

From Willmer & Smith's European Times, December 4.

DOMESTIC.

The recent intelligence from India shows that the efforts to retain Gholab Singh in possession of the territory which the British government had assigned to him are powerless. The far-famed Vale of Chashmere is to be the scene of contention, when the season permits; but although the power of Gholab may be restored, it seems clear that, unless we take the territory altogether under our own control, not only will he be "snubbed," but the British power will be treated with less than its customary respect. We committed a great mistake in permitting such barbarians to have a voice in the election.

Liverpool and other leading towns are busily engaged in getting up a strong agitation for the reduction of the duties on tea. Last week the Liverpool meeting took place, over which the Mayor presided, and the most influential merchants took part in the proceedings. Gentlemen of all shades of opinion were present, and expressed strong views in favour of a large modification of the present exorbitant duties on a necessary of life. The average duties on tea amount to more than 200 per cent.; on some descriptions as much as 600 per cent.!

The fiscal view of the question refers to the immediate, not the remote, consequences. It is proved satisfactorily, that with every increase in the duty the consumption has largely increased. By cheapening the article there would be a vastly increased demand, which is proved by the fact, that the use of tea in most of the British possessions, where the duty is nominal, exceeds per head that of England in three, four and even five fold. A year or two, or, at the most, a few years, would therefore place the Exchequer, as regards the tea duties, in a more advantageous position than at present.

The commercial view is based upon the extension of our trade with China. No doubt our exports would increase if we took a larger quantity of tea from the Celestials, as it is the primary, almost the only article of merchandise in which they can repay us. This permanent addition to the commerce of the country would be followed by an increased consumption of sugar, bread, and other articles of sustenance. Hitherto, the Chinese markets have been glutted. The capacity of consumption amongst a population which is numbered by hundreds of millions, has never been fairly tested. Our high duties have crippled the supply on one side, the demand on the other; and the great experiment involved in the extinction of the East India monopoly, has hitherto proved a failure from the causes at which we have thus briefly glanced.

The little republic of Cracow seems likely to set the crowned heads of Europe by the ears. The territory in question is now formally absorbed in the Austrian empire, to the great scandal of all who respect the faith of treaties, and the rights of legitimate government. This step has been forced upon Austria, it is said, by the Czar of Russia, with the consent of Prussia. The annexation, or absorption, is most unpalatable to France, which has strongly protested against it, and urged England to join in the protest; but the Whig Cabinet, displeased at the Montpensier marriage, stands aloof, and protests singly, gratified, apparently, at the opportunity which has so speedily occurred, of making the French Monarch feel his littleness in carrying off the Infanta, contrary to their wishes, for the aggrandisement of his family.

The treaty of Vienna secured the independence of the ancient capital of Poland, and now the treaty is set aside with as little compunction as a penniless customer is ejected from a pot-house at midnight. Two out of the five contracting powers are insulted by the act; but the spirit of amity having been broken recently between the dissentients, the three great Northern Powers think the occasion opportune for violating justice and decency with impunity. Had England and France remained true to each other, this perpetration, at which every honest mind revolts, would never have been consummated.

The plea for the aggression is, that Cracow, instead of being neutral, became the focus of conspiracy and rebellion; and the late attempt to secure the nationality of Poland, filled, in the estimation of the despots, the measure of the little Republic's iniquity. Less causes, ere this, have produced a general conflagration over Europe. Who knows but the Cracow injustice may yet be the means of lighting the benighted Poles to liberty and nationality?

It is deeply to be regretted that Louis Philippe has sinned against courtesy—to give it the mildest phrase—in his conduct towards England. United, the two powers were more than a match for the rest of Europe; severed, as in the present instance, the sacred cause of liberty suffers by their mutual distrust and jealousy. As a matter of interest, the French King has erred; as a matter of prudence, he has perpetrated a still greater blunder. Our neighbours, at this moment, are burning with indignation at the fraud which has been put upon Cracow. Even if the storm blows over without any immediate consequences, the injustice will rankle in the national mind, and may tell against the Orleans dynasty, when the dust of this royal Cræsus is mingling with its kindred worris. With England the case is different. Her insular position does not mix her up so immediately with continental broils; and as she has previously burnt her fingers in meddling in quarrels not legitimately hers, the present occasion has been seized for the maintenance of a passive policy.

The position of parties in Portugal is very critical. Rumours prevailed, a few days back, that the royal cause was considered so hopeless that apartments had been provided in Windsor Castle for the fugitive Queen and her consort. At the last advices, however, the desertions from the popular cause were numerous and frequent; but as yet it seems to be uncertain whether the Queen can retain her throne. The people are strongly discontented, and labour under feelings very inimical to the existing order of things.

Captain Warner has at length had a full and fair trial of his "long range," and the result of the experiments tried on the 28th ultimo, before the commissioners appointed by Government to test its power, has been unsatisfactory—in fact, a complete failure. The experiments were made at Beaudesert, near the seat of the Marquis of Anglesey; Master-General of the Ordnance.

LOSS OF THE GREAT BRITAIN.

Yesterday's mail brought us a communication from two correspondents, one of which is from Lieutenant Gabriel, of the Royal Navy, from which we make the following extract:—

"The Great Britain's position at present is almost the worst she could be in, and her fate is even supposed by some to have arrived at its climax, that is, that there are now no hopes of her preservation, and that she may almost be abandoned as a total wreck. She certainly has suffered considerable injury from the gale and high tide which took place on the morning of the 20th ult.; her stern has been shifted some distance further in shore, and she is laying with a list to port; several of her cabin doors and bulkheads, particularly amidships, have been split and smashed in consequence of her heavy straining; the boilers have forced the kitchen deck upwards from at least eighteen inches to two feet, which can leave no doubt but that she is resting upon a rock of no inconsiderable size, it is generally supposed to have gone through her bottom, but of this there is some doubt. Altogether, she has suffered considerable damage; but I am still decidedly of opinion that she is to be got off, if prompt and efficient means be applied; but if the same apathy prevails which has shown and manifested itself during the last nine weeks, she stands a good chance of leaving her ribs and trucks where she now is.

"That the Great Britain could weeks ago have been liberated from her perilous position, there can be no doubt in the mind of any man knowing anything at all of the matter; that she can be saved now becomes another matter of consideration: I say she can, but should be very sorry to make that assertion two months hence.

"The plans that I propose have been hitherto approved of by every one who has seen them; and I still maintain that if I meet with that due support which should long since have been shown, I will once more place this leviathan in her own element."

A communication from Bristol, dated Nov. 28, speaks in a very desponding tone of the ship, and seems to coincide in the view taken by the correspondent, whose opinions we have given above.

Lieut.-General Sir Benjamin D'Urban has received the appointment of Commander of the Forces in Canada, and proceeds there with his Excellency the Earl of Elgin, the Governor-General.

IRELAND.

Whether we regard the political or social portion of Ireland, it is at the present moment a curious—an anomalous one. The events that have taken place since the sailing of the last packet will confirm our statement, and afford to the reflective mind food for meditation upon the present state and future prospects of this unfortunate country.

The famine—for with thousands of the Irish peasantry that is an unexaggerated reality—still rages. Nevertheless, the progress of destitution has been less rapid and destructive in its movements than previous accounts would have led us to expect. There were parties who thought it no sin to draw the most horrifying pictures of destitution which would ensue ere the close of November. They have been, and glad we are to record it, false prophets. Corn and provisions of all kinds are becoming more abundant, and greatly to the satisfaction of all parties, save one—the speculators and holders, who are likely to be the sufferers in the attempt to uphold the prices of food beyond their natural level. The Irish Executive still continue their laudable exertions to grapple, as far as in them lies, with the miseries of the people. The enjoyment of the peasantry at the public works increases rapidly, there being now considerably more than 150,000 engaged thereon. The chief Secretary has issued instructions from the Castle, that no person should be employed whose tenements are valued under the Poor-law at £5 and upwards, unless in cases of undoubted destitution. It has also been forbidden, under pain of dismissal, that any persons employed by the Board of Works should be engaged in the "truck system" in the sale of spirits or food in the neighbourhood of works. Loans to railway companies are to be granted on certain conditions; the amount so advanced to be repaid by the baronies, through which the railways pass, upon their presentments.

The landlords of Ireland, despite of all the vituperation and malicious statements to which they have been exposed, have not been found wanting. They have given every encouragement to all the feasible suggestions that have been made for employing the people; and many of them have made considerable reductions in the rents which should have been paid. Everything considered, the prospect before Ireland is now more encouraging than it was some weeks ago.

There is at the present time a great rage for fire-arms among the lower classes of the Irish people: orders cannot be met with anything like promptitude. Such a spirit is dangerous, especially when the Government looks on with indifference. The apologists of the arms-act will crow over this mania for purchasing firelocks; but buying guns when they are represented as being destitute of food!

The breach between Mr. O'Connell and the Young Ireland party has not yet been made up; nor is there any expectation that it will, seeing that the latter have commenced business on their own account. Mr. Smith O'Brien, as our readers are aware, is the leader of the secession. The columns of the Nation are at his service; and through the medium of that journal he is laying before the world his views upon all the great leading topics of the day. He is making an attempt to rouse the "landed proprietors" to a friendly union in behalf of a "susceptible population," by exciting their passions against the people of England.

The Repeal Association is getting on very slowly. The funds are reduced to a low figure; many of the clerks of the establishment paid off, and its chief about to retire to Darrynane. This does not tell well for the restoration of the Irish Parliament to Collegegreen, under the auspices of Mr. O'Connell, notwithstanding his many protestations to the contrary. The proceedings at the usual weekly meeting, held on the 23rd ult., were not of a remarkable character. In place of the customary speech from Mr. O'Connell, he read his report on the existing disunion among Repealers. It set forth the various points of difference between "old" and "young" Ireland, his own exertions previously to the passing of the Emancipation Act, and concluded by enumerating the advantages of peaceful exertion in establishing the nationality of Ireland, &c. The rent was announced at the low figure of £54!

The meeting of the Repeal Association was held at Conciliation-hall on the 30th. Mr. O'Connell attended, but the proceedings were rather tame, and do not embrace anything of importance. Another fling was taken at the Young Ireland party. The rent amounted only to £45 14s. 5d.

LOSS OF THE STEAMER NORTH AMERICA.

The steamer North America, Capt. Brown, from St. John, N. B. via Eastport, on the 25th ult., for Boston, burst her steam on Wednesday, about 10 o'clock, off Long Point, Mount Desert, Me., during a heavy gale. W. S. W. and drifted to within half a mile of the shore, when she let go both anchors, the sea running very high and the vessel straining very badly. She was soon logged, when the cables were cut, and she went on shore on Tuesday morning. The vessel was run from the wreck to the shore, and the passengers and crew, about sixty in number, were all saved, with the exception of a fireman, an Irishman who slipped from the rigging and sank. The passengers and crew, who were in an exhausted condition, left the vessel under the care of some of the Islanders, who promised to take care of what property came ashore, for which purpose they were to fire upon the beach. The passengers went up to the houses upon the island to warm and recruit themselves. Previous to leaving the steamer, Captain Brown had ordered all the baggage of the passengers, together with the money, silver plate and other articles belonging to the boat, in the cabin, which was comparatively unbroken.

On Friday morning, upon going to the beach, they found that, during the night, the cabin had been set on fire, and burnt to the water's edge. By this accident they lost every thing but one or two trunks, mostly in a very destitute condition. The clothing, which was known to have been in the trunks of the passengers, was found on board a schooner at anchor there, and bound to New York, and claimed. The answer was made, that if they could prove it was their property, it should be given to them. Sixteen passengers and one crew arrived in the city, this morning, on the steamer Penobscot. The letter bag was recovered. The North America had a little freight. Capt. Brown remains on the wreck, in the hope of saving something of the crew of the North America, and a schooner, name unknown, was ashore some miles from them, that the Islanders and all hands had perished.

The Bangor Whig says:—"The ship's passengers on board, all of whom, with the crew—with the exception of a man, a fireman—were saved, by the exertions of the citizens on shore, who threw them to land, while the surf was running from ten to twenty feet high. The passengers lost every thing, except what remained on, and the steamer is completely broken. A vessel was chartered at Mt. Desert to take the passengers to Thomaston, or Bangor, in order to meet the Penobscot, to pay for last trip for the season."—Boston Patriot.

IMPORTANT.—A vessel has arrived from Orleans from Havana, bringing intelligence, under date of 27th November, that the United States intended to recognize both American and Mexican prizes in the ports of the island.

If by "recognize" it is meant to allow prizes to their ports for present refuge and perhaps our treaty with Spain may be of this: but if the word "recognize" means to permit prizes to be condemned and Mexican Consuls or Agents there to receive course for our Government to pursue, if not promptly complied with, at once to blockade every port in the island, unless such a course be made with the Court of the United States in taking possession of the Letters from Havana also mentioned. Missions for Mexican privateers had been offered for sale at \$2000 each.

Commodore Stewart, who was ordered to the command of the United States Squadron in the Mexican Gulf, has returned to Philadelphia without orders to proceed, in an interview with the President, to take upon himself the responsibility of going to take the castle of San Juan, which responsibility the President is to shift from his own shoulders to those of a veteran Commodore, by leaving it to the discretion to attack the castle or not.

We copy from the London Gazette following notification:—

DOWNING STREET, 24th November, 1847.

Her Majesty has been pleased to appoint J. HOOPER DAWSON, Esq. to be Clerk and Registrar of the Supreme Court and Clerk of the Central Circuit Court of the Island of Newfoundland.

Printed by John Thomas, Boston.