

The



Star

AND

Conception Bay Journal.

VOL. V.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 1839.

No. 264

Printed and Published by JOHN THOMAS BURTON, at his Office, opposite Mr. W. Dixon's

CIRCISSIA.

The country known by the name of Circassia, consists of a range of mountains (the Caucasian,) high, steep, and almost impassable, situated on the eastern coast of the Black Sea, where it extends about 300 miles, and diverges from thence, in undiminished ruggedness, till it reaches the Caspian. It is the line which separates the territory of Russia, from the more genial climate of the south, and is a barrier against her aggressions in that direction. These mountains, more stupendous and inaccessible than the Pyrenees, are inhabited by a population (still unsubdued) of more than a million, and a half, inured to war, and hardships, and peril; and filled with one common sentiment of hatred to the Russian name. This barrier of the Caucasus is capable of being crossed only by two passages; one the Demir Capu, or Iron Gate, which is a long, difficult, and expensive route; the other, the Vladoy Caucas, more easy, and which is the high road used by the Russians, (by help of an escort of 150 men and artillery each time a courier has to pass,) from their legitimate territory to Georgia, but which 2,000 disciplined men could easily and effectually close against any army that could be brought to bear. Now when we consider that Russia, by an unprincipled fraud, which it is not my object to discuss here, has got possession of Georgia beyond the Caucasus; whereby she secures a footing in Asia, south of the Caspian, by means of which position she intrigues with, menaces, and keeps in check, Persia on one hand; and on the other, looking on Egypt and Turkey, holds the balance between the rebellious vassal and the sultan, and by being protector to one, secures dominion over the other. When we consider by this position alone, (not only by the power it confers on her of acting on Turkey and Persia, but also because impassable deserts prevent her progress in any other direction,) Russia is put on the high road to India. When we consider that the Black Sea is closed by the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, that Poland is prostrate, the Crimea Russian, Moldavia and Wallachia nearly so, Austria overawed, Turkey under the hoof of the Muscovite, Persia at her nod.—When we consider that the frontier states of Cabul and Candahar are up in arms against us, and that an oppressed, insulted, misgoverned, and famishing population in India are eagerly looking forward to any change which may free them from the iron hand of British misrule. When we look into an organ of the Russian government, (the *Augsburg Gazette*), and find sentiments such as that “the vocation of Russia is to acquire, to organise, and to incorporate, till this mighty organisation can be completed; till the cabinet of St. Petersburg can embrace and hold Europe in one arm and Asia in the other!” When we see in the *Moscow Gazette*, the threat of the Russian Emperor, that “when its turn is come, he will dictate to this proud and indebted Albion, terms at Calcutta! When we look calmly and dispassionately on this the unparalleled complication of our position, surely we shall be able to see the importance of the now one barrier of Circassia, to burst which Russia has unceasingly expended her energies for 140 years in vain. Surely every Briton must overflow with gratitude to the gallant race, that so long has continued to baffle our most dangerous foe: and every eye look with admiration on that people—to use the language of the profoundest and most eloquent political writer of the day—“the only people from Nova Zembla to Tangier, from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, prepared to avenge an insult, or resent any injury from the Czar of Muscovy.”

If any reader should think that this may be an exaggerated representation of

the value of Circassia as a check on the encroaching spirit of Russia, he has only to look at a map to become at once convinced of the truth of it; indeed, he has only to reflect on the prodigious exertions made by Russia for more than a century, and still increasing, to subdue this band of mountaineers, and be convinced that it is for no common object that she desires its acquisition. What value can a chain of mountains have to call forth the enormous expenditure of blood and treasure, to occasion the misery and crime that Russia—cool, crafty, calculating Russia, has so long crippled herself by persevering in? The land or revenues to obtain; she has certainly had the gratification of destroying the trade of England to her coasts (thanks to Lord Palmerston!) but still this is not an equivalent for her immense sacrifices in the endeavour to rob this poor people of their mountains and their liberty. No! It is the position of those mountains, and the hatred to Russian tyranny and aggression in that brave and determined people, that stand in the way of the “vocation of Russia, in acquiring, organising, and incorporating;” it is because a courage never surpassed, a patriotism scarcely ever equalled, have succeeded in enabling that people, for almost centuries, to frustrate the intrigues, to repel the violence, to counteract the machinations, to restrain the aggressions of that nation, whose whole system of commercial policy is directed to the destruction of England's trade. It is because Circassia stands as a perpetual hindrance to the completion of that “mighty organisation which is to enable the cabinet of St. Petersburg to embrace and hold Europe in one hand and Asia in the other,” that Russia makes such enormous sacrifices to exterminate that people and gain possession of her mountains! This is the powerful reason that has made it worth Russia's while to expend as much skill in England as she has done blood in Circassia, in blinding our statesmen as to the value of those mountains; and by working that fearful engine of mischief, party-spirit, in disseminating throughout the land, the absurd, the fatal delusion of the insignificance and barbarism of the inhabitants. No other cause can account for the spathy of the people of England in not coming forward with one voice, to demand the impeachment of the man, who can so raise his arm against his country, as to give active assistance to the work of delivering up this bulwark of our safety in the East to the keeping of our most implacable foe.

Until within the last few years we have been in perfect ignorance of the state, peculiar characteristics, I may even say of the very existence, of that high-spirited people. We have suddenly become acquainted with the fact, that there exists a barrier to the designs of Russia more effectual than all the fleets and armies in existence. For the knowledge of this we are indebted to a man whose name has recently become well-known and endeared to the commercial communities of England, it is to Mr. Urquhart, late Secretary of Embassy at Constantinople, that we are indebted for our knowledge of Circassia. This gallant and enterprising man first ventured among their unexplored mountains, and found there, to use his own eloquent words in acknowledging the toast, “Circassia, the bulwark of the British possessions in India!”—“The garrison of the Caucasus—the defenders of our Indian empire—comely in aspect, vigorous of frame, with the eye of the eagle and the limb of the roe, and combining the sternness of the clansman with the saunty of the courtier, and the simplicity of the child.” Previous to that gentleman's visit to Circassia, although the fame of its loveliness had alone “reached the shores of Western Europe, the disciplined thousands and hundreds of thousands of the Czar has learned to appreciate its manly virtues

and heroic deeds;” and although no friendly stranger had before come amongst them, to encourage them by the assurance of the sympathy of other lands, their whole energies had been spontaneously bent on resistance, to the Russians.

When Mr. Urquhart made known to them that he was an Englishman, that England's cause was their cause, that the common object of both was resistance to the aggressions of Russia, the cries of joy resounded through their mountains; the despair arising from exhaustion gave place to tenfold strength and vigour of hope. From that day Circassia received a new life, and the whole thoughts of her warlike sons have ever since been bent on England. They now their value to England; they understand their connexion with the safety of India; they feel a pride, and have gathered a confidence which cannot be shaken, in the idea of their being linked with England, in resistance to, and in detestation of, Russia. With one voice the Circassians have sworn eternal friendship to England—eternal hostility to Russia; they know that their mountain fastnesses are the best and the surest safeguards of India; and they have pledged the assistance of their warriors whenever England may call on them. They only ask in return the support arising from England's independence—thus preserving the rights of both! They ask for no money, no no troops; they only ask us to dare to be true to ourselves, to dare to be the friends of the Circassians. Such has been the result of Mr. Urquhart's visit to Circassia, and the country is now beginning to ask, what advantage has been taken of such patriotic exertions? What can the Polar-star-of-the-interest-of-England-minister made to this question? What steps has our Foreign Secretary taken to secure the just rights of this people struggling for their existence—to recognise their independence, to strengthen them, and at the same time to strengthen England by such an alliance? What steps have been taken to profit by the commerce prayed for by the Circassians, and for which their 300 miles of coast afford such facilities?—Have honours been showered on the man who opened up the prospect of such advantages? Alas! Lord Palmerston can but answer that he has not dared to let England appear, in the eyes of his Russian masters, to be the friends of Circassia! Or is he in league with the blood-thirsty destroyer of Poland, to assist in the unholy, the suicidal work of the destruction of the Circassian? Let his encouragement of the voyage of the Vixen, the high appointment of Mr. Urquhart, the staunch advocate of the right of British merchants to trade with the independent Circassians and the sacrifice of both, in accordance with Russian views, answer that question. The rankling wound of the Vixen points to the means by which he has annihilated our commerce with the Circassians, and formally exhibited England, not in their eyes only, but in those of every nation in the east, as the terrified, the subservient instrument of the aggressor, in his designs even against Britain herself.—*Correspondent of the Era.*

HINTS TO ELECTORS.—Who found Canada in peace, produced a rebellion in it, and left it under an arbitrary government, and in a state of violent commotion? The Melbourne ministers.—Who found trade flourishing, and left it flat? The Melbourne ministers.—Who entered office to pass the appropriation clause, and then meanly and basely gave it up? The Melbourne ministers.—Who found the boundary question with America on the eve of settlement and left it more hopelessly open? The Melbourne ministers.—Who found England quiet, and left it at the mercy of the Chartists? The Melbourne ministers.—

Who sanctioned the Carlow job? The Melbourne ministers.—Who entered into compact with O'Connell? The Melbourne ministers.—Who increased public expenditure and the civil list? The Melbourne ministers.—Who truckled to Russia in the case of Cracow and the Vixen? The Melbourne ministers.—Who promoted and fostered Popery? The Melbourne minister.—Who aimed “a heavy blow and great discouragement at Protestantism in Ireland?” The Melbourne ministers.—Who traded in jobs and commissions? The Melbourne ministers.—Who lowered the Court in its popularity by base attempts to demoralize and degrade it? The Melbourne ministers.—Who gave places to D. W. Harvey and Sheil, and offered a judgeship to O'Connell? The Melbourne ministers.—Who interfered in the affairs of Spain, without any other effects than the disgrace of England and the waste of money? The Melbourne ministers.—Who left commerce unprotected in Mexico? The Melbourne ministers.—Who commenced a war in India, of which they are now afraid? The Melbourne ministers.—Who endeavoured to keep their pieces without earning their pay? The Melbourne ministers.—And beyond all these, to whom does Great Britain owe her present distracted and weakened position, the peril of her institutions, the decay of her foreign influence, the disgraceful condition of her navy, the insolent threats of an insurrection in Ireland, and the attempt to foist on her people an infidel system of education? The Melbourne ministers.

We can on all men to remember these things; and so to prevent the possibility of such miserable, unprincipled, and pitiful ministers ever regaining power—One more such cabinet would ruin the country.—*Manchester Courier.*

FRENCH DISCOVERY.—PENCIL OF NATURE.—The French journals, and reports of proceedings, admit that these admirable representations still leave something to be desired as to effect, when regarded as works of art. It is singular, they observe, that the power which created them seems to have abandoned them, and that these works of light want light. Even in those parts the most lighted, there is an absence of vivacity and effect; and it is to be allowed that, amidst all the harmony of their forms, these views appear subjected to the sober and heavy tone of colour imparted by a dull northern sky. It would appear that, by passing through the glasses of the optical arrangements of M. Daguerre, all the views are uniformly clothed with a melancholy aspect, like that given to the horizon by the approach of evening. Motion, it is obvious, can never be copied; and the attempt to represent animals and objects in action, consequently failed.—Statuary is said to have been well defined, but hitherto, M. Daguerre had not succeeded in copying the living physiognomy in a satisfactory manner, though he does not despair of success.

CARD-PLAYING IN RUSSIA.—The Russians appear to be extremely devoted to card-playing, which they carry on on Sunday as much as any other day. I am not speaking here of gambling, which, however, I fear is lamentably prevalent, but of the practice in ordinary society, where whist is the usual game. They sit down before dinner, which is usually at three or four o'clock, and when it is announced, they leave their cards on the table, and resume their game the moment they return from the dining room continuing to play from that time till the party disperse; so that, excepting for those who are no card players, there really is no conversation. I observe every where a custom which is exceedingly slovenly—namely, that of mopping the state of the game by scoring it with chalk upon the table-cloth.