition of that independence, which they had no intention to acknowledge.

The embarrassments that beset the path of the Conference were enhanced by various minor incidents, which threatened disastrous consequences. The most prominent of these were, first, the sudden seizure, by the Dutch, of Mr. Thorn, the Belgic governor of Luxembourg, who was detained during many weeks in the federal fortress, and after having been the subject of several protocols and remonstrances, was eventually liberated by command of the Confederation. The second was the constant infraction of the convention of Antwerp, arising from the construction and arming of

various batteries, which Chassé declared to be as dangerous to the safety of the citadel, as they were opposed to the maintenance of the *statu quo*. It required all the temper and ability of Sir Robert Adair and his French colleague, M. de Tallenay, who had continued to act as chargé d'affaires from the time of Belliard's death, to prevent the parties coming into collision. However, in despite of intervention and remonstrance, the Belgians continued their operations, and crowded the quays and ramparts with that formidable line of batteries which afterwards so powerfully contributed to check the aggressive intentions of the Dutch general.* Such was the state of affairs up to the month of October.

In the meantime, a private negotiation, of vital importance to the consolidation of the new dynasty, and the domestic happiness of the monarch, was being silently carried on. One of the most ardent vows of the nation, indeed one of the principal accessaries to the king's election, was the hope of his selecting a daughter of France as the partner of his throne. This hope, skilfully put forward at the moment of discussing the eighteen articles, was about to be realized. Disappointed in not having been able to induce Louis-Philippe to allow his son to accept the proffered throne, the wishes of the people were directed towards his daughter. It was, therefore, with universal joy that the nation heard that the preliminaries of a marriage between the king and the amiable and interesting Princess Louisa of Orleans was about to be concluded, and that the day for the royal nuptials was definitively fixed. This ceremony

* The number of guns mounted on the ramparts, quays, and forts, susceptible of being brought to bear on the citadel and river, amounted to 69 mortars, and 150 long guns.

took place with every possible degree of solemnity at Compiègne, on the 9th of August, 1832. On the 15th, their majesties arrived at Laeken, and on the 20th following, they made their entry into the capital, where they were received with the highest demonstrations of loyalty and enthusiasm.* This union was not only a political event of deep interest, but it offered one of those rare occasions when the vows of the people almost unanimously coincided with the inclinations of the sovereign. A new dawn of happiness—of that domestic happiness for which Leopold is so essentially qualified—again sprung up before him. The unaffected benevolence, piety, virtue, and many admirable qualities of this young and gentle queen, were sure guarantees that, if the cares inseparable from a throne should weigh heavily upon him, he would find a solace and consolation in domestic life. This conviction has been fully realized; for Europe can scarcely furnish an example of more perfect domestic enjoyment than that which has fallen to the share of this august and fortunate couple.

* According to the marriage act, dated the 9th of August, 1832, at 8½ p.m., the king, born on the 16th of December, 1790, was in his forty-second year; and the queen, Louise Marie Therese Caroline Isabelle, born at Palermo the 3d of April, 1812, in her twentieth year.

CHAPTER XI.

POLICY OF THE BELGIC GOVERNMENT TO INDUCE THE CONFERENCE TO EMPLOY MEASURES TO OBTAIN THE TERRITORIAL EVACUATION—DUTCH MANIFEST AGAINST THE CONFERENCE, WHICH DECIDES UPON COERCIVE MEASURES—EAGERNESS OF THE BELGIANS FOR WAR—CEREMONY OF PRESENTING STANDARDS TO COMMUNES AT BRUSSELS—CONVENTION BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND—MR. THORN—EMBARGO AND SIEGE OF ANTWERP—MARITIME REPRISALS ON THE PART OF HOLLAND.

THE union of Leopold with a daughter of the house of Orleans not only diffused general satisfaction throughout Belgium, but was productive of important results elsewhere. These results were not slow in developing themselves in the conduct of the French government. And, in this instance, the private sympathies of Louis-Philippe according with the vows of the French nation, harmonized with the policy of the great powers.

In the meantime, the position assumed by the contending parties subsequent to the ratifications, was such as to raise a bar to all diplomatic progress. The one, as before stated, pertinaciously declined all further negotiation until the treaty of November should receive a commencement of execution by the evacuation of the Belgic territory ; whilst the other consented to negotiate, but on conditions that tended to destroy the provisions of that treaty in all its most essential points. It was evident, therefore, unless one or the other could

be induced to yield, that the mediatory task of the Conference must shortly terminate.

The situation of Belgium was, however, so precarious, and even disquieting to other states, that the friends of that country both in France and England strongly urged its government to emerge from the narrow orbit within which it had restricted its sphere of action. But, although its ministers were aware of the dilemma in which they were placed, and secretly admitted the policy of concession, yet they had pledged themselves too deeply to the chambers to admit of retraction.* In order, therefore, to preserve their character for consistency, and yet not to raise an insuperable barrier to progression, De Muelenaere and his colleagues resigned on the 15th of September, and were succeeded by General Goblet. The ostensible object of the latter in accepting office was to open a direct negotiation with Holland, on the basis of Lord Palmerston's theme, which deviated but in a trifling degree from the November treaty.† But his real purport was to exchange places with the Dutch cabinet as regarded the Conference. That is, to induce the former to withdraw its offers to negotiate, and thus to cast the odium of delay on Holland, and thence to enable Belgium to demand from the five powers the fulfilment, or part fulfilment, of their stipulations; or, in other words, to overcome their repugnance to the employment of coercive measures against Holland.

* "The government will refuse to take part in any new negotiation, until the treaty has received a commencement of execution in all such parts as are not subject to negotiation, that is to say, that it will exact before all things the evacuation of the Belgic territory." *Speech of the Belgic Foreign Minister, 12th of May, 1832.*

† This theme, or project of treaty, formed the annex B to the sixty-ninth protocol.

The drift of this tactic was neither discovered by the Belgian public or Dutch cabinet. Thus the latter were the dupes of a manœuvre, which they might easily have turned against its projectors. For the virtual acknowledgment of Belgic independance, which would have resulted from direct negotiation, would not have entailed specific recognition, or vitiated those principles from which the King of the Netherlands had determined not to deviate ; whereas the *statu quo*, with all its territorial and financial evils, might have been continued, and the discussions prolonged to an indefinite period, and thus all the benefits that Belgium might have derived from direct negotiation would have been counterbalanced by the disadvantages of delay. But General Goblet's previsions were soon realized, and, for the first time the wary and veteran statesmen of Holland were over-reached by their less experienced rivals. For no sooner was Mr. Van de Weyer furnished with full powers than the Dutch cabinet drew back ; and upon the same day, the 20th of September, forwarded to the Conference a note of a nature so uncompromising as to render all approachment impracticable. This document first reclaimed the signature of the Conference to the treaty of separation, on the basis of the Netherlands notes of the 30th of June and 25th of July—that is to say, on conditions already declared inadmissible both by the plenipotentiaries and Belgians ; and then proceeded to declare “that the king would listen to no further concessions, that he declined the responsibility of all complications that might arise from delay, and loudly proclaimed that he would never consent to sacrifice the vital interests of Holland to the revolutionary phantom—that the free people, over whose destinies he was called to preside, confiding in Providence, well knew how to resist all that the enemies of public order and

the independence of nations might attempt to prescribe."

This species of manifest which seemed intended as an attack upon the principles and views of a portion of the Conference, and was so considered by them, was replied to by an explanatory memorandum on the 24th, in which the plenipotentiaries demanded categorical replies to certain questions, and hinted, that, as all means of conciliation appeared to be exhausted, nothing remained for them but a recurrence to other measures. Indeed, the tone now assumed by the Dutch cabinet was sufficient to undeceive the most sceptical. It was now evident that no propositions, however equitable—no basis of arrangement, however satisfactory to the five courts, that tended to replace Antwerp on a footing of rivalry with Amsterdam and Rotterdam, or to neutralize the territorial pretensions of the king, would ever be accepted by that monarch. The futility of all efforts to negotiate, unless upon conditions so favourable to Holland as were tantamount to the destruction of Belgium, was admitted by all who were not directly interested in protracting the solution of the Batavo-Belgic question. A question, that had held Europe in a state of suspense during two years, that had diverted statesmen from the pressing affairs of their own countries, and, baffling the ingenuity of the ablest diplomatists, had constantly menaced the repose of surrounding nations.

The question, however, was pregnant with intense difficulty and embarrassment to the great powers, and perhaps with some hardship to the house of Nassau, which was doomed to be sacrificed for the general good. But the necessities of individuals, and the ties of families, could not be allowed to weigh against those of states. The Duke of Wellington's administration had been the

first to recognize principles by which the people of France and Belgium became arbiters of dynasties. His successors and their allies had consecrated these principles, by acknowledging Louis Philippe, and by ratifying the treaty of November. By so doing, they probably arrested the further flow of democracy, and maintained general peace.

This policy was at once prudent, enlightened and in harmony with the general spirit of the times. It must be observed, however, that the decision, as regarded Belgium, was one of necessity, not of inclination; and that the choice, as it concerned King Leopold, was one of policy, not individual preference. Here again great discrimination was shown, for no prince in Europe was more essentially qualified for the task.

But if the necessity of elevating Leopold to the throne was imminent, the urgency of promptly placing that throne beyond the reach of accident was still more imperative. The revolutionary hydra slumbered, it was not crushed; every hour's delay tended to awaken one or more of its noxious heads. Procrastination enervated the friends of order, encouraged the partisans of anarchy, and threatened the most disastrous consequences to Europe.

From the moment of passing the eighteen articles, on the promise of whose faithful execution Leopold alone accepted the Belgic crown, the wisdom of firmly establishing that crown, and of awarding to his people the utmost sum of prosperity compatible with the general interests of Europe and the just rights of Holland, was self apparent. The revolution of September had annihilated the edifice erected at Vienna, and reversed the position of Belgium as regarded France and Europe. If, therefore, to regain what Europe had lost by the force of events, or rather by the impolicy and short-

sightedness of the Netherlands government, it was deemed advisable to acknowledge the right of insurrection, to abandon an ancient ally, and to erect a portion of his revolted kingdom into an independent monarchy, it was surely sound policy to consolidate the work by placing it in a state of security, and to accord such advantages to the people as were calculated to enlist their pride and interest in maintaining their young nationality against French influence or encroachments. England and northern Europe were as much interested in this consummation as King Leopold himself; unless, indeed, they desired that the labours, as well as the sacrifices of principles, alliances, and affections of the previous eighteen months should pass for nothing, and that the barrier of 1831 should be swept away like that of 1815.

To employ unsound materials in the construction of a dam, intended to resist any sudden irruption of waters, and thus to engraft rottenness in its very foundation, would be madness in a builder. The metaphor was applicable to Belgium; for the sovereign could expect no security, no durability for his throne, or in other words, for the barrier of which he was the key-stone, unless that throne rested on a solid basis, and unless his subjects enjoyed greater advantages under their new institutions, than they had previously possessed under the Netherlands government, or could obtain by a reunion with France. To effect this object, vigorous measures were not only necessary, but delay in their execution was dangerous. To expatiate on the urgency of the one, or the impolicy of the other, would be superfluous. It was clear that, without coercion, the Netherlands king never would renounce his pretensions or his hopes of restoration. Argument, mediation, advice, and menaces had been assayed, and had alike proved impotent.

The subject had been discussed to satiety. There was no point of view in which it had not been placed. Every experiment that diplomatic skill and impartiality could devise had been employed. Friends and foes had been equally repulsed. The fraternal intreaties of the courts of Petersbourg, Berlin, and Vienna had no more effect than the more earnest remonstrances of France and Great Britain.

As far as the king was concerned, this tenacity excited no surprise; for, independent of the natural firmness of that monarch's character, he was seconded by able ministers, and skilful plenipotentiaries, who had hitherto watched and profited by the vacillations and irresolutions of the Conference. He was countenanced by the sympathies of every court, save that of France. He was confident in his army, navy, and strategetical position, and was not only supported by the unanimous patriotism of his subjects, but encouraged by his partisans in Belgium, whose machinations and persuasions were multiplied in proportion as the decisions of the Conference were retarded. Besides, his majesty well knew that whilst all was concord and loyalty in Holland, distrust and want of union prevailed in Belgium; and no where more so than in the chambers, where national objects were too often lost sight of in the virulence of personal antipathy. So marked was the contrast in this respect between the two countries, that it drew forth the following strictures from a member of the Belgic legislature. "Look," said the orator, "look at the Dutch, they are ready to make any sacrifice. The town of Amsterdam will come forward, if necessary, and place all its wealth at the king's feet, and the States-General consents to every demand of the throne. What will Europe say of us if we are divided, and do not maintain strict union with the government?"

That which constitutes the force of Holland is the union of the people with the sovereign. We also might be strong by pursuing the same course. If there be any enmity towards certain persons, speak boldly ; but remember, that all personal animosities ought to give way to the interests of our country.”* But the dangers of internal troubles, and the many ills that attended the state of affairs so long existing in Belgium, were secondary considerations, when compared with the great European questions that the French and British governments were bound to balance and watch over. The momentary welfare of the Belgians ; the clamours of the press or people could not be permitted to divert the powers from the steady line of negotiation which was held essential to the maintenance of peace. To have hurried forward a precocious solution—to have attempted to coerce either Belgium or Holland, before the points at issue had been investigated to the very core, and before every method had been tried to bring the parties to an understanding, would have been as impolitic as to have delayed the adoption of coercive measures when all mediation had failed. “ The ripeness or unripeness of the occasion must ever be weighed.” That the occasion had arrived at maturity—maturity even to rottenness, could not be denied. No one attempted to gainsay this fact, or to refute the danger of further procrastination.

Admitting, however, by way of hypothesis, that the danger was exaggerated, and the state of Belgium misrepresented, there was a higher and more noble consideration that influenced the cabinets of St. James’s and the Tuileries. They had become willing sponsors of the new monarchy. They had deliberately and irrevoc-

* Speech of Count Villain XIV., 19th of November, 1832.

cably subscribed to a treaty. They had given to this important act all the solemnity of which royal and ministerial forms were susceptible. The honour of the respective kings' names, the good faith of the governments, and the dignity of the French and British nations were at stake. Both were bound by every tie hitherto held sacred, to look to the execution of a treaty which they had sworn to maintain. The Belgians had a right to claim the fulfilment of their bond, and the more so since it had been imposed upon them; and if England or France refused, they were justified in taxing them with a breach of faith, and to exclaim—

“If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.”

“Let Belgium hold to her treaty, nothing but her treaty,” said one of the most enlightened members of the British cabinet, “and she must eventually carry the contracting powers with her. Let this be her sole *ægis*. She will gain more by firmly and tranquilly entrenching herself behind that treaty, than by all the clamours of her press and people, or by any warlike demonstrations, which can only tend to compromise her independence.” These predictions were speedily verified.

On the 1st of October, the Conference unanimously decided that forcible measures were necessary, although it differed as to the means to be employed. The three northern courts opined for pecuniary coercion; that is, for authorizing Belgium to deduct the amount of her war expenses at the rate of one million florins per week from the arrears due to Holland since the 1st of January 1832. But England and France peremptorily objected to a proposition, the tendency of which was to renew negotiations that the experience of months and the ad-

mission of the Conference itself had shewn to have become hopeless, and which merely served to delay the execution of a treaty, "the non-fulfilment of which exposed the peace of Europe to constant and increasing peril."*

The unanimity that prevailed in the Conference as to the principle of coercion had thus been nearly disturbed by the difference that arose as to the mode of execution. But by the skill and temper of the negotiators, who were powerfully assisted by Lord Durham during his special mission at St. Petersburg, and from the fixed determination of the five courts to maintain peace, all difficulties were speedily overcome; and Russia, Prussia, and Austria, although they refused direct or indirect participation, consented to remain passive spectators of the physical measures proposed by France and England.†

The energetic course resolved on by these two governments received an additional impulse from two notes addressed to them by that of Belgium on the 5th and 23rd of October. After explaining the motives that actuated them in desiring to open direct negotiations with Holland, and declaring their conviction that all hope of conciliation had become illusory, the Belgic ministry protested against all further delay in the execution of the treaty, and peremptorily declared, if

* Protocol of the 1st of October, 1832, No. 70, by which the series of these documents was concluded; indeed, this may be said to have been the last public act of the Conference.

† A note was addressed on the 30th of October, by Lord Palmerston and Prince Talleyrand to the Berlin cabinet, proposing that Prussia should take possession of those parts of Limbourg and Luxembourg destined by the November treaty to be adjoined to Holland, and that she should hold them in trust until that government should engage to fulfil the conditions attached to their possession. The Prussian government, regarding this as a participation in the coercive measures, declined.

the stipulated guarantees were not enforced, at least in part, that their sovereign would find himself compelled to appeal to arms. "It is on this condition," said the note, "that the existence of the new ministry depend.* The evacuation of the territory must be effected by the 3rd of November, either by the action of the great powers, or by that of the national army." That was to say, that unless the Conference forthwith adopted measures to expel the Dutch from Antwerp, the Belgians were resolved to take the law into their own hands, and to commence a war whose fatal consequences no man could pretend to foretell. "This is an obligation," added the note, "that is imposed on the Belgic ministry by the internal state of the country, and by the force of events."

Such was truly the case. For although the principles of Goblet's, or rather Lebeau's, administration were essentially congenial with those of Casimir Perrier and Lord Grey, and consequently eminently pacific and conciliatory, yet they had no power to stem the torrent of national impatience. The reports generally current of a misunderstanding in the Conference, and a prospect of rupture between the contracting powers, had produced a most unfavourable effect. It discouraged the friends of repose; it weakened the confidence of the nation in the stability of the monarchy; it augmented the virulence and malevolence of those who were always ready to disseminate trouble and sedition, and who, either leaning to Dutch restoration or French aggres-

* It was thus composed:—

Goblet.....	<i>Foreign Affairs.</i>
Rogier.....	<i>Interior.</i>
Lebeau.....	<i>Justice.</i>
Duvivier.....	<i>Finance.</i>
Evain.....	<i>War.</i>

sion, were equally desirous to promote war. But on this occasion, these restless spirits did not stand alone. Civilians and soldiers, commerce and agriculture, press and chambers, alike cried out for the employment of force. Their present situation was indeed so vexatious, that a prospect of prolongation was insupportable. The immense sacrifices that had been made during two years, the apprehensions of a renewal of these sacrifices, and the approach of winter, united the whole country in one general cry for war.* Their impatience was not only excited by distress and the fear of accumulating burdens, but by an ardent desire to wipe out the stain of their recent discomfiture. And they had some right to calculate on success, seeing that they had a well-appointed and efficient army exceeding 105,000 effectives, of whom nearly 70,000, with a numerous artillery, were disposable between the Scheldt and Meuse.† The general desire to have recourse to the sword was further inflamed by the ceremonies that were fixed for the anniversary of September, which epoch had been selected for distributing honorary standards to the different communes that had distinguished themselves during the revolution.

This imposing solemnity took place on the 27th of September. An estrade of exceeding taste and richness, surmounted with military trophies, was elevated

* The ways and means for the current year were estimated at 83,000,000 of francs, exclusive of the 17,000,000 annual interest due to Holland. The total budget exceeded 160,000,000, of which 76,000,000 were absorbed by the war department. The deficits were covered by loans.

† The Belgic army of observation was composed of the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth divisions, with 104 field-pieces; the army of reserve consisted of the sixth and seventh divisions, with thirty-two field-pieces—the latter holding Antwerp, the former guarding the Flanders.

in front of the perystyle of the church of St. Jaques sur Caudenberg. In the centre, under a dais of crimson velvet and gold, was placed a throne of state, flanked on either side with galleries for the queen and diplomatic corps. To the right and left of these were seats for the provincial deputations and public authorities. Beneath, and in front, arose a low semicircular amphitheatre, for the persons deputed to receive the banners; each commune being distinguished by its respective device. Masses of cavalry and infantry lined the square and adjacent streets. An immense concourse of spectators occupied the intervening space, and crowded the surrounding buildings to the very roofs. The beams of a glorious sun glittering on the sabres and bayonets of the soldiers—the clang of martial music—the nodding of plumes—the waving of pennons and garlands—the shouts of the multitude, and the roaring of artillery, at once combined to add grandeur and animation to the scene.

The young queen, radiant with smiles and animation, arrived in state at mid-day, attended by the Duke of Orleans, and preceded by guards of honour and a body of one hundred sergeants bearing the colours awarded to the communes. When these had reached their allotted station, the thunder of cannon announced the approach of the king, who shortly made his appearance, on horseback, amidst the most deafening acclamations, intermingled, however, with shouts of "War! war to the Dutch!" Having dismounted and ascended his throne, his majesty assembled the provincial deputations around him, and after a short, but forcible harangue, delivered to each its destined standard, amidst a deep and imposing silence, interrupted only by flourishes of trumpets and the plaudits of the surrounding multitudes. The ceremony being ended, the royal procession

returned to the palace, and after a general review of the troops, the day terminated with banquets, fireworks, and illuminations. So eager, however, was the nation for war; so great was the state of excitement of all classes, that the king was not only urged by several persons who had borne a prominent share in the revolution, to give the signal for hostilities, but a meeting was held by the provincial deputations, for the purpose of drawing up an address to the crown, insisting upon a termination of all negotiation. A placard to this effect was posted on the walls and distributed through the city. "Belgians!" exclaimed this document, "let us avail ourselves of the anniversary of the memorable days of September, when so many brave men fell for the independence of their country. Let us avenge their memory. Let us call on the king to declare war without longer waiting for the interminable decrees of the Conference. War to Holland! Yes, war! The whole nation calls for it. It is the only means of saving our honour and securing our independence."

Being determined to avert a collision between the two parties, the result of which would have been an inextricable complication of affairs, Lord Palmerston and Prince Talleyrand concluded a convention on the 22d of October, which they forthwith communicated to the other three courts, of whose passive adhesion they had already been assured.

This convention stipulated, "that France and England should forthwith proceed to the execution of the treaty of November; that the territorial evacuation should form a commencement; that the Belgian and Dutch governments should be required to effect this evacuation reciprocally by the 12th of November; that coercive measures should be employed against either government that had not consented before the 2d, and

that, in the event of refusal on the part of Holland, an embargo should be laid upon the Dutch vessels, whether in the ports of the respective powers, or navigating the high seas; that a combined fleet should be stationed off the Dutch coast, and that, on the 15th of November, a French army should enter Belgium to lay siege to the citadel of Antwerp, and having executed the object of the expedition, that it should withdraw within the French territory."

In order to carry these measures into effect, a combined squadron, equally composed of British and French ships, was ordered to rendezvous in the Downs. The French division, commanded by Admiral Villeneuve; the English, by Sir Pulteney Malcolm; the whole under the orders of the latter. The French army of the north, was also placed on a footing of concentration, and the ordnance department was directed to prepare a battering train, and stores necessary for the operations of a siege.* It was on the 30th of October that the convention, which had been ratified on the 27th, was presented to the Belgic government by the envoys of England and France. On the 2d of November, General Goblet notified the consent of his sovereign to the evacuation of Venloo, and such other portions of terri-

* Orders were issued on the 10th of October to augment the battering train in dépôt at Douay from fifty to eighty-six pieces, according to the following detail:—

24-pounders.....	32
16 ditto	26
8-inch howitzers.....	12
10 ditto mortars.....	10
Pierriers.....	6
	<hr/>
	86

The ammunition was directed to be prepared in the proportion of one hundred rounds per gun for fifteen days.—*Journal des Observations du Siège d'Anvers, par le Général Neigre.* Paris, 1834.

tory as were destined to be made over to Holland, on condition that his Belgian majesty should immediately obtain possession of Antwerp and the territory held by the Dutch. A similar summons was addressed to the Dutch government, but met with an unequivocal rejection. The result was, that the combined fleet proceeded to blockade the Dutch harbours, the French army was directed to hold itself in readiness to enter Belgium at the stipulated period, and by an order in council of the 6th, an embargo was laid upon all Dutch vessels in French and British ports.

These measures were not carried into effect, however, without exciting the sympathies and producing strong manifestations of disapprobation on the part of the commercial and mercantile interests in London. The embargo was considered so oppressive to Holland and so injurious to British trade, that a meeting of many eminent merchants and bankers was convened on the 13th, when an address was unanimously voted to the king, expressing "the utmost grief and alarm at the employment of the combined squadron against Holland, deprecating a war with that country as dangerous to the peace of Europe, and praying his majesty to postpone all coercive measures until the wishes of the nation on this subject had been ascertained in parliament."

It was evident that the framers of this address, however justified in stigmatizing the proceedings as injurious to their interests, were as ill acquainted with the character of the negotiations as regarded the contracting powers, as they were with the situation of affairs abroad; for, whilst they denounced the coercive measures as a commencement of general war, it was evident that these hostilities, or rather demonstrations of hostility, were intended, and did most probably avert that very conflagration which they so justly deprecated. The

risk of employing ships of war off the dangerous coast of Holland at that advanced season, the inconvenience to commerce, and the difficulty of establishing an effective blockade, were generally admitted ; but although some inconveniences and risks were incurred, it was essential to enforce this measure, in order to convince Holland of the inflexible determination of the powers, and to prove to the rest of Europe the unanimity that existed amongst them ; a measure of the utmost importance, not only to the consolidation of credit and confidence, but to the affirmation of general tranquillity.

The enforcement of the embargo six days earlier than the period prescribed for the reciprocal evacuation of the territory, was also adopted, in the hope that the Dutch cabinet, seeing the serious resolution of France and England, and the passive acquiescence of the other powers, would have complied with the summons of the 30th, and have thus obviated the necessity of deploying further force. The principles that guided that cabinet were no secret. They had been exposed in a striking manner by the foreign minister of the power of all others most friendly to Holland, in a memoir, of which the following is an extract, and which is the more worthy of observation, since it proves that even the court of St. Petersburg disapproved of the king's conduct :—" It appears proved to us, beyond a doubt," (*jusqu'à la dernier evidence*), said Count Nesselrode, " that the Netherlands government, far from having negotiated to establish a simple *administrative separation*, has constantly shown itself disposed to sacrifice its rights to Belgium, and to establish a *political separation* ; that it has been solely intent upon rendering its recognition of the independence of that country and its new sovereign subordinate to its desire to insure for

itself equitable conditions; and that, if the Hague cabinet at present affirms and insists upon a contrary principle, this assertion is in manifest opposition with facts, as well as with the letter and spirit of its declarations both to the Conference of London, and to the assembly of the States-General of Holland.*

It was, indeed, difficult to comprehend the policy or object of the king's resolve, especially when his majesty found himself abandoned to the united action of the two coercing powers. However chivalrous, however consistent with the hereditary constancy and patriotism of the Dutch character, this haughty rejection of the last overtures of the Conference might have been, it was impossible that its resistance could be productive of moral or material benefit; whereas concession, under such overwhelming circumstances, would neither have entailed an abandonment of principle, a renunciation of rights, nor a curtailment of national honour.

But it was determined otherwise. The enthusiasm of the Dutch people responded to the energy of the government. From the throne to the cottage, the whole population was animated with a firm resolve to imitate the example of Van Speyk, sooner than to surrender. The reserves were called out, and readily answered to the appeal. The volunteer corps eagerly flocked to join the active army. Dispositions were made for convoking the levy in mass, and the States-General unanimously applauded the conduct of government. Not only was the question of territorial evacuation rejected in a cabinet council held at the Hague on the 1st, but more

* Concluding paragraph of Count Nesselrode's memoir to the Emperor Nicholas, containing an analysis of the negotiations from the 4th of November, 1830, to October, 1838.—*Papers relative to Belgium laid before Parliament.*

than one member proposed that the threatened embargo should be regarded as a declaration of war, and that the active army should forthwith be ordered to attack the Belgic forces before the French could arrive to their succour. Although this dangerous suggestion was overruled, a cabinet order of the 17th directed, that all "French and English vessels should be ordered to quit the Dutch ports, and that the flags of those nations should not be admitted within the Dutch waters until the embargo should be raised in France and England."

Orders were also transmitted to Chassé to complete his defensive preparations, and, in case of need, to protract his resistance to the utmost extremity. In order, however, to sustain the courage of the garrison, hopes were held out that a diversion would be made in their favour by the active army, aided by a Prussian corps, whose concentration in the Rhenan provinces was already announced.

This corps, which did not exceed 22,000 effective combatants, under General Muffling, assembled in virtue of the 46th protocol of the Germanic Diet, which denounced the act of physical coercion to be "a war between Holland and the two powers, tending to endanger European peace, and requiring precautionary measures." Explanations having been demanded by France and England on this subject, the court of Berlin renewed its assurances of neutrality, and declared that the military movements in the Rhenan provinces were purely demonstrative, and intended for purposes of internal rather than of external security. This resolution was notified to the Hague cabinet, and renders the obstinate defence of the citadel and the useless sacrifice of life a matter of greater surprise. For here again the same moral and political objects would have re-

sulted to Holland, had Chassé been permitted to beat a chamade soon after the French batteries had opened their fire. Whereas, though France might have been spared the cost of a few thousand projectiles, and the loss of a few lives, she would have undergone almost all the inconvenience and expense attending the expedition, without reaping for her young army any portion of that honour, the attainment of which was one of the principal objects of Louis Philippe's government.

In the meantime, although the Dutch cabinet thus cast down the glove of defiance, it availed itself of the divergency of opinion manifested in the 70th protocol, to endeavour to renew negotiations through the medium of the Prussian court; in concert with which it drew up and adhered to a new project of treaty, which was forwarded to the Conference on the 9th. Independent, however, of the inadmissible character of the proposed modifications, the conjoint labours of the plenipotentiaries may be said to have terminated with their protocol of the 1st of October; and it was therefore declared, at least by France and England, that the hour for negotiation was past, and that submission to the summons of the 30th must be the *sine quâ non* of all subsequent approachment. Foiled in this attempt, the Dutch plenipotentiaries addressed themselves semi-officially to Lord Palmerston, and then to Lord Grey. But this step being regarded, not only as a deviation from the forms hitherto pursued by the negotiators, but as a mere cloak for renewing delays, the overtures of Baron Falck and Mr. Van Zuylen were rejected, and the coercive preparations were actively continued.

A private arrangement between the British and French governments had determined the employment of the combined squadrons. A formal convention between France and Belgium, signed at Brussels on the 10th of

November, regulated that of the French army. The principal stipulations of this convention were, that the auxiliary force "should not garrison any of the Belgic fortresses; that 6,000 Belgians should occupy Antwerp, but preserve the strictest neutrality; that the main body of the national army should concentrate on the right of that of France, and abstain from all aggression upon Holland; that the citadel and forts should be delivered over to Belgium, as soon as they should be evacuated by the Dutch, and that on no account whatever were these operations to be considered as offensive against the Dutch territory." It was attempted to impose the extraordinary expenses of this expedition on Belgium, but its government protested, and the claim was abandoned.

By one of those inconsistencies that so frequently characterized the proceedings of the Belgic legislature during this struggle, this act of coercion, undertaken at great risk and expense, for the sole benefit of Belgium, was loudly clamoured against by a large portion of the representatives. So long as England and France hesitated to interfere, the chambers were loud in taxing them with bad faith and disregard to treaties; and yet, when intervention took place, they were no less eager to express their disapprobation. In May a large majority had demanded territorial evacuation as a *sine quâ non*. In November they turned round, and stigmatized the execution as injurious to their country. At one moment the *statu quo* was declared insupportable; at the next they desired that matters should remain on their present footing; and, drawing courage, as it were, from the amicable dispositions of the two powers, put forth pretensions as inadmissible as they were exaggerated. In short, the ministry under whose auspices the coercive measures were brought to an issue, only

escaped condemnation on the 27th of November by a majority of forty-four to forty-two voices.*

An animated debate on this subject took place on voting the address at the opening of the session. It was then argued, that any advantages likely to result from the evacuation of the citadel would be counter-balanced by the surrender of Venloo, and the stipulated portions of Limbourg and Luxembourg, the population and resources of which amounted to nearly one-twelfth of those of the whole monarchy.† That, although the Dutch might be expelled from the citadel, no guarantees would be given by them for opening the Scheldt, Meuse, and intervening waters, nor for fulfilling other clauses of the treaty, infinitely more essential to Belgium than the possession of a fortress, the siege of which would probably entail the destruction of the adjacent city. It was, above all, declared to be degrading to the national honour, that a population of more than four millions should require foreign assistance to make good its rights against a nation not much exceeding half that number, and this, too, with a well-appointed and efficient army, equal in discipline, and superior in numbers to that of their adversaries. An

* Mr. Lebeau and his colleagues immediately resigned, but from the difficulty of forming a new administration, they resumed their functions on the 16th of December.

† The population allotted to the respective states is thus divided :—

Holland :—	
Limbourg.....	175,000
Luxembourg.....	153,000
	<hr/>
	328,900
Belgium :—	
Limbourg.....	158,000
Luxembourg.....	157,000
	<hr/>
	315,000

The balance in favour of Holland is thus nearly 15,000 in round numbers.

order of the day announced to the troops their neutral destination, and, although this galling intelligence was generally submitted to with moderation and discretion, some superior officers were loud in expressions of discontent and jealousy. With an overweening confidence in their own powers, or rather with consummate disregard to the difficulties of the operation, they declared that the national forces were fully adequate to carry on the siege, and to protect the frontier from all aggression.* These clamours were not heeded by the government, and the different corps immediately took up their destined positions; the left leaning on Turnhout, the centre on Diest and Hasselt, and the right watching Maestricht and the Meuse, with the grand head-quarters at Antwerp, and the reserves at Terveuren.

Whilst this important portion of the political drama was drawing towards a close, the liberation of Mr. Thorn, provincial governor of Luxembourg, whose case had furnished exclusive matter for the 60th, 62d, and 68th protocols, was effected through an act of vigour on the part of a Belgic functionary. Although Mr. Thorn's seizure had been declared by the Conference to be "an abduction, and an act of violence, disavowed by the ducal government, and disapproved of by the Germanic Confederation," and although the most urgent remonstrances had been made on his be-

* The population of Belgium, including the whole of Limbourg and Luxembourg, excepting the two fortresses, amounted on the 1st of January, 1832, to 4,122,000; that of Holland to 2,410,000. Supposing the treaty of November to receive full accomplishment, Holland will be augmented to 2,738,000, and Belgium reduced to 3,882,000. The annual increase of population, according to the learned Professor Quetelet, is in the proportion of 124 on 10,000 annually, or about 1½ per cent.

half, the Dutch cabinet turned a deaf ear to every solicitation. Their plea for so doing was, that Thorn's detention was a reprisal for that of certain individuals who had been arrested by the Belgian authorities for attempting a counter-revolutionary movement in the grand duchy.

The detention of these personages not only gave rise to much subtle discussion on the part of the Dutch, but was disapproved of by many sensible Belgians, both upon the ground of legality and policy. It was argued on the one side that, according to the treaty of which the Belgians demanded the execution, the captives were Dutch, and not Belgic subjects, since they belonged to, and had committed the alleged offence in that portion of the territory abandoned by Belgium, and which only awaited the ratification of the king grand duke, to become a part of Holland.

Besides, although they might not be considered as *bonâ fide* Dutch subjects, so long as the treaty remained unaccomplished, still the position of Luxembourg was exclusive and exceptional, and its inhabitants ought for the time being to be considered as appertaining to a neutral province, under the protection of the Diet, and, consequently, not amenable to the common law of Belgium. On the other side it was objected, that the treaty not having been ratified, nor any of its stipulations fulfilled, Luxembourg could not be placed on a different judicial footing from the remaining Belgic provinces; and, therefore, the prisoners must be considered Belgic subjects, and liable to the penalties attached to a treasonable attempt to subvert the existing government. Thus the Dutch, and indeed the Confederation, arguing upon the principle *de jure*, arising partly from anterior, and partly from repudiated treaties, made the release of these persons as the preliminary *sine qua non* to that

of Mr. Thorn ; whilst the Belgians, founding their arguments on *de facto* possession, were equally determined to send the captives before a jury. Although the Belgic government was strongly advised to liberate the prisoners, and thus to terminate an impolitic discussion, that only tended to complicate the general question, it persisted in its original intention, and the case went before the assizes of Namur, where the parties were acquitted. But, as these individuals had been subjected to the forms and risks of trial, and as judgment by default was issued against those confederates not in custody, the Dutch government declared that Mr. Thorn should pass through a similar ordeal.

The only chance, therefore, of obtaining the release of the latter, who had been confined since the 17th of April, was for the Belgians to effect some vigorous act of counter-reprisal. Chance soon threw into their hands a fitting hostage, in the person of a Mr. Pescatore, president of the grand ducal commission at Luxembourg.

Intelligence having been received of the intended passage of this functionary from the fortress to Treves ; an ambush was prepared ; he was seized on the 19th of October, and conveyed to Namour, where he was detained until a protocol of the Diet, of the 8th of November, put an end to the discussion by directing the exchange of the two captives, on conditions that all further pursuits and proceedings in the business should be stayed. These reserves were adhered to on both sides ; and thus, on the 23d of November, terminated an affair that had served during many months to embitter national hostilities, and to augment the embarrassments of the mediating powers.

Such was the state of the question at the period when the Conference terminated its collective labours, and intrusted to the energy of the sword the first commence-

ment of a solution that had hitherto defied the subtleties of the pen.

The term allowed by the Dutch for the territorial evacuation having expired, the French army, consisting of fifty-one battalions, fifty-six squadrons, and sixty-six field-pieces, entered Belgium on the 15th; and on the 19th, the advanced guard, under the Dukes of Orleans and Nemours, had already reached the vicinity of Antwerp. This force was subsequently augmented by thirteen reserve battalions and twelve guns, so as to allow nearly 30,000 effective infantry for the details of the trenches, independent of two covering divisions, thrown forward on the right and left bank of the Scheldt. The battering train, intrenching tools, and stores, whose dead weight exceeded 2,000,000 of killograms, or about 2,100 tons, were embarked from the arsenal, at Douay, in fourteen vessels.* Thence descending the Scarpe and Scheldt, they were conveyed to Boom, near the confluence of the Ruppel, where a sufficient quantity arrived on the 27th and 28th, to enable Generals Neigre and Haxo, directors in chief of the artillery and engineers, to report themselves ready for commencing operations.†

In accordance with the system pursued with its allies in all previous occasions, the British government dispatched a military diplomatic agent to the French headquarters. Lieut.-colonel Caradoc, who had distinguished himself on a similar mission at Navarino, was chosen for this service, and executed the duty with such zeal and ability as fully justified the selection.

An immense supply of gabions, fascines, and other en-

* "Journal du Siege d'Anvers," par le Général Neigre.

† This battering train of eighty-six pieces was augmented from the Belgic arsenals by thirty-eight ten and eight-inch mortars and nineteen cohorns, which, with six iron 24-pounders in Montebello, and the monster mortar, swelled the gross amount to 150 pieces.

gineer stores, having been prepared by the Belgic and French artificers,* the various military arrangements being completed, and the diplomatic and local difficulties, as to the point of attack, being overcome, Marshal Gerard moved his head-quarters to Berchem on the 29th, and issued orders for breaking ground on the same evening. Although the weakest portion of the citadel fronts the Esplanade, it was decided, in order to deprive General Chassé of all direct pretext for bombarding the city, to confine the attack to the southern or external faces. Further, to prevent all possibility of collision between the Dutch and Belgians, the latter were withdrawn from the posts contiguous to the fortress, and their places occupied by 500 French. A convention regulating the daily relief and passage of this detachment through the Malines-gates, as well as the occupation of the lunette Montebello by the French artillery, was concluded between General Buzen the Belgic governor, and the French marshal. The occupation of this advanced work, which it is difficult to consider in any other light than as appertaining to the body of the place, gave rise to urgent and just remonstrances on the part of General Chassé, "who denounced it as an infraction of the neutrality of the city and threatened retaliation, unless it was abandoned."†

But these menaces passed unheeded by the besiegers, who were fully convinced that the Dutch general would rather submit to this infraction than molest the city, by which he would not only have brought on himself the overwhelming fire of seventy additional mortars and

* Some idea of the superabundance of these may be formed from the fact that those remaining after the siege were purchased by the Belgic government for 44,000 francs; part of which were re-sold, and the rest employed in restoring the dykes near Burcht.

† *United Service Journal*, No. 52, March, 1833.

as many heavy guns, but have subjected his garrison to fearful reprisals, and his government to the severest moral and financial retribution. Indeed, General Chassé in his official report of the 10th of December, candidly avowed himself fortunate in securing the neutrality of the city "as in a contrary case, the flotilla and *Tête de Flandre* would have been soon destroyed by the superior fire of the enemy's artillery."

Owing to the unfavourable state of the weather and other local frictions, the troops destined for the first night's duties, consisting of eighteen battalions, 900 artillery, and 500 sappers, led on by the Duke of Orleans in person, were unable to commence work before nearly two A. M. on the 30th. Nevertheless, the first parallel extending from Montebello on the right, to beyond the Kiel road on the left, a distance of 1800 yards, with coffers for nine gun and four mortar batteries, was in such a state of progression by day-light, as to afford ample shelter for the working parties, who proceeded thus far without molestation from the garrison. But the summons addressed by Marshal Gerard to General Chassé, soon after dawn, having been peremptorily rejected, the Dutch artillery opened their fire at mid-day, and maintained it until the last moment of the siege, with a degree of precision and steadiness that reflected the highest honour on the officers and soldiers of that arm.

Having described the offensive means at the disposal of the assailants, it is necessary to offer a brief sketch of the defensive powers of the besieged. On the morning of the 30th of November, the citadel, with the lunettes St. Laurent and Kiel, were held by about 4500 men, with an abundant supply of provisions, ammunition, and 134 pieces of cannon of different calibre.* The

* At the expiration of the siege there remained 150,000 lbs. of powder, 12,000 shells, 11,500 round shot, 1,000,000 cartridges, 5,237

Tête de Flandre, forts Burcht, Zwynndrecht, and Austrowiel, were garrisoned and armed by about 500 men, and twenty-seven pieces; whilst eleven gun-boats and two steamers, manned by nearly 400 seamen and marines, were anchored in the river. The whole of the polders, or low marshy lands, contained within the angle formed by the Scheldt, from the village of Burcht above, to the Pipe de Tabac below Antwerp, were inundated by perforations in the dykes, and thus secured these forts, the flotilla, and citadel from all molestation on the left bank. Although the corporeal infirmities of General Chassé deprived his troops of the active superintendence of their commander, he was ably seconded by Major-general Fauvage, by Colonel Gumoens, and by Lieut.-colonel Selig, commanding the artillery, to whose exertions and that of his brave cannoniers the honourable and prolonged resistance must be mainly ascribed. These were powerful resources; but, on the other hand, the casemates and bomb proofs were ill ventilated, and utterly disproportioned to the shelter of a garrison double that prescribed by the ordinary rules of defence, and who were consequently jammed together in the narrow passages, or crowded beneath the damp and unwholesome posterns, where they suffered as much from inaction as from want of space. The barracks, hospitals, and other blinded buildings were totally inadequate to resist, and indeed soon yielded to the overwhelming mass of fire incessantly poured upon them. The sufferings of the people were thus intense. But that which contributed mostly to incommode the troops was the want of good

muskets, and 114 pieces of serviceable artillery. It may here be mentioned that the total estimate of trenches, batteries, &c. thrown up by the besiegers, amounted to 14,000 metres, or about 8½ miles English.

land a body of troops, with the view of cutting the dykes, and inundating the polders near Doel, no further effort was made to interrupt the siege. Indeed, when the neutrality of Prussia, and the great superiority of the French and Belgian armies is considered, it would have been the height of rashness, on the part of the Prince of Orange, to have attempted any aggressive movement. A disposable force of 11,000 cavalry, 10,000 infantry, and nearly 200 field-pieces were too powerful odds to offer any prospect of success to an army not averaging more than half that number.

The general project being to concentrate the attacks on the Toledo Bastion, the left face of which was destined to be breached, it was necessary to silence the fire of the ravelin on its right, and to obtain possession of the lunette St. Laurent. This latter operation was not effected until the night of the 13th, after nearly fifteen days' open trenches. This insignificant outwork might doubtless have been carried at a much earlier period had time been any object; but, under existing circumstances, a *coup de main* would not only have entailed a wanton expenditure of life, but it would have deprived the French engineers of an opportunity of practising the more efficacious and less sanguinary process of descent, mine, and passage of the ditch. This operation, of rare occurrence in modern sieges, was skillfully executed, and attached a much greater celebrity to the assault of St Laurent than it would otherwise have merited.* This fall of the outwork having removed one of the principal obstacles to the progress of

* The garrison did not exceed 120 men, the half of whom fled upon the springing of the mine, and the rest threw down their arms. One long 12-pounder, one 6½-inch howitzer, and two or three cohorns were its projective defences.

the approaches, the attack was carried on with increased vigour. The glacis having been crowned, and the breaching and counter-batteries, each for six twenty-four pounders, having been armed on the night of the 20th, their embrasures were unmasked at sun-rise on the 21st, and their fire maintained with such effect during that and the following day, as only to require a few hours to ensure an easy and practicable breach. The miners having simultaneously carried the two descents *à ciel couvert* down to the level of the water, the counterscarp of the Toledo Bastion being pierced, and the material for forming the passage of the ditch prepared, the batteries re-opened at day-break on the 23d. At eight o'clock, however, a flag of truce with offers of surrender presented itself at the outposts, and was conducted to the French quarters at Berchem, when a capitulation *ad referendum* was drawn up, and at ten A.M. hostilities ceased on both sides, after twenty-four nights' open trenches, and nineteen days' open batteries on the part of the besiegers; and twenty-three days' unremitted fire on that of the besieged. On the 24th the Dutch garrison marched out with the honours of war, and having laid down their arms at the foot of the glacis, returned into the citadel to await the decision of the Netherland's cabinet as to the capitulation.† But the latter having refused to evacuate Lillo and Liefkenshoek, or to permit the Dutch troops to return home on *parole*, it was determined to convey them to France as prisoners of war. This was effected on the

* The detail of prisoners that surrendered by capitulation was—citadel, 3,926, including 129 officers; forts, 467; sick and wounded, 550; seamen and marines, 382—total, 5,325. The loss of the garrison in killed, wounded, and missing, was 561; that of the besiegers, including 109 from the covering divisions on the left bank, 850.

29th and 31st. On the 1st of January the citadel, which had been taken possession of by the French, was delivered over to the Belgians.

Thus terminated an enterprise that stands without parallel in the military and diplomatic anomalies of nations, and which had all the menacing attributes of war, without causing the slightest interruption to peace. An enterprise, where on one side a gallant garrison was sacrificed by their sovereign to the fruitless maintenance of a political principle, without prospect of benefit to their own country or of detriment to its enemies; where, on the other, the laurel and the olive were so blended in the chaplets of the victors, that they themselves seemed to smile at the recompences that were lavished upon them, for a service so far beneath their valour and immense resources; so widely different, in its object and mode of execution, from the rapid, hazardous, and brilliant achievements that immortalized the republican and imperial arms. Still more strange was it to see all northern Europe compelled, by the force of events, to stifle their jealousies and sympathies, and to entrust the chastisement of a near and dear ally to those for whom they entertained neither confidence or amity—to those, whose cannon had never before resounded within the Belgic frontier, without arousing the echo of war from the banks of the Meuse and Rhine to the shores of the Danube and the Neva. It seemed as if the powers of Europe, and even Holland herself, were desirous to increase the popularity of the new French dynasty, by affording to Louis Philippe an occasion for exercising and decorating the unscarred bosoms of his young troops, and to his gallant sons an opportunity of wetting their willing but virgin swords.*

* Amongst the honorary recompences bestowed on the French troops were 392 crosses of the Belgic Leopold Order, which order had

The scene that passed on the banks of the Scheldt, in December, 1832, might be likened to one of those bloody pageantries that were once of trite occurrence upon the borders of the Tiber ; where the mock game of war was played upon a scale of fearful theatrical grandeur, and where the bleeding bodies of the captive Gaul or Dacian were relentlessly immolated to slake the pampered thirst for amusement of semi-barbarous Rome.* In this instance, the citadel was the arena, the Dutch and French were the gladiators, and civilized Europe the spectators. The issue was perhaps more bloody, but the sacrifice was not less wanton.

been founded by the king on the 11th of September, 1832. The first person to whom this cross was accorded, and that by the king of the Belgians in person in the trenches, was a private sapper who had been dangerously wounded. A nobler occasion, or a more fitting person, could not have been selected.

* The simile is the more justifiable from the fact that the roof of the theatre at Antwerp was the resort of spectators, who were thence enabled to witness the operations. Strangers were invited to this novel spectacle by the following advertisement:—“ *Notice ! The public is informed that places may be procured at the “ Théâtre des Variétés for seeing the siege.”*”

CHAPTER XII.

THE FRENCH ARMY WITHDRAWN FROM BELGIUM—RESULT OF THE EXPEDITION—NEGOTIATIONS RENEWED BY LORD PALMERSTON AND PRINCE TALLEYRAND—PROJECT OF THE CONVENTION—COUNTER-PROJECTS—NEGOTIATIONS INTERRUPTED—DUTCH CABINET ORDER OF THE 17TH NOVEMBER ENFORCED—MR. VAN ZUYLEN RECALLED—MR. DEDEL ARRIVES IN LONDON—PROPOSITIONS OF THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT—CONVENTION OF THE 21ST MAY—EMBARGO RAISED—PRISONERS RESTORED—NEGOTIATIONS FINALLY INTERRUPTED—CONVENTION OF ZONHOVEN—LUXEMBOURG QUESTION—GENERAL DIPLOMATIC POSITION—SITUATION OF BELGIUM, FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL—CONCLUSION.

OF all the groundless assertions and sinister predictions that attended the execution of coercive measures, not one was verified. On the contrary, twenty-four days' open trenches sufficed to subdue the citadel, without injury to the city. Russia, Prussia, and Austria remained passive spectators of an enterprise executed in support of a treaty to which they were contracting parties. The union between the British and French cabinets was strengthened without enfeebling their good understanding with other courts. With the exception of a fruitless attempt to destroy and inundate a few farms, the Dutch made no effort to succour their countrymen. No sooner had the French army placed the fortress in the hands of its legitimate proprietors, than it retired forthwith; thus affording a striking proof of the disinterestedness and good faith of Louis Philippe, and giving him additional titles to the support of England and the confidence of the northern powers. Peace, the

paramount object of every effort, having withstood this severe shock, was more firmly established; and a unanimous vote of the Belgic chambers accorded a sword to the commander, and thanks to that army, whose entry into the country had been stigmatized as the result of a deplorable system of policy, and pregnant with evil to Belgic interests.

The moral benefit derived by Belgium from the emancipation of her first commercial city, and the prospect of the speedy re-opening of the Scheldt, was great; the strategetical advantages, equally so. With the exception of Lillo and Liefkenshoek, which had little influence upon the navigation of the river, since vessels must pass under the guns of Flushing, Batz, &c., Belgium obtained full possession of the whole of her territory on both banks. From the inconceivable policy of the Dutch in retaining Lillo and Liefkenshoek, a policy that fully justified the speculations of the Belgic government, the latter was liberated from the necessity of delivering up Venloo, Limbourg, and Luxembourg. The left flank and even rear of her army of observation, hitherto menaced by the citadel and fleet, was completely unshackled, and the communications between the two banks were opened, as far as La Croix and the St. Anna Polder; and the forts placed in such a state of defence as to defy the most powerful marine.

Notwithstanding these advantages, the military position of Belgium is less favourable than that of her antagonist, whether considered offensively or defensively. For were the latter to be the aggressors, and should success attend their arms, there is no serious obstacle between them and Brussels, no strong position to the south of the Nethes, where an army could rally after any signal overthrow; the positions of the Dyle and Demer being easily turned by the roads from Tongres,

Jodoigne and Wavre.* On the other hand, supposing the Belgians to be victorious, they could not penetrate more than two marches into N. Brabant, without falling upon Bergen-op-Zoom, Breda, Bois-le-Duc, and Tilbourg, or being arrested by the inundations which either cover or are prepared to overspread the whole intervening country between these places and the Moerdyk. But the neutral position assigned to Belgium render these disadvantages of less importance.

Although the refusal of the Netherlands cabinet to abandon Lillo and Liefkenshoek was doubtless advantageous to Belgium, it was highly embarrassing to France and England, since it rendered it impossible to discontinue maritime coercion without acting against the letter and spirit of the convention of October; the sole object of which was to effect the complete territorial evacuation. So long as any of the causes that produced that convention continued to exist, it was evident that the convention itself must remain in full vigour, and that the embargo and blockade arising from it could not be removed, without an abandonment of serious resolves and a virtual acknowledgment of their injustice and impolicy.

Such, however, was the inconvenience to British commerce, and such the general repugnance not only of the mercantile world, but of the English and French governments to the prolongation of these measures, that the intelligence of the fall of Antwerp had scarcely reached London ere an attempt was made by Lord Palmerston and Prince Talleyrand, to renew negotiations. With this view a project of convention was drawn up and forwarded to the Hague, on the 30th of

* It is intended to protect this frontier by erecting a fortress at Zamel, and to fortify other points, including Lierre, Diest, and Hasselt.

December. In this, the release of the Dutch prisoners and the cessation of the embargo were offered in exchange for the evacuation of Lillo and Liefkenshoek, the re-opening of the Scheldt, and one or two other stipulations of minor importance. This overture was met by a counter-project of the 9th of January, 1833, in which, whilst the Dutch government consented to the principle of territorial evacuation, it proposed to impose a toll both upon the navigation of the Scheldt and the transit into Germany, and demanded the annual payment by Belgium of the 8,400,000 interest of debt. But, before this document reached its destination, the negotiations were again interrupted by the enforcement of the Dutch cabinet order of the 17th of November.

The state of warfare within the Scheldt had hitherto rendered this act a mere dead letter, as regarded the port of Antwerp; but hostilities had no sooner ceased before the citadel, than its effects were essayed on two Austrian merchant vessels, the *Roleslaw* and *Prince Metternich*; more, perhaps, with the view of feeling the pulse of the five powers, than with any serious intention of interfering with the ships of neutral or non-coercing nations. The first of the two vessels alluded to, having attempted to proceed seawards, was brought to by the Dutch guard-ship at Lillo and compelled to retrace its steps. The second, inward-bound, was boarded at Flushing, and thence escorted to the limits of the Belgic waters, but not until the master had engaged himself "to pay the amount of such duties on his cargo as might afterwards be demanded in the event of Belgium consenting to the imposition of a toll."* This incident, which was not only of vital importance to general navigation, but in direct violation of the treaties that gua-

* Extract from the log of the master of the *Prince Metternich* Austrian merchant brig. 10th of January, 1833.

ranteed the freedom of the Scheldt, was immediately communicated to the French and English governments, by whom explanations were demanded of the Hague cabinet.

To this the Dutch foreign minister replied, that "the recent measures enforced against Holland being in opposition to the principles laid down by the ninth protocol, by which the liberty of navigating the Scheldt was rendered contingent on the cessation of hostilities on all sides, the Netherlands government had determined upon the expulsion and non-admission of French and English vessels, as an act of reprisal. But although navigation was interrupted for the ships of those two nations, it would remain unimpeded for all others; for it was not until the Dutch flag had been repelled from the upper Scheldt that analogous measures had been adopted by Holland in the lower. Nevertheless, however well entitled the court of the Hague might be to close the Scheldt for the present, it would not avail itself of the rights reserved by its declaration of the 25th of January 1831, but would endeavour to conciliate them with the interests of navigation and commerce. Therefore, whilst the king was resolved not to renounce these or other rights vested in him by the ninth protocol (meaning the supposed right of establishing a toll), he would not object to the temporary freedom of the Scheldt, on condition that his troops were liberated, and the coercive measures discontinued. But until this should be effected, the dispositions emanating from the cabinet order of the 17th of November would continue in force as far as regarded France and England."*

Although this note gave an interpretation to the twelfth clause of the ninth protocol, which it was not

* Despatch of Baron Verstolk van Soelen, 25th of January, 1833.

intended to convey, it was interpreted satisfactorily by France and England, as showing that the Dutch had adopted counter-coercive measures as a temporary and exceptional act of reprisal, and not with the intention of definitively infringing the treaties that secured the freedom of general navigation. This view of the case was further corroborated by the arrival at Antwerp of several neutral, and indeed of many Belgian vessels under neutral colours, without other hinderance than a simple visit of formality at Flushing. The negotiations were therefore renewed, and a few days produced four projects and counter-projects, which, failing in their purpose, were resumed in a note addressed by Lord Palmerston and Prince Talleyrand to Baron Van Zuylen, on the 14th of February.

It resulted from this able and lucid document that, if there had existed any serious disposition on the part of Holland to terminate the matter in dispute, she might have availed herself of the propositions of the two powers without compromising any of her interests. For all that was demanded was, that the territorial question should remain in *statu quo*, both parties retaining, for the time being, the territory actually in their possession; that a formal armistice should be concluded without other special guarantee for the maintenance of peace or disarmament than the acknowledgment of Belgic neutrality; and lastly, that the Meuse and Scheldt should be re-opened, the former on the basis of the convention of Mayence, and the latter on the same footing on which it had existed from January 1831 to November 1832.* In return for this, maritime coercion was to be discontinued, and the Dutch troops to be conveyed home with arms and baggage.

* The convention of Mayence, ratified on the 31st of March 1831, regulates the tonnage and navigation duties on the Rhine.

Although these propositions prejudiced no ulterior question, and imposed no definite conclusion, "but were calculated to procure immediate relief both to Holland and Belgium, and contained such sureties for the maintenance of peace as might lead to a direct and definitive arrangement," they were met by counter-projects of a character "inadmissible as to their contents and objectionable from their omissions."* For whilst the Dutch demanded the cessation of the embargo and the liberation of the prisoners, they proposed to subject all vessels to the payment of tonnage duties, and to consequent search and detention at Batz or Flushing, without offering any guarantee for the pilotage or buoying of the Scheldt waters, or the re-opening of the Meuse. And this, although no such toll had been previously levied except during a short time in 1814, between the expulsion of the French from the Netherlands and the treaty of Paris, when it could only be considered as an arbitrary act on one side, and as an oversight on the other, no ways intended to serve as a precedent. For whatever pretension Holland might have had to revive any portion of the barrier system, by inflicting toll or search, this pretension had never been recognized by the great powers; indeed, it had been formally disavowed by the treaty of Vienna and the secret treaty of the same epoch, by which the king of the Netherlands engaged himself, his heirs and successors, to maintain the liberty of the Scheldt.

The demand for the annual payment of 8,400,000 florins was no less exceptionable. For it was evident that a portion of this charge was imposed on Belgium, not as an equivalent for past benefits, but as part of a future and general arrangement; whence she was to

* Note of the 14th of February, 1833.

derive divers subsequent commercial advantages. This matter was clearly defined by the forty-eighth protocol and the annexed memorandums of the 7th of October, wherein the whole of the various Belgic debts were stated at 7,800,000 florins—that is, 5,050,000 as half interest of all engagements contracted during the union, 750,000 as being the whole interest of the debt called Austro-Belge, and lastly, 2,000,000 as the total interests of the burdens incurred by Belgium during her incorporation with France. But in consideration of the advantages of commerce and navigation which Holland engaged to allow to Belgium, and in return for the sacrifices imposed on the Dutch by the separation, a further sum of 600,000 florins was added, so as to swell the total of annual interests to 8,400,000. It is incontestable that this additional sum was proposed by the Conference and accepted by Belgium as an equivalent for the freedom of navigation and transit; that it formed no part of any anterior obligation, and that it was to be an eventual sacrifice in return for a definite good. Holland had therefore no claim to impose further exactions or restrictions; for Belgium never would have consented to the payment of this sum had she supposed that the Dutch government would have attempted to obstruct the navigation of the Scheldt, or the transit into Germany. Besides, as was justly observed by the plenipotentiaries, “this demand plainly indicated the intention of the Netherlands court to obtain such financial advantages as would enable it to postpone a final arrangement to an indefinite period.” It might have been added, that it would have been an act of flagrant injustice and contradiction, to have allowed Holland to avail itself of one clause of a treaty essentially favourable to itself, whilst it repudiated the remaining articles—indeed, the whole treaty—as being too advantageous to Belgium.

The note of the 14th of February produced a retort from Mr. Van Zuylen van Nyevelt on the 26th. After denouncing the coercive measures as the introduction of "an unprecedented and arbitrary act of international police, and as a system of hostilities, undertaken in the midst of peace, that tended to undermine the basis of the independence of states, to subvert the fundamental principle of the rights of nations, and to substitute the supremacy of force for that of equity," the Dutch plenipotentiary nevertheless proposed to enter into a convention for the mutual cessation of the blockade, and the restoration of the prisoners. But the uncompromising and acrimonious tone assumed by Baron Van Zuylen, both upon this and other previous occasions, having given umbrage in London, his recall was demanded, and the negotiations were again interrupted until the arrival of Mr. Dedel, who, on the 23rd of March, presented a new project of convention to Lord Palmerston and Prince Talleyrand.

It would be superfluous to analyze the various notes and propositions that were as pertinaciously put forward and skilfully defended by one party, as they were steadily and logically repelled by the other, until at length, on the 16th of May, the Dutch government, wearied with the effect of the coercive measures, instructed its plenipotentiary to propose that "so long as the relations between Holland and Belgium should not be regulated by a definitive treaty, his Netherlands majesty engaged not to renew hostilities against Belgium, and that the navigation of the Scheldt should remain free." This proposition, the only one that offered a prospect of approachment, and which, if adhered to, enabled both countries to effect the reduction of their burdensome war establishments, not only relieved France and England from some portion of their

embarrassment, but opened the door to more direct conclusions. It was the forerunner of the convention of the 21st of May, and paved the way to the reunion of the Conference.

By this convention, accepted by Belgium on the 10th of June, the territorial question was left in *statu quo*, or placed rather upon the basis of *uti possidetis* until the conclusion of a definite treaty. The cessation of hostilities was extended to Luxembourg, which had not been included in any former armistice. The liberty of the Scheldt was restored to its previous footing—maritime coercion was reciprocally discontinued—the prisoners were set at liberty—the Meuse was re-opened to commerce—the communications between Maestricht and North Brabant, as well as with Aix-la-Chapelle, were declared to be free, and the courts of St. James's and the Tuileries engaged to occupy themselves forthwith with a conclusive treaty, and to invite Russia, Austria, and Prussia to unite with them in effecting this object.

Such was the essence of the convention of May, which placed Belgium in a position from which she derived greater benefits than could perhaps result from a definite solution. For, whilst she reaped all the advantages emanating from the November treaty without incurring any of its penalties, Holland was saddled with its territorial and financial drawbacks, and had nothing to show in return but the useless forts of Lillo and Liefkenshoek, and the empty honour of maintaining principles, to which she had sacrificed solid facts.

In virtue of the engagement alluded to in the convention of May, the Conference re-assembled in July. In order, however, to simplify its labours, and to avoid adding to the multitudinous protocols, whose very designation had become an object of European disfavour, it was resolved that the negotiations should, as far as

possible, be conducted verbally ; that the parties directly interested should be admitted to plead, but not to participate in the deliberations ; that the treaty of November, which had become the palladium, and, as it were, a part and parcel of the Belgian constitution, should be taken as the index of negotiation, and be subject only to such modifications as might result from the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian reserves, or as might be necessary to elucidate such crudities as obscured its context and impeded its accomplishment. The Conference consequently continued its labours from the 15th of July until the middle of September, and this with every hope of success. Already nineteen out of the twenty-four articles had been mutually agreed to by the Dutch and Belgian plenipotentiaries ; but the ninth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth sections gave rise to such inveterate discussions, as baffled all adjustment ; the negotiations were, therefore, again interrupted, the Conference was finally dissolved, and the question fell into that state of somnolent abeyance in which it has continued to the present hour.

The motives that actuated the plenipotentiaries in breaking off the negotiations, and the dissatisfaction entertained by them at the conduct of the Dutch government, were consigned in a confidential memorandum. This document having been founded upon the observations of the Belgic plenipotentiaries addressed to the Conference upon the 30th of September, the latter may be considered as faithfully resuming the causes that led to the rupture. By this it appeared, that at the moment the Conference supposed itself on the eve of attaining a solution, new and insuperable difficulties were started by the Hague cabinet, which not only eluded all mention of its efforts to obtain the agreement of the agnates of the house of Nassau and confederation,

as to the application of the stipulations contained in the different articles of the November treaty, which agreement was an indispensable preliminary to all further negotiation, but it declared that matters were not sufficiently mature to warrant such exertion; and, in fact, that it intended to render this step subordinate to ulterior negotiation, and to adopt it at such time only as might suit its own interests and convenience, or, in other words, that it arrogated to itself the power of neutralizing the negotiations by the absence of that consent which it knew was essential to the adjustment of the points in dispute. This being the case, and the Conference having also discovered that the Hague cabinet had hitherto neglected to furnish full powers to its plenipotentiaries to come to any definite agreement, although they had gone through the delusive ceremony of countersigning the nineteen articles above alluded to, and being finally convinced that there existed no real disposition on the part of Holland to conclude a final treaty, ulterior progress was pronounced impossible, and, as aforesaid, the Conference declined all further interference.

Whilst the five courts had been thus occupied in endeavouring to effect the desired solution, a private, collateral negotiation, tending to complete the provisions of the convention of May, was being directly carried on between the Duke of Saxe Weimar on the part of Holland, and by General Baron Hurel on that of Belgium.* This negotiation, which terminated in the military convention of Zonhoven, was ratified on the 25th of November.† By this the Dutch obtained a right of

* The French major-general, Baron Hurel, succeeded General Desprez as chief of the Belgic staff (*chef de l'état major*).

† A small town of the province of Limbourg to the north of Hasselt, where the subordinate commissioners met to discuss the con-

passage for their troops and convoys to and from North Brabant and Maestricht, by the route to Lanaken, Bree, and Valkenswaard, and between Maestricht and Aix-la-Chapelle, by that of Galoppe. At the same time, the navigation of the Meuse, through Maestricht, was declared to be re-opened under certain trifling restrictions, which General Dibbets considered essential for the security of that fortress * Here the curtain may be said to have fallen upon the negotiations. Henceforth the task of diplomacy was reduced to insignificance, and a veil of inaction spread itself over the whole question, which, so far, terminated without a single concession or admission on the part of Holland, that had not resulted from force, and which, although no synallagmatic contract had been concluded, placed Belgium under the guarantee of an accomplished fact, and under the empire of circumstances; whence there could be no retrocession without a violation of solemn engagements, nor any material deviation without entailing the curse of general war.

The various impulses that influenced the litigating and arbitrating powers during the course of these long and intricate negotiations, having been developed at some length, nothing remains but to offer a few observations upon the general aspect of the question. These may be speedily resumed.

It has been already shown that a series of impolitic errors, no ways analogous with the alleged wisdom and justice of the Netherlands monarch, or the reputed abilities of his advisers, gave birth to seditious discontents in Belgium, and produced the Brussels re-

ditions, the principal feature of which was, that the force of each detachment should be limited to 800 men per day, with twenty-four hours' notice when the number exceeded twelve.

* Declaration of General Dibbets, 10th of November, 1833.

bellion of August. A fatal perseverance in these errors, together with a combination of untoward events, quickly converted this partial outbreaking into general revolution, and led to the dissolution of that inauspicious union, whose heterogeneous elements rendered all possibility of fusion impossible. In despite of its acknowledged and natural sympathy for an old ally, and in defiance of its admitted aversion to give further countenance to that right of insurrection, which it had sanctified by recognizing the July revolution, the Wellington administration of 1830 found itself no more able to oppose the torrent of events in the Netherlands, than it had been to resist those of Paris. It therefore rejected the urgent solicitation of the Dutch government to interfere by force of arms,* and holding the dynastic interests of Holland as subordinate to the maintenance of European peace, wisely, though reluctantly, resolved to pursue that system of negotiation, of which the protocols of the 4th and 17th of November, 1830, were the first fruits. The pacific principles laid down by the Duke of Wellington having been matured by Lord Grey, and adhered to by Louis Philippe and the great powers, eventually led to the elevation of King Leopold and the treaty of November. Thus Belgium, who already enjoyed *de facto* independence, obtained that *de jure* nationality, which was not only consecrated by a solemn treaty, but consolidated by the presence of envoys from all the contracting powers, except Russia. For, by a singular species of ambi-dextrous policy, Austria and Prussia sent their representatives to Brussels as individual powers, whilst they refused all recognition of King Leopold, as members of that federal union, whose minor elements are dependant on their bidding.

* Note of Baron Falck to Lord Aberdeen, 5th of October, 1830, and Lord Aberdeen's reply of the 17th of October.

Admitted as co-equal members of the great European and transatlantic family—entrenched behind the treaty of November—flanked by the conventions of May and Zonhoven—not less confident in the good faith of the guaranteeing powers than in her superior force, her improving credit, and virgin resources—encouraged by a conviction that external convulsion, or the most egregious internal mismanagement, could alone endanger her nationality, Belgium determined to meet the unbending tenacity with which Holland supported assumed principles, by an equally uncompromising adhesion to ratified facts.

Although the state of *uti possidetis* was not of her seeking, her government resolved on clinging to it until it should be replaced by a definite treaty, and to reject every effort to seduce her into any intermediary position. It was, consequently, declared, that the *sine quâ non* of further negotiation must be the adhesion of the agnates of the house of Nassau and the confederation to the projected territorial arrangements, and that until this adhesion should be forthcoming, the subject was not susceptible of advance or retrocession.

In the determination of Belgium not to swerve from this line of policy, and in the reluctance of the king, grand-duke, his agnates, and the confederation to consent to the principle of territorial exchange, reside the whole difficulty of solution. The principles that actuated Belgium have been explained—to her it is a question of life and death. Those that influenced the Dutch monarch are so strictly interwoven with his undisguised aversion to renounce other collateral pretensions, as neither to excite surprise or require explanation. But the objections of his agnates and the Germanic Diet—if, indeed, these objections be other than a mere pretext for supporting the ulterior views of Holland—

are less easily accounted for, since the exchange offered to the two latter is not only based on conditions of perfect equity, but is in no way calculated to prejudice their individual or federal rights ; the former of which may be considered as essentially financial ; the latter, as exclusively military.

In the first place, as regards the agnates of the house of Nassau, whose contingent interests are as remote as would be those of Ducal Brunswick, in any matter concerning the territorial arrangements of Great Britain, it is notorious that the eastern or German half of Luxembourg is more than equivalent, in population and resources, to the four Nassau principalities ceded to Prussia in 1815, and that the half of Limbourg made over to Holland is superior in territorial and financial importance to the western or Wallon half of the grand duchy allotted to Belgium. Thus, if the Nassau agnates were two-fold gainers by the abandonment of their hereditary German possessions, it is evident they would reap still further benefits by renouncing the half of their acquired property in Luxembourg, in exchange for that offered them elsewhere.

Secondly, as regards federal Germany, it may be affirmed that, although by ceding half the grand duchy, the confederation may break the continuity of its frontier, from opposite Longwy to Mezieres, a frontier of little military importance, it still retains the fortress of Luxembourg and the key of the great roads that conduct direct from Rhenan Prussia into the heart of France. And whilst its barrier against the latter is no ways enfeebled on the banks of the Semoy and Chiens, it obtains a strong military position upon those of the Meuse ; the left flank supported by Maestricht, the right resting on Venloo, or even on Grave, and the centre upon Ruremonde, which is capable of being converted into a

formidable *tête de pont*. The utility of the western portion of Luxembourg to Germany, in a strategical point of view cannot be compared with that of Limbourg; for, in the event of aggressive war, the right flank of any French army, destined to operate upon the duchy of Juliers, would advance direct from Givet by Namur and Liege, and not circuitously from Sedan and Longwy by Bouillon and Neufchateau. Thus, whilst the road to Coblenz, by Trêves, would be sheltered by Luxembourg, that to Dusseldorf and Cologne would be protected by the possession of the right bank of the Meuse, which would be converted into a defensive barrier for the Rhenan provinces, in lieu of serving as a point of offensive concentration against them. As concerns the integrality of the federal statutes, it may be observed, that although these statutes forbid the alienation of any portion of territory, in this instance, it is not an alienation, but an exchange; and of the legality of such negotiations, the recent cession of St. Wendel furnishes a convincing proof.*

It has been plausibly objected, as regards Belgium, that if the half of Limbourg—the whole of which, excepting the Dutch *enclaves*, is admitted to have formed an integral part of her territory—be more valuable than the half of the grand duchy, which is claimed by the house of Nassau, why does she persist in demanding the exchange? Why is she desirous to sacrifice the better portion, which is incontestibly her own, for the inferior part, to which she is said to have no title? † To this it may be answered,

* This small territory, known as the principality of Lichtenberg, was ceded to Prussia by the Grand-Duke of Saxe-Cobourg, on the 23d of September, 1834, for an annuity of 80,000 rix dollars (12,000*l.*). It consists of 11½ miles, and contains 26,000 inhabitants: it is situated about five leagues north of Sarrebruck, in the regency of Trêves.

† It has been previously observed that from the time of Philip the

that the Belgians not only contest the just title of possessive right to Luxembourg; but that the option does not rest with them. For, inasmuch as the avowed object of the treaty of Vienna was to render the military position of the Netherlands kingdom as strong as possible, by bristling her frontiers with fortresses, and by placing her, as it were, astride upon the Meuse, Scheldt Moselle, and Our, so the occult object of the treaty of November, and concurrent negotiations, was to enfeeble the strategical position of Belgium by destroying these fortresses, and by depriving her of the utrilateral advantages of these rivers, so as to reduce her to a situation more accordant with that neutrality which is her destined character; if, indeed, it be ever practicable to realize a project so little accordant with a geographical position which seems to have destined her armies to be the vanguard of those of France or Germany, even as it has hitherto designated her territory as the arena for the first encounter of both.

Such being the case, it is highly questionable whether the demand for the entire cession of Luxembourg, and the retention of the whole of Limbourg, would be attended to; for, by this means, Prussia and Holland would be deprived of their barrier on the Meuse, and the Belgians would be brought into contact, not only with the most vulnerable part of Holland, by Grave and Nymegen, but would reach within two marches of the Rhine. But were it otherwise, France is herself interested in the maintenance of the proposed arrangement; for although the possession of the western half

Good, in 1460, down to the treaty of Vienna, in 1815, Luxembourg was invariably looked upon as forming an integral part of the Belgic provinces. It was so considered upon the incorporation of Belgium with France in 1795, and this interpretation was sanctioned by the treaties of Luneville and Campo Formio.

of Luxembourg may be deemed more important to the Germanic Diet than the right bank of the Meuse, it is evidently advantageous for France that Belgium should obtain as much as possible of the former, by which her own frontier contiguity to the Confederation is diminished by about fifteen leagues, and her connexity with a friendly power increased in a similar ratio.

Such is the outline of the diplomatic question. A brief space must now be devoted to describe the immediate results to Belgium of the change in her political position.

“The causes and motives of sedition are innovations in religion, taxes, alteration of laws and customs, breaking of privileges, general oppression, advancement of unworthy persons, strangers; and, in short, whatever in offending people fanneth and knitteth them in one common cause.”* Had this definition been expressly written for Belgium, it could not have been more apposite. For the grievances complained of by the southern provinces not only embraced all these innovations, but were of such nature as finally united men of adverse doctrines in the same bond, and drove them to seek by violence that just and fair administration of the laws which had hitherto been denied to their petitions. A short but fierce struggle ensued: embittered by all the rancour of individual and national prejudices, and darkened by more than one of those acts of frenzied and unpardonable violence that are the too frequent concomitants of popular convulsion. The people triumphed, and their unlooked-for victory solved the first portion of the insurrectionary problem—that is, the abolition of grievances. But the second—namely, that of financial and commercial amendment, which is solely dependent

* Bacon's Essays.

upon time and judicious administration—still remains undefined.

With the independence and nationality they so long thirsted for, the Belgians have obtained a constitution so eminently liberal as to require modification rather than enlargement, at least as regards the executive. They have re-established trial by jury, extended the law of representation as relates to the commons, and circumscribed it as affects the aristocracy. They have removed all restrictions upon the liberty of the press, upon education, upon the publicity of judicial proceedings, and upon the right of association for political, literary, or commercial purposes. Important reforms have taken place in the administration of justice, in prison discipline, in the mode of collecting taxes, and in the municipal and parochial laws. A revised penal code, purporting to restrict capital punishment to fourteen cases, and to abolish branding and the pillory, is forthcoming.* New canals and roads have been opened, and others are projected. A railway from the sea to the Prussian frontier is steadily advancing, and cross-posts have multiplied the means of internal communication. Saving banks have received an immense extension, having augmented their deposits from 200,000 francs to 18,000,000. Two new universities have been founded ; and the number of persons attending primary schools has increased nearly one-sixth. The unconstitutional and mysterious syndicate has disappeared. Decennial budgets have been replaced by annual estimates. A severe economy and careful watchfulness have been introduced into every department of public expenditure, not a single item of which can now escape legislative scrutiny, or be diverted

* Mr. Lebeau, the projector of this amended code, purposes to modify 170, and to repeal 20 articles of the existing penal statutes.

from its destined usage. Civil and military employments are the exclusive property of the natives.* Lotteries have ceased to exist. Various imposts, alike obnoxious from their nature and amount, have been modified or entirely abrogated: fiscal vexations have been softened; and public credit—that unerring criterion of national vigour and resources—has risen nearly to a level with that of the most favoured nations.

On the other hand, although the clothiers, armourers, colliers, iron-workers, sugar-refiners, soap-boilers, and distillers, are actively employed; and although the customs' receipts of Antwerp and Ostend, for 1834, show an increase of 459,000 francs over those of 1829, it is admitted that colonial commerce is reduced to comparative insignificance—that the imports exceed the exports by nearly 4,000,000—that some branches of industry, especially the cotton trade, are in a languishing state;† that several great mercantile houses and ship-owners, who trafficked with the Indies, have removed from Bruges and Antwerp to Holland; that, with abundance of specie, there is a want of lucrative employment for capital; that the average shipping returns of the out-ports, for 1833-1834, fall short by many tons, compared

* Out of 2768 officers only 128 are foreigners, and the services of these are limited to the duration of the war. Before the revolution the numbers of officers was 2,373, of whom only 417 were Belgians. Baron de Keverberg, in his "*Royaume des Pays-Bas*," states the number of Belgians to have exceeded 500; but this still leaves the proportion at nearly 5 to 1.

† The cotton manufactories introduced under the empire owed their prosperity, first, to the continental system; and, secondly, to the assistance of the million of industry. This prosperity may, therefore, be said to have been in a great measure artificial. In a former note the number of individuals employed in the cotton trade was stated at 250,000: this was an error—the total, including their families, does not exceed 220,000. The average wages are one franc per day.

with those of 1829 ; that general crime has increased ;* that the number of indigent has augmented ; and, finally, on comparing the budgets for the last six years, it appears that no direct alleviation has taken place, notwithstanding the abolition of taxes above mentioned.†

It is proper to observe, however, that these unfavourable symptoms are the inevitable consequence of past and existing circumstances. For, although the expenditure of blood and treasure has been proportionately trifling, it is not to be supposed that the Belgians have been enabled to emerge from a state of vassalage into one of almost unlimited freedom, without considerable temporary sacrifices, or that the first fruits of the transition should realize the general vow. Thus, notwithstanding an addition of 20 per cent. upon certain items of public revenue, and notwithstanding that the receipts have constantly surpassed the estimates, the ways and means of the four first years were totally inadequate to meet the extraordinary exigencies of the crisis. Loans to the amount of 116 millions, including 15 millions francs exchequer bills, were therefore necessary ;‡ the interests of which, added to the 8,400,000

* It is proved by the interesting work of M. E. Ducpetiaux (*Justice Social*), that capital crime has decreased, the total condemnations from 1830 to 1834 inclusive being 58, of these only one has been executed.

Francia.

† Budgets in 1830	84,000,000 (portion of Belgium.)
1831	112,000,000
1832	203,000,000
1833	119,000,000
1834	84,000,000
1835	92,000,000, of which 295,000,000

have been absorbed by the war department since the 1st of January, 1831.

‡ Loans raised by Belgium and Holland since the revolution : *Holland*.—Total 518,000,000 francs ; of these 119,000,000 have been reimbursed, leaving 399,000,000. *Belgium*.—Total 162,000,000 ; of

florins (17,777,760 francs), and arrears eventually to be paid to Holland, will swell the gross amount of public debt to 25,775,760 francs, a sum nearly equal to the 26 millions formerly paid by Belgium as her portion of the united dead weight. However, as in the event of peace, the army may be diminished to nearly a third of its present numerical strength, which is fixed at 110,000 available militia, exclusive of civic guards, and as the war estimates have constantly absorbed half the general budgets, important reductions will be feasible: so that the ways and means ought not to exceed 75,000,000. Consequently, there will be a direct annual relief to the nation of nearly 11,000,000, when compared with its contributions during its union with Holland.

In presenting this cursory sketch of the actual condition of Belgium, it is not intended to penetrate deeper into futurity, or to hazard speculations, the development of which is solely contingent on the action of time and the favourable junction of external with internal impulses. For it would be as hazardous to prescribe a remedy for the languor that affects commerce, as it would be to specify the benefits that may arise from the completion of the national undertaking, destined to unite the Scheldt with the Rhine.* Suffice it to say, that the Belgians are without apprehension as to the

these, 46,000,000 have reimbursed; remain 116,000,000. The total war expenses of Holland for the five last years are estimated at 346,000,000 francs. The public debt of Belgium, as voted for 1835, exclusive of the pension list, &c., amounted to 7,798,000 francs; the total to 11,640,883 francs.

* The Belgic railway, commencing at Antwerp, with embranchments to Brussels and Ostend, will traverse Malines, Louvain, Tirlemont, Liege, and Verviers, and enter Prussia in the vicinity of Eupen (a manufacturing town five leagues south of Aix-la-Chapelle); whence it will proceed in nearly a direct line by Bergheim to Cologne. The expense of construction averages about £720 per mile (English). The mean speed is calculated at nine miles per hour.

ultimate recovery of the former, and that they look forward with sanguine expectations to the success of the latter, which, it is calculated, will give to Antwerp a decided superiority over her Dutch rivals, by destroying the transport monopoly hitherto enjoyed by them from the absence of competition, and from the want of more rapid and economical communications between Cologne and the sea. This anticipation seems to be well-founded. For it stands to reason, if the German merchants and manufacturers, especially those of the Rhine and its tributaries, can import or export their goods more cheaply and speedily by land than by water, and this without interruption from the seasons, that they will not hesitate between the two modes of conveyance.* The question that merits the most serious attention of Belgian political economists is not so much, however, whether their commerce will revive, or the railroad succeed ; but whether it be more advantageous to extend their political and commercial relations with France, and almost exclusively look to that country for support ; or whether they should gradually wean themselves from French ascendancy, and endeavour to unite more closely with Germany.

Without pretending to enter into details, it may be affirmed, that whilst the political and moral sympathies of Belgium attract her towards France, her material interests seem to incline her towards Germany. For, on the one hand, however intimate her alliance with the former may be, it is fallacious to suppose that the French government will ever accord any important com-

* The importations into Germany from Holland by the Rhine amounted in 1834 to 86,500 ; the exportations by the same channel, to 248,131 tons, at an average cost of about 3s. 6d. per cwt., demanding an average of eight days to Cologne. The calculated expenses by the railway will be about 3s. per cwt., requiring twenty-four hours for goods.

mercial concessions to a nation, which, from the abundance and cheapness of its mineral productions, from its superiority in machinery, from its equal facility of procuring raw materials, from its immediate vicinity, and from various other favourable causes, would not only be enabled to compete with, but to undersell the French manufacturers in their own market, were the prohibition removed, or the protecting duties sensibly diminished. On the other hand, although similar objections may be started by some parts of Germany, it is the evident interest of the majority of states, that are enveloped in the Prussian customs association, to admit Belgian manufactures under a mutually modified tariff, not only in order to excite competition, which is the mother of invention and economy, but that they may obtain readier issues for their own wools, wines, and other articles of indigenous produce.

Whatever may be the opinions of the Belgian legislature upon this question, it will surely be admitted by the statesmen of England and Germany, that, as the peculiar position of Belgium tends to submit her to the constant action of foreign influences, it is sound policy to abstract her as much as possible from those of France. This can only be effected by liberal concessions, and by amicable and protecting ties. It is obvious that the greater the causes for Belgic estrangement from Germany, the greater will be her inclination to draw towards France; whereas, if she be strengthened, encouraged, enriched, and, above all, if her material interests be ameliorated by a connexion with Germany, there can be no doubt that, in case of emergency, she would as readily cleave to the north as she now clings to the south. For the sympathies of nations, like those of individuals, are subordinate to self-interest and self-preservation.

It is of trite occurrence to hear the Belgians accused of an exclusive bias towards France ; and to a certain degree this imputation is not unfounded. But admitting that it were true to the extent generally asserted, what would be more natural ? Independent of an affinity of language, religion, jurisprudence, civil and military organization, literature, tastes and usages : independent of public ties and private connexions, of geographical contiguity and divers other causes tending to promote international affections ; the Belgians are aware that they are mainly indebted to the amity of France, and the prudent moderation of Louis Philippe, for their present existence as a nation. Not only did that monarch reject the offers of a re-union pressed upon him by some of those who first seized the reins of revolutionary government at Brussels, but, rising above the allurements of family aggrandizement, he refused the throne for his son ; because acceptance would have entailed war and the destruction of Belgic nationality—whilst, with an equal regard to the welfare of the people who courted his alliance, he readily accorded them his daughter, that she might not only act as a bond of amity between the two countries, but as the co-founder of an indigenous dynasty. Not content with lending the immense weight of its assistance to Belgium in the cabinet, France has been equally prompt in stretching forth her protecting arm to her in the field. Twice her armies entered the country, for purposes of rescue or support, and having accomplished their mission, again withdrew ; taking upon themselves all the risks and expenses of the two expeditions, without other recompence than that of acquiring fresh titles to the confidence of Europe, and to the thankfulness of the people, whom they had gratuitously succoured.

This amicable proceeding was calculated to effect a

still deeper impression upon the minds of the Belgians, when contrasted with that of the trans-Rhenan states; which, without being overtly hostile, was of a character essentially adapted to augment the very influence that has furnished matter for so much jealous objurgation. If the operation of this influence be an evil, if its counteraction be a matter of political importance, the remedy is at hand. Let the Germanic Confederation come forward. Let it abandon the mysterious and equivocal line of policy it has hitherto pursued, and whilst it turns a watchful eye to its own interests, as well as to the just claims of the house of Nassau, let it frankly contribute in consolidating that independence, upon which the force of events, rather than the vigour of man, has set its seal. The impolicy of the Dutch government hastened the downfall of that barrier, which, during fifteen years, was regarded as a master-piece of excellence. If a substitute be necessary, the way to upraise it is not by enfeebling the resources, or by casting discredit upon those on whom depends its reconstruction and guardianship; and yet such appears to have been the system hitherto embraced by the Germanic Diet.*

But it is time to bring our imperfect labours to a close. This cannot perhaps be accomplished in more just or appropriate terms than by stating that Belgium, prospering beneath the influence of regenerated monarchical institutions, and the paternal sceptre of a prince who generously associated himself with her destinies, and

* We may here quote a remarkable authority in support of our opinion, and this no other than the Prince of Orange himself, who, in his manifest of 11th of January (see Appendix, No. 27), thus expressed himself. "I rely with confidence upon the assistance of the great powers, whose whole views are directed towards the maintenance of the equilibrium of Europe and the preservation of general peace. *To render Belgium independent, strong, and happy, ought to be their common interest. Upon that essentially depends universal security.*"

exposed his life for her independence, may now boast that the sum of her liberties is complete, and that, whilst commerce and industry only require peace and equitable treaties to restore them to wholesome vigour, the arts and sciences are advancing in a manner not unworthy of their pristine reputation. A progress, that must be principally ascribed to her political emancipation, and to the expanding consciousness of that freedom which is so essential to the development of individual or national resources.

Enchained during a long lapse of years beneath the iron rule of various masters, the Belgians had lost the title, but not the sentiment of nationality. The irresistible outbreaking of the one has obtained for them the enjoyment of the other; and this, under a wise and tolerant sovereign, who not only reigns amongst, but exclusively for them. They may now, therefore, invoke the evidence of ancient times, and dwell with pride upon the memory of those illustrious countrymen, whose names are interwoven with the pages of European history. They may now renew the broken links of national traditions, and shew that they are not without honourable records of the past, nor undeserving of brighter prospects for the future.

And what country has a better claim to retrospect than that which, as early as the fifteenth century, was pre-eminent throughout Europe for its wealth, industry, civilization and learning?—than that which furnished Charles V. with many of his ablest generals and most valiant soldiers?—than that where Egmont, Horne, and other noble victims fell martyrs to the cause of liberty?—the land that was the birth-place of Scaliger, Ortelius, Lipsius, Van Eyck, and Rubens?—the land that nobly struggled for its rights and privileges against the persecutions of Spain, and resisted the encroachments of

Austria with equal courage, though perhaps with less justice, than she successfully emancipated herself from the thralldom of Holland?

Content with the luxuriant richness of her soil, and the many natural benefits that Providence has conferred upon her; essentially industrious in her habits, and moral in her disposition; desirous to encircle her territory with a fence of olive rather than with a barrier of steel, that land now craves no other boon of Europe than the unobstructed enjoyment of her independence, upon terms compatible with her own vitality and the collateral rights of other states. Policy and justice demand the accordance of this concession. Should it be denied, or should any attempt be made to violate her nationality, Belgium will be as ready to court the hazards of war as she is now anxious to cherish the blessings of peace. She will then be as willing to expend her blood and treasure in defending rational liberty against the infringements of despotism, as she is now eager to co-operate with moderate governments in stemming the progress of irrational licence.

Having reconquered that rank amidst nations which is her just heritage, the ardent vow of Belgium is not to disturb European institutions, but to accommodate herself to them. Passive, but fully armed—patient, but resolute, she is prepared to encounter any political vicissitudes that may assail her from abroad; whilst, with increasing powers and a prospect of diminished burdens, she tranquilly pursues the work of amelioration at home, and devotes herself to the cultivation of those generous and useful arts that are the glory of all civilized nations.

APPENDIX.

No. 18.—GENERAL ORDER.

INHABITANTS OF BRUGES!—Public peace has been compromised: the people, usually well disposed, have been instigated to commit excesses. Apprized of the disorders that have disturbed the town of Bruges, General Duvivier, military governor of the two Flanders, has confided to me the honourable mission of re-establishing tranquillity. Inhabitants of Bruges! I will prove myself worthy of his confidence, and hope that at my voice the people will acknowledge its duty, and the workmen return to their labours. I am entrusted with extensive powers, and am determined to employ them in saving Bruges from anarchy. I, and the troops that I have the honour to command, succeeded in re-establishing and maintaining tranquillity at Ghent, even under the fire of the Dutch guns: we are resolved to fulfil our duty in the same manner at this place. *There can be no liberty without independence, no independence without public order.*

(Signed) DE PONTÉCOULANT.

Head-quarters, Bruges.

No. 19.—DECREE OF PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.

THE provisional government, considering that it is necessary to fix the future condition of Belgium, decrees:—1st. The Belgic provinces, detached by force from Holland, shall form an *independent state*. 2d. The central committee will occupy itself with the project of a constitution. 3d. The national congress, wherein the interests of all the provinces will be respected, will be convoked. It will examine the project for a constitution, will

modify it as far as may be deemed proper, and will order its establishment throughout Belgium as the definitive constitution.

(Signed) DE POTTER, &c. &c.

No. 20.—ROYAL DECREE. (EXTRACT.)

WE, William, &c. &c.—Considering that, in the actual situation of the southern provinces, the action of government over such parts of these provinces where order and tranquillity have been hitherto maintained, cannot be exercised without difficulty at the Hague; desiring to remedy this inconvenience, &c. &c., decree:—Art. 1. Our well-beloved son, the Prince of Orange, is charged in our name with the temporary government of all those parts of the southern provinces where legal authority is still recognized. 2. He will fix his residence at Antwerp. 3. He will second and support, as far as possible, by conciliatory means, the efforts of the well-disposed inhabitants to re-establish order, wherever it may be troubled. 4. Our minister of state, the Duke d'Ursel, &c. &c., and our counsellors of state, Baron d'Anethan, &c. &c., are directed to follow our well-beloved son, the Prince of Orange, to Antwerp.

(Signed) WILLIAM.

Given at the Hague, this 4th October, 1830.

No. 21.—PROCLAMATION.

WE, William, Prince, &c. &c.—To the inhabitants of the southern provinces of the Netherlands kingdom.—Charged for the time being by the king, our august father, with the government of the southern provinces, we return amongst you in the hope of contributing to the re-establishment of order, and the happiness of the country. Our heart bleeds at the ills you have endured. Seconded by the efforts of all good citizens, we trust that we may anticipate the calamities that still menace you! Upon quitting you, we conveyed to the foot of the throne the vows expressed by many of you, that a separation should take place between the two portions of the kingdom, to remain united, however, beneath the same sceptre. This demand has been accepted; but, as inevitable delays must arise before the mode and conditions of this important measure can be determined in the proper constitutional forms, his majesty has accorded to

the southern provinces a distinct administration, of which I am the chief, and which will be composed entirely of Belgians. Affairs will be discussed both by public and private individuals, in the language of their choice. All places dependant on this government will be given to the inhabitants of the provinces that compose it. The utmost liberty will be left to the instruction of youth. Other ameliorations will accord with the vows of the nation, and the exigencies of the times. Compatriots! we only demand of you to unite your efforts with ours, in order to realize all our hopes. From that moment we guarantee the *oblivion of all political faults* antecedent to the present proclamation. For the better attainment of the proposed object, we will invoke every means of enlightening ourselves; we will anticipate every useful counsel. We will surround ourselves with such notable inhabitants as are most distinguished for their patriotism. Let all those that are animated by the same sentiments approach us with confidence! Belgians! it is by these means that we hope to concur with you in saving the beautiful country that is so dear to us!

(Signed) WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.

Antwerp, 5th October, 1830.

NO. 22.—ROYAL PROCLAMATION. (EXTRACT.)

WE, William, &c. &c.—Dutchmen! faithful to our constitutional oath, and to the obligations that we were bound to fulfil in regard to our subjects, we have vainly employed every possible means of appeasing the armed revolt that has taken place in the southern provinces. Events that have arisen with overwhelming rapidity having rendered it impossible to protect the faithful inhabitants of these provinces against superior force, we feel that it is essential to occupy ourselves solely with the welfare of that part of our kingdom, whose fidelity to our house and well-organized social institutions has manifested itself, in a positive manner. You see with what promptitude terrible disasters have been produced, by the conduct of a multitude worthy of pity. Your prudence and fidelity to your duties, your attachment to order, and, above all, your faith in God, the avenger of injustice, has prevented your being borne away by the torrent. The maintenance of that liberty which the Netherlands have enjoyed during centuries, would otherwise, perhaps, be for ever impos-

sible, and your destruction certain. Inhabitants of our faithful countries! all your strength is necessary at this moment for the protection of your native land. The situation of the kingdom demands that a general armament should forthwith take place, and that your energies should be exerted to preserve all that is most sacred, most dear to you. The fundamental law prescribes, as a paramount duty under similar circumstances, that the inhabitants of the kingdom should fly *to arms!* This command coincides with your desires. Well, then, Hollanders! to arms! At the pressing call of your sovereign, *to arms!* In defence of order and the laws, *to arms!* Under the protection of Almighty God, who has so often rescued the House of Orange and the Low Countries from the greatest perils, *to arms!* * * * *

(Signed) WILLIAM.

The Hague, 7th October, 1830.

No. 23.—PROCLAMATION OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

BELGIANS!—Since I addressed you by proclamation on the 5th instant, I have carefully studied your position. I understand it, and acknowledge you as an independent nation. That is to say, I will not oppose any of your civic rights even in the provinces, where I exercise extensive powers. Choose freely, and by the same method as your countrymen in the other provinces, deputies for the approaching national congress, and proceed there to discuss the interests of your country. I thus place myself in the provinces that I govern at the head of the movement which is to lead towards a new and stable order of things, whose strength will consist in your nationality. This is the language of him who shed his blood for the independence of your soil, and who desires to unite his efforts to yours for the establishment of your political nationality.

☉ (Signed) WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.

Antwerp, 16th October, 1830.

No. 24.—ROYAL MESSAGE TO THE STATES-GENERAL.

NOBLE AND PUISSANT SIRS!—By the proclamation of our well-beloved son, the Prince of Orange, given at Antwerp this 16th instant, *the motives of which are little known to us, though we can*

appreciate the consequences, it appears beyond a doubt that all recognition of the constitutional authority has ceased in the southern provinces. In this state of affairs, our whole care must henceforth be exclusively devoted to the faithful northern provinces. Not only shall all our means and energies be exerted in favour of their interests, but all measures of the constitution must likewise concern them. It is in consequence of this principle that all propositions on our part will be proposed and communicated to this assembly; we hope that these interests will be viewed by your high mightinesses in the same light, and that you will consider yourselves from this moment as solely representing the northern provinces, until something definitive shall be determined upon, in accord with our allies, concerning the southern provinces.

(Signed) WILLIAM.

The Hague, 20th October, 1832.

NO. 25.—PROCLAMATION OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

BELGIANS!—I have endeavoured to do you all the good that it was in my power to effect, without being able to attain the noble object towards which tended all my efforts—the *pacification of your beautiful provinces!* You are about to discuss the interests of your country in the approaching national congress. I think that I have fulfilled my duty towards you as far as depended upon me, and believe that I still fulfil a most painful one, in quitting your soil for the purpose of awaiting elsewhere the issue of the political movement in Belgium. But, whether far or near, my vows will be with you, and I shall always endeavour to contribute to your real welfare.

(Signed) WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.

Antwerp, 25th of October, 1833.

NO. 26.—CONVENTION OF ANTWERP.

GENERAL CHASSE consented to an indefinite suspension of arms upon the following conditions:—

- a.—That all offensive operations should instantly terminate.
- b.—That no armed individual should show himself upon the esplanade or environs of the citadel.
- c.—That no act of hostility should be committed against the fleet in the Scheldt.
- d.—That

the provisions plundered from the stores at Rivoli in defiance of the armistice should be restored, the said armistice having prevented General Chassé from ordering a sortie against the pillagers." These propositions were agreed to in an explanatory convention signed by Baron Chassé and Mr. Chazal, on the 28th of October, by which reciprocity was guaranteed and the environs of the citadel declared to include the esplanade, the whole of the arsenal, and all the exterior of the citadel to the distance of 300 metres (327 yards) from the foot of the glacis, including the lunettes St. Laurent, and Kiel. A further convention to the following effect was concluded at mid-day on the 5th of November. "Affairs shall continue to remain in *statu quo*. The renewal of hostilities shall be announced on either side three days before hand."*

(Signed) BARON CHASSÉ.

F. CHAZAL.

(Approved) C. ROGIER.

No. 27.—MANIFEST OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

BELGIANS!—The recent events in Belgium have entailed upon me, upon my family, and the nation, misfortunes which I shall not cease to deplore. Nevertheless, in the midst of these calamities, I never have renounced the consolatory hope that the time would come when the purity of my intentions would be acknowledged, and when I might personally co-operate in the happy endeavour to calm divisions, and to revive the peace and tranquillity of a country to which I am bound by the sacred ties of duty and the most tender affection. The choice of a sovereign for Belgium has been attended with difficulties that it would be needless to describe. May I, without presumption, believe that my person at present offers the best and most satisfactory solution of these difficulties? The five powers, whose confidence it is so necessary to obtain, after combining their efforts with so much disinterestedness to terminate the evils that oppress us, will doubtless see in this arrangement the surest, most speedy, and easiest means of strengthening internal tranquillity, and of assuring the general peace of Europe. The recent and

* It was the repeated infraction of this *statu quo* on both sides that gave rise to such constant diplomatic discussions, and often endangered the safety of the city.

many detailed communications received from the principal towns and provinces, offer striking proofs of the confidence which a great portion of the nation still accords to me, and authorizes me to cherish a hope that this sentiment may become unanimous when my views and intentions are sufficiently understood. It is for this motive that I desire to offer an explanation of these intentions and views. The past, as far as I am concerned, shall be devoted to oblivion. I will allow of no personal distinction based upon political acts; and my constant efforts will tend to unite for the service of the state, without exclusion or regard to past conduct, all those men whose talents and experience render them capable of fulfilling public duties. I will devote my most assiduous care to insure to the Catholic church and its ministers the attentive protection of the government, and to surround them with the respect of the nation.* I shall be ready at the same time to co-operate in all measures that may be necessary to guarantee the perfect freedom of religious worship, so that every one may exercise without restriction that to which he belongs. One of my most earnest desires, as well as one of my first duties, will be to combine my efforts with those of the legislature, in order to complete the arrangements which, founded upon the basis of national independence, will give security to our external relations and contribute to ameliorate and extend our means of prosperity at home. To obtain these grand objects, I rely with confidence on the assistance of the courts, whose whole views are directed towards the preservation of European equilibrium and the maintenance of general peace. To render Belgium independent, strong, and happy ought to be their common interest. Upon that essentially depends universal security. Every thing which tends to adjourn a final arrangement cannot fail to diminish, if not to destroy, the salutary effects; and the more one considers the means of assuring to Belgium, together with the establishment of her independence, the benefits of a long and durable peace, the more one acknowledges the indispensable necessity of measures, which, under existing circumstances, appear the least exposed to increasing difficulties and to the danger of ulterior delay. It is thus, that I place myself before the Belgic people with all the frankness and sincerity reclaimed

* The Catholic religion being almost the universal faith of the country, this phrase gave intense offence.

by our mutual position. It is upon the intelligence that guides her in the appreciation of the wants of the country ; it is upon her attachment to liberty that my principal hopes repose. It only remains for me to assure her, that in adopting the present step, I have less consulted my own interest than my lively and invariable desire to see the evils that still afflict Belgium terminated by measures of peace and conciliation.

(Signed) WILLIAM, Prince of Orange.

London, 11th of January, 1831.

**No. 28.—EXTRACT FROM THE ELEVENTH PROTOCOL,
20TH JANUARY, TERMED BASIS OF SEPARATION.**

Art. I.—The limits of Holland shall compromise all the territories, fortresses, towns, and places, which belonged to the former republic of the united provinces of the Netherlands in the year 1790.

Art. II.—Belgium shall consist of all the remainder of the territories which received the denomination of the kingdom of the Netherlands in the treaties of the year 1815, except the grand-duchy of Luxembourg, which, being possessed by the princes of the house of Nassau under a different title, forms, and shall continue to form, part of the Germanic Confederation.

Art. III.—It is understood that the arrangements of the Articles from CVIII to CXVII inclusive, of the general act of the congress of Vienna, relative to the free navigation of the navigable rivers, shall be applied to the rivers and streams which traverse the Dutch and Belgian territories.

As it would, nevertheless, result from the basis laid down in articles I and II, that Holland and Belgium would possess detached portions of land within their respective territories, such exchanges and arrangements shall, through the care of the five courts, be effected between the two countries as shall ensure to them, reciprocally, the advantage of an entire contiguity of possession, and of a free communication between the towns and fortresses comprised within their frontiers.

Art. IV.—The preceding articles being agreed upon, the plenipotentiaries directed their attention to the means of consolidating the work of peace, to which the five powers have devoted their lively solicitude, and of placing in their true light the principles which actuate their common policy.

They were unanimously of opinion that the five powers owe to their interest, well understood ; to their union, to the tranquillity of Europe, and to the accomplishment of the views recorded in their protocol of the 20th of December a solemn avowal, and a striking proof of their firm determination not to seek in the arrangements relative to Belgium, under whatever circumstances they may present themselves, any augmentation of territory, any exclusive influence, any isolated advantages ; but to give to that country itself, as well as to all the states which adjoin it, the best guarantees of repose and security. It is in pursuance of these maxims, and with these salutary intentions, that the plenipotentiaries resolved to add to the preceding articles those which follow.

Art. V.—Belgium, within those limits that shall be determined and traced conformably to the arrangements laid down in articles I, II, and IV of the present protocol, shall form a perpetually neutral state. The five powers guarantee to it that perpetual neutrality, as well as the integrity and inviolability of its territory, within the above-mentioned limits.

Art. VI.—By a just reciprocity, Belgium shall be bound to observe the same neutrality towards all other states, and not to make any attempt against their internal or external tranquillity.

Art. VII.—The plenipotentiaries will occupy themselves without delay in deciding upon the general principles of finance, of commerce, and others, which the separation of Belgium from Holland requires.

These principles once agreed upon, the present protocol, thus completed, shall be converted into a definitive treaty, and communicated in that form to all the courts of Europe, with an invitation to them to accede to it.

Art. VIII.—When the arrangements relative to Belgium shall be completed, the five courts reserve to themselves the power of examining, without prejudice to the rights of third parties, the question whether it would be possible to extend to the neighbouring countries the benefit of the neutrality guaranteed to Belgium.

No. 29.—EXTRACT FROM THE NINETEENTH PROTOCOL, 19TH FEBRUARY.

§ 1. THAT it remains understood, as it has from the beginning, that the arrangements resolved on by the protocol of January 20, 1831, are fundamental and irrevocable.

§ 2. That the independence of Belgium shall only be recognized by the five powers upon the conditions and within the limits which result from the said arrangements of January 20, 1831.

§ 3. That the principle of the neutrality, and the inviolability of the Belgian territory within the above-mentioned limits, remains in full force and obligatory upon the five powers.

§ 4. That the five powers, faithful to their engagements, claim the full right of declaring that the sovereign of Belgium should, by his personal situation, conform to the principles of the existence of Belgium, ensure the safety of other states, accept without restriction, as his majesty the King of the Netherlands did with regard to the protocol of July 21, 1814, all the fundamental arrangements contained in the protocol of January 20, 1831, and be in a situation to secure to the Belgians the peaceable enjoyment thereof.

§ 5. That these first conditions being fulfilled, the five powers will continue to employ their care and their good offices to procure the reciprocal adoption and execution of the other arrangements rendered necessary by the separation of Belgium from Holland.

§ 6. That the five powers admit the right in virtue of which other states may take such measures as they may judge necessary to enforce respect to, or to re-establish their legitimate authority in all the territories belonging to them, to which the protest mentioned above sets up pretensions, and which are situated out of the Belgian territory declared neutral.

§ 7. That his majesty the king of the Netherlands having acceded, without restriction, by the protocol (No. 18) of February 18, 1831, to the arrangements relative to the separation of Belgium from Holland, every enterprise of the Belgian authorities upon the territory which the protocol (No. 11) of January 20 has declared Dutch, will be regarded as a renewal of the struggle to which the five powers have resolved to put an end.

NO. 30.—PROCLAMATION OF THE REGENT OF BELGIUM.

INHABITANTS OF THE PROVINCE OF LUXEMBOURG! FELLOW CITIZENS!—I have sworn to maintain the independence and integrity of the Belgian territory: I shall be faithful to my oath.

Do not suffer yourselves to be seduced by promises or terrified by threats. The Congress has protested against the acts of the Congress at London, which a great power itself considers only as proposals. The nation which has been able to vanquish the

Dutch armies will maintain the protest of its representatives. We began our revolution in spite of the treaties of 1815: we will finish it in spite of the protocols of London.

Luxembourgers! you have been for three centuries Belgians like us, and you have shown yourselves worthy of that name. Ever since the reign of Philip the Good, your efforts, like ours, have had for their object a common nationality.

In 1815 you were for the first time connected with Germany, but you have continued to live under the same institutions as the rest of Belgium.

In our grand duchy, as well as in the other Belgic provinces, King William has broken the social compact which united him to the Belgians, and has released them from their engagements by violating his own. War has decided between him and us: the legitimate authority is that which the national will has founded.

You are not strangers to our combats, to our victories; you have spontaneously associated yourselves with the Belgic revolution, and the names of your volunteers are inscribed in the history of our days.

You already enjoy, as far as circumstances will permit, the benefits of the revolution.

The most odious taxes are abolished.

You have yourselves renewed your communal authorities, and your affairs are administered by men of your own choosing.

Your deputies have concurred in giving to Belgium the constitution which governs it.

You have not forgotten the vexations of which you have been for fifteen years the victims. Dread the return of the Dutch system of taxation, which has ruined your manufactures and your agriculture.

The men who speak to you of legal order, and who excite among you civil war, are the agents, the accomplices of the overthrow of the government: they have lived by all the abuses, and they regret the loss of them.

Reduced to itself, separated from Belgium, France, and Prussia, hemmed in on all sides by lines of custom-houses, your province, by constituting itself apart, would be the most wretched country on earth.

Luxembourgers! remain united and firm. In the name of Belgium, accept the assurance that your brethren will never abandon you.

E. L. SURLET DE CHOKIER,
The Regent of Belgium.

No. 31.—LETTER OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF SAXE COBURG TO THE REGENT OF BELGIUM.

SIR,—It is with sincere satisfaction that I have received the letter, dated the 6th of June, which you have written to me. The circumstances which have delayed my answer are too well known to you to require an explanation.

Whatever may be the result of political events with respect to myself, the flattering confidence which you have placed in me has made it my duty to make every effort in my power to contribute to bring to a happy conclusion a negotiation of such great importance to the existence of Belgium, and perhaps the peace of Europe.

As the form of my acceptance does not permit me to enter into details, I must here add some explanations. As soon as the Congress shall have adopted the articles which the Conference at London proposes to it, I shall consider the difficulties to be removed as far as I am concerned, and I shall be able immediately to proceed to Belgium.

The congress will now be able to embrace at one view the situation of affairs. May its decision complete the independence of the country, and thus furnish me with the means to contribute to its prosperity!

(Signed) LEOPOLD.

London, June 26, 1831.

No. 32.—LETTER OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE LEOPOLD TO THE BELGIAN DEPUTATION.

GENTLEMEN,—I entertain a deep sense of the wish of which the Belgic congress has made you the interpreters.

This mark of confidence is to me the more flattering, since it was not sought for on my part.

Human destinies do not present a more noble and more useful task than that of being called to maintain the independence and consolidate the liberties of a nation. A mission of such high importance can alone determine me to abandon an independent position, and to separate myself from a country to which I have been attached by ties and recollections the most sacred, and which has given me so many proofs of its benevolence and sympathy.

I accept then, Gentlemen, the offer which you make me, it being understood that it will belong to the congress of the national representatives to adopt the measures which can alone constitute the new state, and thus secure for it the recognition of the European powers. It is thus that the Congress will give me the power of devoting myself entirely to Belgium, and of consecrating to its well-being and prosperity the relations which I have formed in countries whose friendship is essential to it, and to secure for it, as much as depends upon my co-operation, an independent and happy existence.

(Signed) LEOPOLD.

June 26, 1831.

No. 33.—ARTICLES PROPOSED BY THE CONFERENCE TO BELGIUM AND HOLLAND.—ANNEX A, TO PROTOCOL (26), JUNE 26TH, DESIGNATED THE EIGHTEEN ARTICLES.

Art. I.—The limits of Holland shall comprise all the territories, fortresses, towns, and places which belonged to the ancient republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands in the year 1790.

Art. II.—Belgium shall consist of all the remainder of the territories which received the denomination of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the treaty of 1815.

Art. III.—The five powers will use their good offices in order that the *status-quo*, in the grand duchy of Luxembourg, shall be maintained during the progress of the separate negotiation, which the Sovereign of Belgium will enter into with the King of the Netherlands and with the Germanic Confederation, on the subject of the said grand duchy,—a negotiation distinct from the question of the limits between Holland and Belgium.

It is understood that the fortress of Luxembourg shall preserve its free communication with Germany.

Art. IV.—If it is proved that the republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands did not exercise the exclusive sovereignty in the town of Maestricht in 1790, the two parties shall consider of the means of coming to some suitable arrangement in this respect.

Art. V.—As it would result from the basis laid down in Articles I and II, that Holland and Belgium would possess detached portions of land within their respective territories there

shall be made between Holland and Belgium such amicable exchanges as shall be thought good for the mutual accommodation of both.

Art. VI.—The mutual evacuation of the territories, towns, and fortresses shall take place independently of the arrangements relative to the exchanges.

Art. VII.—It is understood that the arrangements of the Articles from CVIII to CXVII inclusive, of the General Act of the Congress of Vienna, relative to the free navigation of navigable rivers, shall be applied to those rivers which traverse the Dutch and Belgian territory.

The execution of these stipulations shall be regulated with the least possible delay.

The participation of Belgium in the navigation of the Rhine by the internal channels between that river and the Scheldt, shall form the subject of a separate negotiation between the parties interested ; to which the five powers will lend their good offices.

The use of the canals from Ghent to Terneuse, and of the Zuid-Wilhelm-waart,* constructed during the existence of the kingdom of the Netherlands, shall be common to the inhabitants of the two countries ; a regulation upon that subject shall be established. The drainage of the waters of the two Flanders shall be regulated in the manner most likely to prevent inundations.

Art. VIII.—For the execution of the preceding Articles I. and II., Dutch and Belgian commissioners of demarcation shall meet, with as little delay as possible, in the town of Maestricht, and shall proceed to mark out the boundaries which are to separate Holland from Belgium, in conformity to the principles established for that purpose in the Articles I and II.

These same commissioners shall be employed on the exchanges to be made by the competent authorities of the two countries, according to Article V.

Art. IX.—Belgium, within the limits such as they shall be traced in conformity with the principles laid down in the present preliminaries, shall form a perpetually neutral state. The five powers, without wishing to interfere in the internal administration of Belgium, guarantee to it that perpetual neutrality, as well as the integrity and inviolability of its territory within the limits mentioned in the present article.

* This latter canal connects the Meuse, at Maestricht, with the river Aa at Helmond, in North Brabant.

Art. X.—By a just reciprocity, Belgium shall be bound to observe the same neutrality towards all other states, and not to make any attempt against their internal or external tranquillity ; reserving to itself, however, the right of defending itself against all foreign aggression.

Art. XI.—The port of Antwerp, in conformity with the 15th Article of the Treaty of Paris of May 30th, 1814, shall continue to be solely a port of commerce.

Art. XII.—The division of the debt shall be regulated in such a manner as to allot to each of the two countries the total of the debt which originally, before their union, belonged to the territories of which those countries consist ; and to divide in a just proportion those which have been contracted in common.

Art. XIII.—Commissioners of liquidation, named on either side, shall meet forthwith. The first object of their meeting shall be to fix the proportion which Belgium shall have to pay provisionally, and subject to a final settlement, for the discharge of a portion of the interest of the debt mentioned in the preceding article.

Art. XIV.—The prisoners of war shall be restored on both sides, fifteen days after the adoption of these articles.

Art. XV.—The sequestrations imposed on private property, in both countries, shall be immediately taken off.

Art. XVI.—No inhabitant of the fortresses, towns, and territories reciprocally evacuated, shall be molested or disturbed for his past political conduct.

Art. XVII.—The five powers reserve to themselves the faculty of using their good offices whenever they may be demanded by the parties interested.

Art. XVIII.—These articles reciprocally adopted, shall be converted into a definitive treaty.

No. 34.—PROCLAMATION.*

BELGIANS!—In taking possession of the throne, to which I was called by the will of the nation, I said, in addressing myself to the representatives of Belgium,—“ If, notwithstanding every sacrifice to maintain peace, we should be threatened with war, I

* This document was drawn up by Mr. Nothomb in the king's cabinet, and under the eye of his majesty.

shall not hesitate to appeal to the courage of the Belgian people, and hope that the whole will rally round their chief for the defence of their country and national independence. These words I address to-day to the whole nation.

Without any previous declaration, the enemy has suddenly renewed hostilities. Disregarding both the engagements which result from the suspension of arms, and the principles which regulate civilized people, they have not shrunk from the most odious violation of the rights of nations, thus hoping, by surprising us, to obtain some temporary advantages. They are the same men whom you saw in September—they re-appear in the midst of a peaceable population, preceded by devastation and incendiarism. Strong in the sentiment of our right, we will repulse this unexpected aggression; we will oppose force to force. Once already you have conquered Holland;—you began the revolution by victory—you will consolidate it by victory. You will not be faithless to your glorious recollections. Your enemies await you upon the spot which has already been witness of their defeat. Each of us will do his duty.

Belgian like yourselves, I will defend Belgium.—I depend upon the civic guard, the army, and upon the courage and devotion of all. I go to my post—I await there all Belgians to whom their country, honour, and liberty are dear.

(Signed) LEOPOLD.

(Signed) { COUNT D'HANE.
{ CHARLES DE BROUCKÈRE.

NO. 35.—SUBSTANCE OF TWENTY-FOUR ARTICLES.

Art. I.—THE Belgian territory shall be composed of the provinces of South Brabant, East and West Flanders, Liege, Namur, Hainault, Antwerp, and Limbourg, such as they formed part of the united Netherlands kingdom constituted in 1815, excepting those districts of Limbourg designated in Art. IV. The Belgic territory shall, moreover, comprise that part of the grand duchy of Luxembourg specified in Art. II.

Art. II.—His Majesty the King of the Netherlands, &c. &c., consents, that in the grand duchy the limits of the Belgian territory shall be as follows:—Commencing from the frontier of France, between Rodange and Athus, a line shall be drawn which shall leave the road from Longwy to Arlon and Bastogne, Arlon, Mesancy, Heebus, Guirsch, Grende, Nothomb, and

Parette to Belgium;—Eischen, Oberpalen, Perlé, and Martelange to the grand duchy. Then, following the course of the Sure as far as Tintange, to the frontier of Diekirch, to pass between Surret, Harlange, and Terchamps on the Luxembourg side, Honville, Livarchamp, and Loutremange on that of Belgium. Then having reached the boundary of the arondissement of Diekirch, the said line shall continue to follow that boundary to the Prussian frontier. All territories to the west of this line, to belong to Belgium; all those on the east, to the grand duchy.*

Art. III.—In return for these cessions, his Majesty the King of the Netherlands shall receive a territorial indemnity in Luxembourg.

Art. IV.—1st. The old Dutch *enclaves* upon the right bank of the Meuse shall be united to those districts on the same bank which did not belong to the States-General in 1790, so that the whole of the province of Limbourg, between the Meuse to the west, the Prussian frontier to the east, the present frontier of Liege to the south, and Dutch Guelderland to the north, shall henceforth belong to his Majesty the King of the Netherlands, &c. &c.

2d.—A line shall be drawn on the left bank, from the southernmost part of North Brabant to Wessem on the Meuse; all districts to the north of this line to belong to Holland.

The old Dutch *enclaves* on the left bank shall belong to Belgium, excepting Maestricht, which, together with a radius extending 1200 toises from the outer glacis, shall continue to be possessed by the King of the Netherlands.†

Art. V.—His Majesty the King of the Netherlands, &c. &c. shall come to an agreement with the Germanic Confederation, and agnates of the house of Nassau, as to the application of the stipulations contained in Art. III and IV, &c.

* The part of Luxembourg retained by Holland, contained, on the 1st of January, 1830—Cantons, 13½; communes, 115½; population, 164,000. The part ceded to Belgium—Cantons, 18½; communes, 190½; population 158,000.

† The Dutch *enclaves* consisted of fifty-four communes, containing 58,861 inhabitants—of these, thirteen were on the left bank. The portion of Limbourg retained by Holland comprises 13½ cantons, including the fortress of Maestricht, 123½ communes, and 174,500 inhabitants. The Belgic moiety contains 12½ cantons, 188½ communes, and 157,500 souls.

Art. VI.—In consideration of these arrangements, each party for ever renounces all pretensions to the territories &c., situated within the limits of the other, as specified in Art. I, III, and IV. The said limits to be marked by Belgian and Dutch commissioners.

Art. VII.—Belgium within the limits above specified, shall form an independent and perpetual neutral state, and be bound to observe the same neutrality to other states.

Art. VIII.—The drainage of the Flanders waters shall be regulated according to the 6th Art. of the definitive treaty, between the Emperor of Germany and States-General of the 8th of November, 1785.

Art. IX.—The provisions of Art. CVIII to CXVII inclusive, of the Central Act of the Congress of Vienna, relating to the free navigation of rivers, shall be applied to those which separate or traverse Holland and Belgium. The piloting and buoying of the Scheldt shall be subject to the joint superintendence of commissioners appointed on both sides. Moderate pilotage dues shall be fixed by mutual agreement. These dues to be the same for both nations. The intermediate channels between the Scheldt and Rhine, and *vice versa*, shall be free, and only subject to moderate tolls, to be the same for both countries.

The tariffs of the convention of Mayence of the 31st of March, 1831, to be applied provisionally to the waters separating or traversing the two territories.

Art. X.—The use of the canals traversing both countries to be free and common to the inhabitants, and on equal conditions.

Art. XI.—The commercial communications through Maestricht and Sittard to and from Germany, to be entirely free, and subject only to moderate turnpike tolls for the repairs of the road.

Art. XII.—In the event of a new road or canal being made in Belgium, terminating at the Meuse, opposite Sittard, Belgium shall be entitled to demand of Holland (who shall not refuse) that the said road, &c. shall be continued strictly for commercial purposes, at the cost of Belgium, to the frontier of Germany.*

Art. XIII.—1st. From and after the 1st of January, 1832, Belgium shall remain charged with 8,400,000 florins of annual interests, the capital to be transferred from the debt of Holland to that of Belgium. 2d. The capitals transferred shall form part of the Belgic national debt, and no distinction shall ever be made by her between this and any other portions of her debt

* This difficulty will be obviated by the railway.

already existing, or that may be created hereafter. 3d. The payment of the above sum shall take place regularly every six months, without any deduction whatsoever, present or future. 4th. In consideration of the creation of this sum of annual interests, Belgium shall be liberated from all other obligations to Holland, on account of the division of the public debt. 5th. Commissioners shall be named on both sides to regulate these matters.

Art. XIV.—Holland having, since the 1st of November, 1830, exclusively made all the advances to meet the charge of the whole debt, shall receive five per cent. interest for arrears from that period.

Art. XV.—The port of Antwerp shall continue to be solely a port of commerce, in conformity with the 15th Article of the Treaty of Paris, 1815.

Art. XVI.—Works of public or private utility shall belong to the country in which they are situated, and no claim shall be raised in regard to the expenses of construction.

Art. XVII.—All sequestrations imposed in Belgium on property or hereditary estates, shall be taken off without delay, and the enjoyment thereof restored to their lawful owners.

Art. XVIII.—The inhabitants of both countries shall be allowed two years to transfer their residence, sell, exchange, or remove their property, without hindrance, or the payment of other duties than those in force upon all such changes, &c. The *droits d'aubaine et de détraction* upon persons and property shall be abandoned in both countries.

Art. XIX.—The character of a subject of the two governments, with regard to property, shall be acknowledged and maintained.

Art. XX.—The stipulations of Articles XI to XXI, inclusive of the treaty concluded between Russia and Austria, on the 3d of May, 1815, relating to persons possessing property in both countries, shall be applied to the subjects of Holland or Belgium who may come within the cases therein provided for.

Art. XXI.—No person shall be molested on account of any part which he may have taken in previous political events.

Art. XXII.—The pensions and allowances of unemployed or retired persons, shall be paid on either side conformable to the laws in force previous to the 1st of November, 1830. Those to persons born in Belgium to remain to the charge of the Belgian treasury ; those born in Holland to the charge of the Dutch.

Art. XXIII.—All claims of Belgic subjects upon private establishments, such as widows' funds, &c., to be examined and determined by the mixed liquidation commission, mentioned in Article XIII.

Art. XXIV.—Immediately after the exchange of ratifications, orders shall be transmitted to the commanders of the respective troops, and civil authorities, to evacuate and deliver over the territories, &c. that change domination.

Three explanatory articles, dated the 11th of June, 1832, were added to this treaty.

The 1st recognized the dissolution of the union ; the 2nd. the independence and neutrality of Belgium ; and the 3d. specified six weeks as the period for ratifying the treaty of the 15th of November.

THE END.

BAYLIS AND LEIGHTON,
JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET-STREET.

