

THE TIMES.

WEDNESDAY MORNING, SEPT. 16, 1835.

By the arrival of His Majesty's packet *Spey*, Capt. James, at Halifax, in 30 days from Falmouth, we are put in possession of London dates to the 6th ult; they do not add much to our former stock of intelligence by way of Newfoundland.

On the 23rd of July, an atrocious attempt was made to assassinate the King of France, which, although it failed in accomplishing the primary object, namely, the destruction of the royal family, did notwithstanding cause the death of 30 individuals near the King's person, some of them persons of distinguished rank. Marshal Mortier, Prince of Treviso was among the number; we have given a sketch of the military career of this renowned general of the Bonapartian Dynasty. This plot appears altogether *unique*, both as regards the means used, and the previous knowledge which was had of the conspiracy, and which led to the unusual arrangement of the Royal Cortège; we cannot help thinking, that the French Police must have recently lost much of that *tact* and *nerve* for which it has been so justly celebrated.

In Parliament, the business of the session was progressing rapidly; the Corporation Reform Bill, and the Irish Church Bill had both passed the House of Commons, a Bill for the reform of the Irish Corporations had been introduced, read a first time, and ordered for a second reading.

We can scarcely take up an English paper but the question meets us, "What will the Lords do with these sweeping Bills?" The answers of course are as various as the principles of the parties who put the questions. For our own part we have no hesitation in saying, that the lords will reject them wholly, believing, as they now do, that they are established as a Tory Faction, in the confidence of the King; but here the question arises, What will the King do? why, we think he will be advised by the Tory Lords to dissolve Parliament, and will do so; this leads to the farther query, What will the people do? The consequences arising from this question we are really afraid to contemplate, for there is a certain point in the endurance of a patient people, beyond which arbitrary power itself cannot pass with impunity.

But to return to what is now matter of historical fact, the Lords after reading the Corporation Reform Bill a first and second time, resolved, contrary to the declared wish of Ministers, to hear counsel in behalf of the Corporations of England and Wales, and also to examine evidence in committee;—accordingly Sir C. Wetherell and Mr. Knight, said to be two eminent Barristers, were called to the bar of their Lordships, who were heard in behalf of the Corporations—the former in a speech of six hours length, which is trumpeted forth by the Tories of every grade as a *flourish* to the Reformers in both Houses, but which we think, upon a sober examination, to be at once the most rapid and bombastic piece of hypochondria we ever saw in print: in fact, he has not so much as once hinted at the actual and acknowledged state of these sinks of iniquity and corruption which the Bill proposes to reform. He deals with this part of his subject as a wary traveller does with the crater of a volcano, he keeps at a distance lest he gets engulfed in the yawning vortex. With a view to please the majority of his hearers, he launches forth into immeasurable abuse of Reformers and all their measures; in many places he descends to language that would do credit to Biltongate orators; while, in the highest of his flights, he merely shows his pendency by quoting strings of barbarous Latin phrases. We really are surprised that their Lordships could have patience to sit and hear him out. He seems to have been singularly defective in the knowledge of Parliamentary etiquette, having been twice called to order, and once made to withdraw for making motions and other in-

fractions of Parliamentary usages. The following will serve as a specimen both of his oratory and his logic:

"He should now come to the appointment of magistrates. What sort of persons were those who heretofore had filled the magisterial chairs? They were men who had risen through various gradations of wealth, and had at length attained the full confidence of their fellow-citizens; those were, by the wisdom of the crown, in ancient times, deemed the fit depositaries of magisterial power. But what sort of men did the new system introduce? What was the tremendous attack which plebeian legislation made upon the authority and prerogative of the crown? The council of 96 were to furnish a list to the crown, from which his majesty would be at liberty to choose as many as he saw fitting to become borough magistrates. Heretofore the King had been deemed the fountain of justice, but that distinguished prerogative no longer remained, but was transferred from the monarch to the lowest inhabitants of the boroughs; a plan of corporation government as old as Alfred was now to be exchanged for a new and democratic system, by which the King would have no more to do than register an apparent consent to the appointment of the nominees of universal suffrage, for of necessity the King could not do otherwise than accept the names that were given to him—he must do it, whether he would or not; thus a completely self-elected corporation would prevail and be predominant. He knew nothing more illustrative of the republican and radical tendency of the measure, first, than this mode of election—secondly, than the total absence of all qualification of a pecuniary nature; the perfect and total deprivation of private and individual wealth was precisely that which was deemed the most fitting to place him in the situation of one component to fill civic offices; such a man would then be in all respects in the safest and happiest condition to which a corporator could attain. He remembered a poem quoted by Dr. Johnson in his Lives, in which the man without wealth was described as the happiest of mortals, and the best protected from danger,—

*"Felix cui nihil est; —————
Non timet insidias; fures, incendia temit;*

from him nothing could be stolen, he could be neither the subject of robbery nor arson. The possession of that negative wealth, which consisted in having nothing at all, formed the highest possible recommendation to corporate offices under this new bill."

To this we would add nothing more than merely ask, is there a man in ten thousand under the British Crown, who does not in his heart believe that all magistrates ought to be appointed in the manner pointed out in this Bill? Whose interests are most deeply affected by the doings of Magistrates? is it not the people's? and who may be supposed the best judges of the necessary qualifications of the men who should be the guardians of the public weal, the King, or his Representative in the shape of a Governor—neither of whom ever saw the individuals, or the people themselves who have a thorough knowledge of the men from their boyhood? As to what Mr. Knight's speech was we are left in ignorance, but believe it must have been inferior even to Sir C. Wetherell's, as the Tory papers themselves have not, so far as we know, recorded it.

After both Counsel had been heard, the following discussion took place on Monday, 3rd August, and two following days:

LORD MELBOURNE rose to move the order of the day for resolving into Committee on the Corporation Bill.

Several Lords rose at the same time, and a scene of confusion took place which lasted for some moments, the object of each party being to gain precedence of the other. Lord Mel-

bourne, however, continued on his legs in defiance of repeated calls to order, until at length the confusion having died away, he was left in quiet possession of the chair.

LORD MELBOURNE then proceeded to address the house, having first proclaimed himself sick and tired of the political differences which had prevailed during the last five years. He alluded to the manner in which the present bill had been passed by the Commons, without any change or amendment of the least importance in any of its provisions; but he did not anticipate their lordships would be as ready to agree either in the existence of the evil or the justice of the remedy. The noble Lord then entered into a description of the principle on which the bill was founded, and took a review of the details; and concluded by moving that the house resolve itself into a committee on the bill.

THE EARL OF CARNARVON, after a speech in which he deprecated the bill as an unjust interference with political rights, moved an amendment—"That evidence be taken at the bar of this House in support of the allegations of the several petitions, praying to be heard against the bill."

LORD BROUGHAM, Lord Radnor, the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord Plunkett, and the Earl of Ripon, spoke in favour of the motion; the Earl of Winchelsea, Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Warrneliffe, the Duke of Newcastle, the Earl of Harwood, the Duke of Wellington, and the Marquis of Bute, in favour of the amendment.

The House then divided, when the numbers were—

For the Amendment.....124
Against it.....51

Majority against Ministers.....70

On our entrance into the gallery we found Lord Brougham protesting against counsel being again allowed to speak on the introduction of evidence after being already heard.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH moved that counsel be called in.

LORD BROUGHAM in reference to their future proceedings, proposed that they should go on with the evidence from eleven o'clock until seven. (No.) They should proceed in this case as men of business.

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON said he was ready to sit until twelve o'clock.

THE EARL OF WINCHELSEA moved the resolution and protest of which he had given notice, against the Corporation Bill, founded on the illegal character of the commission, no evidence in support of its allegations having been produced.

The noble Lord's resolution against the principle of the bill was then put.

LORD KENYON begged his noble friend not to press the amendment, at that moment, after the division which had taken place and the decision to which the House had come.

LORD WINCHELSEA said he would at the suggestion of his noble friend withdraw his amendment, with the determination however, of proposing it hereafter.

The amendment was accordingly withdrawn.

LORD LYNDHURST—Sir Charles Wetherell, the House has decided on hearing evidence, and counsel are to attend for that purpose at 11 o'clock to-morrow.

LORD BROUGHAM—At 11 o'clock this day, and we shall sit until 12 at night.

The House adjourned at half past three o'clock.

TUESDAY, August 4.

Their Lordships were occupied from eleven till four o'clock, in the examination of witnesses on the Corporation Reform Bill. They then adjourned for two hours, and at six o'clock.