

(From Willmer & Smith's European Times,  
November 4.)

The Great Western carried out the fact that there will be no immediate meeting of Parliament, and that the ports will not be opened for the admission of grain free of duty. The tone of the ministerial organs before the Cabinet Council prepared the public for such a result, and although on this, as on all other topics of the day, there is necessarily much dissimilarity of opinion, the judgment of the business portion of the world has already endorsed the resolution at which the Government has arrived with approval. The feeling is daily becoming more general, that too much has been made of the food alarm, and the meeting of the national representatives would rather increase than abate the evil. For all practical purposes the executive is armed with powers sufficient to meet any emergency which is likely to arise; and there will be no hesitation on the part of the Legislature if extraordinary powers are required, to legalize their use.

The opening of the ports is a point on which a wider margin of opinion exists. The ultra-liberal and free-trade section of the press has been crying out lustily for the abrogation of the present paltry impost on corn; and looked at with reference to the state of the market and the amount of protection to the agriculturalist, it might as well cease altogether. But the Protectionists are a powerful party, who cannot be lightly treated; and to break the compromise which was so recently made with them, would re-open the whole question again, and involve the Government and the country in another conflict with the great landed proprietors. The Whigs are too recently in power, their footing in Downing Street is too slippery, to court such a collision; and on a review of the pros and cons of the question, the benefits and the evils appear to be pretty equally balanced. Already the alarm produced by the state of things in Ireland is subsiding, and most of the corn markets in England are becoming easier. Prepared, however, for riots in the sister country, in consequence of the state of matters there, the Government is concentrating a large military force, so that any attempt to disturb the peace will be promptly and energetically put down. Of course, the same Privy Council which declined to open the ports or to summon Parliament, gave the quietus to the rather loudly expressed cry for the prohibition of malt in the distillation of spirits, and the substitution of sugar. As the Government must, of necessity, have the best and most early information relative to the food prospects of the nation, the conclusion is apparent that matters are not so bad as they have been represented. In every point of view this is gratifying. It will not be without its influence on trade, and it will go far to restore that confidence which has been slightly impaired by the gloomy position of affairs during the last few months.

The Queen, in the exercise of an amiable feeling, is paying a series of flying visits to the residences of some of the nobility. She has but recently returned from Hatfield, and next week is set apart for the royal countenance illuminating the recesses of Arundel Castle, the seat of the Duke of Norfolk. His grace, it is well known, is a Roman Catholic, as his ancestors with an occasional exception have been, and it says much for the more enlarged and enlightened toleration of the present day, that

we hear nothing objectionable urged to the Queen's host belonging to the ancient religion of the country. A few years ago, when sectarian animosity ran so high, the bare idea of the Protestant Sovereign of this country being the guest of one of her Catholic subjects, would have raised a storm of bigotry, of the most fierce description, through the length and breadth of the land. Now, happily, more sense, more toleration exist. During the Whigs' ten years lease of power, their opponents found that the most effectual means of smiting them was to brand their alliance with O'Connell and the priests, and to impeach the purity of their Protestantism. These *ad captandum* appeals produced fruit, which Sir Robert Peel adroitly plucked; but when the harvest had been gathered, he declined to sow the same seed, or to continue the delusion.

The news from Ireland is painful. There may be, probably there is, some exaggeration in the accounts of starvation and destitution; but, after making a liberal discount for every imaginable species of ingenuity on this head, enough remains to show that in various districts the poor people are in a wretched plight. But while there is so much misery stirring, the evil is increased by the conduct of the people themselves. The charitable interference of the Government seems to have destroyed that self-reliance, which under the most favourable circumstances, is not a marked feature in the character of the nation. Instead of looking the evil boldly in the face, and putting their shoulders resolutely to the wheel, the peasantry in many parts of the country, where public works are being undertaken, in order to mitigate the evil, are haggling about the rate of wages, and actually demanding a higher scale of remuneration from the Government than they were in the habit of receiving from private individuals! The Lord Lieutenant has been so much annoyed at the absence of all sympathy, the want of gratitude on the part of the people, that he has given peremptory orders where such annoyances prevail, to the servants of the Government to withdraw, and leave the dissentients to their remedy.

Lord John Russell, too, has been obliged to lecture the people, and more especially the landlords of Ireland, in this emergency. In a letter addressed to the Duke of Leinster, as the President of the Irish Agricultural Society, the Premier enters somewhat at length into the responsibility of the landlords, the duty of people, and the policy of the Government in this crisis. He hints, unmistakably, his conviction, that the lords of the soil in the sister country are not playing their parts with becoming promptitude and good faith. The truth is, that the Irish landed proprietors cannot, as a body, aid to any great extent in counteracting the effects of such a calamity as that which has overtaken the country. As a body, they are comparatively poor—for the man whose income is twenty, and who spends twenty-one thousand a year, is poor, irrespective of his huge rent-roll. To this letter it is useless to solicit attention; for the advice which it contains, and the influence which the state of Ireland must necessarily have on the price of provisions in the Western continent, will command it. Lord John gives excellent advice in a quiet and effective manner; but so anomalous is everything in Ireland, that it is doubtful whether it will be productive of any great advantage.

#### IRELAND.

**STATE OF THE COUNTRY.—DEATHS FROM STARVATION.**—The accounts of the state of the country continue to be most distressing. A letter from Shinnone, Tipperary, says, "A report has reached Shinnone that a young girl has died at Kilmommon of starvation. Several families at the lower end of Kilmurphy parish have been living on cabbages, and turnips these few days, without any other description of food."—At Borrisoleigh many were living on one scanty meal during the twenty-four hours, and the forbearance of the sufferers was amazing. A letter from Dungarven of the 19th instant says, "The condition of the people is truly heart-rending. They are starving! One of the dragoons, a very intelligent man, gives a most deplorable account of the sights witnessed by them as they came along to-day by the houses of their prisoners. They were followed by frantic-

looking women and children, half naked, whose cries were unlike anything human—being husky, broken, and quite feeble, from starvation.—In the course of a sermon, delivered at Newry, on Sunday, the 18th inst., the Rev. Dr. Butler specified two cases of death from starvation in that neighbourhood.—Our Dublin correspondent, writing on the 24th, says, "There are again most heart-rending accounts of destitution from various parts of the country, and social disorganisation is prevailing far and wide. Although the Board of Works have, up to this day, flated no less a sum than £700,000 for public works, there are still complaints in many counties, either that works have not yet commenced, or that those in operation are totally insufficient to give employment to the crowds of destitute beings who prowl about seeking the means of keeping body and soul together. There are many wicked vagabonds who take advantage of the general destitution, in organising a system of outrage; but the really destitute seldom join in these confederacies, but patiently endure their sufferings in the hope of speedy relief. This, I think, the most trying period; for we may expect a considerable alteration when employment becomes general throughout the country. The system of voluntary relief, too, now is pretty generally adopted. The workhouses, which two months ago did not contain half the number they are capable of accommodating, are now crowded, and many of the poor, for want of room, are lodged in out-houses." The laborers in different parts of the country having objected to work by piece or task work, and shown a disposition to resort to violence to prevent others doing so, the Lord Lieutenant has addressed a memorandum to the Chairman of the Board of Works, to the effect that, if after full explanation of the nature of the task work, and the wages which may be earned, the laborers shall still refuse the work provided for the support of themselves and their families, the officers are at once to withdraw from such locality, as it is not consistent with the directions of the Government that they should be subjected to offence and violence in performance of their arduous duties.—The total amount of money voted at the various meetings in the county of Cork, held under the Labour Rate Act, is £608,015 14s. 7d.—A numerous meeting of the landowners and others was held at Fermoy on the 24th inst., to consider the state of the country. Mr. O'Connell was present. A general order has been just issued by the Lord Chancellor, authorising (in consequence of the prevailing distress) sums to be granted to local relief committees out of the estates of minors, wards, lunatics, &c. The master in the cause is empowered to grant such sum as he may deem expedient under the circumstances, not exceeding 7 per cent. upon the net annual income of the estate. Special cases are to be preferred to the Lord Chancellor when the amount sought exceeds £100.

#### DREADFUL FLOODS IN FRANCE.

The Paris papers of the 23rd and 24th inst., contain the particulars of the inundations by which several of the French provinces have been fearfully devastated. We subjoin the following:—

"It appears," says the *National*, "that every scourge has this year fallen on our country. Incendiary fires lighted by unknown hands have carried desolation into several departments, the dearth of provisions has increased the distress, and at present the rivers are overflowing, and the inundations ravage what had escaped the fires. Entire villages have been swept away; bridges, viaducts, and considerable buildings have fallen to pieces. The loss is not yet ascertained, nor is the number of victims yet known; but the letters received from the scenes of desolation are filled with lamentations." The devastations caused by the overflowing of the Loire have been dreadful.

The *Journal du Loiret*, an Orleans journal, gives the following, dated the 21st, 2 o'clock, p.m.:—"The disaster continues. The Loire has again risen. It has increased nearly forty centimetres. The accounts from the country are equally bad. It is impossible to form an estimate of the loss which the valley will have sustained." In another part of the same paper, the *Journal du Loiret* gives afflicting details from the environs. Several houses had been washed down, but the loss of any one life is mentioned. In Orleans itself the inundation had produced great calamity.—The Municipal Council had met and ordered the distribution of bread, and tickets for lodgings, to the numerous persons who had been

driven from their homes. A letter from Tours states that the adjoining country is inundated, and the roads rendered impassable.

The communications between Paris, Orléans, Avignon, Marseilles, and all the eastern regions of France, is completely cut off by the inundations. The accounts almost necessarily, imperfect, and often contradictory; one thing, however, is certain, that the magnificent bridge over the Loire at Orléans, the viaduct connecting the Orléans and Vierzon Railway with the terminus city, has been swept away by the fury of the torrent. It cost 6,000,000 francs in the erection, and will probably delay the opening of that line for at least two years to come.

The *Semaphore de Marseilles*, of the 1st inst., says that during the last twenty years it has rained incessantly in the south of France. The rivers Huveaune, the Durance, Rhone, and their tributaries, had overflowed their banks, and, on several points, interrupted the communications. On the 19th inst. part of Avignon was under water. A reason the Rhone had risen, on the nearly 20 feet above its usual level, and inhabitants apprehended a recurrence of disasters of 1840. At Audreux, the town of the town situated on the Rhone has levelled, comprising eighteen houses, and the traces of the adjoining railroad are visible. The barracks of the gendarmerie are a heap of ruins, and several persons perished. The number of houses destroyed at Audreux amount to 115, and of 400 boats, laden with merchandise, lying in the Noire or in the Loire and made fast to the quay, 270 were destroyed. The most fatal episode of the disaster of the 19th, at Roanne, was the loss of a municipal councillor, Merie, his son, and other persons who were upset in a boat, sight of hundreds of spectators, and perished. At three o'clock on the morning of the 20th the Loire rose suddenly, and overthrew the whole of the lower part of Nevers, joining the Nièvre, formed an immense under which had disappeared part of the bourgs of Mousse, Nièvre, and Loire, which extended to Plagny. Here and there were seen floating timber, trees, and cries of distress were heard at all points. In an instant the whole garrison assembled at the scene of the disaster. The object was to save the population of the bourg Saint Antoine, and the inhabitants of the isolated houses in the country.

A Bordeaux journal of the 21st gives the following account of the loss of the diligence near Fleurs—"The diligence, in which were eleven persons, was carried away by flood, and only three persons escaped."

A Blois journal says—"All the accounts that we receive from the lower part of the Loire are distressing. It is said that at Blois 26 persons perished in an inn. A portion of the railroad has been carried away."

A letter from Tours of the 24th inst. is only owing to the rapidity with which the waters were adopted that the greater part of the city is not under water. As it is, the fault of St. Symphonien is inundated. In places the water is more than nine feet deep, and part of the wall of the cemetery has been washed down."

#### BLOCKADE OF THE RIVER DOURO.

Lisbon, October 24, 1846.  
A royal decree, ordering the blockade of the river Douro, was issued instantly. The corvette Vito de Me and brig Vouga, have sailed for purpose, and the frigate Donna Maria proceeds to-day for the same destination.

#### ITALY.—ROME, Oct. 23.

The enthusiastic affection of the people to the new Pope continues undiminished, and, in fact, appears "to grow by which it feeds on." The Pope has been compelled to moderate it by issuing a request that no more public rejoicings shall take place in his honor.

His Holiness designs, it is said, to establish a Council of State, to which men will be admitted. This is considered a great concession towards liberty; but, if report can be credited, nothing compared to what the Pope signs to do for his people.

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