BELGIUM

IN 1830.

Auditis ille hæc placido sic reddidit ore:
O fortunatæ gentes, Saturnia regna,
Antiqui Ausonii! quæ vos fortuna quietos
Sollicitat, suadetque ignota lacessere bella?

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1831.

BELGIUM.

THE National Congress has pronounced the fatal decree. It is an event far more important than—taking the size of the country and the preceding circumstances into consideration—it would strike a superficial observer as being. We shall at a proper season give a complete history of that event, but the moment is not yet come when certain names might be mentioned, certain facts rendered clear, without inflicting a severe injury on unprotected individuals; which is not desirable even for the sake of truth.

We shall limit ourselves to the collecting facts publicly known, and shall enable our readers to

form a fair and impartial judgment upon them. In this small compass we undertake an important task; attended with difficulty at any time, far more so in our own. Amidst the pompous clamour of one party, the blind tenacity of the other, the doctrinal errors of the third, we purpose to remain immoveable, as if we had survived many generations, and were dispassionately judging their words and their deeds in order to give every one his due.

If the subsequent declarations of the English ministers have produced a general regret, that a phrase should have been inserted in the speech from the throne, which, while it was uselessly offensive to the rising people, could not console the King of the Netherlands, (who found himself definitively dethroned by the mission of Mr. Cartwright to Brussels, and who probably would have preferred a total silence to a vain praise, the emptiness and sterility of which have been so soon made apparent to the world); it cannot nevertheless be denied that the Royal statement with regard to the administration of the King of the Netherlands was historically correct. The Government of King William the First was decidedly a liberal and *enlightened* government.

We shall not speak of the prodigious increase

in the prosperity, nor of the extension and embellishments of the capital, which, but a few years ago, presented the aspect of a poor deserted residence of a French prefect—a fact generally known; but we affirm that the other towns, so numerous in Belgium, did in proportion participate in the blessings attendant on a free and enlightened administration. Ghent was doubled in population, industry and social advantages; and although we do not totally approve the system of exciting industry by premium, yet it would be unfair to withhold from the Dutch Government due praise for almost restoring to Ghent its long-forgotten prosperity. Liege began to vie with England itself in the rapid improvement of its machinery and in the articles of its production, rendered more perfect by an extensive application of science and discoveries to the various branches of its manufactures. Antwerp did not only enlarge tenfold its navigation, but, even in the speculations of commission and banking, became a dangerous rival to Amsterdam, and an emporium for the productions of the Eastern and Western parts of the globe.

It is to be observed that this flourishing state of the towns, was in no way purchased at the expence of a neglected agriculture.

The weight of the taxes, devised and assessed

chiefly by Belgian land-proprietors, was thrown in a great measure upon the towns, and with an evident disproportion to the land-tax. If, notwithstanding this unfavourable distribution, the Belgian cities enjoyed such an unparalleled increase of prosperity, we may easily infer that the agricultural interest was not hindered in a proportional developement, which is almost always concomitant with the improvements in the towns. In fact, the appearance of the cottages, the comforts of the lowest class of the inhabitants, the excellent state of the roads, (far superiour to those of their French neighbours,) the yearly increase of the public conveyances, the absence of all military power in the villages, (so offensive to the eye in many other parts of the continent) all this impressed the mind of the traveller, with the soothing thought, that he was in a country enjoying the blessings of a free and benevolent government.

Agreeing with those, who do not consider similar material advantages the only criterion for judging of the state of a nation, we can boldly assert, in the intellectual point of view, that Belgium was as advantageously situated as France or even England. It is useless to reason continually upon the propagation of knowledge among all classes of society: the great secret of the best

method will always consist in the cheapness of education, and the facility of procuring useful books at a lower rate. It is known to all Europe, that not only there existed in Belgium no prohibition whatsoever of any literary productions, but that they were admitted without the payment of duties: nay, the English productions, of some note, as well as the French, were reprinted there; sometimes at 25 per cent, sometimes at 50 per cent cheaper: we know cases where the diminution amounted to two thirds in the price of the original work. Thus, a Belgian could procure a vehicle of information, which in England or France was only accessible to persons three times as rich as himself. All the European papers were admitted with the same liberality, and the national quotidian press was not only free, but often permitted by the tribunals a greater indulgence in party spirit than would have been the case in England or France. It is only during a late period, that some impolitic prosecutions have been instituted against Mr. Potter and some of his companions, which ended by their exile from their country; but the tribunals were then already awakened to a dangerous excitement in the public mind. Lastly, in order to give to our statement an entire confirmation, by one single characteristic trait of the former

government, let us not forget that all those who were, for political opinions, banished from, or condemned to death in their own country, found not only a safe refuge, but a fearless and benevolent protection in the states of the King of the Netherlands.

It would be however a mistake to suppose that this flourishing state of the nation was incompatible with real grievances, which remained unredressed. We shall divide these into two classes, material and moral, according to their action upon the people. In the first class were principally the following.

First: A heavy and undiminished taxation, in spite of a long and uninterrupted peace.

Secondly: The establishment of the high court of judicature at the Hague.

Thirdly: The unfavourable ratio of the national representations, in which the number of the Dutch members was equal to that of the Belgians, while the population of the country of the latter was to that of the former as almost two to one.

Fourthly: The expenses of the Indian war, while the advantages of those possessions were not generally acknowledged, or were considered unworthy the sacrifices incurred for their conservation.

The moral grievances, less glaring, but

far more calculated to irritate the passions of men and wound the national feelings, were chiefly the following:

First: An attempt on the part of the Dutch government to interfere in the education of the Catholic clergy.

Secondly: An attempt to force upon the nation the Dutch language; which, scarcely intelligible to the inhabitants of the two Flanders, was an object of disgust and contempt to the majority of the Belgians accustomed to the French language.

Thirdly: The prosecutions against political writers, namely Mr. Potter and his companions, who were tried and condemned to banishment—a measure which gave them all the celebrity of devoted patriots.

And Lastly: The preference given to the Dutch for filling the public employments.

We shall briefly examine the positive importance of every one of these grievances. The impossibility of materially diminishing the weight of taxation was the natural consequence of the union-act, and of the participation in the debt contracted by the Dutch previously to the political combination, which confounded the two countries. This arrangement, made by the congress of Vienna, cannot be, with any justice, laid to the charge of

King William's government. We except from it the tax upon the grinding of corn, which ought to have been abolished for the simple reason that it was unpopular; the ignorant reproached the *government* with this tax, while it was levied by, and for the *towns*.

The complaint against the High Court of Judicature being out of the country, appears to us a reasonable one, nor can we account in any way for the government's not having manifested a disposition to redress it.

The complaint of inequality in the representation is of a dubious nature: it is yet to be determined, whether a national representation must always, like that of America, be grounded upon a simple geometrical ratio, or whether it must collectively represent the interests of the various divisions of the country. Each of these systems may be attacked and defended with plausible arguments, and, in the case we are examining, it cannot certainly be denied, that the Dutch, who, since the Union of Utrecht, (1579) existed as an independent country, and occupied no inglorious place in the annals of Europe, might lay some claim in the united chamber to a sort of collective representation, relative to the unity of the state and not to the numerical inferiority of its inhabitants.

With regard to the expenses of the colonies: although we are disposed to concede the principle, that those fallacious advantages which different European Governments imagine they draw from their colonial possessions, are often a source of disappointment, and that those vast possessions so pompously described, and so flattering to the vanity of the possessor, are in the end rather a burden than a privilege, it cannot be denied that they open a large field to moral activity, to knowledge, to the expansion of ideas and pursuits, thus more than compensating the expenses of the possessor, and the disadvantages attending occasional unprofitable speculations. At any rate, there has not been yet a single instance of a country that willingly renounced her colonial possessions upon the ground of economy.

We should here mention the refusal of two laws: one determining the responsibility of ministers, the other of the trial by jury; but both questions depended more upon the legislative than the executive power.

We shall now proceed to examine particularly these moral grievances of the country.

The interference in the education of the catholic Clergy was surely an ill-judged attempt, and although our information leaves no doubt

that it was made with the purest motive, its impropriety cannot be controvened. If the same attempt, upon the same spot, made previously to the French revolution of the past century, caused a rebellion against the catholic and powerful Monarch Joseph II of Austria, what unskilful adviser could have prompted a calvinistical Sovereign of the Netherlands to try the same experiment—the success of which for the benefit of philosophy was uncertain and hypothetical, and the irritation, jealousy and opposition natural and obvious? The attempt was abandoned, but the hatred it engendered remained as powerful as though it had been carried into execution.

Secondly. (With regard to the attempt to force the Dutch language on the Belgians) : no act of Napoleon, in his gigantic projects of fusion, has done him more injury than the attempt to force the French language upon the nations he conquered. The Germans, nay the Dutch themselves, considered that attempt almost as an individual insult. But what comparison can be established between a language adopted already as a vehicle of communication among all the courts and high society of Europe—and the Dutch language, which, beyond the Moerdick and the Erus, is not spoken or

known by any individual of the Globe? This ill-judged attempt has inflicted one of the deepest wounds upon the national vanity of the Belgians, and has been one of the most powerful engines in the hands of those who have contrived to alienate the hearts of the people from the government.

Thirdly: The impolitic though legal prosecutions against the political writers—form a question of a very difficult nature: how far the indulgence must be carried, and where the imperious necessity of self-defence must begin, are questions requiring so nice a descrimination, that even in England, where the liberty of the press is not an imported but an indigenous production, perfectly understood by all the classes of society, errors have been committed by the adminstration, with the most upright views and the greatest impartiality. These prosecutions are always more or less unpopular. Once accustomed to the indulgences in question, men look upon the art of writing in no other light than that of conversation. It is a calamity inherent in human nature, that when a calumny is spread against character, there exists but the option of two evils, either to suffer it uncontradicted and leave to time the task of doing justice, or, by bringing the calumniator before the law to run the chance of strengthen-

ing the false accusation, and giving to the condemned accuser an importance he would never have been able to attain by himself. This truth has been in the most mischievous manner exemplified in the case of Mr. Potter, whose impotent hand has been thus strengthened to the Samsonic power of shaking and overturning an edifice raised by the combined efforts of Europe.

We come now to take the last and most loudly complained-of grievance against King William's government, viz., the partial distribution of public offices.

We have spared no pains to collect information upon the subject, and to examine it with the most minute attention. Our researches have led us to the following explanation. The Dutch nation, since the union of Utrecht (1579), existed under an independent government, and therefore possessed naturally a stock of public functionaries in every branch of the administration. Belgium, on the contrary, until the year 1814, has never known any but a provincial existence. In the beginning of the union, the Belgian aristocracy were unwilling to accept any office at the hands of the Prince of Nassau, (as they called the King), and the new government was obliged to resort to its old dominions for the functionaries of the civil service.

But we have positively ascertained, that neither in the army, nor in the judicature, nor in fact in any of the branches of service for which the Belgians were qualified by their former habits of political life, has any partiality whatsoever been manifested by government. We were even assured by a well-informed and impartial Belgian nobleman, that every countryman of his, who appeared desirous to serve the government, and was entitled to office by his abilities, was more welcome than a Dutchman, with equal qualifications.

After having examined the absolute value of the grievances, let us cast a look upon their relative importance, and how far they were able to create or strengthen opposition and malevolence in the different classes of society.

Faithful to our method of facilitating the labour of our readers by a numerical division, we shall distribute the principal opponents of the government into three classes; first, the inferior clergy, secondly, the aristocracy, and thirdly, the liberals of the French school.

The skill of an absolute government is limited to the art of insuring the obedience of the army; that of constitutional or liberal governments consists principally in the management of the most influential members of the nation. In this branch

of policy, we readily admit, no government has had the misfortune to show less dexterity and prevision; it will afterwards appear, that we do not judge by consequences, but analyse the given problems, as if we were not aware of the result of our operations.

First, as to the clergy. The King, far from being intolerant towards his catholic subjects, was known, even in private life, to be rather partial to those whom he knew strictly attached to that communion. We can assert upon the best authority, that in his private circle, he often spoke with admiration of a fabric which so many revolutions could not shake in its foundation. He was rather pleased and flattered with the idea of elevating the Belgian clergy, by the increase of episcopal seats. His government, on the other hand, acted in such a manner as to render this statement totally incredible. In the first place, a minister for ecclesiastical affairs has been appointed, from a class of men whose profession excludes the possibility of such an appointment in any well-regulated country. He had been, if we are not misinformed, a manager of some inferiour theatre, and scarcely admitted to any intercourse with the Belgian nobility. This man, on one occasion, was permitted to write and publish a most improper letter to the Arch-Bishop

of Malines, a Prince by birth, and universally venerated for his apostolic virtues. This letter excited universal reprobation. The writer was subsequently dismissed; but the impression of the injury remained upon the public mind. It was followed by the attempt to establish a seminary at Louvain, where the national clergy were to qualify themselves in philosophical studies, before they could enter their profession. A powerful opposition arose against this ill-advised measure: it was abandoned, but the inferiour clergy, more numerous and more powerful than the bishops, more passionate in their dislike and less informed of the upright views of the King, were from that moment declared foes to his government. Their voices stifled in the breasts of the inferior classes all gratitude for the blessings they enjoyed, and awakened an intolerant animosity against their protestant master.

Secondly, with regard to the aristocracy: a part of the Belgian aristocracy belongs to such families as, before the fall of the German Empire, ranked with Princes. Some, like the Duke of Aremberg and the Prince de Ligne, would not even acknowledge their allegiance to the house of Nassau, and continued to hold their large landed property as foreigners, subject, in their persons, to the Austrian court. Others, although

not so powerful by the extent of their territorial possessions, nevertheless considered themselves very little inferiour in rank to the former Statholder of Holland; they did nothing indeed formally to oppose the government: but their irreverence did not fail to diminish its appearance of respectability.

Thirdly, with relation to the liberals. It would be a great mistake to confound the English and the French school of liberalism. The one is founded upon practical expediency; upon a strong desire never to exceed the measure of what is required by the present state of society, never to indulge in projects of abstract or future excellence; whilst the French school on the contrary, admits every plausible theory, although untried by experiments, as a foundation of legitimate wishes. Continual and progressive improvement is the main principle of the masters of that school; no measure is admitted to regulate its celerity: no real object is proposed to its unlimited action. The Belgian liberals were brought up in that school. French books, French papers and French teachers have formed their minds: they consisted principally of lawyers, and of young men distinguished by their philosophical acquirements, but perfect strangers to the management of public affairs,

to the real knowledge of the human heart, and to those sad truths as to manifest impossibilities, with which experience alone can familiarize a high-soaring mind. They boldly attacked the government in the daily press.

The administration, on its side, far from having the art to oppose to such enemies able and skilful writers, intrusted the state of its defence to the most unworthy hands. Mr. Van Maanen, minister of justice,—of whom the Duke of Wellington very properly said in the House, "a certain person called Van Maanen," for, previously to the Belgian revolution, few persons in Europe had ever heard his name,—Mr. Van Maanen thought proper to place at the head of the ministerial paper, a foreigner called Libry Bagnano, who somewhere or other had been condemned to the gallies. This extraordinary choice produced as much irritation as contempt: the most convincing arguments to prove the purity of the views of the government, the sincere desire to propitiate the public, the unqualified respect for the constitution and liberties of the people, were received, when transmitted through such a channel, with abhorrence and disgust.

Having thus minutely presented to the judgment of our readers the state of the nation up to the last days of King William's government—the

flourishing condition of the towns and the country in general, under the heads both of their material and moral interests; having enumerated their grievances, analysed their substance, appreciated their action, and shown the various powers undermining the existing order of things—let us make some observations upon the character of the Sovereign.

We do not know what important change the severe lashes of undeserved adversity may have operated in his noble mind: we do not presume to calculate the deleterious effects of a never-ceasing irritation; we cannot measure the perturbation of a heart unconscious of any guilt, struggling against unparalleled reverses, against the disappointment of baffled undertakings, against the calumniation of intentions, against the cruel desertion of friends, and the hatred of unlooked-for enemies; we shall speak of him as he was known to be, before the explosion of the Belgian revolution,—a virtuous, benevolent, liberal Monarch.

His affection for his catholic subjects was not grounded upon the generally-admitted principle of toleration. He respected their creed, and approved of their attachment to its doctrines. He was proud of his hereditary title of defender of the public liberties: he never reflected upon the part

a man had been obliged to take in former governments, in order to refuse him his confidence, when deserved. The rigorous doctrines of the Emperor Galba, although joined to a heart of sterner stuff, might afford some resemblance to the King's political character. An unbending obstinacy in all his purposes; a persuasion that his conscience alone must necessarily be an unerring guide, rendered him incapable of correcting his errors *in time*. He was never deterred by the consideration of the various insurmountable prejudices which he was likely to meet with, nor did he stop to examine the outward appearance of what he thought proper and just. A certain tenacity to legal forms rendered him quite deaf to what expediency alone might recommend. These imperfections, peculiar to that frame of an upright mind, hindered him from stemming the tide of the Belgian revolution.

Such was the relative situation of things in July 1830. If the reader, who may already decide by himself how far this state of things was ominous to the future welfare of the country, and whether there existed, or not, sufficient grounds to anticipate a convulsion in the state, should enquire whether, in our opinions, some explosion would have taken place, even *without* the events of the Parisian revolution, we have no

hesitation in saying, that, if the government had persevered in the same system; if it had taken no measures to soothe the existing irritations; if some of the above-mentioned grievances had remained unredressed, and accusations unanswered properly either in word or deed—some catastrophe, of a more or less violent nature, might have been expected. At the same time we are persuaded, that the regular exertions of the Belgian deputies in the chamber, the strong and unabated remonstrances of the press, the power of the public opinion, increasing as the dissatisfaction became more general, would have forced the government to retrace its unpopular acts, to dismiss obnoxious advisers, and to correct in a legal way the few errors with which it was so bitterly reproached. We are positively convinced, that the evil was not of such a nature, as to require any destructive remedy, nor do we think the public mind was inflamed to such a pitch, as not to be easily and sincerely reconciled to a government to which the nation at large owed so many positive and unquestionable blessings—when the French revolution of July opened a new era in the political existence of Europe, of which in all probability the existing generation is not destined to see the entire development.

We have often heard of the shock given to existing institutions and principles, by the transitory elevation and triumphs of Napoleon: we cannot find the chain of reasoning which would lead us to adopt a similar opinion. This gigantic man left indeed behind him an unrivalled name and an eternal subject for pensive meditation

" Of various turns of fate below."

But the moral influence of his reign and fall corroborated rather than shook the existing doctrines. It would be in fact preposterous to say that the European governments, in acknowledging him as Sovereign of France, did an act prejudicial to their stability. Far from being something new, some extraordinary phenomenon peculiar to our age, his elevation was but an exemplification of what in our youth every one of us was taught to admire in the history of old; a career peculiarly pleasing to young imagination; one of those of which the satirist said long ago:

" Sævas curre per Alpes,
" Ut pueris placeas et declamatio fias."

He strengthened the opinion, that every monarchy originated in the power of the sword and the

recompense due to victory. Would it not sound ridiculous indeed, to reproach the Austrian or Prussian government with having acknowledged, in the person of Napoleon, a subversion of every principle of legitimacy, when their invaded capitals spoke loudly enough, that there was no question of metaphysical distinction; that it was absurd, even had it been practicable, to deny the title of monarch to a man whom his devoted people armed with such power and led to such victories? The low voice of legality, said one of his devoted followers, was stifled here by the sound of trumpets and the beating of drums. His elevation to the throne, the pomp and the aristocracy of his court, were a death-blow to all republicanism; and the Monarchs of Europe could not give a better answer to the friends of innovation than to point out to them their new colleague.

Very different indeed from that just alluded to, is the revolution which placed the Duke of Orleans upon the throne of France. The governments of Europe were then called upon to acknowledge, not a simple imperious fact, not a customary change of names, not a court revolution produced by a triumphant party, but certain universal doctrines unknown, or at least unacknowledged, before. Every intelligent adviser of the crown, (if there are many such who can

approach their respective Sovereigns), was obliged to present his master with an analytical survey of all that was implied in the recognition of the new order of things in France. This duty was commanded by the necessity of not recoiling before the consequences of a principle once admitted, when similar circumstances may call for its application. We shall present our readers with this analysis, and by this medium we shall illustrate and solve the Belgian case.

ANALYTICAL SURVEY.

In acknowledging the new order of things in France, the following principles or results are considered as established :

Firstly : *That the sovereignty resides in the people, who are authorised in certain cases to resume the exercise of their dormant rights.*

Secondly : *That this sovereignty needs not to be exercised through the medium of its presumed or appointed delegates, such as a monarch, an elective or an hereditary assembly, corporate bodies, &c. but on the contrary, that the people can, at their pleasure, exercise their sovereignty by themselves, not only in the absence but even in the presence of their appointed delegates, without requiring their concurrence or their action.*

Thirdly: *That this sovereignty of the people does not require, for its being exercised, the repression of the wishes entertained by the majority of the people, but might be lodged in a certain number of individuals, heretofore unknown, who, having properly guessed those wishes of the majority, are authorized to put them into execution, provided it would be followed by the general assent. This active minority becomes, in that case, the whole of the people.*

Fourthly: *That this sovereignty is of a different nature from that which is attributed to one or many individuals in existing governments, whose actions or commands are more or less subject to some control or some moral examination which can, in certain cases, preclude the necessity of obedience; that this sovereignty, on the contrary, approaches more to the omnipotence of divine law, than a human institution, where to hesitate or to examine is a downright inconsistency. The exercise of this sovereignty superseding all laws, there can be no question of justice, which supposes certain indestructible rules.*

The following may be considered as simple corollaries of the above, also explicitly admitted in the same recognition:

Fifthly: *That whenever a monarch, or any authorized delegates, are invested with any power or prerogative, they are only to exercise it until no opposite wish is manifested on the side of the people. Such*

a manifestation destroys ipso facto *the legality of those conceded powers or prerogative; and the instantaneous compliance on the part of the government, or condign punishment, must of necessity follow.*

Sixthly: *That whenever the delegates of the sovereign people, that is to say, the existing government, employs wilfully, or under a mistake, armed force against these new delegates, or their organs who act in conformity to their wishes, the government loses its former authority, and becomes a public enemy. The armed force, in complying with such commands, is guilty of murder.**

* Every judicious and impartial reader can verify the identity of our propositions, by examining the facts of the French revolution of July, 1830, deducing the consequences, and putting every one into a general form. But for those of our readers who are not strangers to mathematical studies, we must state that in the above analysis we proceeded rigorously, by the method known under the name of *discussion*, that is to say, an enquiry what an unknown quantity becomes, if you suppose successively, in the various factors of the equation, a different value. This operation is nothing else than to examine in all its bearings an already resolved problem or an admitted general truth. Those who protest against the system of introducing mathematical methods in the subjects not belonging to physical sciences, prove only that they have neglected to follow the progress which mathematical philosophy has made in the last twenty years. Carnot's *Reflections upon the Metaphysics of the differential calculus*, Laplace's *Probabilities*, and Lagrange's *Analytical Functions* have submitted to mathematics the whole moral world.

We have not pretended here to examine the principle in all its bearings; we have chosen only those of its multifarious forms which are applicable to our subject. We have no personal opinion upon the principle itself; consequently we neither blame nor praise the French revolution. Our intention is to pass alternately from indubitable facts to admitted principles, and *vice versâ*, for the purpose of elucidating both. The French revolution of July 1830 acted upon Belgium in a compound ratio of neighbourhood, community of language, similarity of education, existing grievances, original weakness of a government combined by European policy, and lastly, of the connection of liberals rendered more intimate by the exiled Belgian political writers. The first manifestation of an overt opposition was the barricading of Brussels to render the efforts of the military inefficacious. A national flag was hoisted; the magical word of liberty re-echoed in every corner, and a redress of some grievances was loudly called for. The first demands might have been easily complied with, and were preferred with some remains of affection for the existing government. The Prince of Orange scrupled not to enter the barricaded capital unarmed and unattended but by the National Guard. He was

received with a general applause and affection, and if, now and then, he heard any scurrilous reproach, it proved the freedom every one enjoyed to express his feelings, and enhanced the value of those evinced by the majority. Assured of the loyalty of the inhabitants, he promised redress, and appointed a junta composed of the most respectable part of the aristocracy and commoners of the country, to devise the best means of giving satisfaction. He promised to plead their cause with his Royal Father, and to return with satisfactory intelligence. It was not in his power to accomplish a design which would probably have stopped the disturbances *in limine*, saved the royal authority of his Father, and spared to humanity the odious sight of a civil war.

The people, first of all, asked the dismissal of Mr. Van Maanen, the obnoxious minister, to whose charge the Belgians laid all their various wrongs; the abolition of the unpopular tax upon the grinding of corn; the establishment of the trial by jury; the recall of the exiled patriots, etc. Had the King, not unmindful of the principles admitted (vide Nos. 4 and 5 of our Analytical Survey) complied instantaneously with those demands, no person doubted but that he would have returned to Brussels amidst an applauding and grateful people. The King hesitated; grant-

ed at last the required dismissal of the obnoxious minister; but too late.

In the meanwhile Liege followed the example of Brussels, with a more violent spirit of opposition and bitterer feelings against the Dutch Government. Then only these two provinces started in common the idea and afterwards the positive demand of a separated kingdom with individual institutions, although under the same monarch. Not the King alone and his advisers, but all the Dutch politicians questioned the generality of such a desire, and treated the insurrection as a partial rebellion of two towns, unmindful of the principle admitted (No. 3. An. Survey); as if no change had taken place in the state of Europe; as if the relations between a monarch and his dissatisfied subjects had not suffered any modification by the establishment of the new order of things in France, and its recognition; in one word, against the admitted principle (No. 2 An. Survey). The King assembled the States-general, to propose to them the question, and, in the case of their assent, to dissolve the abhorred tie. The necessary delay of such a discussion, nay its evident inutility, increased the evil, extended over all Belgium the same ardent spirit of opposition and resistance, and rendered the grant a vain pageant,

which was not even noticed by the people, when it was proclaimed by a no longer acknowledged authority.

Had the King complied by himself (which he considered an illegality) with the illegal wishes of his subjects, he would have shewn that he understood the change produced in the very notions of legality by the French revolution of July 1830. He would have instantly put an end to the convulsions of the state; he would have insured for himself and his successors their Belgian dominions. All parties are agreed that at the two periods of which we described the progressive steps to a final independence, the conservation of the Belgian crown was in the hands of the King. The reader must have seen by all the measures of this ill-starred monarch, that either he was perfectly unconscious of the magnitude of the change operated in Europe, or that he did not distinctly see that the problem he was to solve was identical with the one the solution of which introduced those very principles he imprudently acknowledged and rejected at the same time.

We come now to a new melancholy proof of this political inconsistency, in the deplorable attempt to reduce Brussels by the force of arms. A great disorder prevailed in that capital. Some

of the most respectable Belgians remaining at the Hague, were (if we are not misinformed) encouraging the government in that attempt, and representing the facility the army would have in crushing the rebels and restoring tranquillity to the town. Upon such false data, such unjustifiable want of prevision, the Prince Frederick received the order to march against Brussels, with an army promiscuously composed of Dutch and Belgians. If the sovereigns and their advisers did not yet distinctly understand the abstract question decided in France; if they had but a confused and imperfect notion of what they admitted, as an incontrovertible corollary of the main principles of the French revolution; the insurgent people could not be equally blind to the important deduction which we laid before our readers (No. 6 An. Survey). If, on the one side, it inflamed them with the spirit of resistance, it damped on the other that of the troops. While, in the camp of the defenders of Brussels, every man thought himself entitled to the palm of immortality, on the opposite side every Belgian did his duty with reluctance; some refused to obey, others surmised at least that obedience might be a matter of blame, at any rate not a subject of congratulation. The amount of the forces on

this side should have been indeed overwhelming, to balance the noted disadvantages of such a situation, and to insure success, if success could be uncertain between parties animated by such opposite feelings with regard to their respective tasks. After a useless and most lamented destruction, Prince Frederick's army was repulsed, and disorganized in its retreat.

The victorious party, in judging the vanquished, applied to them in all its extent the formula we developed (No. 6 An. Survey); they declared all the ties of allegiance broken, they called down vengeance upon the murderers; they appealed to Europe for the appreciation of their cause and their heroic defence.—In deploring the calamities which Brussels suffered, how can we impute them to the cruelty of the unfortunate monarch, when, by the statement of the Belgians themselves, the army was totally unprovided for the supposition of resistance. The only guilt of the King, if guilt it could be called, is simply this: to have under-rated the magnitude of the French revolution, not to have weighed sufficiently the unpalatable truth, announced, trumpet-tongued, to Europe, that the word *rebellion* was for ever blotted out from its dictionaries, and that no event could replace it there, if Providence has decreed that the new

order of things in France should receive from the sanction of time a necessary consolidation. No partial success in any other part of Europe will be adequate to destroy the ever-speaking doctrines inscribed upon such a monument, nor to weaken their action upon the minds of mankind.

When the bloody days of the Brussilian Park decided the fate of the Capital, the crown of Belgium fell irretrievably from the venerable brow of King William the First. In a country which was in the singular predicament of offering so many strong holds for a defensive war, built at the expense of Europe, one fortress after another was wrung from the hands of the occupying garrison, and the sway of the Dutch Government reduced at last to the Citadel of Antwerp and the Fortress of Maestricht.

But, in destroying the monarchical power of King William, circumstances had not decided any thing prejudicial to his son, the Prince of Orange, and his posterity. The Prince, either surrounded by more moderate advisers, or guided by his own excellent sense, did immediately perceive the confidence which the neighbouring revolution gave to the one his family was doomed to undergo: he did not disguise from himself the combined force of private grievances joined to

the enthusiasm inspired by newly-started, and successful doctrines. He had the merit to foresee the inefficacy of military coercion, and adopted, from the beginning of the struggle, the language of conciliation. Successful or not, the attitude he assumed will always be a pattern of wisdom, practised under the most trying circumstances in which an individual has ever been forced to take his share. His task was not a personal one: he was under the moral obligation of devising the best means to transmit to his children a crown he did not wear at his birth, and which kindness alone could insure to his posterity. He did not revolt against the paternal authority; he reconciled in those awful moments the duty of a son with that more imperious one of a father, and abstained from every act, every participation in any measure which could in the least authorize the Belgians to confound him indiscriminately in their just or unfounded animosity. Whatsoever may be his future destiny, this legacy of not having caused to a Belgian a single tear, will pass unquestioned to his posterity; and we should indeed despair of the penetration and justice of men, if, considering the difficulties of his situation and the manner in which he bore them, without swerving a single moment from the path of a mild conciliation, his

equanimity and benevolence do not excite a sympathy in every breast, an approbation in every enlightened mind.

When facts had demonstrated to the Dutch Government the necessity of resorting to other means, the Prince of Orange was sent to Antwerp with an authority, (which was improperly called full powers) to settle the existing disturbances. But while he was permitted to speak to the Belgians the language of reconciliation, the hostilities continued, and the commanders of the Dutch army were placed beyond his control. This unjustifiable anomaly led to the most mischievous results. The numerous and respectable party, which only waited for a favorable occasion to place him victoriously at the head of the Belgians, and which was sincerely devoted to his person, not only at Antwerp, but at Ghent, at Liege and Brussels itself, lost all confidence in his proclamations, and would not stir to promote designs which were ushered in with such irreconciliable contradictions. The attitude of the Dutch front on one side, that of the Belgian Provisional Government on the other, placed him in the extraordinary predicament of being neither a friend nor an enemy to the country he was appointed to pacify and govern. Both parties persevered in their obstinate blindness to the advan-

tages which he alone upon earth could offer, to protect the nascent liberties of the one and the decaying dignity of the other. He strove long against that reciprocal infatuation; and withdrew at last from the heart-rending scene, foreseeing a new calamity, which he was unable to stop, nor could bear to sanction by his presence.

Bombardment of Antwerp.—There is something so revolting in useless destruction, that when it chances to be our lot to have been instrumental to such a calamity, we contrive by all possible means to disguise the truth, and to lay it to the charge of our adversaries: such was the natural manœuvring of the Provisional Government of Belgium with regard to the conflagration of Antwerp; and it succeeded in misleading the public opinion, because the Dutch Government unwisely fancied it beneath its dignity to present Europe with a satisfactory explanation; and because it is the general bias of the day, to receive more favourably the statement of the struggling people, even when contradicted by the clearest evidence, than that of a government defending the remnants of its contested authority. *Nos autem veritatem colemus;* and having, we trust, already satisfied our readers of our impartiality, we consider it as an imperious duty to place before them the facts of the calamities of Antwerp,

in such a manner as not to mislead their judgment, but to correct their prejudice, if they involuntarily labour under any false notions. To fulfil this task, we must enter into some enquiry with regard to the Provisional Government.

We know not how far it may be a subject of triumph to governments, or please their vindictive passions, to see the greater part of the respectable members of society withdraw themselves without an effort from the stage, when disturbances arise in a country, as if they had not enjoyed previously a large share of privileges and prosperity, the safety of their accumulated property, the consideration due to their rank, amidst those very men whom they thus "desert in their utmost need:" but we cannot forbear branding with our most decided censure such a dereliction of a positive duty. The Belgian aristocracy did neither forward nor oppose the national movements. Men of property, rank and tried abilities hid themselves in some obscure corner; leaving the management of the vessel to the crew. It was in such circumstances that the Provisional Government was formed: it was composed neither of men whose extensive property gave them some influence in the country, nor of men who had acted a conspicuous part in public life under any of the preceding governments: it was formed

of individuals who volunteered their services, and could not themselves measure their own abilities by past experience. There was not among them a single man known by his military, diplomatic, or administrative talents: from the obscurity of private life, from the partial views of political criticism, or the minutiæ of the bar, they were called to superintend the destinies of a newly-rising people; not to promote their independence, (that was achieved before their accession to power and without their concurrence), but to join to it those quiet blessings of order and consolidation, without which the best-intentioned revolution is but a curse.

The two most conspicuous personages of the Provisional Government were Mr. Potter and Mr. Van de Weyer: the first, decidedly a political writer of some parts, a sincere and consistent republican, whose abilities would have been serviceable to his country, had he not had private wrongs to avenge, and were he not deplorably ignorant of the political situation of Europe, nay, of the sentiments of his own friends. He must have convinced himself of this unpalatable truth, when the National Congress, called by his own writs, assembled under his influence, not only repulsed him with disdain, but offered the strange phenomenon of only 13 votes among 200, agree-

ing in the system which the founder of that national convention had publicly advocated and recommended to the nation.

The other person, Mr. Van de Weyer, was a young lawyer of most promising acquirements, of a mild temper, but whose political experience was of no older date than that of the nation whose infant steps he was called upon to guide by his wisdom.

The others are less deserving of particular notice.

It may be easily perceived that a junta of such a formation, engrossing not only the executive, but almost all the powers of the state, could not authorize great expectations of foresight and political capacity. They rejected all negotiations with the Prince of Orange, when his was the only banner which could shield the country from foreign intervention, from utter destruction, or at least from the certain calamity of becoming once more the field of battle to surrounding nations. By that passionate resolution, they deprived themselves of the glory of appearing among the benefactors of mankind in the eyes of impartial posterity. On the other hand, they foolishly excited the zeal of serving the cause of Belgian liberty among many adventurous minds of the neighbouring countries, without consulting the

history of the *condottieri* of old, and without foreseeing the many inconveniences, dissatisfactions and murmurs their proud assistance might occasion among the peaceable inhabitants. Had they possessed among them a single individual practised in military affairs, it would have been impossible for them to have planned an operation against the citadel of Antwerp, with a handful of volunteers not amounting to the third of the garrison, which had the advantage of one of the strongest positions in Europe, and the easy supply of provisions and ammunition by the sea. If they calculated upon the excitement of the populace, (for assuredly they could not reckon upon the sincere co-operation of the merchants and bankers of Antwerp), it was again a proof of the most unjustifiable ignorance as to the proper appreciation of such an unavailable auxiliary, against a fortress, the situation of which presented no similarity to those inland fortresses, which had been surrendered to the Belgians. But these were not the considerations which determined the baneful attempt. It was decided by the murmurs of the Burghers of Brussels, to whom their new defenders became every day more troublesome. Some of these transformed into a source of speculation their right to be lodged in private houses; they went from one to another, allowing

the proprietors the choice of getting off, by paying money, from the insupportable burthen; they extorted in this manner daily contributions from the peaceable inhabitants. Such proceedings naturally excited murmurs, and the Provisional Government, frightened by the consequences, were anxious to devise some plans to get rid of the unwelcome, although invited defenders. This was the motive for their directing the Parisian legion upon reluctant Ghent; this was the paltry cause which brought upon Antwerp the dire calamity with which we will not afflict the imagination of our readers.—A more than human patience was required from the Dutch commander, to see his soldiers butchered in the streets, his magazines attacked, without resorting by retaliation to those means which the merciless right of war authorizes on such occasions, and which does not allow to spare the guilty in favour of the innocent, or discern passive sufferance from bold provocation.

Here ended (except the insignificant occupation of Venloo) the military achievements of the Belgians, who have repulsed a regular army, and in a few weeks wrung from their opponents a territory protected by a most artful system of European fortification. Such achievements could not have been performed without the

most brilliant valour and most energetic devotion, which, whatsoever might be the difference of opinions upon the abstract merits of the cause, will always excite in the breast of man, wonder and admiration.

We have previously observed, that we neither praised, nor blamed the French Revolution; we repeat the same with regard to that of Belgium. However new and strange such a neutrality may appear, we shall state here our reason. We cannot praise it; for, in examining dispassionately its origin, we do not find it tally with our notions of justice or legality.

We call a revolution *just*, when a government, concentrated in one individual or many, attacks the religion, the personal safety, or the private property of the inhabitants, and leaves no possible means of redress, but in the overt act of national resistance.

We call a revolution *legal*, when the sovereign gives unequivocal proofs of his intentions to overturn and crush the institutions of the land, and, after the legal defenders of those institutions have in vain remonstrated against his usurping attacks, contrives to reduce them to silence by an illegal abuse of military power. The imperious call of those protecting authorities, in

public distress might release the ties of allegiance, and invest with legality a popular insurrection.

In applying these principles, established by Grotius, and some of the profoundest writers upon the subject, we do not find that either the French or the Belgian revolution could claim the benefit of the above-explained rules; notwithstanding this, we do not pronounce upon them our condemnation; for we cannot conscientiously blame *involuntary* acts.

These revolutions have originated in events long ago gone by, upon which the present actors had no possible control. They have been prepared by a long peace succeeding to the most warlike period in European history; by the anomaly of quiet life and stimulating education; by the admission throughout all Europe, more or less, of the liberty of the press, and the non-admission of proportionate abilities in the cabinets. They have been prepared by an association of thousands of ideas, notions, sensations, which, acting imperceptibly upon the mind, become, if we may use the expression, a part of the man himself. Lastly, it is not from a plot, a deep designing conspiracy, not from the unsleeping activity of personal revenge or interest, but from an unexpected catastrophe, that they both re-

ceived a violent and sudden impulse. Thus, whatsoever may be the destinies which Providence has reserved to both, it is assuredly not our hands which would raise for their promoters either an altar or a scaffold.

The Belgians have achieved the revolution; it was the duty of their representatives to place the work upon a solid basis, and render the well-protected edifice unassailable by outward or inward dangers. Their task was great indeed, but at the same time it was easy and obvious. Let posterity judge whether they fulfilled it without passion, views of private interest, fear, or improvident animosity.

Had the National Congress, in deciding upon a monarchical form of government, endowed the country with a liberal and well-appropriated constitution, and called the Prince of Orange to the throne—men of moderate doctrines, friendly to liberty, but at the same time friendly to its peaceful enjoyment, who will never cease to warn power to be just, or the people rather

> "To bear those ills they have
> "Than fly to others that they know not of—"

such men would have approved of their moderation, their justice, and their provident wisdom.

Had they, on the other hand, boldly resolved

to stand and fight for the blessings of a republican confederacy, the great majority of the young generation, and some respectable theorists of the old, would have hailed their success and admired their devotion.

But, as the matter now stands, in connection with the unhallowed proscription of a whole family, consisting not only of children not privy to any guilt, but including an individual whose tried attachment to the Belgians no man can deny, they have done a deed which can meet with approbation only from those who reckon indiscriminating hatred or political pusillanimity, amongst the commendable qualities of public or private life.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY G. SCHULZE, 13, POLAND STREET.