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THE EVENTS OF 1848,

ESPECIALLY IN

THEIR RELATION TO GREAT BRITAIN.

A LETTER

TO THE

MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE.

BY

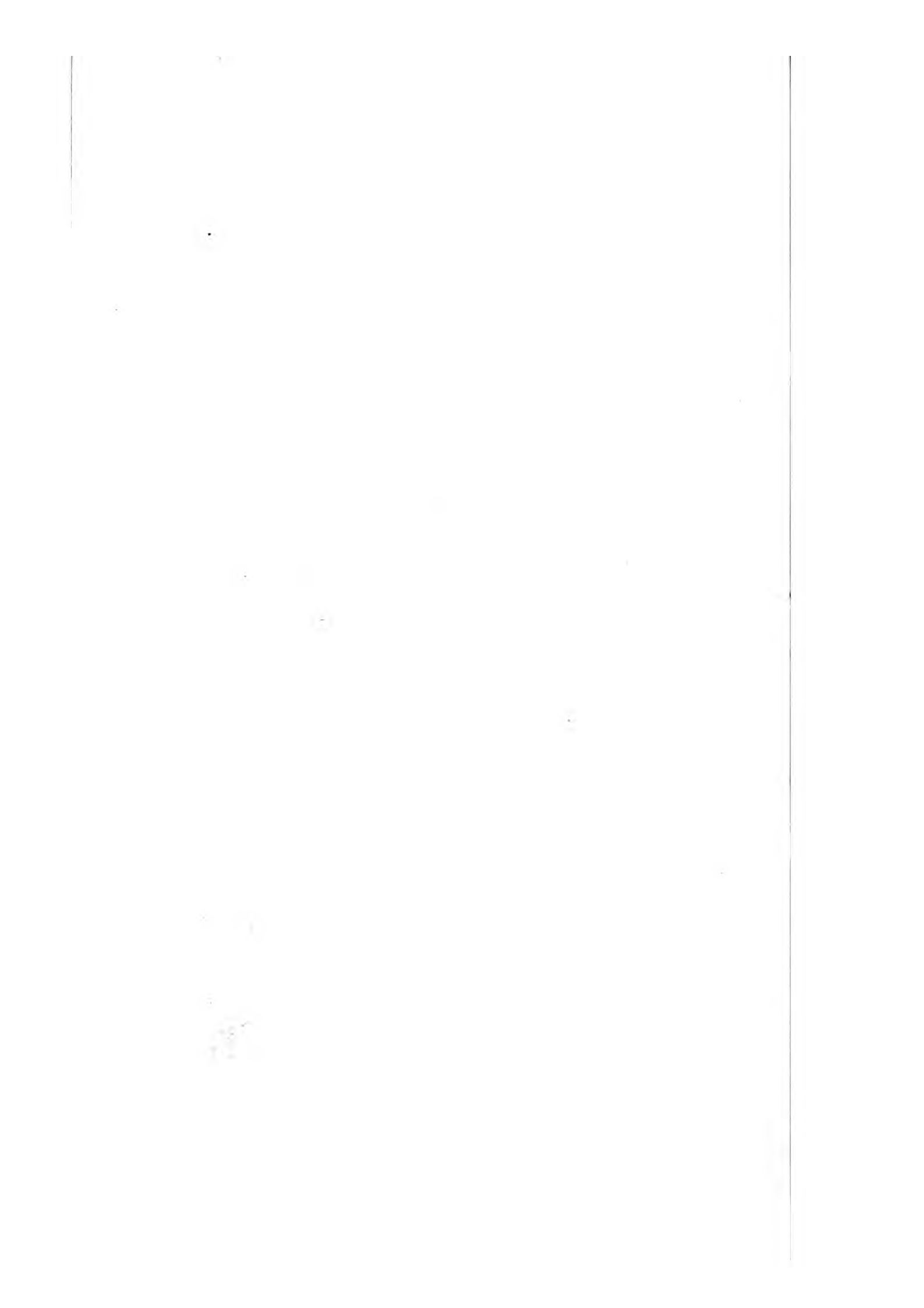
RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES, M.P.

LONDON :

JOHN OLLIVIER, 59, PALL MALL.

1849.





A LETTER,

&c. &c.

MY DEAR LORD,

THE large interest which your attentive observation and impartial temper have enabled you to take in continental politics, and the spirit in which you have of late combined your defence of the Foreign policy of this country, with an Englishman's sense of the blessings of liberty, and a Christian's convictions of the duties of humanity, induce me to believe that it will not be displeasing to you to be invited to cast your mind over the European events of this last year, especially in their relation to the conduct and circumstances of Great Britain.

I have no desire to recapitulate the occurrences which the powerful organs of the daily press have recorded and reviewed, and I am also conscious that they lie much too close to us to admit of the judgment of the historian, or the illustration of the philosopher; but there remains an intermediate field of observation appropriated to the politician, whose attention must not be riveted to immediate events any more than directed to remote speculations, and it is to this point of view that I would ask you to accompany me.

We may be sure that it is by no arbitrary singularity that the English people are indisposed

to the consideration of Foreign affairs, and a little reflection will convince any one that the independent political existence of this country is in a great measure owing to the physical circumstances and the course of events which have separated its interests from those of the Continent, and transferred its activity and its ambition to the surrounding sea. Compressed within these limits, we have advanced, and are advancing, in all that constitutes national strength with an even pace to which history affords no parallel: the most hostile settlements, the result of diverse immigrations have been fused down into one compact people: a conquest, the most complete ever effected by so small a body of men, has enlarged without weakening our language, and varied without impairing our natural character. In later times the hand of the stranger has never arrested our growing liberties, nor degraded us by advantages bestowed not won. In all ages disputed frontiers and coveted territory have been the main causes of wars, and the ocean which has protected us from foreign invasion has gone far to secure other nations from our aggressions, and placed salutary restrictions in the way of our extended dominion. Thus, with the exception of our civil contests, our hostilities have always had the character of a brave adventure or an occasional necessity, and war with us has never become, as with continental nations, the habit of the people.

And while all these benefits have resulted from our enforced concentration and division from the great

body of Europe, our chief difficulties and drawbacks have arisen from the diffusion and intermixture of interests, which circumstances could not wholly control. The losses of Calais and Dunkirk, though belonging to the least honorable portions of our history, have not excited the regrets of one reflecting historian; and Hanover, which Mr. Fox told us should be dear to us as Hampshire, recovered its integral independence without a sigh from an English bosom. For, with us, foreign war has ever meant increased taxation, and, while some rare spoils distributed, *sub hastà*, have gratified the enduring soldier, and some additional territory has occasionally flattered the pride of the sovereign, no series of victories (and they have not been wanting), has ever repaid the original cost, and no continental possession has, of itself, increased the wealth or secured the permanent interests of this country. It is only as pledges of the security of our commerce in all seas, as points of communication and places of succour, that any reasonable men desire England to hold dominion over an inch of continental Europe, and we look for the justification of the exercise of British energy and valour in distant parts of the world, to the colonies in whose hands seems chiefly to rest the future destiny of mankind, and to the various races gradually ascending to a higher civilisation by the maintenance of peace, a wiser jurisprudence, and a purer religion.

This comparative isolation cannot fail to have

produced its moral effects, and they are by no means of unmixed good. Our disregard of the political condition of other nations is always liable to be proud, selfish, and unjust. At one moment, we reprobate every disturbance of social order in foreign countries, just as if our own order and freedom had not been won by civil war, by resistance to power, and by the punishment of evil-doers in high places ; at another, we exhaust our indignation and scorn against the meanness and effeminacy of men who submit to lie under the terror of brute force, or, still more, under the oppression of an alien rule, and justify the tyranny by the nature and habits of the slave. Forgetful of our own ancestors, who, in the field of battle, on the scaffold, in exile or captivity, have raised, stone by stone, the edifice of our civil life, we mock at the sacrifices, the labours, and the martyrdoms of other patriots, who have not succeeded in realizing at once all their hopes and aims, but whose blood and tears may be just as fruitful as those of our progenitors. Unconscious or careless of the many fortuitous circumstances and natural advantages to which we owe our independence and our blessings, we look with contempt on all other less favoured nations, and, by a curious confusion of ideas, assume them to be incapable of freedom simply because we do not see them free. And too often, thankless to Providence for all he has enabled us to do, we seem to regard the blessings

of self-government as the especial property of Englishmen, and the more safely secured to our possession in proportion as they are denied to the rest of mankind.

So far, indeed, are we from falling into the delusions and dangers of a political Propaganda, that we seem to grudge to every other people all that experience has taught us to hold most precious for ourselves ; and precisely those persons who assume the most positively the perfection of the British Constitution, refuse the most earnestly to encourage its extension to other countries, and its adoption by other masses of men. And yet we can be as enthusiastic for an abstract notion of liberty as any other people, if we choose ; we can be nobly lavish of our hard-won wealth, and thoughtless of the gravest political and social consequences to large classes of the community ; we can intrude the inspiration of our humanity into compacts with which it has nothing to do, and demand its recognition by Governments indifferent and even hostile ; and we can find consolation for frequent failure, and indemnity for apparent wrong, in the consciousness that we are advancing the dignity of human nature, repairing the injustice of past ages, and erecting a world of free action and responsibility out of the chaos of disordered will. Our pursuit of the cause of the emancipation of the Negro race has had about it a sacred extravagance, which assimilates it rather to those old Crusades,

that brought the East and West of the world together, and had so much to do with the civilization of Europe, rather than to the more modest political sympathies of modern times. Did we only feel for Poland and for Italy as we have done for the nations of the coast of Africa, of what generous follies should we not be capable! If, then, these interferences in behalf of humanity are wholly unwise and unjust, let us never forget that England has been guilty too.

Admitting, however, as undeniable, the customary indifference of the English people to the political condition of other nations, the strange contradiction ever rises before us that it is problematical whether the strongest sympathies and the closest communion of interests which our physical isolation permitted, could have entailed on us a heavier financial burden and have imposed on us severer sacrifices, than we have submitted to, for the purpose of preserving the balance of power in Europe, of defending territories with which we had a merely dynastic connexion, and in maintaining principles which were believed at the time to be essential to good government and public order. The general ignorance of foreign affairs has taken them out of the range of Parliamentary supervision, and empowered any Government to act in this department very much as if no constitutional checks existed on its caprices or its power. Even now a Secretary for Foreign Affairs may involve, at his good pleasure, the country

in war almost without the complicity of his colleagues ; and the commencement of our great hostilities have always been so popular that it would only be owing to novel influences, to which I may presently allude, if he were thwarted in his intention. The demands upon the character and abilities of a Foreign Secretary are therefore proportionably large, and although this exceptional power in a free country has not only its attractions to the possessor, but its advantages in administration, yet it is necessarily accompanied with so much suspicion, and its action is so likely to be mischievously or stupidly misrepresented, that I think a wise Minister would do all in his power to dissipate the reserve in which his office is usually veiled, and to force both the House of Commons and the country into some share of his responsibility. Keeping then in mind these characteristics of English thought, and these circumstances of our past relations with Continental States, I would wish to apply them to the late occurrences of Europe, and to deduce the leading principles on which our present foreign policy should be conducted, so as at once to satisfy the better instincts of the English people, to promote solid and permanent English interests, and to accomplish, as far as in us lies, our providential destiny in the history of the world.

The destruction of the French empire and the subsequent peace of Europe were purchased by so heavy and lasting a charge on the industry of this

country, that any alteration of the great settlement, involving as it must do a possibility of future effort and outlay, must awaken serious anxieties, not unmixed with disappointment, and it will be well to consider for a few moments how far reasonable men were justified in considering the arrangements of 1815 as definite and satisfactory.

The Treaty of Vienna and its annexes comprised the territorial arrangement of the whole of Europe; for the rights of those nations that were not immediately parties to the compact, were secured by the limitations imposed on the cosignatories. After so many changes and transferences of dominion, the settlement was as satisfactory as the pride of conquest and the contest of ambition would permit. Compared with the peace of Luneville, the distribution was singularly just, for not only was the infamous principle of carving compensation for losses out of neutral territories never admitted, but respect was shewn even to the vanquished, and Saxony retained her place among the more important states of Germany. Yet when the calm politician surveyed this new disposition of Europe, the result of the most fearful struggle the civilised world had witnessed and endured, he must have been conscious that there were weak points in the system, which, in the natural course of events, would generate disease and disturbance, and that it would require great skill and much temperance of power to preserve the healthy state and growth of the political

frame. There was nothing indeed that, under certain conditions, might not prosper; there was no difficulty absolutely insurmountable. France, who, at the commencement of the Congress, appeared almost as a criminal at the bar of the enemies and victims of her Revolution, but whom the adroitness of Prince Talleyrand and the wiser second-thoughts of the Governments soon raised to an equality with the highest deliberating powers — France might, indeed, receive in a right spirit the severe lesson that had been dealt to her aggressive ambition, might find an ample field both for her national pride and her national advancement in the varied and extensive territory she still retained, and might cease to regard the frontier of the Rhine as an important, or even as a desirable object. Belgium might happily develop her young nationality in constitutional union with a Monarchy, which retained much of the spirit of one of the oldest and best of European republics, and while she shared the colonial dominion of Holland, might be preserved from absorption into France. Poland, under the sceptre of a still young and generous Emperor, might become the herald of the liberties of the Slavonic nations, and while the turbulence imputed to her by history was awed by the huge force of Russia, she might enjoy her portion of freedom, at least secure from the jealousies of stronger neighbours. The Republic of Cracow might remain as a solemn pledge on the part of the partitioning powers, that nothing

more should be done to oppress Polish nationality, but that, on the contrary, a nucleus should be preserved, where this feeling might expend itself, without offence, round the tombs of its ancient kings. Lombardy, resuming the Ghibelline tradition, might submit without dishonour to the Austrian, though no longer Roman, Cæsar, and, with an Italian administration and the continued use of the Code Napoleon, might not be unwilling to mingle her soldiers, whose worth had been tried in the campaign of Moscow, with the Imperial army, and to contribute liberally, out of her abundant national resources, to the necessities, in exchange for a share in the dignities and emoluments, of the Empire. And Venice, of whose commonwealth our Harrington wrote, "it is immortal in its nature, and to this day she stands with a thousand years of tranquillity on her back;" (he adds, "notwithstanding that this Government consists of men not without sin,") might find in the commercial advantages which would make her the Hamburgh of the South, some consolation for the loss of an independence no longer supported by colonial domination or domestic wealth. Such were the possible results of the more difficult combinations of the Treaty of Vienna.

It required but a short lapse of time to test their strength and efficiency. The Polish revolution, provoked by the outrages of a military Viceroy, perhaps hardly responsible for his own actions,

brought the whole weight of Russian vengeance on that unhappy country. The most heroic courage of an army of nobles and gentlemen was beat down by the sheer force of numbers, Europe was covered with exiles whose patriotism and poverty excited the liberality of constitutional governments, rarely aroused to foreign sympathies, and France, regretful of the lost opportunities of founding an independent Poland, evinced an interest which no prudence of king or minister could effectually suppress. Poland became, and has since continued, a dependency of Russia, held by military occupation: the protests of Powers, cosignatories of the Treaty of Vienna, have been made in vain: in England the language of Lord Palmerston has not been more explicit than that of Sir Robert Peel, in declaring the present condition of Poland an infraction of the engagements of 1815; and in France each annual meeting of the Chambers, under all phases of administration, has reiterated its declaration of the rights of Poland. A less formal, but still more earnest, demonstration in favour of Polish nationality, took place in 1848, on the 15th of May; and the use that was made of that excitement by a few designing men in no way affects the sincerity of the movement. Having been accidentally a witness to the whole events of that day in the National Assembly, I can testify that the treason against the majesty of the nation, which followed the Polish petition, was as great a surprise to the

motley multitude that filled the hall as to the members of the Assembly.

The destiny of the Republic of Cracow, though less tragic, has not been unlike that of the kingdom of Poland : the provocation to the breach of treaty-engagements, however, was still less, and the infraction required the consent of the three protecting Powers. The protests of France and England were equally disregarded ; and here too the compact of Vienna has been no security against the supposed interests of the parties who had the desire and the power to effect the change.

The separation of Belgium from Holland, although in a different political sense, is not the less a divergence from the dispositions of 1815. The Powers of a secondary rank who formed part of the Committee of Eight, to whom the general arrangements of Europe were then entrusted, had no share in the conferences that decided the repeal of that union. Russia still declines to acknowledge that ultimatum, although the effect has been advantageous to both countries, and, as regards Belgium, eminently successful in the cause of public order.

The incompatibility of these two nations is now undeniable, and the only effect of a longer duration of the connexion would have been, that Belgium would have increased in force and intelligence, would have secured the Catholic sympathies of Brabant, and that Holland then would have been clamorous for separation. By opportune concession

the peace of both people has been preserved, and “the little monarchical experiment” with which Lord Palmerston was twitted in Parliament, remains a signal monument of his energy and his discretion. No experience can furnish a stronger proof of the advantage of accepting in time a distinct manifestation of national feelings: and the good practical working of the Constitutional system in a country exposed to much danger from religious excitement, and little protected from confusion by the interest of any dominant class, has done more service to the cause of order and liberty throughout Europe, than many more ostentatious demonstrations. Belgium had no independent traditional history: she had been a province transferred by heritage or by conquest, from power to power: no clearly-defined frontier of hill or stream disparted her from other territories: conterminous to her lay a great European power, which attached the highest importance to the possession of her chief maritime city, and which had long treated her as a department of its empire: she had been for ages a battle-field of contending armies, inured to outrage and insult, and accustomed to prostration before all forms of rule: self-respect, self-control, the independent mind, and the devoted heart were here as far extinguished as force can effect and God will permit; and yet, out of this, by the wise application of constitutional influences, and the free action of a national spirit, rises up one of the most happy

and healthy of modern communities, resolute against violence from without, and against disorder from within, understanding and recognising the character of a constitutional king, and checking the encroachments of an ambitious hierarchy.

By analogy and by contrast the mind naturally passes to the history, the physical position, the relations, and the destiny, of the portion of Italy, submitted to the power of Austria by the Treaty of Vienna. The relation of the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom to the Austrian empire can hardly have realized the hopes of the founders of the new order of Europe. It certainly was not intended that one of the richest, most accessible, and most improvable of the districts of the earth, inhabited by a frugal and industrious people, an intelligent and active middle-class, and a wealthy and polished nobility, should be permanently held in subjection to the authority of a strange and distant capital, by the sole tenure of military rule. It surely was not contemplated that the pleasant land between the Alps and the Po, the line of historic and decorated cities, leading to the wondrous one which had of old been wedded to the sea, and all the host of gay towns and villages that border the most beautiful lakes and most fruitful plains of the Italian peninsula, should be compressed beneath a German and Slavonic soldiery, and regulated by officials speaking an alien language, and referring to a far and unknown centre of dominion. Such a destination could

not reasonably form part of any scheme which pretended to public equity, and did not profess to disregard the welfare of mankind.

It is however no secret that the cool judgment of the Emperor Francis anticipated all the evil results of this unnatural connection. He personally expressed to the British Commissioner, Sir Robert Wilson, his determination not to accept of an inch of Italian territory, and authorized him to communicate this resolution to the authorities, then composing the kingdom of Italy.* By whatever diplomatic representation and pressure this sagacious decision was overruled, the unwillingness of Russia and Prussia to enlarge the boundaries of Austrian Poland was probably an important element, and the British Commissioner, with that purity of honour, which assimilates his character to the models of ancient chivalry, conceived that his word, at least, was pledged to the independence of the Italian States, and resigned his office accordingly.

Where the political disposition is so faulty, it is

* In the same spirit, when the first Belgian Envoy was presented at Vienna, the Emperor expressed his gratification at the independent establishment in Europe of the old dependency of Austria, and his satisfaction that he had not the responsibility of the government of a province, which could not add to the compact power of his empire. At the opening of the Congress of Mannheim, in November 1813, the Allies proposed that the independence of the States of Italy should be secured under princes of native families.

difficult to say that the whole blame of the failure of the transaction lies with either side. Whether any conciliation of the Italians, any concessions to their national feelings, would have succeeded in identifying their political interests with those of the Empire, cannot now be determined, but, at any rate, no such attempt was made. German and Slavonian functionaries in offices of trust—German and Slavonian troops in the garrisons, were the rule—Italians were the exception. There was, indeed, no eagerness on the part of the Italians to serve the Government either in civil and military employment, and soon, indeed, it became a degradation to do so. The higher ranks, not too energetic by natural disposition, fell into a life of desponding inactivity; and except at Venice, where the habits of occupation in the public service had never been given up, and where a deeper poverty supplied an additional stimulus, no men of worth and education frequented the offices of the state. Nor were the foreign officials men of especial mark or position, but the clever and genial Italian spirit was everywhere submitted to that of the ordinary heavy German functionary. The strictest censorship enclosed the press; the most communicative of people was shut out from the intelligence of the rest of the active world; literature was emptied of all her high and serious purposes, and reduced to subsist on a low material knowledge and a formal religion: primary instruction was generally and liberally afforded, but the

fuel was denied to foster the flame, and the peasant who knew how to read at twelve years of age had forgot how to do so at five and twenty. Among the nobility, which is a large class, all political influences tended to degrade and demoralise ; they were excluded from all the objects of intellectual labour and honest ambition, by the best, as by the worst parts of their nature, by their patriotism and their passiveness, by their indolence and their independence. The administration of justice was of the rudest kind ; not only without publicity, the only permanent safe-guard, but conducted almost entirely by written evidence, and without the confrontation of witnesses. The judgments were perhaps as good as such imperfect forms permitted, and indeed, if it be once assumed that the north of Italy must necessarily be held by military occupation, there is no ground for charging the Austrian government with especial harshness or wanton cruelty ; restrictions and occasional violences were incidental to the mode of Government, and hardly admitted of mitigation, without a total change of the relations of the countries.

It may indeed be fairly asked why the peace which proposed the re-establishment of right throughout Europe, should have delivered these countries over to a new and repulsive subjection ? The position was new, for the Duchy of Milan, as a fief of the Roman Empire, held a totally different place from the province kept down by military force : in those disturbed times, the relation of the Emperor

was formal and protective ; the representation of his power was confined to a Viceroy and a few officers — and the practical government was in the hands of the Italians themselves. Since that time the Cisalpine Republic, the Department of Olonna, and the Kingdom of Italy, were forms of government imposed indeed by foreign power, but their administration was in the hands of Italians, and there was no restraint on the expression of national sentiment. Napoleon was, it is well known, as desirous of the national development and power of Italy, as he was suspicious of, and indifferent to, that of Poland. I say nothing of Venice, whose memories were not only of independence but of substantial power, whose traditions were not only of freedom but of sway. The abortive attempts of 1821 only embittered the hostility : the tortures of such men as Gonfaloniere and Silvio Pellico rankled in the hearts of thousands ; no glittering surface of material prosperity could even conceal the brooding hate. The gay Corso and the brilliant Theatre scarcely masked what lay below. The society of the upper and middle classes of Milan was inaccessible to the Austrian officer, however personally amiable : intermarriage between the nations was most rare, and gallantry indecorous. This was a state of things not to be affected by the construction of good roads and handsome bridges, by improvements in irrigation and agriculture, or the maintenance of charitable institutions. The heavy taxa-

tion took away all notion of gratitude for boons like these, or, if felt at all, it was solely by those who looked to daily labour for the subsistence of life.

The peasantry of Lombardy, remembering the havoc that war had made of late years of fertile land, looked with respect and good will on any form of power that promised to secure them from future invasion and tumult, and with terror on the possible disturbers of that tranquillity. The miseries of warfare fall on the heads of the labouring classes, so palpable and so unredeemed, and the advantages of victory appear so remote and so uncertain, that it is not to be wondered at how much a rural population will endure before a levy "*en masse*" attests their rage and their resolution. And thus, amid all the efforts and sacrifices of the late rising in Lombardy, those have shewn the most apathy who had least to lose, while the Borromèos and the Littas have shaken off their sloth and shared the enthusiasm and the disasters of the student and the artisan.

In these considerations I have not alluded to the effects on France of her restricted frontiers and her diminished authority in Continental Europe: and I have not done so, because, on the whole, the anticipations of those who wished well to France have been as yet fulfilled. Internal political life, and social developments, have, to a surprising extent, taken the place of the passion for glory, and the lust for dominion. The inhabitants of the left

bank of the Rhine have shewn no desire to return to the French connexion, and notwithstanding much political sympathy and a general friendly feeling, any indication of conquest on the part of France has been met by the Germans with enthusiastic indignation, and both statesmen and soldiers, capable of reflection, now entertain considerable doubt whether one bank of a river, inhabited by a heterogeneous and discontented population would not, of itself, be a dangerous and ineffective frontier, to say nothing of the cost and bloodshed by which alone it could be obtained. The rapidity also with which France resumed her rank in Europe, although her efforts took a bad and unnatural direction, was no doubt of use in healing her wounded pride, and appeasing the bitter feelings which might have excited her to the notion of righting herself in the face of Europe; and the general recognition of the Revolution of July, headed by England, was the most satisfactory proof that the old banded enemies would or could no longer interfere with the internal affairs of the French people, but that they might continue, as they would, the work of Eighty-nine, provided they remained at home. Even Russia was content with an attitude of surly surveillance, and the still more sudden and novel change which has taken place in France, has met with a ready acquiescence from all the powers of Europe. The Republic enters by right into the circle of kings and emperors, and no trace remains

on the surface of the political world, to shew that ever combined Europe wished to dictate to France the form of her government, or the name of her rulers. France, in truth, can now owe no grudge to the treaties of 1815 ; she is herself again.

The late disturbances in Germany have had so little to do with territorial distribution, that, although closely related to the circumstances of the War of Independence, yet they cannot be strictly regarded as connected with any compact to which England is a party. The engagements, whose violation or retardation have issued in the revolutions of 1848 and the present disorganised condition of Germany, were between the sovereigns of that nation and the people, who restored them to their thrones. The broken faith of the late King of Prussia has discredited the word of his honest son, and now every German prince who pretends to rule, will have to meet those very demands from a deceived and distrustful people, which, if granted to the enthusiastic loyalty and confiding love of 1815, would have smoothed down every difficulty of transition from one form of government to another, and have established on the safest common basis those institutions that will now have to force their way through the crevices of a convulsed society, and which will only stand firm at last on a ground of sodden ruins. In the more complicated case of the Austrian Empire, who can say to what height of prosperity and contentment it might not have risen, under a federative system, which should have developed the principle

of popular representation and local administration, according to the needs, the capabilities, and the character, of the several provinces, reserving to the central Government the privilege of rectifying partial errors and directing the interests common to the whole? With a judicious central authority in the place of "Congress," the United States of Austria, perhaps even including Lombardy, might have been a great nation, instead of a collection of small states with the sole headship of a great army repressing and terrifying all.

It is not improbable, if the real nature and extent of the influence exercised by Prince Metternich over Austria ever comes to be clearly known, that it will be seen that he was not insensible to the importance of such a combination, and that, if he had been allowed to act more independently of the Emperor Francis, and, after his death, of the Imperial family, the provincial liberties would have been fostered instead of being kept down, and instead of being driven, as he ultimately was, to the wretched policy of playing off race against race, and class against class, he might have been hailed as the founder of a really united Empire. As it was, the sole province, which successfully asserted its independent nationality was Hungary, where the discrepancy of race between the nobility and the people converted liberty itself into an arm of tyranny and a weapon of offence, and which is now paying the bloody penalty of a freedom monopolized by a portion of the nation.

For all these issues England is so far responsible as her influence at the Congress of Vienna extended, and no more. After so long an experience it is very easy to suggest some line of policy which might have induced a safer and wiser settlement, but when it is remembered with how many ambitious and even revengeful passions Lord Castlereagh had to deal, it does not appear certain that the clearest conviction on the part of the English Government of the ill results of these portions of the arrangement would have stood in the way of their adoption. Indeed the papers lately laid before Parliament give evidence of a strong desire on the part of Lord Castlereagh to obtain all the recognition of Polish independence that he possibly could ; and the conduct of the English Government in the later reactionary negotiations of Troppau and Laybach was avowedly opposed to the principle, which at Verona obtained its complete expression, that wherever a revolution breaks out, any European power may interfere to suppress it. The decided refusal of England to join that singular compact, which, under a religious and almost mystical formula, masked the most audacious return to unalloyed absolutism, the Holy Alliance, must have prepared the Courts for the independent attitude she afterwards assumed, and for the protests against the abrogation of the Sicilian constitution and the French intervention in Spain. But Mr. Canning's line of action was still more distinct, and the recognition of the South American

Republics, the establishment of constitutional government in Portugal, and the independence of Greece, remain historical monuments of some continuous sympathy in England for the freedom of other nations. The ready acceptance of the Revolution of July by Tory ministers took this policy out of the range of party names, and stamped it as national and necessary.

It cannot indeed be asserted of any English Administration since the war, that it has avowedly and systematically supported the anti-popular cause in Europe, and the faults with which some may be charged, are of omission, not of commission. Therefore, now to throw the moral influence of England into the scale of arbitrary authority, to support, even by words, the cause of military force against the expression of national feeling and the development of representative institutions, would be a departure from the foreign policy which has, as it were, forced itself on all our public men for the last thirty years, and a derogation from the position which England is bound to adopt, namely, that of being the open friend of such orderly freedom as we ourselves enjoy, even as our own early Protestantism made us the vindicators of religious liberty throughout the world.

Why, then, though ready to acknowledge the advantage of such institutions, and even to perceive the useful operation of them in other countries, do we look on the processes and changes by which

they are acquired with no favour, and are rather inclined to confound them in one common reprobation? Is it not that the peculiar felicity of the method by which our liberty has been acquired, the co-ordinate progress of our means of intelligence and of our political franchises, the fair proportion which the power of different classes of the community has here always borne to its real worth, the entire absence of strange and unsympathetic interference, have, as it were, spoiled our judgment for deciding on practical political problems in less favoured nations? When a member of the English aristocracy reads of a foreign noble, as well educated, as sensitive of shame, and at least of as polished manners as himself, being dependent, in all the circumstances of his existence, in the disposal of his property, in the place of his residence, in the destination of his family, on the capricious will of a Sovereign, however wise and just, and liable, if he opposes that will, to be exiled to a penal settlement, or degraded to the condition of a private soldier, he would naturally shudder with indignation, and would think hardly any price too dear to pay for liberation from such a servitude. When an English traveller comes to be intimately acquainted with some highly-informed and accomplished Italian gentleman, of independent means, who tells him, with what delight he should visit Paris, but that there is no chance of his government (and that a foreign one,) giving him a

passport and permission to go there, the question would force itself on his mind, "why is this man this bondsman, and why am I free to go where I please?" When an Englishman of the middle classes is told, that a man, whose social position and moral claims resemble his own, in a country separated from us by a mere strip of sea, and which professes the full enjoyment of constitutional liberty, had no voice in the representation of his country, was forced to send his son to a University whose opinions he disapproved, and could not himself attend any religious meeting which was not in connexion with some body recognized by the State, he would not wonder at that man not caring to defend that Government when in peril, and looking forward to organic change of the constitution rather with hope than with fear. And if the English artisan, so accustomed to the intervention of the wealth of the State between himself and destitution, that he regards it as a right, not as a boon, and complains of the mode and amount of relief, without the thought ever passing through his mind that it could be altogether withdrawn—if he hears that, in other nations, even in those in which the distinctions of classes have given way far more than in his own, and where the words of equality and fraternity are ever on the lips, not only no right to subsistence, or to the work that should procure it, is admitted on the part of those in power, but that solely the precarious charity of

pious individuals stands between the pauper, however innocent, and starvation, he could hardly avoid feeling, that even his respect for law might not resist that temptation, but that he would try if his own strong arm could not force the willingly inoperative rich to do something for the forcedly inoperative poor. And so, by the common law of human sympathy, it would, and ought to be ; but, in reality, it is so little so, that no one would be surprised to hear the nobleman praise the energy of the autocrat, the gentleman approve the precautions against the spread of popular opinions, the shopkeeper abuse the apathy of the *bourgeois*, and the artisan express a hope, that, "if those fellows made a row, they might get what they deserved." The truth is, that Order with us is found reconcileable with improvement and progress, and every disturbance of it injures the cause in which it occurs. Order has never "reigned" with us as at Warsaw. Order means ports full of ships, shops full of customers, factories in full work, and political confusion abroad injures commerce, and at home stagnates trade. For some rare important objects, long agitated in the minds of the people, some external demonstration of popular force has been permitted, but we have seen what indignation has been aroused at the bare suspicion that the Government could have sanctioned such an instrument, in the case of the Reform Bill, even though two branches of the constitution were there agreed, and the resistance

came from a portion of the third: and there is no doubt that the feeling of the agricultural classes on the repeal of the Corn-law was much exacerbated by the notion that the Minister had yielded, rather to the pressure of the League, than to argument or circumstance. We cannot be sufficiently thankful for the temper that makes political agitation repulsive to the habits of the English people, and this, not because it is the chief security of our domestic peace, but because it permits the stream of improvement to flow on almost unchallenged. Our revolutions are made before we recognise them; unjust privileges are quietly subtracted, irritating distinctions are imperceptibly removed, by such means as railroads and the penny postage, and the repeal of legal restrictions, and where all are better soon no one feels himself the worse. This source of tranquil power is, no doubt, increased by the conviction, that when the crisis demanded it, we also have fought and are ready to do so again, but not lightly and not prematurely. I do not know that any thing in history affects me more than the instances in which the English people have voluntarily endured palpable present evil for the sake of permanent good: the refusal of the Dissenters to accept of the "dispensing power" of James II. rather than invest the Sovereign with unconstitutional authority, and, afterwards, the long retention on the throne of kings, ignorant even of the language, and offensive to the morals and

intellect of the country, to the exclusion of a race, native and genial, but dangerous to public liberty, are examples of civil prudence, such as perhaps no other nation can exhibit, and to which we owe more than we can tell.

We have indeed no right to judge other nations by this standard, because we owe this advantage quite as much to circumstances as to the national temperament. For where else has the outward frame of institutions represented so justly the mental progress of the people? Where else have the tree and the bark so continuously grown together? In France the philosophy of the 18th century found itself compressed within the forms of the 16th, and shattered them to pieces; the controversy of ideas that agitated the breasts of Voltaire and Rousseau became the agony of the nation in the struggle of the Gironde and the Mountain, and, under other names, the contest still continues. In Germany the discrepancy between the worlds of thought and of action has been still more striking: notwithstanding the solemn example of France, and the singular opportunity for reuniting the people to their institutions offered by Providence at the conclusion of the War of Independence, the external mould has been rather contracted than enlarged, while thought has expanded with an audacity and a freedom without parallel. As long as the philosopher did not attempt to realize his speculations, he had the full range of heaven and earth; no restraint of faith or veneration lay upon him—no limit of expediency

or possibility tested his schemes—no practical failures forced him to humility ; but the policeman and the censor stood close outside, and the instant he attempted to act, punished and coerced him. Then came the day, when, without notice or warning, these thinkers found the political destiny of Germany placed in their hands, and these ready writers were told to realize their dreams. Hence, of course, infinite confusion, ceaseless misunderstanding, inconsistency without end ; hence, the student, the man that studies, in open struggle with the soldier, the man paid to act : hence the divisions and dissensions which have accompanied the establishment of the constitutions in a great part of Germany, and which in one portion has permitted the dangerous preponderance of an alien and antagonistic element, and commenced a contest of races, in which political forms may not improbably be absorbed and nullified, and society reduced to its first conditions of aggression and defence. The long usage of the representative system has produced in England a healthy and peaceful political activity, which we have no right to expect to see at once organized in other countries, and to persist in withholding from them all sympathy on that account is an absurd injustice ; for a little consideration would shew us, that the direct and primary advantages of that system are sufficient not only to justify an interest in the countries endeavouring to obtain them, but to render its consolidation there the chief object of the friends of peace and order in Europe.

I think we may justly regard all governments as holding rule by the fear, the apathy, or the consent of the governed. Mere fear can never long hold any large number of men in subjection to a single tyrant : space itself is a great security against systematic oppression. In the old time, when the City was the State, the personal power of the one man was something which would be inconceivable to us if we had not lived in the times of Napoleon and O'Connell, but, in such cases, admiration and love modify and elevate the sentiment, and terror is converted into awe. Now there is nothing necessarily degrading in any submission to an authority believed to be true ; for, while there are, no doubt, many forms of reverence incompatible with any moral or intellectual elevation, there is nothing servile in the obedience paid to one who is conscientiously held to have the right to demand it, and it is the doubt or the disbelief of that right which alone legitimatises resistance against power. Thus ancient despotism had always a theocratic character, and even now, in the heart of the Russian serf, the Czar is divine. But the real government by fear is that of organised armies, huge machines of human violence, swayed by the will of an unloved sovereign or an obnoxious class, and placing the subject in the alternative of passive obedience, or injury to his person, his family, his property, his life. Of this nature are the military occupations of Poland and Lombardy and the Christian portions of the Turkish empire,

and such would be English dominion of India, were not the armed force there almost wholly identified in race, habits, and interests with the people, and thus by no means likely to oppress or injure them. From the debasement of this subjection there is no escape, and the degradation is not confined to any especial form of government. Spain, under the Inquisition, sank into moral ruin; France, under the Terror, lost the great spirit of the Revolution, and descended to the Directory; and England would similarly have fallen had she submitted to the Star Chamber Court, or to the Irish troops of James II.

Indeed, it generally happens that continued fear so weakens the capacity of mankind that it is succeeded by an apathy which takes hope itself away, and leaves life to the mercy of the appetites of the hour. This recklessness of politics may indeed spring from other and very different causes, and some of them reconcilable with a very advanced state of society. Combined with religious fatalism, such apathy is the predominant condition of mind throughout the East, where the violences of government are passively submitted to like the visitations of nature, where a capricious Pasha is like a partial shower of rain, and where the existence of evil is accepted in political life as in the order of creation. A similar apathy is produced in civilized countries, where the natural wants of men are fully supplied, their appetites indulged, and their attention exclusively directed to sensual objects. This

is the passiveness which permits revolutions it has neither the will nor the courage to make; and which is only aroused by some terrible onset, like that of last June in Paris. But Vienna was the very type of the political apathy which it was the policy of such governments as Austria to encourage, and of all the marvels of 1848 it is, I think, the most unaccountable, that the political sleep of that luxurious capital, deepened as it was by the kindness and familiarity of its rulers, should have been broken by the Jericho-trumpets of Liberty, and that the walls of Absolutism should have fallen even there.

Such examples would indeed seem to afford irrefragable proof that no form of personal government, however paternal, is, in these days, proof against the spirit of revolution. It may seem to have the full consent of the people, but an unpopular minister, or a change in the government of another country, or a crisis of distress, may give to, perhaps, a small minority of the nation the power to upset, in a few hours, a dynasty in France and a system at Vienna. That large net-work of functionaries, to whose tenacity Austria owes the semblance of unity which she has preserved in all her distractions, did not prevent revolution there any more than the National Guard did at Paris; for both had become indifferent to the actual order of things, and in that indifference they followed where, in the natural order of things, they should have led, and found themselves in hands much more distasteful to them than those they had

let fall. By a tardy activity they might rescue themselves, but the power, which they had not saved, was gone for ever.

Without representation public opinion is unknown to rulers, without a fair representation it is distorted, and public opinion is the visible sign of that real consent, without which all governments are insecure. The King of Prussia having attempted for several years to decipher the public opinion of his country without representation, so that he might adapt a constitution to its desires and requirements, at last was compelled to summon a Parliament, whose proceedings, though merged in the tumult of the last months, were most wise and effective, and must have frequently since suggested to thoughtful Prussians how much anxiety and embarrassment must have been saved, not only to their country, but to Germany, if that assembly had been established long enough to have taken root in the country, and to have become the firm trunk out of which other freedoms might naturally grow. Had the King summoned his people about him when he ascended the throne, there can be little doubt that the political position of Prussia would at this time have been the object of admiration to the other states of Germany, and the firmest support of the common fatherland.

This is not the place to discuss the relation that the newly proposed Central Government at Frankfort should bear to the other Powers in Germany, but, as far as England is concerned, it may assuredly

be stated that, as long as the arrangement be amicable, and the pretensions not enforced beyond the free consent of the parties concerned, our interference must be unnecessary. The arrangement of Germany in 1815 was made with the advice of England, and such advice in a friendly spirit might, no doubt, be tendered again ; but, as long as there is nothing aggressive in the claims of this concentrated authority, even counsel would be superfluous. If, however, as has lamentably occurred, the very convocation assembled for the express declaration of the principle of German nationality shews itself contemptuous of the same right in other nations, ridiculing the notion of an Italian league at the moment it is demanding a German one, and insisting on the retention of Lombardy as a military frontier of fortresses, while it calls on Denmark and Holland to surrender to the Confederation every portion of their populations that has any pretence to Germanism, it cannot expect to be looked on without suspicion, and as it is above all things desirable that Germany should possess the greatest amount of defensive power both against France and Russia, so we should be urgent that the new foundation may be just, in order that it may be secure, for it will most assuredly be a source of mere weakness and distraction if it does not combine a deference for the spirit of independence abroad with a yearning after unity at home.

There need be little fear, but that things will

soon end well in Northern Germany—either with the King of Prussia or without him ; better if with him, for he is a good and generous man, and may be the means of impressing upon the people, that princes have their worth too. The separation of Austria from Germany is, unhappily, no longer a matter of form, and this not from any differences of abstract opinion, or even of modes of government, but because late events have so developed the Slavonian element, and given it so clear a predominance, that its interests and its inclinations have alike ceased to be German. The once loyal and affectionate city has been bombarded by a Slavonian army, and many hundred German lives were the expiation for one madly taken ; the numerous aristocracy, which was the rampart between Europe and the Turk, and whose oath “*Moriamur pro rege nostro Marià Theresà,*” saved Austria, lies crushed under the Slavonian heel ; the three Generals who exercise a military authority that reminds one of the latter days of the Roman Empire, are of Slavonian blood and name, and have shewn the will, as they have the power, to prevent the revival of the superiority which, as the representative of a higher civilization, the German minority has hitherto always exercised over the Slavonian majority of numbers.

With this remarkable alteration in the prospects of Austria, England can immediately have little right or reason to interfere. The independence of Germany was, no doubt, one of the main objects

of the Treaty of Vienna, and nothing was less contemplated than the subjection of the German provinces and German capital to Slavonian force ; but if this change is brought about by a civil war, without foreign interference, we have nothing to offer but our earnest sorrow at so sad a consequence of former misgovernment. If a Russian soldier crosses the frontier, the question, of course, assumes a different aspect, and it is in the encouragement which Slavonian sympathies would give to such an intervention, and in the probability that, sooner or later, the community of Teutonic race will inflame other portions of Germany to rise in defence of their subject brethren, that we are deeply interested, not only as friends of humanity, but as inevitable sufferers in the case of a European war.

Apart from this consideration, England can have no abstract objection to the growth of this new Power in Europe : in the case of the Turks abandoning that portion of Europe in which, after so many years of conquest, they are still only encamped, there is no other power to which Constantinople, and the mouths of the Danube could be entrusted with so little danger to the comity of nations. Slavonian Austria, extending its influences and conquests towards the East, might not only afford a most wholesome counterpoise to the weight of Russia, but might really advance the cause of civilization and self-government ; but then she must choose between the two destinies, or she may end

by losing both ; she cannot grasp with one hand at the Dardanelles, and with the other retain her hold of Lombardy ; if she will let Italy go free, and give large federal rights to the German provinces, the rest of the world is open to her energies ; but if she will remain in western Europe as a conqueror, Europe will soon regard her as an enemy.*

The settlement of the Italian question is essential to the stable peace of Europe. If the conflicts and difficulties to which it is exposed were limited by the Alps and the sea—if no foreign element entered into the discussion—even then the confusion of this great peninsula would compromise the tranquillity of other nations. There would be dynastic relations, popular sympathies, religious associations, pretensions and claims, all provoking and some demanding interference. And how greatly are these dangers aggravated by the retention of the north of Italy by a power of central Europe, in which the element that has least in common with the civilisation of the

* I know no more striking anticipation of public events than has been offered by Count Valerian Krasinski's work on "Pan-slavism and Germanism," published in the beginning of last year. English public opinion, which ignores all such influences, and looks on Jellachich and Windischgratz as policemen putting down a mob, would learn much from the study of this book, and besides the matter it contains, might find an interest in tracing the deep Slavonic sympathies of the writer himself, an exile from Slavonic persecution. Thus, too, the executioners of Blum, the implacable German, spared Fröbel, who had written or spoken favourably of Slavonic Austria.

modern world, and no historical relation whatever to Italy, has become undeniably predominant? Suppose for a moment that Austria does confine herself scrupulously within the limits of 1815, regardless of the tumult of feelings that is raging on the other side of the Po, will the rest of the Italians remain passive spectators of this noble province, held as a Slavonian fortress? Then, if the other Italian States provoke the conflict, and are defeated, as they probably will be, what is to hold back the victorious power from again occupying Tuscany, or Rome, or Naples? France, under any Administration, can hardly permit the invasion, and England would be loth to admit the retention, of the capitals and ports of Italy by Austria; and yet, if fairly won by force of arms from an insulting enemy, it is hard to say, by what right either power can afterwards interfere. If we do nothing to prevent this otherwise inevitable contest, we shall scarcely be justified in violently impeding its natural result.

It is said to be the intention of the Austrian Government to make the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom a second Poland—to acquire the affections of the peasantry, by confiscating the estates of many of the nobility, and to destroy the power of the middle class, by reducing them, as far as possible, to the lowest level. It is hoped that thus Northern Italy may in time be denationalised, and that a race will grow up

without passions and without memory. A savage and cruel process—but, perhaps, the only one possible, if this abhorred authority is to be maintained. But the analogy is not sufficiently exact to render the experiment even as hopeful as that of the prototype. Poland is surrounded by enemies, animated with all the bitterness of conscious injustice—Lombardy, by compassionate, if not devoted, friends: the Poles have only found sympathy among men strange to their race, their language, and their habits—Lombardy finds sympathy with cognate nations, to which she is bound by a common literature and common customs: Poland to the greater part of European travellers remains but a name—Lombardy is a familiar face to thousands of strangers, a highway of civilised Europe, and a delightful sojourn to the lovers of what is beautiful in nature, in art, and in classic tradition. And France, whatever be her adventures in government, will not easily have so dulled her imagination or quenched her enthusiasm, as to be unmoved by appeals to the deeds of Marengo and of Lodi, and to suffer an expiring nation at her very door to cry in vain for help and protection, not against the restraints of an orderly authority, but against fierce and renewed invaders, intent on her absolute destruction. “*Avidi ruendo ad libertatem in servitutem delapsi sunt,*” can hardly be the final record of Northern Italy.

“ Libertà va cercando, ch’è sì cara,
Come sa chi per lei vita rifiuta:”* —

cried the old poet, whose name has been lately taken in vain by Lord Brougham, against the country he loved so well; and they can know little of Italian nature who believe that she can, under any circumstances, fall back again into the luxurious apathy in which, before these events, she seemed to lie. The only question is, how this excitement is to be directed—how this passion is to be spent. The idea of Italian Unity, which till now remained in the representation of one great common literature and in the visions of theoretical politicians, has seized the Italian imagination from the Alps to Calabria. From the point of view of the moment, it seems to have done so most unfortunately for the establishment of the constitutional liberties of the several States, and to have grievously increased the difficulties and dangers of the time. But for this notion, the success of the generous policy of the Grand Duke of Tuscany would have been complete, and that spectacle of peaceful political ardour and national well-being would have been productive of the highest good: as it is, an element of discontent always remains, which at any moment may ferment into confusion. But for this notion, the reforms of Pope Pius the Ninth, though inspired by no higher sentiment than a humane desire to see his

* Purgatorio 1.—How extravagant is the comparison between Dante’s ideal of a beneficent protecting Emperor, as preferable to the Papal rule, and the German occupation of Lombardy!

people improving and contented, would have laid the basis of a good government ; and although there may be something in the constitution of the Ecclesiastical Republic repugnant to the wants and feelings of present Italy, yet at any rate the melancholy example would have been avoided, of so painful a desertion from the cause of hopeful progress, and of the sudden lapse of so fair a name from the lofty series of the benefactors of mankind.

Yet it may well be suggested whether the temporary inconvenience of this notion is not compensated by its own grandeur and worth ? If, beneath its influence, the petty jealousies and envies of separate States, the reciprocal ridicule of peculiarities of manner and speech, and the ready reproach of inferiority, pass away, or are even diminished,—if the value of the common literature, intelligible and open to all, be fully recognized and improved, who will be bold enough to say, that the incorporation of the Italian States into one federation is impracticable, or even far distant ? Let them once sacrifice wealth and life for one another's freedom, and fraternity cannot be far off. The cohesion may be just as strong under monarchical forms as under republican, and probably more manageable ; and, comparing the difficulties that surround an United Italy with those that attend an United Germany, the balance is strongly against the German. The contrasts of national position, the discrepancies of commercial interests, the distinctions of manners and modes of thought are much less on the

side of Italy, and the differences of dialect about the same. These last have, indeed, been much exaggerated; a Genoese would understand a Neapolitan quite as easily as a Cornishman would a Yorkshire peasant; and in a federal Italian Assembly there would arise none of the impediments to which the Austrian Diet is exposed. Nor can the traditionary talent of the Italians for political life be altogether left out of consideration. Amidst the stormy republican excitements of the middle ages, they combined what at this distance looks nearly as confused a social state as the present one of South America, with all the grace and pleasure of existence, with the summit of art, and the flower of literature: the diplomacy of European nations was almost exclusively in their hands, and the policy, of which Machiavelli was the organ and the representative, has always predominated in the Italian spirit, over that of chivalry and Christian scruple. It was this political aptitude probably which made Napoleon, who had no taste for sentimental nationalities, always maintain the possibility of reconstituting an Italy, and direct his policy to that end, as far as his other schemes permitted. With such a spirit, it is unlikely that she would have remained cantonized in chance principalities, even if these general movements had not taken place, and now the restoration of the old scheme is frankly impossible. It will be of no ultimate disadvantage to the arrogant and boastful tendency of that people if many checks require many efforts, and if they be

made strongly to feel that so great a gift as independent nationality and self-government is worth the life-blood of a generation.

To England the peaceful consolidation of Italy would bring nothing but advantage: it would open to our manufactures a market all but closed against us by high tariffs and annoying restrictions of every kind: the exportation of corn, of the best quality, would be quadrupled by good and quiet cultivation, and that of silk and oil considerably increased. Her naval and commercial power, commanding the two coasts, would stand in the way of all monopoly of force in the Mediterranean, and tend to preserve the liberty of the sea. At the same time the completion of the Lyons Railroad will facilitate the access of travellers, and bring her within a week's easy journey. The pleasure-hunter should desire the true preservation of order in Italy by pacific means, as well as the advocate of liberty or humanity.

In the meantime Russia stands

“ Like a mute shadow watching all ;”

and her attitude commands at once respect and fear—respect from those who, at a distance, see in it a passive dignity, and fear from those who believe it to be the vigilance of power gathering itself together for a favourable opportunity. It is only by residing some time in Germany that one can understand the political terror of Russia, that overhangs the popular mind. The calm Niebuhr himself, in his latter

days, was burthened with the thought, that a new era of intellectual darkness and brute force was at hand for Europe; Napoleon said, "in fifty years Europe would be Cossack or Republican:" the family alliance between Prussia and Russia has gone far to alienate the nation from the House of Hohenzollern: the Poles, though inimical by race, and uncongenial by character, were objects not only of pity, but of respect in Northern Germany, and even the Cabinet of Vienna shewed no hostility to the Polish Revolution. These feelings have little to do with the personal character of the Emperor, whose efforts, however unsuccessful, to reform the administrative corruption of his huge dominions, have won the admiration of a people, whose functionaries, however unenlightened, are notable for personal honesty: the antagonism has a far deeper root and larger meaning. It is felt that Russia not only is, but must be, the irreconcilable enemy of liberal institutions in Germany; she cannot keep her people from the infection of a spirit so near at hand, and the infection, acting on a body totally unprepared to receive it, can hardly produce anything but evil. It is the very worst misfortune of the political condition of Russia, that influences, in themselves good, can only injure her peace and weaken her stability: the patriarchal system is disturbed, and nothing is substituted: government from above is discredited, and self-government not insured: for where the Czar is still divine, rebellion

against him assumes the impotence of blasphemy, and the traitor sins against the public conscience. The long process of the feudal system to which Europe has been subjected, and out of which she has elaborated her liberties, is there unknown, and the sense of responsibility has yet to be developed out of the municipal nucleus common to the East of the world. And yet how near is Breslau to Warsaw; how accessible Kœnigsberg from St. Petersburg! The fear of the consequences of this contact is most just on both sides, and it is an interesting point in diplomatic history to observe how unwilling the European States have been to recognise Russia as a substantive European power. Till the commencement of the French Revolution, her attempts to procure an influence in the domestic affairs of the German Empire were without success; the German States having encountered with determined opposition the pretensions of Russia to the title of "Guarantee of the Treaty of Westphalia," which she claimed by a forced interpretation of a passage in the Treaty of Teschen. It is in the memory of the present generation with what courteous disregard the proposals of mediation in the agitations of Europe, from the young and enthusiastic Emperor Alexander, were received by the Allies, and how it required all the insanity of Napoleon's ambition to bring the Russian army to the gates of Paris. But from that time Russia took her undisputed seat in the councils of Europe, and cannot be expected to

resume an isolation offensive to her pride, however beneficial to her own true interests and those of the civilised world. The future of Slavonic Austria will, no doubt, multiply the points of contact, and the far-sighted politician would probably fix on the circumstances connected with that relation as the main source of peril to the tranquil advancement of Europe.

The good understanding between Russia and England runs little chance of being disturbed by any of the above considerations, and yet it is to Russian agents, unrecognised or disowned, that we owe the disasters of Affghanistan, and the seizure of Constantinople is, with the exception of the stoppage of communication with India through Egypt, the single act of political aggression, in the range of probability, which would compel us, under any Administration, to an immediate declaration of war. As long as the present Emperor lives, the former event is unlikely to occur, but the hope of it is fixed in the heart of the Russian nation, and it is, and will long be, the business of Russian rulers to restrain, rather than excite, the ardour of their subjects. The great devastations and injuries of the world have been committed rather by excited masses, than by individual passion. The invading Moguls rather led than followed Genghis-Khan, and France rather demanded than answered the ambition of Napoleon.

It is assuredly a fact of much significance, that

the country whose relations with our own give cause for the least anxiety, should be the very one of which we had at one time come to believe, as Cromwell said of Spain, that God had made her our enemy, and man could not make her our friend. While the other nations of Europe have cried to France—

“ C’est toi, qui pour nous as mis le charbon sur la lèvre,
 Toi, qui nous enfilant le venin de ta fièvre,
 Nous a fait boire au fond de ton verre enchanté
 Le vin de l’espérance et de la liberté, ”—*

England has rather learnt to appreciate the value of what she already possesses, and with no vain pride has contemplated the security derived from a blameless Sovereign, an inoppressive Church, and a Parliament on the whole obedient to the desires of the people. This feeling has no doubt been heightened by the consciousness that it is to the want of this principle of ministerial responsibility, here so firmly established, though not without many a constitutional struggle, that the success of the late subversive movement in France is to be mainly ascribed. A true constitutional throne has barriers about it to preserve the Sovereign from falling, which cannot elsewhere exist. I am not blind to the difficulty of establishing monarchy on the ground of high expediency in a country where it has not historically grown up, and it must be owned that hitherto the experiments in France have signally failed. There the inviolability of the crown has been like the ring

* Barbier.

in the comic fairy-tale, which possessed the remarkable quality, that from whatever height the wearer happened to fall, the jewel remained uninjured. Louis XVI. was inviolable by the constitution at the moment of his execution : Charles X. and Louis Philippe when they were exiled. “Why establish a principle,” it may be said, “to which neither side will adhere?” “Le Roi le voulait,” was the excuse of the Ordonnances, and the King fell.—

“Mori fuggendo e disfiorendo il giglio :”

“Le Roi règne et gouverne,” was the cry of the Opposition, and Louis Philippe fled.

Assuredly the English people would not thus have punished any desire of family aggrandisement (and that family honest, amiable, and patriotic), which wore at least the colour of the firm establishment of a constitutional dynasty ; and, if an unscrupulous and unjust use was made of the enormous patronage of which the Government was the disposer, the proper remedy would have lain in some diminution of the means of favour. To expect that any executive should hold that machinery of influence in its hand and not use it for political purposes, argues more faith and less sagacity than the French people usually possess, and it is singular that, up to the present moment, no serious attempt seems to be in contemplation to diminish this inevitable source of corruption to the nation and demoralization to the Government.

The constitutional party in France has always remained a fraction both in the Chambers and in the country, although composed of such men as de Tocqueville and de Beaumont, and has never commanded the influence its purity of character and eminence of talent would have justified. There was, perhaps, hardly an act of the personal government of the ex-King, which the majority of the nation did not approve of, and it seems as if every French ruler was tempted on to the exercise of unconstitutional authority, and then hears the terroristic motto clamoured in his ear, "La responsabilité, c'est la mort." It is needless to say that such a disposition is utterly at variance with the hereditary principle as exercised in a free state, and the question must have lately forced itself on the mind of many an Englishman, whether constitutional monarchy in France is possible, if such offences as those committed by Louis Philippe were deemed worthy of the banishment of himself and his family.

This apparent contradiction is in some measure diminished, when we remember that in France a minority has always made the revolutions; but it is the minority congregated in towns, active, intelligent, bold in theory, brave in practice, the real mind of the nation. On the other side is the majority of Frenchmen, tranquil, frugal, domestic, material in their objects, in a large part of the country religious, and in all patient and unpolitical. This is the France, which submits to revolution, (though it once resisted in

La Vendée,) while the other France will always hold the ultimate destiny of the country in its hands, and the difficulty will always lie in the conciliation of the two. This was the great achievement of the Empire, which gave to the masses tranquillity, justice, and order—to the ambitious, the possibility of every man becoming great, rich, and glorious—and to the republican communist an equality under the sword, accompanied by a sort of political pantheism absorbing each individual into the State.

With the form of Government in France Great Britain has given the most signal assurance that it has no intention in the slightest degree to interfere, and we heartily desire that the one may be established which shall receive the full and free consent of the French people. Whether the chief magistrate should be elective or hereditary cannot concern us, and the less so, as experience has taught us the fallacy of the Roman notion that liberty depends on an elected sovereignty.* The only combination which could affect us would be the ascension of the throne of France by that branch of the Bourbon family, whose natural sympathies would lie rather with absolute than constitutional powers, and who cannot look with preference on a country which has so readily accepted the political changes by which that family has suffered. But even this contingency could little affect the external rela-

* “ In eo libertas posita erat populi Romani quod non nascebatur sed elegibatur princeps.”—*Tacitus*.

tions of France, now that all the governments of Germany have been compelled to assume a constitutional form : that which was easy to an arbitrary power is impossible to a legal one obliged to assign legitimate motives for its acts : the scandal of the partition of Poland, for instance, would never have come from powers constitutionally organised.*

The virtuous and uncompromising Minister who has governed France for a longer period than any other statesman since Cardinal Fleury, has lately given to the world his gloomy prospects of the future of French democracy, and yet it is, no doubt, to the expression of the most democratic portion of the constitution, viz. to universal suffrage, that the present highly conservative tone of French politics is owing. The very large number of landed proprietors in France gives a preponderance to fixed property which we could not expect to find under a similar system in this country. If it turns out, as is not improbable, that the possession of this franchise inspires the masses with political interests, they may be induced to acquire the knowledge of political economy, the want of which is really at the bottom of all those tumultuous theories of life, that at a distance seem so fair ;

* M. Bancroft informs me he saw in the archives at Paris a letter from the Minister to England, after the Peace of 1783, stating that George the Third had expressed to him a hope that Louis XVI. and himself might remain good friends, and added, "if we do so, such an event as the partition of Poland would be impossible."

and, by fairly partitioning public opinion between the towns and country, it may tend to decentralise France without weakening her energies or thwarting her inclination.

I have attempted in these pages to enunciate what appear to me the simple principles on which it becomes our diplomatic relations with Europe to be conducted, consistent with treaty-rights and the eternal obligations of justice. I have not entered into close diplomatic detail, because the events of last year have gone far to take matters out of the hands of diplomatists. "Diplomatic relations," lately observed Lord Palmerston, "lie in reality between nation and nation, and the Governments are the organs through which they communicate:" a large and statesmanlike opinion, and adapted to the exigencies of these times. For on reviewing the movements of the Continent, it is singularly clear how untenable have been the conditions even of the great compact of 1815, that have not been ratified by the respective peoples. Belgium, Poland, Lombardy, Venice, and the Italian Duchies—all have changed the political aspect which was then attempted to be impressed upon them, and are either successfully independent, or ruthlessly enslaved. The later efforts of Austrian state-craft to stifle the constitutional principle in Southern Italy, through the means of the King of Naples, have resulted in an internecine struggle, which has shocked the hardened nerves of experienced warriors, and revived the memory of the 'Sicilian Vespers.'

Yet there is nothing in this view either dangerous to public law, or even condemnatory of the more formal and arbitrary system of former ages. While the greater part of the civilized portions of Europe remained in that passive political state in which the character of the governing power was comparatively unimportant, as long as no new and unaccustomed acts of personal oppression were committed and no violent change attempted to be brought about in the domestic habits of the people, there was of course no other check to the ambition of Kings or States, but the strength of their antagonists, and no fitter mode of settling the external relations of mankind than engagements binding on the honour of the contending parties. As long as men were chattels, they were subject to be treated as such, and to be transferred in the same manner; and how late in history this doctrine prevailed is evident from the claim of Louis XIV. to the sovereignty over the Belgian provinces of Spain, founded on the peculiar laws that regulated the disposition of property in those countries. The Impropropriations admitted into the treaties between Buonaparte and the German princes were a continuation of the same principle. But with a change in the notion of sovereignty necessarily comes a change in the notion of its power in the disposition of its subjects. Pure force will always keep its own; but then it has nothing to do with Law, which cannot exist without some ingredient of justice,—“ὁ γὰρ νόμος δίκαιόν τι.” Here professedly there is none except

what is assumed by the law itself: and therefore diplomacy is now reduced to two modes of action—the consent of the nations it represents, and the use of material violence.

Not but that another field is already opened to diplomatic skill, prudence, and energy, which, if rightly used, will confer on them a far higher function and a far wider participation in the destinies of mankind than they have ever enjoyed in the palmiest days of intrigue or the most profitable reign of duplicity. There is better work for diplomatists now-a-days than there ever was for Gondomar or Barillon. They, indeed, could threaten or promise the intervention of armaments, but these can wield the moral force of nations. A wise mediation is a nobler work than a prudent peace, and although an evil from which we are preserved may not be appreciated as one from which we are rescued, yet history will learn to appreciate these more silent glories, and, day by day, will be less inclined to let the fame of men depend on the single moral faculty of personal courage, and the single intellectual talent of military combination.

Without regarding the amiable enthusiasm of the members of “Universal Peace Societies” with more interest or sympathy than one gives to men who propose to themselves an admirable object but have little or no means of accomplishing it, it is impossible not to feel that they only represent the exaggeration of a conviction rapidly growing in public

opinion of the fault, as well as the crime, of War. A cessation from arms of more than thirty years has not had the effect which has been so often attributed to peace, of fattening men for destruction. The world has not been accumulating wrath it is desirous to discharge, or violence it is labouring to vomit forth. The discontents and vexations of men have taken another direction, and are spending themselves on their own political or social condition. Now, although it may be very useful to every highly-civilized and orderly nation to have some such outlet for the fiercer instincts of our nature as India, Algeria, or Mexico, it does not at all follow that the warlike spirit holds the same position it did in the necessary constitution of society. These conquests and contests have something about them of fatal and compulsory, and are not calculated to produce the same immoral consequences that follow from regarding war as a science or a pastime. What a large majority of men wish for is at once accomplished—what the wisest and best desire comes too, but not at once, and he must indeed be dull to ethical and political conclusions, who does not perceive in the tone of popular thought, and in the declarations of public men, and in the spirit of the literature of England, France, and Germany, indications of the moral sense that war is either a duty or a crime, and that the acts of violence on the part of States are amenable to just the same rules as acts of violence between man and

man. Thus, in the invasion of Lombardy, by Sardinia, the excuse (I will not discuss its validity) was assistance to a cognate and conterminous nation in throwing off the oppressive yoke of a stranger, without which liberation no union either federal or absolute of the Italian peoples was possible. The interference of Germany, in Denmark, arose from the presumed incompatibility of the characters of King of Denmark and a German Prince, and the supposed necessity of either closely incorporating those provinces in the new confederation of Germany, or separating them altogether from it, against their will. Apart from the right or wrong on these matters, it is evident that they are not to be confounded with wars of conquest or aggression, for in both cases it was admitted that the aid was demanded by the parties most interested, namely, the populations whose political destiny depended on the issue.

How far therefore the peaceful mediations, which have averted so many evils, and palliated so many more, will become the rule or habit of modern Europe, and substitute, as it were, a high Court of public opinion not only for regular and open wars, but also for such armed interventions, as I have just mentioned, will, no doubt, mainly depend on the firm establishment of representative institutions throughout Europe.

As the rulers and ruling classes of communities have usually been those who have suffered least from wars, it is not to be expected that such

a considerable change could take place, only or mainly through their means. It is by the popular feeling making its way in representative assemblies, by the determination of the people, legally expressed, not to be taxed for any hostile purposes, however gilded with promised glory, that war will become the rare phenomenon instead of the staple of history. Nor does it follow that in any degree the spirit of national defence will grow weak in the hearts of the people, nor even that one nation may not offer its physical force to support another in its defence against overpowering aggression, such as the invasion of the Turks in past times or the possible irruptions of the Slavonic races in the present. In such cases representative governments would be no more likely to hold back than absolute ones, and indeed they would possess a concentrated energy and unity of action, which would make them doubly formidable.

It would appear almost superfluous to add how much the chances of civil peace are increased in constitutional states. There it usually happens that the snow melts where it falls. Difficulties are resolved, passions are spent, crises are tided over, conciliations are accomplished, that under personal government would be impracticable; for by the very theory of representation you procure the consent of the masses without their actual interference and the satisfaction of their will without its violence and caprice. But for this end it is above all things necessary that the representing

body should have the respect and confidence of the people, and for that purpose its constitution must change, from time to time, according as public opinion modifies or extends itself. In the old Hungarian constitution, where "populus" meant "the nobility," public opinion was really represented, because the nobility comprised nearly the whole of the invading and ruling race. In time the invaded became "populus" also, and the neglect to consolidate their interests with those of the old rulers has led to the destruction of the independence of Hungary. In France the refusal of progressive reform in the representation has caused the late revolution, caused it apparently and immediately, for, although the demand for a change in the electoral system was not expressed with the general enthusiasm that won the English Reform Bill, yet the refusal of the Government to grant, except with the bayonet at its throat, even the smallest and most gradual concessions, went far to alienate the confidence of the population in their prudence and sagacity, and to arouse the expectations of the determined men, who saw that the opportunity was coming to get far more than the nation desired to ask, and to wring from tumult and disorder far more than they could have hoped to gain from peaceful progression. "La Religion en politique," writes a statesman certainly not addicted to radical politics, Baron Wessenberg, "consiste à savoir faire un sacrifice à temps : prendre l'ini-

tiative d'une concession devenue inévitable est le seul moyen d'en atténuer le poids et d'en éviter un plus grand."* Now Count Molè has mentioned, I think in an Address to the French Academy, that Napoleon said to him, "I closed the book of the French Revolution, but when I go, the book will open at the page I left off;" and he and other real Conservative French statesmen, have surely been blinded either by fears or by doctrines, who thought that so small a body of electors as France possessed thirteen months ago could guarantee to the Government such a national confidence as would defend them in a struggle with the bold, earnest, unscrupulous men who believed themselves commissioned to continue the work of the Revolution, and who were connected with it by a chain of conspiracies extending through the Empire and the Restoration. Thus, when the day of battle came, the Monarchy and the Republic met and fought, and the People looked on.

The form and name of the executive power in France may change, but universal suffrage will remain, and, as I have already stated, under very advantageous circumstances. The chief of these is, I conceive, the absence of any such heavy national burthen, in the way of debt, as that we labour under, and which invests, with so solemn a responsibility the electoral body, and pledges them to support at any sacrifice the character and credit of the country.

These events, therefore, my dear Lord, are not

* Pensées.

without some possible application to ourselves. It is not likely, unless France should become the scene of misfortunes which we have no reason to anticipate, and which we should most seriously deplore, that the English people will remain unaffected by the extension to all citizens of political rights in a country with which we are physically so closely connected, and whose moral influences over other nations have always been remarkable : and for this we must be prepared. “ We are all conscious of the voice of Providence in the tempest and the earthquake, but a true statesman, as the true prophet, hears it in whispers inaudible to the common world.”

These last impressive words are some of those I now mournfully recall—recollections of the beloved conversation of a man to whose worth, as a colleague and a friend, you are, no doubt, ready to pay every homage, but in whom, only those, that knew him most intimately, can estimate what his country has lost—Mr. Charles Buller. I am thankful to have brought most of the thoughts and sentiments of these pages to the test of his large, just, and discerning spirit, and to have acquired more confidence in the truth of my opinions on foreign politics from their coincidence with his own. For with him the finest sagacity was compatible with the purest enthusiasm ; though many who only saw the clearness of the stream, were totally unconscious of its depth or of the rapidity of its flow. In him the toleration of error never implied the indifference to truth, but he could perceive in the theories and

principles of other men truths and leadings to truth, of which they were themselves, perhaps, hardly aware ; and thus his consciousness of the value of the institutions of his country and of the character of his countrymen never obscured from him the merits and meaning of the ideas and efforts of other nations. He was one of the few practical English statesmen whom I happen to have known, who believed that Englishmen could derive any clear additional views in public matters from the observation of foreign politics, or who cared much more about revolutions on the Continent than to see that they did not produce a troublesome echo in Trafalgar Square.

Let us then, in all our spheres, you, my Lord, in the highest, as Minister of Education in this country (as far as our unhappy dissensions permit us to have one) do all in our power so to advance the enlightenment and intelligence of the English people, that, in proportion that political power is extended, the sense of political responsibility, and the knowledge of political truths, may not fail. I am sure we never consider sufficiently how much of our real present social security we owe, not only to the practical sense, but to the information, however imperfect, of the multitudes in our large towns. The political economy may be rude, but it is not the less useful, by which those men are intimately convinced that an illegal and tumultuous attack on the property or persons of their wealthier fellow-subjects would not answer the objects they have in view: that violence would not only lead to repression and punishment by the

law, but that, even if it succeeded, the consequences of a forcible change in the distribution of wealth or of a disturbance of the ranks of society must rather injure than improve the condition of the masses of the community. It is a plain knowledge of the conditions of production and distribution, though occasionally suspended by passion, or blinded by misery, that keeps tranquillity in our crowded streets and order among our eager and anxious artisans. Thus the schemes of society, which, as matters of political science, engaged the controversy of Aristotle against Plato, which, as ideals, have been held up by men as holy and as wise as Sir Thomas More, and have been aimed at in practical life by exceptional bodies as numerous, and in many respects as excellent, as the monastic institutions of the middle ages—these dreams of a past Paradise or visions of a future Atlantis, have found, and are likely to find, little favour with Englishmen of any class, under any pressure of the present mode of existence. To this result the unimaginativeness of our character contributes something, its sturdy individuality still more; but the real obstacle, which no extravagance can overcome, is the strong impression that anything brought about by mere force will not last, and that there are certain sufferings and evils for which the laws of nature, and not the laws of man, are accountable. Let this knowledge be only still further widened, this conviction still more deeply felt, and all discussion and examination of the phenomena of

social life (and those who suffer will discuss and examine) will be instructive, suggestive, elevating, purifying, instead of fostering hates and animosities of class against class, and threatening all classes with common ruin.

This, if in any degree accomplished or furthered, will be one of the results of the events of 1848 that will remain, when the fume and the tumult have passed away. Already we can perceive the forms of other substantial benefits to humanity standing forth and vindicating the ways of God to man. Open courts of justice and trial by jury have taken the place of those antiquated forms which, however honestly administered, could never give confidence to the people or elevation to public opinion, through the greater part of central Europe. The freedom of the Press may be suspended by military ordinances in some places, but these measures are professedly exceptional, and prohibit little more than was before systematically prevented: incontrollable events have put an end to the struggle between thought and expression which raised into importance every worthless forbidden book, and dammed up the healthy stream of open debate, which carries off so many of the impurities of society and fertilizes even the ground that it overflows. Representative institutions on a wide basis are the inevitable foundations of future government in Northern and Western Germany, while Austria herself will, with difficulty, throw off the constitutional form,

however irreconcilable it may be with military occupations and not only discordant but inveterate nationalities. A separate provincial organisation is what may be there expected, and that is no weak security for future freedom. The national sympathies that have played so considerable a part in the politics of the year will probably lose much of their exclusive action, but their defensive strength will remain, encouraging the principle of patriotism and self-sacrifice in resistance against a common enemy. Nor do I think that I am either lauding or justifying the stupid and wicked spirit of causeless revolution, in expressing an opinion that, whatever be the political issue, it is satisfactory to the Christian moralist to have witnessed that all the delight and indulgence of animal life that filled the hereditary dominions of Austria, and all the pleasant sloth that nature and art and governments encouraged throughout Italy, were not sufficient for the soul of man, but that he was still ready to imperil all this for the idea of some better and higher condition of existence. Aspirations indeed, however noble, will of themselves do little more than disappoint, and disappointment may generate despair, but they may also produce a wise humility, a just appreciation of self, and a determination to endure to the end. This is the hope of the friends of Italy.

Peace, and the free institutions which alone can unite peace and progress, are the fruit which Great

Britain desires that Europe should gather from this wondrous year. Theorise as we may about non-intervention and isolation, we cannot cast off the relations that hold together the nations of the world. The system which would make of England the peaceful forge of arms with which the rest of the world is fighting, and the comfortable manufacture of clothes which other countries are too busy slaying one another to fabricate, is just as vain as that which would surround our islands with a wall of glass, grow all our own food, and live wholly on the produce of our own labour. Indeed, of the two, the latter scheme is the more consequent and intelligible. For Free-trade, above all other theories, interests us in and, in a certain sense, makes us dependent on the foreigner. If our fabrics were diffused as they might and ought to be a revolution in China would affect the clothiers of Leeds, and the tranquillity of the South American Republics would be as important to the men of Manchester as the order of their own streets. Incomplete as is our present interchange of commodities, we have yet suffered grievously from the confusions of the Continent: and unless they lead to a more general well-being and an increased prosperity, they will have been to us an unmixed commercial evil, and we owe no thanks, except to the English Minister who has enabled this country to preserve an honourable peace, and, whenever he has had the oppor-

tunity abroad, has mitigated violence, and impeded war.*

In conclusion, let us not overlook the evidences of the sense of the value of social order, which have shewn themselves in the very centres of revolution. Most of the great cities of Europe have been, not metaphorically, but absolutely, in the hands of the lowest class of the people for weeks together, and yet property has generally been untouched, woman respected, religion revered, obnoxious persons uninjured, strangers unterrified; while some acts abhorrent to humanity have not failed to meet with signal retribution. No stronger proof could be given of the force of the social instincts in these masses of men, than society going on for some time as it were, of itself, preserved by the habit of law and the sense of duty; and no higher test could be required of the fitness of the people to share in the

* In one quarter measures of force have been abstained from even at some apparent risk of our national dignity. The vain-glorious and passionate Minister, who, for the sake of a *coup d'état*, expelled Sir H. Bulwer from the court of a sovereign, whom English arms and money had largely contributed to place on her throne, has remained unpunished. Strong as we are in the sense of our generosity to a weak and imprudent adversary, and well as Sir H. Bulwer can rest on his character and his worth, yet some such act as the blockade of a Spanish port or colony, might have been of real advantage to that fine people whose over-weening conceit is the only impediment in the way of their enjoyment of their free institutions and their general prosperity.

benefits and responsibilities of representative institutions. Nor is it a chimerical hope that this country, which, under the Divine favour, has been, and continues to be, the example of free political life and peaceful constitutional progress, will be regarded with increased interest, sympathy, and confidence, and gain as much gratitude as men ought to give for blessings which, in the main, they must owe to themselves.

I have the honour to be,

Dear Lord Lansdowne,

Yours, truly and obedient,

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES.