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# OBSERVATIONS

MADE DURING A TOUR IN

1816 AND 1817,

THROUGH THAT PART OF THE

# NETHERLANDS,

WHICH COMPRISES

*Ostend, Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, Malines & Antwerp;*

WITH REMARKS ON THE WORKS OF ART, IN  
CARVING, PAINTING, AND SCULPTURE;

AND ENQUIRIES INTO THE PRESENT STATE OF  
AGRICULTURE, POLITICAL OECONOMY, LITERATURE, THE ARTS  
LAWS, GOVERNMENT, AND RELIGION.

To which is added, from the most authentic information,  
SEVERAL ORIGINAL ANECDOTES

RELATIVE TO THE

## BATTLE OF WATERLOO,

And the humane conduct of the Inhabitants of the  
CITY OF BRUSSELS,  
ON THAT OCCASION.

*In a Series of Letters.*



BY

HENRY SMITHERS,

LECTURER ON HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY,

AND

*Author of "Affection" a Poem.*



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Printed for the Author, and to be had of him, at No. 950 Rue Verte  
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TO HIS GRACE

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND, &c.

K. G. &c. &c. &c.

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED,

BY PERMISSION,

As a small tribute of grateful acknowledgement for  
his Patronage, and of esteem for his  
universal Benevolence.

*By his obedient, humble Servant,*

THE AUTHOR.

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# PREFACE.

SEVERAL of the Observations which appear in this Volume, composed parts of Letters written by the Author to his family in London ; the difficulty of collecting so many facts together in a foreign Country will account for any inaccuracies that may occur ; he trusts that from material errors the Work is free.

The reflections which are occasionally interspersed will be found uniformly favourable to Virtue and Christianity ; a parent who is convinced of the authenticity and high origin of the latter, would ill discharge his duty ; if he neglected to avail himself of such an opportunity to impress upon the minds of his Children, its Supreme importance ; and the objects that hourly occur in the Netherlands bring the subject more immediately into notice ; the Author views with admiration the complete toleration which prevails there both in principle and in practice.

Feeling a most ardent attachment to his native Land, which is fully justified by its pre-eminence among Nations, Foreigners may think perhaps, when other Countries are brought into comparison with it, that he betrays some partiality, let them examine before they decide ; the Author flatters himself that he has held the balance of justice with an impartial hand.

It would argue ingratitude, were he to withhold those acknowledgments which are justly due to the highly respectable individuals who have furnished him with valuable information on several of the subjects noticed in this Volume; next to the satisfaction of conferring benefits, is that of acknowledging them.

He has the more pleasure in discharging his debt, from the liberal manner in which the communications have been made to him: the Original Anecdotes relating to the battle of Waterloo, he feels confident will be justly appreciated, when it is known, that the most material of them have been communicated by his Grace the Duke of Richmond, whose active mind, acknowledged bravery and strong friendship towards the Duke of Wellington urged him at the risque of his own life, to witness the triumphs of his friend, and the valour of his Countrymen.

To A. Sayer, Esq. M. D. the Author is obliged, for the several prefatory observations on the new Decimal System of Weights and Measures, marked with inverted Commas; and also, for the several facts relating to the Charitable Fund established in Brussels, of which he is the Treasurer.

To Mons. Van Hulthem, the principal Librarian of the Bibliotheque, he feels obligations for his readiness to afford information on every subject connected with that Institution.

To his highly valued friend **Mark Watt, Esq.** of Edinburgh, the Author is indebted for the original designs of the two Belgians The female in “*La faille de soie noir*”—and the Man in the Winter Cloak, styled *Le Manteau*.

The Frontispiece represents a *Kermese* or Village Feast, such as continually occurs in the vicinities of all the Towns and Cities in the Netherlands ; it is taken from an original sketch by *Ostade* and is as applicable to the present state of customs and manners as when first designed by his Pencil—the three Plates are engraved by *Mr. William Johnson* an Englishman, now resident in Brussels.

Should the present Volume meet encouragement, it is the Authors intention to follow it with Observations on the more Southern parts of the Netherlands, particularly, *Louvain, Tournay, Namur*, its Minerals, and the Romantic Scenery of the *Maes* or *Meuse*, with some observations on the culture of the Vine.

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OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE  
*PRESENT STATE*  
OF THE  
NETHERLANDS,  
&c. &c. &c.

*In a Series of Letters.*

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OSTEND, SEPT. 5, 1816.

WHEN I parted from you in England, I engaged to furnish you with such particulars of my intended Tour, as I should deem either amusing or instructive: I proceed therefore to redeem my promise. After a tedious, but safe voyage from London Bridge, I reached Ostend in four days, by the *Marquis of Anglesea* packet, a voyage which is often effected in a single day. Various are the motives which induce travellers to forego the comforts of home, and endure priva-

tions, which in their own country they would consider most severe hardships ; whilst a thirst for fame was, perhaps, the leading motive that induced Bruce to trace the Nile to its source, and urged Columbus to search out a new world ; christian principles impelled Howard to penetrate the abodes of wretchedness, and the haunts of misery ; so intent was his mind on the accomplishment of the great enterprize, that no inferior object could for a moment divert his attention, no obstacle subdue the ardour of his pursuit.

The traveller who presumes to publish to the world the result of his observations, should remark whatever is novel or valuable, and describe the same with the strictest truth and perspicuity ; above all, he should select the useful, and bring back to his own country whatever shall appear calculated to prove beneficial to it. The difficulties are great, for to the mere traveller, the superficies of society only, is, for the most part exhibited ; residence, and even long residence, is necessary to examine into the true manners and genius of a people ; a Tourist should so regulate his own mind, and so temper his own feelings, as to suppress national vanity and prejudice, penetrate the veils thrown over actions and events, view things as they are, not as they appear to be, and like the supreme magistrate seated on a throne of judgment, hold, with an unwavering hand, the scales of justice, and decide with discrimination and equity ; however I may succeed, these are the great objects I

shall keep in view in the observations with which I shall from time to time furnish you;

Ostend is one of the most valuable entrances to the Netherlands; the possession of it has ever been considered of the greatest consequence, by the several Powers, who, in succession, have held the Sovereignty of the Low Countries; its value will fully appear by inspecting the map of those territories; it is considered to be the second port of Flanders, in maritime importance.

The Harbour is difficult to enter, and somewhat hazardous; a flag-staff is elevated to guide vessels in their approaches to the port, and an excellent look-out is maintained, but notwithstanding these precautions, an accident occurred in 1816, to one of the packet-boats, without blame attaching to any of the persons concerned: On her being about to enter the harbour with a brisk wind, it suddenly abated, the vessel became unmanageable, and struck the bank: a considerable altercation took place on shore about rendering assistance; monsters in human form, deaf to feeling, and blinded by cupidity and the hopes of plunder, contended against affording the necessary aid, expecting to partake of the spoils; but humanity prevailed, and the crew were saved; both the cargo and the vessel were much damaged. Justice obliges me to observe, that on some of the

coasts of our own country, similar atrocities are occasionally committed.

Ostend is situated in long 3. 1. E. from the meridian of Greenwich; and lat. 51. 15. N. or nearly the same latitude as London.

In the year 814, Ostend was a small village, and was constituted a city in 1072. In 1445, Philip, surnamed the Good, surrounded it with walls, and in 1583 it was regularly fortified, when he became master of Ghent and Bruges.

One of the most memorable events relative to this city was the celebrated siege which it sustained when attacked by the Spaniards, under the command of the Duke of Alva, from July 5, 1601, until September 14, 1604, when Ambrose Spinola succeeded against it, and nearly reduced it to ashes; the besieged are said to have lost 80,000, and the besiegers upwards of 50,000 men. Marshal d'Aumont, who endeavoured to take it by stratagem, in 1658, was himself taken prisoner.

Upon the death of Charles the II. of Spain, the French seized Ostend. It was again besieged and taken by the Allies, during the wars of the Duke of Marlborough, in 1706, and the States General ceded it to the Emperor of Germany by the treaty of Ut-

recht, concluded in 1715. He established an East India Company here, which excited so much jealousy among the European Powers that he abandoned the project, and the Company was suppressed by treaty in 1731. The French again became masters of Ostend, in 1745, but restored it by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748. In 1772, it was made a free port by the Emperor Joseph II. who considerably improved it, and in 1776 a basin, near 400 feet broad, surrounded with store-houses, was opened for the reception of ships of considerable burden. In the progress of the French Revolution, the English, in 1798, landed some troops, and destroyed the Sluices communicating with the Bruges Canal, but the wind shifting before they could effect their re-embarkation, they were compelled to surrender prisoners of war.

During the time that Ostend was in possession of the French, they repaired and extended the fortifications; the Fort on the west, began by them, has been recently finished under British Engineers; on the south side the fortifications have been strengthened, and new barracks are erecting, which will, eventually, render it a formidable place of defence. At the general peace of 1816, Ostend, with the whole of Belgium, was united to Holland. It offers little worthy of particular observation, excepting its fortifications, and the sluices which communicate

with the Canal of Bruges. The breadth of its streets, its fine square, or market place, and the magnitude of many of its houses, (compared with those of the seaport towns in England) contrasted with the general inactivity, and silence that prevail, exhibit a character of departed magnificence, which receives full confirmation on farther progress into Belgium; the present population of Ostend is estimated to be about 10,000, exclusive of the neighbouring villages; it contains three Catholic churches of an inferior class. Although many protestant families reside here, no place of public worship has yet been assigned them; but the well known liberality which prevails on the subject of Religion in this country, among the Rulers, authorises me to say, that on a proper application, some fit place would be appointed.

Ostend experiences great inconvenience from the want of fresh water, the requisite supplies of which are obtained from Bruges, and preserved in Reservoirs, to which cause may be ascribed the offensive smells that are so prevalent here at all seasons.

In the new town, founded by the Emperor Joseph, are some excellent houses, well furnished, and fitted up with a great degree of neatness; throughout the Netherlands, the numerous large Squares are used as markets for the sale of butter, cheese, vegetables and fruit; the vendors remain until about noon, and then

remove with the whole of their utensils and goods, and leave the Squares neat and clean.

A terrace walk surrounding the fortifications on the west side of the city, affords fine views of the Sea, the breezes from which are deemed to possess considerable restorative powers; a bathing machine is kept on the beach. The females are cleanly and healthy, but to a traveller they exhibit a most grotesque appearance; among the middling or lower classes, hats or bonnets are not worn, but large scarfs black or coloured, and most ponderous ear-rings, suspended from each ear, and exceeded in size and weight only by those of the natives of Ava and Pegu in the east, where the holes in the ears are made when the female is young, and when increased to the size of a dollar, earrings are fitted thereto.

It was judiciously remarked by an intelligent American, that when he first landed in England, the similarity of language, of habits, and manners to those of his own country, was such, that he forgot the distance which intervened; but when he crossed from the shores of Britain to Ostend, in a few hours only, he was struck with such an entire contrast in dress, food and costume, as induced him to think he had been landed in some new world.

Ostend has nothing pre-eminent in art to boast of, near the portals of one of its churches is a frightful

representation of the miseries of purgatory, the place is strewed with human bones, and eminently calculated to awaken sensations of horror.

The traveller who flies from city to city, and from object to object without plan, and without reflection, may extend the circuit of his ideas, but not improve his taste or strengthen his judgment ; this observation will be found peculiarly applicable to Belgium, and crowded as it is with tombs, relics, altars, pictures and statues, an indiscriminate survey of the whole will tend only to confuse the memory and injure a fine taste. The experienced connoisseur will judiciously make his selection, passing by every thing of an inferior description ; to the inexperienced I recommend to visit the several works of art, whether in Architecture, in Painting or in Sculpture, progressively, commencing with those of inferior character, and ascending regularly to the higher efforts of genius.

You will probably recollect that it was at Ostend, that many of the gun-boats for the invasion of Britain, during the last war, were constructed, the greater number of which remained there until their decay.

I shall write you again from Bruges, in the mean time, adieu.



BRUGES, SEPT. 12, 1816.

THE Canals which intersect the Netherlands, afford the most valuable facilities to travellers at a moderate expense ; early every morning the barge starts from Ostend to Bruges, and arrives in less than three hours ; to such who wish to prosecute their journey to Ghent without delay, another Treckschuyt will be found ready, which reaches Ghent the same evening : but Bruges will well repay the traveller who devotes a few days to inspect its public structures, and its environs.

In the surrounding scenery may be evidently traced those models, which the Flemish painters selected for their fine Landscapes ; and in the groupes of figures which are now and then exhibited, you see whence Teniers, Brouwer and Ostade derived those ideas of character, which they have so successfully delineated !—here are to be seen several fine specimens of trees, principally beech, planted in the manner of the ancient avenue, but their lateral branches being stripped during their growth, they do not produce the damps which are found to prevail in the avenues of England ; the present population of Bruges is about 33,632 persons—it once exceeded 200,000 ; from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century it was the grand depot of European commerce, and scarcely a nation but

had its Consul and factory established there, it was the emporium for wool, which its inhabitants manufactured into broad cloth ; at that period, the art being unknown in England, she exported all her wool and received cloth in return : the cloth-market is yet to be seen, and several extensive manufactories of serges, baize, dimities, camblets, and fine linens are carried on in this city—and the articles sold at the market held every week under the arcades of the Hotel de Ville : the entrance to the city from Ostend, is through a fine avenue of trees extending a considerable distance ; the houses are ancient, but well built, and lofty ; the city has many spacious streets, six principal market places or squares with numerous churches and chapels : Bruges was formerly a bishops see, the steeple of the Church of Notre Dame, serves as a land mark for vessels coming to Ostend, although about nine miles distant.

Such travellers as are desirous of seeing every object worthy of notice when on a tour, I recommend to take an early opportunity after their arrival in each town or city, to ascend some lofty tower or eminence therein, to gain a clear idea of the relative situations of the several structures, market-places, and public buildings, and also, when it can be done, to walk round the town or city, in its suburbs or terraces. This plan I have experienced to be attended with numerous advantages, and to save time ; the ramparts round the City of Bruges, and the Hotel de Ville,

offer great facilities for this purpose ; from the latter, which is a fine specimen of Gothic architecture, upwards of four hundred feet in height, a most commanding view of the city and of the surrounding country will be obtained, and amply repay the labour of ascending it. Here are two large bells, one weighing 19,666 *lbs.* and the other 22,500 *lbs.* which were sounded to announce the Victory of Waterloo in 1815. They are rung on the same principle as barrel organs. No city in Belgium can boast a more melodious set of bells than Bruges : I have listened to them for a long time with increasing pleasure.

The Church of *Notre Dame* is embellished with one of those fine specimens of pulpit architecture, for which the Netherlands have long been celebrated ; it is designed in a rich and elegant taste, and executed with superior skill. In this Church is also a fine marble statue of the Virgin and Child, taken by Napoleon Buonaparte's command to Paris, and restored in 1816, when the Louvre was despoiled of its stolen trophies ; it was probably No. 1116 of the Italian School in the Catalogue of the Louvre. Here are to be seen also, two splendid tombs or mausoleums one of Charles the Bold, who fell in battle, and the other of his daughter, the grand-mother of Maria Louisa, the second wife of Napoleon. Visiting these sepulchres a few years ago, on seeing these monuments, which were rapidly decaying, he ordered them to be repaired at a considerable expence, and caused

them to be richly embellished with a stellated ceiling; they have cases thrown over them, which for a small fee are always taken off; they well deserve inspection.

Had the career of victory which Napoleon had run allowed him time for reflection, he might have learnt from the fate of Charles the Bold, the uncertainty of power, and the caprice of fortune. He might then have viewed his own successes as meteors appointed to blaze, and to astonish only for a time, and then disappear. Had he confined his ambition to the real welfare of the country over which he reigned, he would have maintained himself on a pinnacle of unassailable greatness, every eye that saw him would have blessed him, and every heart have given witness to him.

In an early Campaign of the French, Bruges was bombarded, and one of the Churches and a Monastery were totally demolished. In the Church of St. Salvador are several good pictures, but not of a first rate class. The Baptism of John, and the Resurrection of CHRIST by Van Os, are among the best. In the Vestry is an excellent Portrait by Adavere, painter to the King of the Netherlands, from which an engraving is now making.—Upwards of Sixty British Families are residents in this city.

Few of the numerous Monasteries and Nunneries

with which the Netherlands once abounded, are now to be found ; many of them were abolished by the Emperor Joseph II. and the French Revolution completed their overthrow. A Convent of English Nuns has been permitted to re-assemble, which may be visited on particular days. I had a long conversation through the gratings with one of the Sisters, an intelligent female, upwards of fifty years of age, of the Jerningham family, of Suffolk, from whom I learnt the following particulars :—When the French invaded Belgium, the whole Sisterhood with great difficulty effected their escape, in disguise—some in carts, or waggons—and fled to England, where they were dispersed among their different relations ; the property belonging to the Convent being in the English funds, escaped confiscation. On the restoration of peace, they were permitted to re-unite in their Convent of St. Augustin, their tutelar saint, and, what is remarkable, after eight years absence, and renewed intercourse with the world, they all, without exception, voluntarily returned to their Convent, under its ancient restrictions, some of which by the votaries of fashion will be deemed severe : they rise every morning, both in summer and winter, at half an hour after three o'clock, attend Matins at half past four, Vespers at three in the afternoon, and retire to bed at nine each evening, in separate apartments. The Convent consists of the Superior or Abbess, ten lay sisters, twenty-five Nuns, and three on probation, for which one year and an half is al-

lowed before the black veil is taken, which is irrevocable : Besides these, a number of young ladies are admitted for education, whom the sister-hood instruct during the day. On my second visit to Bruges, I attended their annual celebration on St. Augustin's day, the Church is small, but remarkably neat and clean. It has a splendid altar-piece, which was most tastefully decorated with artificial flowers. The service was performed in Latin, and a fine organ was played by some of the Nuns, who were appointed for that purpose, and separated from the audience by gratings ; on the floor under them were the lay-sisters and domestics, and on an elevation the three noviciates engaged in acts of devotion. The whole scene was imposing, and inclined the spectator to invest the three candidates for the veil in greater beauty, than on nearer view might have been realised ; —one of them appeared peculiarly interesting.

It is painful to behold youth and beauty immured in cloisters, in open violation of the commands of Heaven, and in opposition to the interests of society : In vain will it be urged, that they are self-dedicated to the glory of God ; for those best promote his glory, who mostly contribute to increase human happiness, and the history of the world evinces, that the brightest charities of our nature, and the virtues which most ennoble the soul, flourish far better in society than in the abstraction of a Monastery, or in the cells of a Convent.

At a short distance from Bruges is the Church of Jerusalem, which, although very small, has something peculiar about it; by stooping you enter a cave intended to represent the tomb of the Saviour, appropriately decorated; in the Church are some fine specimens of ancient stained glass. I was informed by an English resident at Bruges, that a Convent of Recollett Nuns of a strict order, wearing a horse-hair dress, feeding on bread, water, and dried fish only, sleeping on short boards, with a back to keep them upright, and living in a state of the most austere mortification, had been recently abolished.

Bruges maintained formerly a most extensive commercial intercourse with the Cities of Italy and with the East, by way of the Mediterranean. It was once the residence of the powerful Counts of Flanders, and the Court of Philip the Good, was the resort of the unfortunate from other countries; it was maintained with a splendour and magnificence unequalled by any other State. He established, in 1430, the order of the Golden Fleece, on the very day of his marriage with Isabella, daughter of John, King of Portugal.

My next Letter will give you some account of the celebrated city of Ghent.

GHENT, 24, SEPT. 1817.

HOWEVER elevated the rank of the traveller, if he be desirous to observe human character, travelling by the barges offer a favourable opportunity so to do, for although the classes of Society are in some measure separated by the different prices, the dress, the habits, and the manners of the natives may be well observed there.

The Ghent Barge as it is denominated, or that Treckschuyt which starts from Bruges to Ghent twice each day, is very similar to the city barges of London; it is fitted up with every convenience, an excellent hot Flemish dinner is provided at a moderate rate, and the dishes are very numerous, although but little in each; the English traveller must not expect large pieces of roast beef or joints of any sort, but the viands are good, and the cookery excellent.

Ghent, the capital of Flanders exhibits architectural grandeur far beyond its present political importance. The houses which are built on a scale that surprises the stranger, are appropriated for the most part to purposes of commerce, being occupied as shops, manufactories or offices.



Ghent is built upon twenty-six islands, and contains near three hundred bridges ; from the low grounds which it occupies, it must be subject to great damps and severe cold in winter ; it has, also, two considerable canals, one communicating with Bruges, and the other circuitously with Brussels.

In the year 789 the City of Ghent must have been a place of some importance, King Alfred having compelled the Danes to accept of a truce after they had ravaged England, they retired from thence to Flanders ; attacked Ghent and obtained considerable booty.

Charles the 5th was born in this city, and a handsome statue was erected to his memory here : alluding to the greater extent of Ghent or Gand, as it is in the French language, compared to Paris, he observed he could put all Paris in his " Gand," Glove in the English language. Until the French took possession of Ghent at the commencement of the Revolution, a singular custom is said to have been kept up there. The city having revolted against Charles the V. unsuccessfully, he consented to pardon the inhabitants, on condition that they should appear before him with ropes around their necks, which he compelled them to wear afterwards in their ordinary occupations : being obliged to submit, they converted them into true lovers knots, and the custom was

not wholly abolished, when the French took possession of the city.

When Napoleon had imprisoned the Prince Broglio, bishop of Ghent, he sent another from Paris, in his stead, but not having received the sanction of the Pope, the priests refused to acknowledge him; about two hundred and seventy of them were arrested by military force and marched out to the army, and made to assist in the works of Antwerp. To shew, in some measure the state of public feeling respecting them; it is said, that they were hooted out of Ghent, and jeered at, as they passed along. History records, that Ghent formerly sent immense armies into the field; its present population within the walls by the latest returns, is 60,775 persons.

The inhabitants of Ghent, as well as those of all the other cities of the Netherlands, entertain a strong jealousy of the English; and not long since a considerable quantity of British manufactures were seized at Ghent and burnt in the streets; by thus, utterly consuming them, they rendered the British manufacturers essential service.

Ghent it must be allowed, equally with all other cities of the Continent, groans under the dreadful effects of a long protracted war; her manufactures are weekly dismissing numbers from employment, and the poor are consequently in a wretched state.

This city abounds in bleaching grounds, and considerable quantities of linen are sent here from the manufactories to be whitened for sale.

This city also contains many objects worthy of notice. Its botanic garden is planted with much taste; it is open at certain hours every day for public inspection, free of expence, and is kept in good order. The mildness of the Autumnal season in the Low Countries admits the Green-house plants to remain in the open air, nearly a month longer than would be hazarded in Great Britain. Botany is a favourite study among the inhabitants of this city; and the Netherlands afford a fine field for the pursuit; from thence Britain has received many of her choicest vegetables, flowers and fruit.

There is at Ghent also an excellent public Library, open every day, in which is found many ancient valuable works; it has a reading-desk on a curious construction, very convenient for those who may find it necessary to consult numerous books; it is a moving cylinder with swinging shelves, which, as it turns round, brings forward any book that may have been previously placed for perusal on any of the shelves.

Divine worship, after the forms of the Church of England, is regularly performed every Sunday

in the church of Capuchins, at half past eleven o'Clock.

It was a remark made by the philanthropic Howard, that the prisons in the United Provinces were so quiet, and most of them so clean, that a visitor could hardly believe he was in goal. The prison at Ghent fully confirms this observation. On my expressing a wish more minutely to inspect the economy of it, the superintendant accompanied me through the several apartments; a remarkable neatness is observable throughout—every bed was made, and although humble in its materials, was clean and wholesome; the prisoners are all under strict regulations, and kept employed in cleaning flax, weaving linen, and in other industrious employments; from which they are suffered to receive emolument towards their support. I advise every traveller to make this prison a particular object of his inspection.

“It was my mother's fault,” said a poor boy at Ghent, “that I was not taught to read!” a severe reproof on parental negligence. How many unhappy criminals might urge the same.

Several of the churches at Ghent will excite the attention of the experienced connoisseur. The carvings are matchless. The pulpit in the Cathedral

Church of St. Bavo, by Laurens Delvaux, in 1745, is richly inlaid with medallions of white marble: it is supported by a wood carving of an aged man, to whom an angel, treading the globe beneath his feet, opens the book of life, exhibiting that passage—“*Surge qui dormis et exurge a mortuis et illuminabit te: Christus.*” ad Ephes. 5.—“Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

In this church will be seen some very fine specimens in marble—in Altars, Statues and Embellishments. That of Bishop Triest, by Quesnoy cannot fail to attract great admiration, both in the character, and in the lesser embellishments. The folds of the drapery, the hands, the profile, the features are executed in so masterly a manner that the marble may be almost said to speak. It proclaims strongly the merit of the artist, and may rank with the finest modern sculpture. Here are also some specimens of Basso Relievo, by Van Ryschoot; and amongst the pictures may be remarked the Resurrection of Lazarus, by Otto Van Veen; the Death of Christ, by Vanbonthurst; the Paschal Lamb, by Van Eyck, 1415, the colours as vivid as if just painted, and possessing all the richness of the Venetian School.

This chapel contained a column upon which was depicted. Oliver Mingan and Amelberge Hangen, his wife, who, during their marriage, had thirty-one

children, among whom were several ecclesiastics.— Tradition tells that when Charles V. made his public entry into this city, this good father accompanied by twenty one sons, all in uniform, and under arms, came out with the other citizens, to meet the Emperor, and as these brothers were distinguished from others as well by their resemblance as by their dress; the Emperor enquired who they were. On receiving the information, and that in addition to this number of sons the family consisted of two daughters, he ordered an annual pension to be paid to the parents:— What is most remarkable, is, that soon after this in 1526, the whole of the sons died within a month of each other.

Under this church may be seen the remains of another that previously stood on this ground, and which contains some very ancient specimens of sculpture and painting, and also several ancient monuments.

In the church of St. Michael, four large pictures are kept concealed by a curtain, which will be removed when desired. The crucifixion by Vandyck, represents that hour when darkness was over all the land; it needs no encomium; Vandyck has attained a character, which can receive no addition from the eulogium of a traveller: the three modern pictures have also considerable merit: the one is the martyrdom of St. Helena, by Paelinck, the second the

Ascension of the Virgin, by Francois of Brussels ; and the third is the Annunciation, by Lens ; the group of cherub angels, is in a superior style of excellence : the dignity expressed in the countenance of the Virgin and the tone of colouring, all unite to render this picture deserving of marked attention.

The architecture of this church is grand, the lofty tower having been struck by lightning whilst building, it has never been finished ; a model of what it was intended to have been, is shewn within the church.

The ramparts which environ the several cities of the Netherlands, possess attractions highly powerful, and greatly contribute to the comfort and health of the inhabitants, Ghent has much to boast of in the rural inviting walks which surround it.

The castle at Ghent is memorable, for having given birth to John O'Gaunt, who figures conspicuously in the early periods of English history, and in the plays of Shakespeare. The castle was battered to pieces by the Spaniards in their attacks on the city ; its ruins are still to be seen, marking out the place where once it stood.

Ghent has its subscription concerts, its balls, its public reading rooms, and its other amusements, but I shall reserve my observations on these heads for the gene-

ral remarks which I shall have to make on the manners and costumes of the country.

The church of St. Peters, at the extremity of the city, is built on the model of one of the wings of St. Peters at Rome, and is about one-fifth part of the size thereof; the interior is fitted up in a chaste style of ornament, the pulpit plain but elegant; this was one of the few churches which escaped pillage during the Revolution, the massy plate was concealed and may be seen. In several of the other churches are pictures and marbles deserving inspection, the Hotel de Ville, a very high and spacious building, is also a remarkably fine specimen of the antient Gothic of the ninth century. All marriages are performed in this place.

In one of the streets is placed the celebrated cannon called "La folle Marguerite." It is nearly eighteen feet in length and three in diameter.

Ghent has its academy of design, painting, sculpture and architecture; erected in 1751, under the auspices of Maria Theresa of Austria; every third year prizes are distributed. The public annual exhibition of modern arts is held alternately at Ghent, Brussels and Antwerp.

Ghent has also a Society of literati, and of there



fine arts, equally open to the artists of the whole kingdom, and which distributes annual rewards.

It has also an Agricultural and Botanical Society instituted, October 10, 1808.

Expect my next letter from the celebrated city of Brussels.—Yours, &c.

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BRUSSELS, JAN. 14, 1817.

THERE is no canal communication between this City and Ghent, except by the very circuitous way of Antwerp; diligences go regularly three times a day to and from Ghent and Brussels; but do not conceive that they resemble those conveyances known by that name in England; the first view you have of them cannot fail to awaken risibility; they appear the most unwieldy machines you can imagine, they are constructed with the strength of a waggon, having rope harness, and carry a ton weight in the large basket behind, nevertheless, the inside is roomy and if not annoyed by the company, you will not much complain; the centre of the roads is paved with granite; for such is the natural lightness of the

soil, that they would otherwise be impassable in wet weather and in winter.

But however uncouth these conveyances may appear to the eye, and however tardy in their movements, they are very safe ; accidents by them are rare.

The road to Brussels passes through Alost, a considerable town, chosen by Smollet as the scene of some of his humourous exhibitions of character. In the church is to be seen a fine painting by Rubens, lately restored from the Louvre.

Brussels is situated in 50. 51. N. lat. and 4. 25. E. long. from Greenwich, about twenty-four miles South of Antwerp, and thirty-five miles S. E. of Ghent. It stands partly on the summit of a lofty hill, and partly on the vallies which surround it on the North and West, greatly resembling the city of Bristol, which gives an interesting diversity to its views, and a general air of cheerfulness to its appearance ; it is surrounded by Ramparts, which, by preventing the circulation of the air, makes the city sometimes very damp, nevertheless, they afford most agreeable promenades for the inhabitants, diversified with fine views of the surrounding country, and a commanding sight of the beautiful structures of the city. In walking round them, take the eastern side in the morning, and the western side in the afternoon, by which means the effects

of the rays of the Sun, upon the fine spires of the city, give a favourable idea of its architectural beauties.

If the walls were lowered, leaving only about three tier of bricks above the path, it would greatly improve the walks, and benefit the city.

Authors differ greatly respecting the period when Brussels was founded, it had some houses and a castle about the year 900. It took its present name and rank as a city in the year 1040. Seven different Seigniors had anciently their several castles therein, from whom sprung the seven Patrician families, from among which the magistrates were annually chosen.

It was surrounded with walls in 1044, some remains of which are yet to be seen. Its circumference is 2660 French paces. It boasts that under the reign of Charles the Fifth, it had at one time seven crowned heads residing within its walls :—The Emperor, Philip his son, King of Spain ; Maximilian, King of Bohemia ; the Queen of Hungary ; the Governor of the Low Countries ; and an African King. The sovereigns of this city, were anciently named Counts, but afterwards Dukes of Brabant. On the ground which is now denominated La Place Royale, stood a magnificent palace, which was began to be built in 1300 by John II. Duke of Brabant, and finished by

Philip the Good, but destroyed by fire on the 4th February 1731.

The fire broke out at midnight, and burnt with such violence, that in about four hours the whole palace was consumed. The Princess Maria Elizabeth, Arch-Duchess of Austria, who was greatly beloved, was saved almost by miracle: she escaped with only one stocking on, and in her night robes: the room fell in immediately after she had quitted it, and one of her maids of honour, the young Countess of Ullefold, perished in the flames.

Brussels has eight barriers, or gates of entrance, which are shut every night; and in time of war strongly guarded; for no person is then permitted to pass without a proper passport. To an English traveller these precautions give a degree of trouble to which he has not been accustomed, and at which his mind revolts.

The population of Brussels is estimated at about 80,000. The Fiacres, or Hackney Coaches, for comfort and neatness, are superior to those in London, and subject to excellent regulations.

Of all the populous cities of the Netherlands, Brussels will be found to possess the most powerful attractions; it has been long the residence of the

Court, and of the principal nobility ; and its central situation, its elevation, its public walks and rides, its excellent markets, the magnificence of its buildings, and the general health of its inhabitants, are eminent advantages. The Park is laid out in the formal style of the last century, without the tasteful improvements and irregularity of modern landscape gardening, as practised in Britain ; but the most partial admirer of that system, would not wish an alteration here, for it will be desirable ever to retain some specimens of the antient manner, to contrast with the modern, and mark the progress of taste. In the Spring season the promenades are charming, and the notes of the blackbirds, and the thrushes at an early hour in the morning, and of the nightingales in the evening, add to its attractions. Between the hours of three and five in the afternoon, the promenade called “ La Belle Allee,” is crowded with the English, before their hour of dinner, and more or less by the Belgians the whole of the day. In a deep dell on the south side, is a spring of water, on the stone margin which surrounds it, is inscribed :—

“ Petrus Alexowits, Czar magnus Muscoviæ, insidens margini hujus fontes, aquam illius nobilitavit libato vino hora post meridiem tertia die Aprilis, Anni 1717.” Thus translated :—

“ Peter Alexander, the great Czar of Muscovy, sitting on the margin of this fountain, ennobled it by

drinking wine here, in the afternoon of the 3d April 1717."

The park is decorated with numerous busts and statues in marble ; some few of which merit notice. A Magdalen, by Quesnoy, reclining upon stones, supporting her head upon her hand in the act of reading, has received great injury by time, and from the drippings of the trees which surround it.

Near the residence of the Prince, on the borders of the lawn, are statues of Diana, of Narcissus by Gripele, and Venus with her doves by Ollivier of Marseilles, 1774, and others.

The park is opened early every morning, and continues so till late every evening, except on wet days. To enjoy its beauties it is desirable to be there at sun-rise, the sweet singing of the birds, that unbought aviary of Heaven, and the health that will be enhaled; amply repay whatever sacrifices it may require. There are those, who will prefer the nightly solace of the melancholy nightingale, Milton's favourite songstress.

The soil of Brussels and its environs is sandy, the heaviest rains are quickly absorbed, and the walking is pleasant : this is observable even in the streets, which have no pavement for foot passengers ; the

carriage way is laid with hard granite stones, and is very disagreeable and rugged.

Between the gates of Namur, and of Halle, without the walls, are lofty sand hills, in which large pieces of coral, flints, sea shells, and other fossil remains of an antediluvian world are found.

The city is amply supplied with water which is laid on to the principal houses ; and for the general benefit there are upwards of twenty fountains, some of ancient date, which contribute greatly both to health and cleanliness.

A very handsome one is erected in the Grand Sablon, by Thomas Bruce, Earl of Aylesbury, to testify his gratitude for the asylum afforded him for forty years in this city. Charles II. found also a temporary asylum here. Once more adieu.

BRUSSELS, JAN. 17, 1817.

It is a remark which an appeal to experience confirms, that the general style of the architecture of a country partakes of the character of its inhabitants ; except, where foreign taste, or temporary fashions have been introduced : in the moveable tents of the Arabs may be traced their erratic lives ; in the lightness of the Chinese and Eastern buildings, is perceptible, the character they exhibit, and which their climate and Government have so greatly contributed to form ; in the Egyptian masses, we behold that attempt at duration, which induced them to embalm their dead, and erect pyramids which have endured to this day ; and in the Grecian temples is observable that elegant taste, which constituted them the model of modern architecture ; thus, in the churches of the Netherlands is apparent that gloom, that heaviness which superstition and bigotry has so long and so successfully operated to produce.

The style is a mixture of the Gothic and Moorish architecture, introduced during the period when the low countries were under the Spanish yoke.

It pleases, principally by its magnitude, the boldness of its outlines, and the rich tints, with which time has embellished it.



I cannot avoid noticing with the highest approbation, the liberal system which prevails as well in the Netherlands as in France, of throwing open all the noble structures and institutions of arts and science to public inspection; the remark may, indeed, be considered as an oblique reflection on Britain. I entertain a hope, however, that she will one day follow the example, as she has already commenced to do in the British Museum.

The Cathedral Church of St. Gudule, is built in a grand style of Gothic Architecture, it was commenced about 1010, its founder remains unknown; it is ascertained, that in 1047, it was ornamented and extended by Lambert Balderic, Comte of Louvain, and endowed with revenues to maintain twelve Canons, which number was afterwards increased. About the centre of the aisle is the celebrated pulpit which formerly belonged to the Jesuits at Louvain, it was carved in Oak by Henry Verbrugger of Antwerp, in 1699. It represents Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise by an Angel, death appearing to them, the globe of the earth forms the concavity of the Pulpit, which rests on a tree. On the top of the Pulpit, is the Virgin and Infant Jesus, the Virgin bruising with the cross the head of the serpent, the whole forms another fine specimen of perfection in this art. There are also fourteen statues carved in stone upwards of ten feet in height, representing Jesus Christ, the Virgin, and the twelve apostles,

Matthew, Thomas and Bartholomew, by Quesnoy. In the side aisles are sixteen chapels, ornamented with pictures descriptive of the history of the sacred hosts, said to have been stolen and stabbed by the jews.: in a smaller room in the church, usually locked, are the baptismal fonts; " which were formerly " outside of the churches as they still are at Rome, " Florence, Pisa and some other places. Their " shape was anciently that of a Bath, wherein those " admitted to baptism were entirely plunged. Some " of the learned believe, that during the first three " centuries, no particular place was set apart for " baptism. Mabillon speaking of the baptismal " fonts of Verona, asserts, that they were constructed " of stone, and twenty-six feet in circumference."

The beautiful historic stained glass, which composes the window, demands attention, the colouring is brilliant, the light and shade richly contrasted, and the whole in tolerable preservation, although in some places it is much injured. It represents the Emperor Charles V. and Isabella his Empress. The Emperor Ferdinand and Anna Louisa, his Empress. Francis I. of France and Eleanor, his Queen, sister of Charles the V. Queen Mary, widow of Louisa, King of Hungary. John, King of Portugal, and Catherine, his Queen, sister of Charles the V. Philip archduke of Austria, son of Charles the V. and his Queen. Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, son of the Emperor Ferdinand and his Queen, the daughter

of Charles the V. The whole after designs of the celebrated Rogiers and Diepenbeeck.

The altar of the choir, composed principally of white marble, was erected in 1743:

The interior of this church contains monuments of John II. Duke of Brabant, in 1318, and Margaret, his wife, daughter to Edward, King of England, and the lion over this tomb which is made of gilt copper, it is asserted, weighs 5000 pounds or thereabouts; there is, also, the Mausoleum of Archduke Ernest, clad in armour, he died, in 1595, on this monument is inscribed

*Soli Deo Gloria.*

At the annual celebration of the Sacrement *des Miracles*, in July, several splendid pieces of tapestry are exhibited, which are held in very high estimation.

The principal entrance door of the church of La Sablon, exhibits another beautiful example of Gothic Architecture, the whole structure is of an enriched order. This church was built in 1288, by John I. Duke of Brabant, in commemoration of a great victory, by which the Duchy of Limbourg was reunited to Brabant. The principal aisle is embellished by Statues of the twelve Apostles, which seem to be a favourite ornament, and placed in many of the churches. They are fixed, generally, over the pil-

lars in the principal aisle ; in this Church, is a Statue in marble of Joseph and the infant Jesus—and another of St. Ursula, by Quesnoy. Also, some tolerable paintings by Crayer of the Fathers of the Church, worshipping the virgin and its companion, the death of the virgin.

In an enclosed chapel in this Church, is the celebrated monument to the memory of the Princess La Tour Taxis, in black and white marble, surrounded by cenotaphs, and relics of the eleven thousand virgins famous in the Roman Catholic Legends. In one of the side chapels, is a curious alabaster altar-piece. Several of the pictures from this Church have been recently removed.

To report on the various Religious orders which formerly existed when the Roman Catholic Religion was in its greatest splendour, would far exceed my limits, but the society of Beguin Nuns require particular notice : The most authenticated document respecting them is one dated 1065, said to be found in the archives of the Beguinage at Vilvorde ; this charter mentions two hogsheads of rye, given by them in perpetuity to be distributed to the poor, at the feast of Christmas : This Order is composed of free women, who, without living in societies, devote themselves to devotion, and occasional acts of benevolence ; they wear habits of a religious order, and sometimes travel the country to attend the sick ; in

1743 Belgium contained upwards of 10,000. The Revolutions have dispersed them greatly, but the Beguinages are yet to be seen, and in some of the Cities are several of the Sisterhood.

In the lower part of the City of Brussels there was formerly a very numerous Society of them; the buildings still remain, and present a very singular appearance; they are divided into narrow streets, at right angles to each other, with other narrow streets, running from them: they were formerly insulated and surrounded by a fosse; upwards of eight hundred resided within the walls, who were governed by matrons, under the Bishop of Antwerp, and seven hundred girls were then educated there.

Since the French Revolution most of the houses are inhabited by other persons, and some few Beguin Nuns, whose numbers at present do not exceed three hundred.

As an object of curiosity, the Beguinage is deserving a morning's ramble for examination; the Church of St. John adjoining, is a gothic structure, built after the design of Wenceslaus Coeberge; the effect of a beautiful carved pulpit is injured by the ochreous colouring with which it is covered.

The carving is excellent, and the design bold, the general architecture of the Church partakes of the

same characteristic. There is also a fine Organ and Organ gallery. This structure was began in 1657, and named after its founder, Stephena Beggha, daughter of Phillip, of Landen.

‡ The Beguin Nuns take merely a vow of chastity ; they can quit the society, and marry ; their time is entirely at their own disposal.

In the Church of St. Finnesterre, built in 1720, in the Rue Neuve, another pulpit of curious workmanship may be seen, and a good modern picture of Philip Neri, the Institutor of the Order of Les Oratoires, worshipping the Virgin—in the vestry also is a tolerable painting of the fifteenth century.

In the Church of Notre Dame de la Chapelle, over the principal Altar-piece, is an indifferent copy after a fine picture of Rubens—and between that Altar and the one on the left is an original picture of Janseens of the martyrdom of St. Laurence ; in the left hand Altar are several landscapes of Asselyn and of Artois ; —there are six chapels on each side of the principal aisle, in one of which are two whole length portraits of St. Xavier and St. Ignatius. In this Church are several ancient monuments, and an annual representation takes place here every Good Friday, of the entombing of CHRIST, with much ceremony.

The Church of St. Caudenburg, in La Place

Royale, was erected in 1774, and composed part of the plan for the improvement which then took place in the park. The facade is elegant; on ascending the steps observe the Alto Relievo over the entrance door; the interior also displays much grandeur of design; it admits considerably more light than the ancient structures, and has few ornaments or decorations. Two marble Statues, the one of St. Peter, and the other of a female saint, deserve notice. This Church is found too small on the Sunday to contain the persons who attend it, it is constantly crowded.

His present Majesty was inaugurated September 21, 1815, King of the Netherlands; the ceremony took place in La Place Royale, in front of this Church, amidst thousands of spectators; an elevated platform had been erected, which was splendidly ornamented. There, in the midst of his people, and surrounded by his nobles, he swore to maintain their rights and privileges inviolate, and to support the Constitution as by law established; receiving in return, oaths of fidelity from the Magistrates, and those in authority. Medals in gold, silver, and copper, which had been struck off for the occasion, were distributed among the populace, to commemorate the event.

The inauguration of the Chief Magistrate, or “ La

"Joyeuse Entree" has ever been considered a jubilee day by the people of these countries.

The length of this letter will be a sufficient apology for its conclusion.

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BRUSSELS, JAN. 28, 1817.

THE Hotel de Ville, in the Grand Place, is a remarkably fine specimen of light and elegant style of Gothic architecture. It was commenced in 1400, and was forty years completing. The tower is 364 feet in height, and in 1445, a statue of St. Michael, the tutelar Saint of Brussels, in copper, 17 feet high was added, and is visible from all parts of the city ; he is represented in the act of striking the dragon, and it serves as a weather cock ; the edifice is built of hard blue stone ; and upwards of one hundred niches are left for statues : many of its fine antique embellishments have been destroyed, in the commotions and convulsions these countries have undergone. The interior abounds with some beautiful specimens of the antient Gobelin tapestry, principally historical ; three after Janseens ; the history of Clovis, Inauguration of Phillip the Good, and of Charles V. in favour of his Son Phillip. This building will be viewed with



some degree of interest as the spot, where the last extraordinary circumstance took place ; Imperial and Regal power has, generally, been found to possess charms too strong to be voluntarily resigned. Brussels, indeed, has witnessed two exceptions to this remark. Christiana of Sweden, voluntarily abjured her crown here, in 1654.

The second Chamber of the States-General, hold their sittings here : it is elegantly fitted up with benches, chairs of State, &c. Tickets of admission to the gallery may be easily obtained to hear the deliberations.

Opposite the Hotel de Ville, is a remarkable structure, called *La Maison du Roi*, built in 1618, by order of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella : her Serene Highness the Infanta Isabella, their governor, considering that “ *Notre Dame de Wavre*” had not only delivered the city of Brussels from the plague, but had, also, vouchsafed the blessings of peace, erected on this mansion an image of the virgin, and placed in the front an inscription which yet remains. *A Peste, Fame, and Bello libera nos Maria Pacis : hic votum pacis publicæ, Elizabeth consecravit.* This building was sold by the government to the Count Arconnati, the upper part is now occupied as a School, and the lower part as shops.

Maria Theresa of Austria, issued an edict in 1773,

in favour of painting, sculpture, engraving and architecture; declaring that the Arts should not derogate from nobility, and that every one might be at liberty to exercise them freely, and vend their performances; in 1774, commenced the great improvements in La Place Royale, which went on rapidly; laid with great ceremony the first stone of the new Church of the Abbey of Coudenberg, which was followed by the buildings in La Place Royale, and the embellishments of the park as they are now seen.

In the Rue Namur are the stables belonging to the ancient Chateau, now occupied by the horses of the Prince of Orange and Prince Frederick, and capable of containing near two hundred; they are open for inspection.

Beneath several of the houses which surround the Park, are extensive subterraneous communications extending to great distances under it. The range of buildings which surround it are constructed in a bold style of Grecian architecture. "*Le tout ensemble*" forms one of the most powerful attractions to this city, and must ever be considered as a most successful exhibition of fine taste. Few cities can boast of two streets that can vie with Rue Decale and Rue Royale, on the east and west sides of the Park. The palace of the King, and the Government offices are on the south side, and

On the north side the residences of the Prince of Orange, the British Ambassador, and the Courts of Justice, the facade of which has been deservedly commended.

The monasteries and convents with which the Netherlands once abounded are nearly abolished. But in Brussels there are several excellent hospitals as well military as civil, for aged men and aged women, and an establishment founded in 1568, for "Les Enfants trouvés." Those who are brought up therein are patronised by the inhabitants of the city, treated with indulgence, and protected in life. It is alledged that females are kept there too long before they are placed out in the world.

This letter concludes the observations of the several objects most worthy of notice within the walls of the city; in my next the suburbs will claim your attention.

BRUSSELS, JAN. 31, 1817.

L'Allee Verte, near the Porte du Rivage, when viewed from the bridge, at the head of the Canal, affords some striking contrasts of scenery. On the one hand is the Canal, filled with trading vessels, its wharfs exhibiting those busy scenes which are the usual accompaniments of commerce ; on the other the banks of the Canal, lined with numerous rows of trees, affording the rural calm retreat, resembling a walk through a Park, forming a magnificent double avenue ; occasionally the sight of a distant Villa affords that variety which even the most beautiful scenery requires, to make it continue to please.

In the Spring and Summer seasons, this is the fashionable evening resort, both for carriages and foot passengers, parading up and down as in Hyde Park.

When the French army, in 1746, under Marshal Saxe, besieged Brussels, the Magistrates sent out a deputation to him, to request him to spare l'Allee Verte, and although much irritated at the resistance made to him, he complied with the request.—

After heavy rains this walk cannot be taken, situated on the banks of the Canal in the lowest part of the City, and overshadowed with trees it will be found disagreeably damp and dirty.

Ascending the ramparts eastward from the bridge towards the port of Lacken, crossing the river Senne, a commanding view of the City is obtained. A long range of building on the left, now in a ruinous state, and recently commenced to be pulled down was formerly an hospital for the sick, called the "Maison des Pestiferes," 1618. On the right are the bleaching grounds, and the Cathedral of St. Gudule in majestic grandeur, towering above all the other structures. His Grace the Duke of Richmond inhabits a house on the right with gardens and outhouses.

Pursuing this walk, passing the gates of Scarrebeck and Louvain, you approach that part of the ramparts which commands the Park, and continuing the route, passing the gate of Namur, the new prison is seen, which Napoleon had destined for British prisoners; it is yet unfinished, but in progress to completion. Adjoining this is the mansion of the Duke d'Arenberg, a spacious residence with a handsome court yard. The Duke has been blind many years, from a fall in hunting. A view of the gardens is obtained from the ramparts. On the left the palace of Lacken and the road to Waterloo are visible. Approaching the gate of Halle, the view becomes in a

high degree pleasing, between that gate and the gate of Scarrebeck the whole of the city is seen with great distinctness. Beyond the gate of Anderlecht the spire of the Town-hall is viewed to the best advantage ; it has here a light and airy appearance not visible elsewhere.

There has been recently discovered, in a field near the village of Ordighem, between Ghent and Alost, an earthen pot, containing upwards of two hundred fine specimens of curious gold coins, of England and France, in the highest state of preservation, the latest date being about 1500.

At the foot of the hill on which is erected the palace of Lacken, is an English garden, laid out with some taste, but rather minute in its divisions, and not sufficiently bold in its walks, but producing a charming effect.

The Royal Chateau of Schoenberg, or Palace of Lacken, has witnessed some of those vicissitudes to which all terrestrial objects are liable. It was erected by Maria Christiana, of Brabant, in 1782. When the French army invaded Belgium, they purposed to convert it into an hospital, "because," said the Revolutionists, "it is full time that the golden wain-coats which have served to embellish the residences of tyrants, should now be rendered useful ;" but the return of the Austrians put a stop to their

plans: After the peace of Lunevillé, the estate was sold to individuals, who have destroyed the beautiful Chinese Temple, erected between the Chateau and the River, and were on the point of demolishing the Palace, when Napoleon purchased it, and presented it to the Empress Josephine ; it is now the Summer residence of the King of the Netherlands. It is built in a modern style of Architecture, situated in a small park, which possesses very great capabilities. It is laid out somewhat in the English manner, but admits of very great improvements. It was newly furnished from Paris with much taste by the Emperor's directions.

The entrance hall is spacious, but neat and plain : it contains a figure of Victory covering the globe, inscribed "*Empire Francoise est L'Amour.*" Some fine historical specimens of tapestry ornament the several apartments. The principal floor is divided into a suite of rooms, consisting of nineteen in number ; the floors are beautifully inlaid. The furnitures consist chiefly of crimson, green, and purple velvets, with gold fringes. The circular concert room in the centre, contains some fine Basso Relievo's, supported by twelve lofty corinthian pillars ; the floor of marble inlaid. On ascending to the Dome, a most extensive and richly diversified prospect is seen, comprising the city of Brussels, the road to Waterloo, to Antwerp, and the surrounding Champaign country.

The immense Forest of Ardennes, once spread over the greatest part of Belgium, extending itself into Holland, and to the borders of the Rhine ; the forest of Soignes, and even the Park of Brussels, composed part of it. It is related that in the thirteenth Century, a thousand persons consecrated themselves to GOD in its solitudes ; at the beginning of the sixteenth century there was about 600 ; it is a Royal domain, part of the wood is cut down every year, which supplies firewood for Brussels, the poor being permitted to gather the chips. The Princes often used to take the diversion of hunting here, it abounds with game, and formerly with Herons. It is about 8,000 toises in length, and 6,500 in breadth, but it tends greatly to render Brussels humid, by attracting the clouds that approach within its influence. The Wood of Soignes, or Forest of Ardennes is immortalised by Shakespeare in "*As you like it.*"

About seven leagues from Brussels, and near the Forest of Soignes, the River Senne takes its rise, and runs through the city in a direction from N. E. to the S. W. tending greatly to promote the health of the inhabitants ; by its communication with the Scheldt, it contributes also to the supply of the town with the necessaries of life, at a moderate rate ; after passing through Brussels, it runs under the Antwerp Canal near Vilvorde—it was enlarged in 1436. This Canal which goes towards Antwerp, was com-



menced in 1549, by John of Locquenghien, and it is to be regretted that it was not continued to Antwerp, from the other side of the River Rupel, which you pass in a ferry-boat, and pursue the route by land.

The great variety of walks and rides through the neighbouring villages and the country round about Brussels cannot fail to please ; in the Spring, Summer, and Autumnal Seasons they are truly delightful. Nightingales are very numerous here, and cheer the groves with their song. Nor is winter without its charms—a frosty dry season affords variety of enjoyments, so kindly hath Nature's God provided for the happiness of his creatures—it is man alone that makes man miserable.

The village of Vilvorde, six miles from Brussels on the Antwerp canal, offers objects that will employ a day with satisfaction. The interior of the village Church is grand, each side of the choir is embellished with stalls richly carved as in Cathedrals : here are, also, some few tolerable good paintings. During high mass, the organ was playing the well known Overture to Lodoiska, and other theatrical tunes. The village is remarkably neat, and has a very spacious market-place, where, in all probability, Tindal, the first translator of the English Bible, suffered martyrdom in 1536. Notice particularly near this village, the Penitentiary or great Prison, the regulations of which are, in some respects excellent, and

worthy of observation, it is divided into various compartments ; several of the Criminals who have been guilty of murder, have had their punishments commuted into imprisonment for life : the food is wholesome, and the prisoners are employed in winding flax, making coarse linens, shoes, hats, carpets, and in a coach manufactory with smithery on a considerable scale, an elegant Coach had been just completed. The beds, the wards for the sick, and the rooms where the criminals labour, are all clean and wholesome ; part of their earnings is allowed for their maintenance, and part for a fund, when their period of punishment expires, which is proportioned to the degree of crime. Two prisoners are allowed to each bed, this is highly objectionable. Nor does it appear, that sufficient care is taken to instil moral and religious principles ; complete toleration is allowed ; and a Chapel is appointed for the Catholics, but Protestants are not compelled to attend.

The total number of prisoners consists of 1229, of which the greater part are males. This prison and that of Ghent are the only two, on this plan.

Vilvorde claims to have been the place where the Societies of Beguin Nuns were first instituted. A few are still resident there.

In the gardens of a respectable Cabaret at the extremity of the Village, stands a Sun-dial, constructed

with some degree of science; it is about thirty inches in diameter, and when the Sun shines, tells the hour of the day at Cadiz, Constantinople, Madrid, Smyrna, Brest, Peking, Mexico, Vienna, and Vilvorde. It was made in 1801 by J. Provost, who kept an Academy in this village, and dedicated "Aux amis des Arts."

The Netherlands cannot boast that rich scenery, that picturesque beauty, which the irregular surface, and high cultivation of Britain affords; but the extensive levels which they present on every side, are highly favourable to Agriculture; you meet with no hills from Ostend until you approach Brussels, and from the high tower of the Church of St. Bavo, at Ghent, the whole circuit of the horizon presents an extensive uninterrupted plain.

I am about to visit Antwerp, from whence expect to hear again.

ANTWERP, FEBRUARY 23, 1817.

THIS Letter will inform you of the several objects worthy your attention when you visit Antwerp, and furnish you with some anecdotes of that place.

The Heraldic arms of the city of Antwerp consist of two hands and a triangular castle : a man holding the hand of a giant, is placed in several parts of the city. Fabulous tradition tells, that Brabant took its name from a Roman named Salvius Brabon, who came with Julius Cæsar, and that on the banks of the Scheldt, where Antwerp is now situated, dwelt a Giant named Antigonus, in a castle of his own construction ; and that he cut off the hand of all who refused to pay him tribute. Salvius Brabon vanquished this Giant, and threw his hand into the sea, and called the fortress *Handwerpen*, which interpreted is *hand thrown*. From this tradition may have arisen the custom of carrying in several of the public processions enormous Giants, and which custom is still maintained in several of the cities of the Netherlands : although some state that it originated at the time of the Crusades, and was used to excite a public feeling against the Saracens.

Antwerp is situated on the west side of the Scheldt, in latitude  $51^{\circ} 12'$  N. and longitude  $4^{\circ} 15'$  E. from Greenwich.

The structure of many of its buildings prove its high antiquity. Henry I. enlarged it in 1201, but it was considerably extended under John III. in 1314, and in the time of Charles V. it could scarcely contain its numerous inhabitants, which were upwards of 200,000, whereas its present population is only 56,318.

Christianity is said to have been introduced into Antwerp by St. Amand, who built a church there about the year 650.

This city was in great splendour at the close of the fifteenth Century. When the United Provinces threw off the Spanish yoke; they gained the command of the Scheldt, blocked up the harbour, and transferred its commerce to Amsterdam.

The Treckschuyt starts from Brussels to Antwerp, every morning at 8 o'clock, from the head of the Canal which runs on the side of L'Allee Verte for upwards of a mile; and passes a modern built cottage on the left, the gardens and grounds of which are laid out in the English style; above which, on a hill, stands the palace of Lacken, a fine building, but the

dome over the centre, is too lofty and heavy for the other parts of the Architecture.

On the banks of the canal are also several Villas, with gardens, grounds, and meadows, delightfully situated, in the viewing of which, as they appear in succession, the time passes very agreeably until you reach Vilvorde ; where you arrive at the first lock, and on quitting the barge, embark in another, and proceed towards Ubeeck.

Passing grande and petite Villebrouke, and several locks, you arrive at the River Rupell, and are ferried over to Bouin, from whence the Diligence conveys you to Antwerp. It admits fifteen passengers. In my excursion there, a man and woman of the class of peasantry, amused themselves by drolleries, which to an English traveller appears ludicrous and disgusting. A mutton chop, which the fair Belgian was eating from her fingers, was snatched from her by the droll opposite, who bit off a piece, and then put the remainder to her mouth to bite also ; she snatched at it in her turn, but he maintained his hold of part of it, and it was separated, each devouring their respective pieces—all this accompanied with a sort of pleasantry or buffoonery, which appears to have undergone no alteration since the times of the celebrated Flemish Painters.

Antwerp, in the houses, the streets, the cleanliness

and the general appearance of the shops, resembles Ghent and Bruges, rather than Brussels. La Place de Meir, or principal street of the city, is as wide in some parts as Portland Place in London. In this street are two collections of Pictures for sale, the one belonging to N. F. Beckman, the other to Snyers—in the latter particularly will be found some pictures of the very first class. The Shops at Antwerp are not so well stocked as those in Brussels. Provisions are nearly the same in price; house-rent much more moderate; the docks, and the basin on the banks of the Scheldt are grand, and restoring to the state in which they were, previous to the late war. A Church, said to have been one of the finest in the City, near the quays, is now demolishing and converting into warehouses. The tide rises at Antwerp 20 feet, which enables vessels of the greatest burden to come close to the quays. To those who have not seen the stronger fortifications on the Continent, the Citadel is worthy of observation. The Fosse is supplied with water from the Scheldt, and the Arsenal which is contiguous, may be viewed the same day. The Exchange should also be seen; the pillars are of grey marble, and the building was the model after which the Royal Exchange in London was built.

The subterraneous Canals, which once conveyed the merchandize from the vessels to the several magazines of the merchants, still remain, but are converted into sewers for the use of the city.

The Friday's market in the lower part of the City, very much resembles rag fair in London.

The Churches at Antwerp are superior to any in the Netherlands. In the Church of the Jesuits observe some fine specimens of painted glass, the carvings, and also the inlaid marble ceilings or domes. In the Church of St. Jaques, on your entrance notice a fine old head in oil, resembling Shakespeare. A wood carving by Ververde, after a design of Vandyke, and the sculptured marble over the principal Altar. Observe also a small circular medallion of the Annunciation, the character of the Virgin sweetly pourtrayed. The painted glass windows in this Church are of a superior description, and particularly one after Leonarda da Vinci, of the Lord's Supper. Behind the principal Altar-piece is the tomb of Rubens and his family, with inscriptions, and a painting by his own hand, of himself, his three wives, his children, and his parents. He was buried here the 31st May, 1640. In the Church of the Dominicans observe near the side entrance, a representation of Mount Calvary, surrounded by Sculptures, in stone, of the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Virgin, the Saviour, the Cross, and the Rocks. Descending some steps beneath the Rocks, you behold a representation of Purgatory, the Spirits in prison, and the Saviour lying in state near it, the body covered with white silk and silver fringe. Entering the Church remark an extraordinary Clock, the dial is described on a



globe, and the hours and minutes marked on the Equatorial circle, which, as it revolves, the figure of time, points the hour with his scythe. Here are also some good carvings in wood, and three paintings illustrative of the History of Christ, by Rubens and Vandyke. The Crucifixion, the bearing the Cross, and the Scourging—the latter of the very first class. In the Church of St. Augustin's are found several Altar-pieces by Rubens and Vandyke, restored to their present situation from Paris; and also two modern pictures by Van Bree, an Artist of very superior merit, now resident at Antwerp. In this Church also is a beautiful carved pulpit.

However protracted your stay may be in Antwerp, you should scarcely suffer a day to pass without surveying the Cathedral. The external structure is grand, the tower is 466 feet high, including the cross, which is fifteen feet, the whole being built in the fine Gothic of Westminster Abbey; but the large gilded dial of the clock lessens its grandeur in appearance. The Cathedral measures internally 500 feet in length, 240 in breadth and 360 in height. It was commenced in 1422, under the direction of John Amelius, one of the most celebrated artists of his time, and finished in 1518, comprehending a period of 96 years. Its chief bell weighs 16,000lbs.

Let your entrance be at the principal door, the effect from this point being more striking and sub-

time. This Cathedral is far superior to any other in the Netherlands ; the grandeur of the whole is not here frittered away by gildings, and ornaments in false taste. The principal paintings were removed by order of Napoleon Bonaparte, some of them are again restored to the situations from which they were taken. A few pictures only remain, but these are of a very superior class. The disciples at Emmaus, by Monsieur Harens of Antwerp, a modern artist, well merits observation. The elevation and the descent from the cross, both by Rubens, and in his best manner, will engage a long attention and great admiration. Approaching the centre of the church, and looking upwards towards the spire, the painting in the doom represents Angels, Principalities and Powers uniting in adoration and praise. It was painted by Cornelius Schultz, and is inscribed in the surrounding circle, *Chorus Angelorum exaltata est Sancta Dei Genetrix Super.*

The principal Altar piece by Rubens is a gem of great value ; the subject is the Ascension, and the harmony and dignity of the characters all combine to fix the attention. The group of Cherubs, the attendant Angels, the women, and, the disciples, are truly admirable. Rubens is said to have painted this in eight days, and to have received about £130 for it. Here is, also, a fine marble statue of F. Marius Ambrosius Capello, seventh bishop of Antwerp, A. D. 1676. By removing the cha-

pels and every extraneous decoration from this Church, the unity of design is preserved, and the whole may be considered as one of the most successful efforts in Gothic Architecture, that the world has ever produced. A very fine private collection of paintings belonging to Monsieur Van Lancket, in the place de Meir, is open to the inspection of travellers: The collection does honour to his judgment and taste: There are also some fine specimens by Rubens, Vandyke, Wouvermans, Vanderheyden, Fyete, Teniers, Berghem, Cuyp, and others. I would particularly call your attention to the following numbers in the catalogue, viz.:—8—38—59—62—65—80—99—94—95—112—128—130.

Antwerp contains twenty squares, numerous streets, and houses, principally of freestone, many of them bearing evident marks of very great antiquity.—Every person born in this city, although both his parents were foreigners, is free of it in right of his birth. The Docks were once the largest and most complete in Europe: one basin will contain forty sail of the line; they were considerably injured by the British expedition in the late war, but are now restoring to their former magnificence.

In a spirit of narrow and injudicious commercial policy, a Society is established at Antwerp, not only to prevent the use of any English manufactured goods,

but to preclude purchasing any goods imported in British vessels.

In the environs of Antwerp are numerous country houses or villas. The Citadel on the banks of the Scheldt well merits your attention. It is a regular pentagon with five bastions, with covered way, fosse, and the several out-works necessary to a strong fortification. It was erected, in 1568, by the Duke d'Alva, who, in 1571 placed in this city the famous statue of himself, which was made of the cannon he had taken. It was soon after broken to pieces with deserved contempt.

On the grounds on the east side of the Scheldt, and opposite to Antwerp, Napoleon had planned a new city, to have been built, and named after himself. This was to have been surrounded by fortifications, The excavations for the foundations of which are still to be seen.

I shall write you again from Malines.

MALINES, MARCH 14, 1817.

RETURNING from Antwerp to Brussels in the afternoon, I reached Malines as the shades of evening came on ; the effect of the Cathedral Church at this hour was truly grand, it arose in sombre majesty above every other structure, and its grand outlines against the sky, in the back ground, were sublime. Ancient manuscripts report, that Count Adon in the eight century, was the Sovereign of Malines ; from other documents it appears, that the sovereignty appertained to the bishopric of Liege, until 1333. It is now the Metropolitan See, but the Archbishopric is vacant.

This city is situated in a plain, through which runs the river Dyle, the streets are very wide, and many of the houses spacious ; it has also numerous stone bridges.

The magnificent Church of St. Rombout was commenced in the twelfth century, but was not entirely completed until the fifteenth. It contained a tomb of Gauter de Berthouts who was buried there, in 1219, and several other ancient monuments, which have been destroyed in the numerous revolutions which the low countries have experienced.

The citizens of Malines having rendered great services to Charles, Duke of Burgandy, in 1475, he granted them several very peculiar privileges.

In 1546, a dreadful disaster occurred in this city ; a thunderbolt fell on the castle which contained a quantity of gunpowder, and by its explosion two hundred men were killed, 600 wounded, 300 houses were thrown down, and the rest greatly damaged ; the sound was heard at Brussels and at Antwerp. The present population of Malines is about 16,072.

In the Church of Notre Dame de Hanswyck, was formerly a statue of the virgin Mary, *reported* to have been brought there in a boat, which stopped, of *its own accord*, to testify her desire to be worshipped there. The image is destroyed ; little worthy of observation will be found in this church, excepting the pulpit.

In the Church of St. Peter, formerly of the Jesuits, may be seen, a series of paintings by Blendef, Quelten, Eykout and Coxier delineating the events in the life of St. Xavier, the much respected missionary to the Indies. The Church of St. John, although on a small scale, has much architectural beauty ; the principal altar piece, the adoration of the Wisemen, by P. P. Rubens, is one of his finest productions : for which he received fourteen hundred florins only.

Above this are placed three other pictures of Rubens; the Birth of Christ; the taking down from the Cross; and the Resurrection.

In the Church of St. Catherine there is nothing remarkable; but the Church of the Beguinage, dedicated to St. Joseph is striking. The Altar Piece by L. Francois, and other pictures by Boyermans and Coxier, merit observation. I entered it at the hour of Vespers; numerous Beguin nuns, and two Noviciates all in devotion, presented a picturesque effect. The Beguinage was anciently on a grand scale, and contained, about 1400 inhabitants; it is far superior to that at Brussels; it was founded in 1249. There is, also, a smaller Beguinage in this city.

The Cathedral Church of St. Rombout, who was the son of one of the Kings of Ireland, and bishop of Dublin, exhibits the greatest beauties; its external Architecture is composed of the fine Gothic, and is truly magnificent; it measures 350 feet, or 97 metres and 30 centimes in height, without the intended tower which was never erected; had it been completed, it would have been the loftiest Church in Belgium, On entering it, the coup d'œil is truly fine; here are several well painted pictures, one by Francis Floris; an altar piece of the Crucifixion, by Vandyck, and several others. The first stone of this edifice was laid by John Muysen, May 22, 1452. The Church contains six bells, the largest of which, named Salvator,

weighs 15,251 lbs. and several ancient tombs, marble monuments, alto Relievos and Altars of excellent workmanship. In the Collegiate Church of Notre Dame is, perhaps, one of the very finest of Ruben's productions; the subject, Christ entering into Simon Peter's ship, and the miraculous draught of fishes; in composition and colouring this painting may rank with the Cartoons of Raphael. In this city is an Institution for the education of priests of the Catholic faith; it contains, at present, about 150 in number, who pay about 400 franks each, annually; the extra expences of the establishment are defrayed by the Government; there is a small Church adjoining, where the young men are instructed in the rites of the Romish Church, and in singing, the Laity not being permitted to join in this act of Public Worship. The Priests are known by the name of "Les Corbeaux" in derision, which strongly intimates the estimation in which the Priesthood is held.

The Churches at Malines exhibit proofs of its former magnificence and its present insignificance; in 1763 it contained eighteen Churches. House rent is very moderate, although very few houses are to be let; about eight British families are now resident here.

The ramparts round the City are far preferable to those of Brussels, being more airy, kept in excellent order, and provided with numerous garden



seats, well painted, and in good repair. The walks on the ramparts afford a fine view of the City.— Crossing the Dyle, you arrive at a Water-mill, which is appropriated to the grinding of corn, sawing of planks, and beating of flax ; here are also several extensive Bleacheries, and Manufactories of Hats. The Lace merchants, once so flourishing, complain greatly of stagnation in trade ; properly speaking, they never were Manufacturers ; the Lace is made by women and children, and sold to the Merchants ; or the latter provide materials, and pay by the yard for the workmanship.

The Cannon-foundery exists here no longer, a Windmill is erected on the spot. The once celebrated gardens of Pittseberg are planted with wheat and potatoes ; the mansion is in a state of delapidation.

The great Clock of St. Rombout sounds eight times each hour—the hour, half-hour, quarter, and half-quarter ; and, as usual in Belgium, strikes the hour twice.

Flemish is spoken principally in Malines ; at the Inns, French is well understood. The fine Canal which runs through the City communicates with Antwerp and Louvain. Malines is still celebrated for its Tanneries and Hat Manufactories ; also for

excellent pork, and good Meat. A law is enforced here to prevent any Butcher from killing more than one Ox each week. The intention is to compel the Butchers to bring the best meat to market.

The banks of the Canal are, in many places, cultivated, and the neighbouring lands exhibit symptoms of extraordinary fertility. A Bookseller of the name of Bruyne, in Rue Bruhl, has a large collection of Books in all languages, some of which are ancient and valuable.

The superior and surprising effect produced in the Cathedral Church of Notre Dame, at Antwerp, by removing the side altars and decorations of an inferior class would, if extended to all the Churches of the Netherlands, produce such an amazing improvement, and exhibit such fine masses of grand architecture, as could not fail to be viewed with a lively interest, and excite a renewed attention to such fine structures. As a protestant I cannot conclude these remarks without strongly expressing my hopes that the time is not far distant when every Image will be laid in the dust, and the one living and true God alone be worshipped in the way he has commanded.

Thus have I, in a cursory way, described to you all that appears most worthy of notice in some of the once

splendid Cities of the Netherlands. Except in Architecture, scarce a shadow remains of their former magnificence.

I purpose in my next to commence by furnishing you with a short abstract of the History of the Low Countries, from the earliest period to the establishment of the present monarchy. Till then, adieu once more.

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BRUSSELS, MAY 31, 1817.

THE early history of Belgium is involved in a similar obscurity to that of other States. It is generally believed, that it was first peopled by the Celts, and subdued by the Belgæ, descendants of the ancient Scythians, who overwhelmed it by their numbers. It has been thought by some writers that the antient Belgæ came from Scandinavia or Sweden.

It is ascertained that the Belgæ were established in this country one hundred and twelve years before the Christian era, and were conquered by Julius Cæsar, 47 B. C.

The lands of Belgium were in a good state of cultivation, previous to the invasion of the Romans.

From the Commentaries of Julius Cæsar, we learn that the Nervians, or more northern nations of the Belgæ were a valorous people, united under one chief, possessing very correct ideas upon the consequences of luxury and vice. They made their last stand upon the banks of the Sambre. Five hundred men only remained out of the sixty thousand whom they brought into the field. Under Augustus, the Northern division of Belgium including the two provinces of Holland and Utrecht became a Pretorian Province.

All antient historians agree, that the Belgæ were a very numerous and industrious people. In the seventh Century, the Frisians invaded them on the North. They yielded to the Franks in the eighth Century; so that the present race of the Belgians may be considered as originally composed of the Belgæ, the Frisians and the Franks.

After many violent struggles they became divided, and were governed by petty Sovereigns, under the titles of Dukes, Marquises and Counts.

The Earldoms of Holland, Flanders, and Hainault obtained great influence in the political affairs

of Europe. In 864 A. D. Flanders was granted to Baldwin, Earl of Flanders, France reserving the Sovereignty.

It is observable, that throughout the whole period of the Belgian History, the *vox populi* has always maintained a most powerful influence ; the inhabitants are uniformly exhibited as manfully and successfully struggling for their rights and privileges, availing themselves of frequent demands made upon them for supplies, to secure and to extend their own liberties.

About the middle of the fifteenth Century, the several States into which the Netherlands were divided, fell under the dominion of the House of Burgundy ; the full enjoyment of their ancient privileges being guaranteed unto them.

Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent, and Bruges, contained a population at that period, of upwards of 600,000 persons, of whom it is supposed that near 100,000 were employed in the several branches of the woollen manufactories alone.

During the Sovereignty of the Dukes of Burgundy, Brabant and Flanders arrived at the highest degree of prosperity ; about the year 1487 they seem to have reached the zenith of their glory ; their natural advantages, their extensive commerce, and the freedom

which they enjoyed, gave them great political importance ; their fleets were at this time the most powerful in Europe.

After the death of Charles the Bold, on the 5th of January, 1477, at the Battle of Nantey, the Duchy of Burgundy became united to the Throne of France ; but his other States passed into the hands of the Princess Mary his daughter, who fixed her residence in the Low Countries. This Princess convoked the States of Flanders ; taking advantage of the embarrassments of their Sovereign, to augment their own power, they formed a Council of Regency, which kept her in a constant state of dependance, and having detected her in correspondence with her Father, the French King, they brought Hugonnet and Imbercourt, two of her Counsellors, to trial, and condemned and executed them, although she rushed upon the scaffold, and with tears solicited their pardon ; deaf to her entreaties, the executioner was compelled to do his duty before her face. After witnessing the execution, she was carried almost lifeless to her palace. Hugonnet obtained permission to write a few lines to his afflicted wife, whom he addressed as his sister and faithful friend, that contain sentiments which, with some exceptions, are well deserving of record :—

“ Console yourself,” says he, “ for a misfortune attached to humanity ; remember, that at my age, my

“ death is but a little accelerated ; let not the punish-  
 “ ment destined for me make an impression upon your  
 “ mind ; shame attaches upon crime, but I die in-  
 “ nocent ; our children need not blush for the con-  
 “ demnation of their unhappy father ; if deprived of  
 “ their property, GOD, who gave them life, can pro-  
 “ vide for them, and direct them by goodness and  
 “ mercy ; adieu my sister, and my faithful friend, I  
 “ commit you and our children to GOD, and his glo-  
 “ rious Mother—Holy Thursday, which I believe  
 “ to be my last day.”

Irritated at the conduct of the Belgians towards  
 his daughter, Louis entered Artois, and took Tour-  
 nay and Cambray. The inhabitants of Ghent pro-  
 mised the dominions of Burgundy and the hand of  
 Mary, to the Chief who should be victorious over  
 the French, and took from prison Adolphus of Guel-  
 derland, who had been disinherited by his father,  
 and appointed him their General ; but inexperienced  
 and distrusted by his troops, he was beaten, and fell  
 in the battle. His death freed Mary from the des-  
 tiny which then seemed to await her. The Archduke  
 Maximilian, son of Frederick the Third, Emperor of  
 Austria, was successful in obtaining her hand, and  
 was married to her at Ghent, on the 18th of August,  
 1477, which marriage was greatly against the will of  
 the French King, her Father. She died in 1482, in  
 the 24th year of her age, from an accident which oc-  
 curred to her whilst taking her favourite amusement

of hawking. The Flemings considered Maximilian as a stranger who wished to enslave them, raised the standard of revolt against him, placed his children under the direction of the States of Flanders, and Maximilian was compelled to submit to the marriage of his daughter to the Dauphin of France. But he seized the occasion of the death of Louis XI. to attack the Flemings, and threatened to give up Ghent to plunder ; he entered it with about 5000 German troops, gave it up to pillage, and burnt and destroyed part thereof.

Irritated by the frequent insurrections of the Flemings, and educated in maxims of arbitrary power, he swayed an iron sceptre over them. He was at Zealand, punishing some mutineers, when he heard of the revolt of Ghent, and fearing that other Cities would follow the same example, he hastened to Bruges, left his troops in the neighbouring villages, and entered it with his ordinary guard, after some imprudent altercations on his part, and violence on that of the people, they seized him, and bore him a prisoner to the Castle. Maximilian never exhibited more greatness of character than when imprisoned : Some of the soldiers who were appointed to guard him, fell at his feet to implore his pardon, and testify their aversion to the task—" Rise," said he, " obey your superiors."

Cleves, and many other Cities armed in his fa-



vour, and after languishing four months in prison, he learned that his father, the Emperor, was also taking up arms for him, which so intimidated the inhabitants of Bruges, that they proposed terms for his release, which, after having agreed to them, they compelled him to ratify, by a public act, as well as to take an oath of amnesty, giving up to them hostages for the due execution of his engagements.

On the 24th February, 1500, Charles V. the son of Philip II. and of Jane, of Castile, was born at Ghent, and, at the age of fifteen, began to reign: the early periods of his history witnessed the opulence and prosperity of the seventeen United Provinces, which then contained several hundred opulent cities, towns and villages. He ingratiated himself with his people; born among them, and feeling a strong attachment towards them, he respected their privileges, and gained their confidence.

During his reign the Reformation had made considerable progress, and was accelerated by the increased number of indulgences, the vices, and the bigotry of the Romish Clergy: devoted to the Catholic Religion, and naturally inclined to superstition, his mind, however strong and enlarged upon other subjects, became contracted and cruel upon this. The people and the clergy availed themselves of his ardent zeal, and he consented to introduce into his dominions the Inquisition, with all the horrors accompanying it;

not content to punish crimes merely with an active ferocity; it sought out for victims whom it could denominate criminals. With the deepest concern, he beheld, in 1536, Ghent, the place of his nativity revolt against him, its inhabitants inviting Francis the I. of France to assist them, and take possession of those Countries, which were once attached to the French Empire. But Charles subdued them, and on the anniversary of his birth day, six and twenty of the principal citizens lost their lives on the scaffold: it was a favourite maxim of the Duke d'Alva, his General, that a country of rebels ought to be destroyed. Charles V. wished to constitute Flanders a Kingdom, and proposed it several times in Council.

I cannot but indulge the hope, that the events which took place in the reign of Charles V. and in the subsequent reign of Philip, are so indelibly engraved in blood, as to become imperishable memorials, fraught with wisdom, to teach the inhabitants of the Netherlands and the world at large, the dreadful effects of an intolerant, persecuting spirit. Among the converts to Protestantism, were found many of the best manufacturers, particularly of woollen cloths, who were compelled to fly, and carried with them to other countries that knowledge which had so materially enriched their own.

On the 25th October, 1555, the Emperor convoked a meeting of the States General at Brussels, where; in the presence of many foreign Potentates, and a

most brilliant Court, he abdicated the throne in favor of Philip II. his son, and soon after embarked for the Convent of St. Justus, in Spain, which he had fixed upon for his retreat from the world; his character exhibits the most wonderful contradictions.

Philip II. took no pains to secure the affections of his people; educated in maxims of arbitrary Government, he soon rendered himself obnoxious: The Protestants, who increased rapidly, trembled for their safety under a Monarch, who said, that if his own son was suspected of heresy, he would deliver him over to the severities of the Inquisition; and such was his antipathy to the Protestants, that he declared if executioners were wanted, he would become one himself. The Pope created fourteen new Bishops, and issued the most rigorous edicts against the partisans of the doctrines of Luther and Calvin: the brothers of the Prince of Orange, and Count Brederode openly avowed themselves Protestants, and a deputation was sent to Philip into Spain, to soften his animosities, which received from that Monarch the most direct orders to support the Inquisition; for he observed, that he would rather be without subjects than reign over heretics.

The Prince of Orange received information that the King had formed a secret plan against his life; an order was issued to pursue the Protestants without pity, and numbers of the citizens suffered daily on

account of their Religion ; their patience and firmness in the midst of torments, excited a strong hatred against the author of their miseries ; many provinces revolted, the prisons were forced, and a general confederation was entered into, to suppress the Inquisition.

The example was followed by a number of the Nobility and Citizens, both Catholics and Protestants, and the confederation became general. The Prince of Orange and Count Horn, by retiring from the Court, gave their tacit approbation at least to these proceedings.

On the 5th April, 1566, four hundred gentlemen with the Prince Brederode at their head, went from the Hotel de Culembourg at Brussels, to an audience of the Princess, who, with all that firmness which accompanies true courage and a just cause, demanded the abolition of the Inquisition. The Count of Berlaimont said to her. “ *Ne craignez rien Madame, ce n'est qu'une bande de gueux.*” (Fear nothing Madam, they are only a band of beggars ;) this word became the signal of a party, and was the occasion of many subsequent bloody combats. John of Bergue, Governor of Hainault and Florent of Montmorency, Lord of Montigny were sent into Spain to inform the King of the state of the Low Countries ; the latter told the Sovereign, that unless he conceded to them their requests, he would drive the Nation to despair. The

Duke d'Alva considered this wise council as a threat, and accusing the Deputies of being connected with the discontented party, he imprisoned them; the former died there, and the latter was beheaded. The irritated Protestants now became furious, they pillaged the Convents, destroyed the relics, and the images; and treated the priests with every kind of indignity; civil discords ensued on every side, and the King employed the cruel Duke of d'Alva to execute his vengeance; as soon as the people heard of his arrival, and of the departure of the Prince of Orange, they were in the greatest consternation; the massacres were soon renewed, and terror became universal; The Duke d'Alva commenced his Government, in 1567, he established a Council, denominated the Council of Troubles, which the people named the Council of Blood. It is computed, that during his government, eighteen thousand of both sexes suffered death by the hands of the public executioner.

The Prince of Orange was proscribed, and fled; his son, then thirteen years of age, was seized in the University, whilst pursuing his studies, and sent into Spain; the Captain who guarded him, spoke one day disrespectfully of his father, the youth moved with indignation, and urged by filial piety, seized him and threw him from a window; in the fall he broke his neck. The Council deliberated whether they should take the life of the Prince, but they resolved to save

him on account of the noble motive which had instigated him to the deed.

In the year 1568, eighteen of the principal gentlemen of the first families were executed in the Grand Sablon, in Brussels, and the Counts of Egmont, and Horn suffered death in the Grand Place, of the same city, June 1588. The horror which their death excited was universal, which by increasing their hatred against the Spaniards, occasioned the union of the republic of the United Provinces.

During these commotions, the Protestants gained a temporary ascendancy, and for nearly four years the Roman Catholic Religion was suppressed, but in 1585, it was again declared to be the Religion of the State. But it is time to give you some respite. I shall resume this subject in my next. Adieu.

BRUSSELS, MAY, 27, 1817.

Resuming the subject of my last, you will find that the Prince of Orange, notwithstanding the defeat of his brother, by the Duke d'Alva, advanced into Brabant with an army of 28,000 Germans. The Prince repeatedly offered the Duke battle, which he declined, and acting on the defensive only, took possession of several fortresses, and by delay, exhausted the armies of the Prince, whose numbers fell off for want of being regularly paid. So excessive was the vanity and pride of the Duke, that he caused a statue of himself, with a most adulatory inscription to be erected at Antwerp, as before mentioned.

Being entirely occupied in preserving Belgium, Holland escaped his fury. These States threw off the the Catholic Religion, and the Prince of Orange was invested with the attributes of Sovereign power : exasperated and revengeful, the Duke d'Alva gave up the city of Malines to plunder and rapine, both the Protestants and Catholics suffering without any distinction. The besieged Haarlem, in 1572, which was most bravely defended by its inhabitants ; an ancient female named Kennaw Haselaar, animated her sex by her eloquence, and enlisted three hundred females under her banner. Seven months and upwards

Haarlem withstood the siege, and the city was in ruins. Its best warriors had fallen, and famine devoured 13,000 of its inhabitants, all their food being consumed. Weakened and exhausted by extreme want and misery, they resolutely maintained their defence until they could resist no longer, and such was the cruelty of the Spaniards towards them, that the inhabitants of other cities resolved to perish, rather than fall under their yoke.

At length on the 8th Nov. 1576, a treaty of peace was signed at Ghent, by the Prince of Orange, and the States of Holland; in which, an amnesty was announced for the past, and an engagement entered into, to unite, and to drive the Spaniards from the country; the Romish Religion, it was agreed should be protected in all the countries, except Holland and Zeeland, of these the Prince of Orange was declared Statholder.

Phillip II. attributing his loss of dominion over the Low Countries, to the Prince of Orange, excited assassins to murder him and promised on the word of a King, and as the servant of God, 25,000 Crowns, a pardon for all their Crimes, and the rank of nobility, to him who should bring the prince dead or alive.

Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma was now appointed the leader of the Spanish forces, and succeeded in the Catholic countries, or the ten pro-



vinces of Belgium, to excite a strong interest in favour of Philip, nevertheless, they chose the Duke of Anjou, brother of Henry III. of France, for their Sovereign, who offered to Elizabeth, Queen of England; his hand and Sovereignty. This Princess refused the offer, and so slender were the ties, by which he held his crown, that he would have been assassinated by the populace, if the Prince of Orange had not interfered in his favour. Henry III., at length, determined to assist him, and the French succeeded in taking Dunkirk, Dixmude and Dendermonde; but they failed against Ostend and Bruges, and attempting to take possession of Antwerp, by deceit and treason, were there defeated, and upwards of 1500 of their troops made prisoners.

During this time the Prince of Orange gained on the affections of his people, who regarded him as the Father of his country: repeated attempts had been made to assassinate him; Jauregni failed at Antwerp, and five others were defeated at Delft in the same design; when Gerard, who to inspire confidence, had long pretended an ardent zeal for Protestantism; and who having faithfully discharged a mission, in which he had been employed, was admitted into the Princes presence, to receive some further instructions: as the Prince rose from table; Gerard fired three balls into his breast, and he fell in the presence of the Princess. A profound consternation

nation was spread through Holland, and the public indignation rose against the assassin. Excited and blinded by false views of Religion, he gloried in his crime, and expected to gain Heaven by it; maintaining that he was instigated to the act by divine command; to acquit the Spanish Government of any share in it, he artfully charged it on the monks; but his family were ennobled, three Seigniories, and 4000 florins being given to them by the Duke of Parma, as a recompence; Gerard died by the public executioner, with a firmness worthy of a better cause. The youth and inability of Prince Maurice of Nassau, the son of the Prince of Orange, gave reason to fear, that he did not possess sufficient influence to maintain his rights, which induced the people to offer the Sovereignty to Henry III. of France, who refused it. It was then offered to Elizabeth of England, who also declined it; but, nevertheless, she sent both money and troops by her favourite Dudley, Earl of Leicester, whom the Dutch invested with an authority, superior to that, which they had bestowed on their Statholder, but which Dudley greatly abused. Philip was so irritated against Elizabeth, for rendering assistance to those whom he deemed his rebellious subjects, that he fitted out the celebrated Armada, consisting of 150 vessels with a large army, and upwards of 2000 cannon to invade England: the fleet sailed from Lisbon, in May 1588, and met with a tremendous storm, which dispersed and destroyed the greater part of the Armament; the English fleet being at sea,

followed up their destruction, and fifty vessels only returned to Spain.

In 1609, the Northern Provinces of the Netherlands threw off the Spanish yoke, but Flanders remained in a state of most abject subjection ; the records of this period, again exhibit in the most striking manner the awful effects of despotism, superstition bigotry and cruelty. The once flourishing cities of the Low Countries, sunk into insignificance and poverty ; several of their populous villages were entirely deserted. Such is said to have been the extent of desolation, that within a few miles of the cities of Ghent and Brussels, numbers were destroyed by wolves, and other beasts of prey, and Amsterdam engrossed the whole commerce of the country.

If the memorials of the past, are to be viewed as admonitions for the regulation of the future, this period of the history of the Netherlands, offers most momentous instruction.

The death of Philip delivered the Low Countries from a tyrant, but it did not alter the political system of Spain ; however, in 1609, Barneveldt, grand pensionnaire on behalf of the States General, signed a truce with that country at the Hague, which acknowledged the independence of the United Provinces ; Prince Maurice opposed the plans of Barneveldt, whom the States of Holland protected ; they ad-

dressed the Prince with strong remonstrances on the violation of their rights : he, nevertheless, arrested Barneveldt and others, and accused them of treason ; appointing a commission of twenty-four members, from among their enemies to try them.

They did not fail to bring him in guilty, but he was so beloved, that his relations were instigated to solicit his pardon ; fearing that this would be thought an acknowledgment of his guilt, his wife, with a noble firmness, replied, “ I had rather see him suffer innocently, than preserve his life loaded with shame and dishonour.” He himself constantly refused any application for pardon, and when urged to it before his execution, answered, “ My great age has long since admonished me daily to prepare for this event ; I die innocent.” When brought to the scaffold, he thus addressed the populace, “ Think not, my fellow citizens, that I am a traitor to my country ; I have ever conducted myself with integrity, and probity ; I die for having defended the liberties of my country.” Actuated by filial feelings, the son of Barneveldt conspired the death of Maurice, but was detected and condemned : his mother petitioned for his life. “ It appears strange” said the Statholder, “ that you do for your son, that which you refused to do for your husband.” The widowed mother nobly answered, “ I asked no favour for my husband because he was innocent. I solicit it for my son because he is guilty.” At the expiration of a twelve

years truce which had been agreed to, the war with Spain recommenced. Maurice, weighed down with trouble, died at the age of 58 years, and was succeeded in 1625, by Frederica Henri, the third Stat-holder, who being of a very opposite charater to his brother, became a great General, and by his well-directed enterprizes, conquered the Spaniards and ruined their commerce by sea. He devoted himself to the welfare of his country, greatly increased both its domestic and foreign commerce, and founded the University of Utrecht. He was succeeded by William II. who died in 1660.

Charles I. of England received considerable aid in his misfortunes from the States-General. They sent two Ambassadors extraordinary to England, to endeavour to save his life. They arrived in London on the 5th of February, the day on which the Parliament pronounced sentence against him. Their entreaties were without effect, for the following day he suffered on the scaffold.

The death of the Statholder, in 1660, left the States without a General or a Governor; but the birth of William III. eight days after, excited a powerful party in favor of the new-born Prince. A war broke out with England, but peace was signed at Breda in 1667, when the death of Philip IV of Spain once more involved the Low Countries in war,

Louis XIV. pretended that Flanders belonged to him in right of his wife; he conquered it, and also the seven Provinces of Holland, and proposed such ignominious terms of peace, that all eyes were turned towards the House of Orange; and the Statholdership was re-established in favour of the Prince of Orange, William III. who in 1679 succeeded in forming a confederacy of the States of Flanders against the oppressions of Louis XIV. This alliance was called the Union of Utrecht.

The sovereignty of William III. commenced a new and important era in the history of the United Provinces. He was called by the people of England to occupy the throne which his father-in-law had abdicated, and which increased his powers against Louis XIV.; in 1692, he besieged Namur and took it in eight days, when, after various successes and reverses, he consented to moderate terms of peace, and a treaty was concluded at Ryswick; but this calm was of short duration; the Low Countries became again the theatre of war between England and France. The armies of France were commanded by the Duke of Burgundy and Marshal Bouffler, and those of the Allies by the Duke of Marlborough, and Prince Eugene. In 1704 the allied Armies gained a complete victory, when Marshal Fallard was made prisoner, with about 12,000 men at Hochstet. After the battle of Ramillies, in 1706, the victors advanced

upon Louvain and Brussels, which cities immediately surrendered their keys, and the French were driven out of Flanders.

After the battle of Ramillies, by which a considerable part of the Austrian Low-Countries fell into the hands of the Allies, the Queen of Great Britain and the States General of the United Provinces, formed, in July, 1706, a Council of State, for the regulation of the Finances, and the administration of their Laws and Government. In 1702, May 21st, Philip the V. of Spain, was inaugurated at Brussels, as Duke of Lothier, of Brabant, and of Limbourg: and on the 2d June, he changed the form of Government. The Chamber of the Count of Flanders was united to that of Brabant, under the same President; but by the peace of Utrecht, in 1713, the southern Provinces of the Netherlands were once more placed under the dominion of the House of Austria. On the death of Charles VI. in 1740, the Archduchess Maria Theresa succeeded to the government of the Low Countries. In the following year they were over-run by the French, under Louis XV. but were restored to Austria in 1748, at the instance of Holland and England. Brussels, after being besieged, was taken possession of by the French, and held by them during three years.

On the death of Charles VI. Maria Theresa found herself heir to the vast dominions of the House of

Austria, including the kingdoms of Hungary, Bohemia, Silesia, Suabia, Austria, Milan, the Duchies of Parma and of Plaisance, and of the Low Countries. Her education and abilities, together with her amiable disposition, inspired those anticipations of her future character, which were afterwards fully realized. Historians speak of her as impressed with correct views of humanity and religion, and as a model for princes. At fourteen years of age she was admitted to the Chamber of Council, where she gave great proofs of her sagacity. At an early period of her reign she found herself involved in a war with other powers, contrary to the faith of treaties. Forced to fly from Vienna, she escaped with her young child, then a few months old, without retinue, and threw herself on the protection of her Hungarian subjects, who with alacrity armed in her defence; and the plains of Germany became deluged in blood. When threatened with the loss of her dominions, and fearing for the welfare of her children, with calm composure she observed—"My God permits it, and I have no right to murmur." This confidence was not disappointed, she succeeded in placing her husband on the Imperial throne. He was crowned Emperor at Frankfurt, and at length re-entered Vienna covered with laurels, amidst the blessings of his subjects.

In 1746 Louis XV. succeeded in taking Brussels, the citadel of Antwerp, and, afterwards, Bergen-op-Zoom, one of the strongest fortresses in Europe;



but after many severe battles, a treaty of peace was signed at Aix-la-Chapelle. Maria Theresa proceeded immediately to take measures to increase the happiness of her subjects ; she was so exemplary in her private life, as to excite the ridicule of some of the licentious wits of that period.—“ Tell me not,” she observed “ of those learned philosophers, who “ would sacrifice their belief for an Epigram, and “ who pretend to possess that infallibility themselves, “ which they refuse to the Church.” On another occasion she observed to Cardinal Strautsen, Archbishop of Vienna—“ It is necessary if we would exhibit the Deity in our own characters, to practise ourselves that which we require of others.”

Continental politics are as uncertain and variable as the wind. Maria Theresa soon found herself again plunged in war ; but whether in war or peace her conduct was regulated by such correct principles, that it procured her universal respect. Possessing enlarged views of toleration, she granted the Protestants the free exercise of their religion throughout her dominions, and abolished in the Catholic system many of those feasts and fasts which entrench so greatly on human industry and wealth. What few hours of leisure she could obtain, she employed in the perusal of works of solid literature. In benevolence, and in the duties of piety she most excelled.

“ Education,” she observed, is an edifice, which  
 “ it is necessary to raise on Religion, as a founda-  
 “ tion. I had rather that my children should  
 “ cease to reign, than that they should be bad  
 “ Christians.

The patronage which she gave to every institution, tending to promote learning, science, and humanity immortalizes her name. In 1777 she established a Royal Commission to inspect all the Colleges and Benevolent Societies throughout the Low Countries.

She died in 1780, greatly beloved and regretted.

In this abstract of the History of the Netherlands, you will perceive how closely it is united with that of the several countries which have from time to time contended for it, with which reflection I shall conclude this Letter.

BRUSSELS, MAY 31, 1817.

FOR a considerable time the Low Countries had enjoyed tranquillity, when Joseph II. came to the throne of Germany. Possessing views of toleration and religious principles too enlarged for the people of Belgium, he suppressed the several religious orders of Monks and Nuns, justly considering all such institutions as hostile to the true interests of society; and, by an Edict, in 1783, abolished the remains of servitude, or villanage, and the use of torture throughout his dominions. He forbade all religious processions and pilgrimages, prohibited pompous burials and rich offerings, and despoiled the images of saints of all their costly ornaments. He also disclaimed all secular subjection to the Pope, and in 1786, at an assembly of the Ecclesiastical Princes, at Ratisbon, resolved to withdraw from his jurisdiction. He was a great encourager of learning and science, and a liberal patron of genius.

The Clergy, alarmed, as might be expected, raised the cry of sacrilege, announcing that the Emperor intended to destroy all religion, and thus succeeded in stirring up and fomenting strong discontent.

When he attempted to abolish the University of Louvain, and substitute in its stead a College, where all the Ecclesiastics should be compelled to become instructors, they thundered forth against him the most violent invectives, and he found it necessary to employ military force to maintain his authority. The Archbishop of Malines was ordered to Vienna; the Popes Nuncio received orders to quit Brussels, and the Superior of the Capuchins was banished for having refused to send his noviciates to the new School of Theology. The people considered the Priests as Martyrs suffering for the faith, and the Emperor as the author of their calamities.

Joseph undertook also to change the form of their Government. He suppressed the permanent Committee of the Delegates of the States—abolished the Courts of Justice, and the Tribunals—proclaimed the Low Countries to be simply Provinces of the Austrian Monarchy, divided them into nine circles, and placed over them governors independent of the several States.

His entire subversion of their Civil and Religious Codes aroused general indignation. The States of Brabant assembled, refused all subsidies to the Emperor, suppressed the College of Louvain, and presenting the strongest remonstrances, called upon the neighbouring States for their aid, which was immediately granted. A National Cockade was adopted,

and with arms in their hands, the people seized on several of the Governors.

At this period of time Joseph was engaged in a war against the Turks, and irritated at this resistance to his Edicts, he commanded that a deputation from the states of Flanders and Brabant should make known their complaints; he agreed, that if they would lay down their arms, grant the subsidies, and annul their acts, he would re-establish the tribunals, maintain their ancient rights, and suppress the seminary at Louvain. Not satisfied with these concessions, the States insisted upon the full redress of their grievances, and pressed by his wars against the Turks, he yielded to their wishes. New Governors were appointed, and peace and tranquillity were restored. Policy seems to have influenced the Emperor in these proceedings. He began gradually to augment his armies in the Low Countries, changed or removed all the Civil Authorities who had resisted his ordinances, and at length attempted again to remodel the Supreme Court of Brabant, and re-establish the Seminary of Louvain. These measures produced new murmurings, and Count Trantmansdorff suspended for three months carrying them into execution; he then obtained the subsidies which he demanded. The Emperor persisting in his resolutions, the Count commanded the College to be shut up, and when the Council of Brabant was assembled, he communicated the Emperor's commands, allowed them two hours

only for deliberation, and threatened to revoke every former concession if they persisted, and the Council was thus compelled to register the Edict of the Emperor, although greatly against its consent.

An Austrian patrolle having been insulted, fired upon the offenders ; sixteen were killed, and several wounded, and the inhabitants flew to arms. The Emperor recalled to Vienna the Officer who had given orders to fire upon the people, and decreed an amnesty for the past. After continual but ineffectual attempts on the part of the Emperor to carry his plans into execution, the States of Hainault and of Brabant refused the subsidies ; at length the Governors were arrested, the Austrian soldiers attacked, and the houses of the Magistrates pillaged, which led to open hostilities, and terminated in their throwing off the Austrian yoke. The States of Brabant declared themselves independent, and formed themselves into a confederation, which took the name of the " United States of Belgium."

Exhausted by anxiety and disappointments, the Emperor was attacked with a dangerous disease, when he received intelligence of the insurrections in the Low Countries. Tears escaped from his eyes at the thoughts of all his favourite ideas of Reform being treated with indignation ; and by the advice of Comte de Kaunitz, his sage counsellor in affliction, he met the Insurgents and endeavoured to appease

them, but too late; they were armed with power; all negotiation was disdained, and the Netherlands refused all further subjection. He thus addressed the Prince de Ligne—"Your Country has destroyed me—the capture of Ghent has distressed me—and Brussels abandoned has murdered me—I die, I must have been a Stoic not to feel it: Go---endeavour to bring the people back to their allegiance. If you cannot succeed, remember you have children—do not sacrifice your own interest to your attachment to me." He expired a few days after, in February, 1790, having previously written the following Epitaph:—

*"Here lies Joseph II. unfortunate in all his undertakings."*

Read carefully the life of Joseph II.—it abounds with most valuable instruction. His motives appear to have been pure; he seems to have been educated in the school of wisdom, but to have fallen on evil days. He viewed himself as the father of his people, and the Belgians have reason to regret that they resisted him in the execution of plans which would have emancipated them from those fetters of priestcraft which still hold them in much abject bondage. He displayed during his short reign considerable talent; he may be said to have been somewhat deficient in sound judgment, and in apportioning his means to his ends. In one of his journeys to the Netherlands he gained the affections of the Belgians by his gentle-

ness, his courtesy, his readiness to listen to their complaints, and also, by the steps which he took to increase their commerce, and promote their real welfare on all occasions.

On the death of Joseph II. Leopold succeeded to the throne, and had great difficulty to re-establish the Austrian authority in the Netherlands. Belgium became distracted by two parties. The aristocratic, who when they had reinstated the clergy in all their rights, and immunities, and secured the nobility, shewed no further concern; well satisfied to have the States General under their influence, from whence all laws issued; and possessing the entire patronage and distribution of all favours, they asserted, that the people ought to be satisfied and contented, provided the Clergy enjoyed their riches, dignities, and prerogatives; whilst the democratic party demanded the convocation of the general assembly of the states.

The Revolution in France was at this time making rapid progress, and the democratic party received from that country, the most positive assurances of assistance; the army being inclined to favour it, named for their commander Vander Mersch, who, when the aristocratic party dispatched their troops against him, was deserted by his followers; he was arrested and conducted prisoner to the Citadel of Antwerp, which caused great discontents in Flanders. Leopold profited by these dispositions to re-establish the Austrian



authority by sending 30,000 men into Flanders. He offered to the Belgians an amnesty; and if before the 21st Nov. 1790, they would return to their allegiance he agreed to re-establish their Laws and Government as they existed in the time of Maria Theresa with some slight modifications: on their hesitating, he crossed the Meuse with his troops, entered Namur, and Belgium submitted to him. He then issued a general amnesty, and swore to maintain all the privileges which they had enjoyed previous to the reign of Joseph II.

From this period, the Netherlands became the theatre of a most sanguinary war. The armies of the powers coalesced against France, assembled their forces, and Dumourier the commander of the French over-ran the Netherlands with astonishing rapidity. The elements favoured his plans, rivers which had not been frozen over for many years were so hard, that they afforded the greatest facilities for bringing up his troops. The Austrians bombarded Lisle for twenty-eight days without success. Dumourier relieved it, attacked and defeated the Imperial army at Jenappe, which gave him possession of Belgium to the river Roer. The Belgians praised his valour, and regarded him as their liberator; but whatever esteem the French armies excited by their successes, they destroyed by the devastations which they committed. The persons appointed to conduct their commissariat department, manifested the most un-

principled rapacity ; public and private property was seized upon, and the treasures of the Churches were ransacked. They pillaged the corn of the peasants and sent it into France ; thus, by a continued series of acts, which openly violated every principle of private right, they created a strong party in favour of the Austrian Government.

In 1794, Flanders again became the scene of most severe conflicts. The Austrian and British forces took possession of Valenciennes and Condé, and appeared before Dunkirk. The French pushed on and besieged Charleroi, and a second time conquered Belgium, driving the allied troops beyond the Rhine. The Netherlands were once more attached to France, formed into nine Departments, and declared to be an integral part of the French empire ; the Emperor renounced all claims to them at the treaty of Campo Formio, in 1797.

The more recent events must be so fresh in recollection, and are so interwoven with the history of the French Revolution, that you will deem a detail of them unnecessary ; suffice it to say, that, in 1813, Belgium was separated from France, by the Congress at Vienna, who, in the 66th article, declares, that the United Provinces of Holland and the more Southern Belgic Provinces, together with the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, shall form under the Prince of Orange Nassau, the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Thus have I furnished you with a short abstract of the history of Belgium, which, at different periods has been so intimately interwoven with that of Holland, or the Seven United Provinces, that I have found it difficult to draw with accuracy the line of demarcation. If it be at all politic for Britain to form any Continental Alliances, there can be no hesitation in admitting that the Netherlands under its present Government, is its proper and natural ally.

Born and bred a Briton, and educated in the most enlarged notions of rational freedom, I speak the sentiments of every lover of his country, if I conclude this letter by expressing a most ardent wish, that the present family may long continuè to reign over these Realms in the full enjoyment of peace and prosperity—making the general happiness, the great end and aim of its Government, and receiving in return the affections of a brave and free people.

BRUSSELS, MAY 31, 1817.

Without further researches into the history of this country, than has been already made ; I shall proceed to inform you of the nature of the present Government, and of the Constitution of the Netherlands, erected into a Monarchy, by the Treaty at the Hague, August 19, 1815.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands was declared by the Congress at Vienna to be composed of North and South Brabant, Limbourg, Gueldres, Liege, East and West Flanders, Hainault, Holland, Zeeland, Namur, Antwerp, Utrecht, Frise, Overysse, Groningen, and Drenthe. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, being limited, and placed under the same Sovereignty as the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and subject to the same fundamental laws, except, as to its relations with the German confederation.

Every individual in the Kingdom, whether native or stranger, enjoys equal protection in his person and property.

The Crown of the Netherlands is declared Hereditary in his Royal Highness William Frederick Prince of Orange, and his legitimate descendants, and in de-

fect of male issue, the Crown is to descend in the female line. The King of the Netherlands cannot accept of any other Crown, nor can the seat of Government be removed out of the Kingdom.

The King possesses a Revenue of 2,400,000 florins, equal to about 200,000 pounds of English money, with an addition of 100,000 florins for the expenses of the Palaces. He is not restrained from extending this if he thinks proper. The King has the sole direction of the relations with foreign powers ; chooses his own ministers ; makes war or peace ; ratifies all treaties or conventions ; directs the forces by sea and land, and appoints his own officers, He has the supreme direction of the finances ; regulates the Colleges and Universities ; controuls the coinage ; confers titles of Nobility ; grants pardons ; and sanctions or rejects the propositions made to him by the States General.

He appoints the Council of State, which is composed of twenty-four members from the various provinces over which he presides ; the Prince of Orange sitting there in his own right.

The House of Orange traces its lineage from some of the families, which accompanied Julius Cæsar to his conquests in Gaul.

The House of Nassau was one of the most noble families of antient Germany. Adolphus Count of

Nassau, died in 708. Adolphus of Nassau, was elected Emperor in 1292. William VIII. of Nassau Dellenbourg, son of William the elder, possessed the principality of Orange in virtue of the will of Rene his cousin, and was acknowledged by Henry II. King of France in 1559.

William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, became King of England, Scotland, and Ireland, at the Revolution in 1688, having married Mary Stuart, daughter of the Duke of York, afterwards James II. of England.

William Frederick, Prince of Orange Nassau, the present King of the Netherlands, was born Aug. 24, 1772, and married Oct. 1, 1791, Frederica Louisa Wilhelmina of Prussia. Of this marriage was born William Frederick George Louis, Prince of Orange, on the 6th December, 1792; William Frederick Charles, February 24, 1797; Wilhelmina Frederick Louisa Charlotte Marianne, 9 May 1810.

The Prince of Orange married, Feb. 21, 1816, Anne Paulowna, Grand Duchess, and sister of the Emperor of Russia, born Jan. 18, 1795.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands receives Ministers from Foreign States, to which also it sends Ambassadors; Monsieur le Baron H. Fagel is appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plen-

potentiary to the Court of Great Britain; and the Earl of Clancarty is the Minister from Great Britain, resident at Brussels whilst the Court remains here.

The King maintains a Court, attended by the usual Officers of State, with separate Households for the Queen and Prince of Orange.

The King holds a Cabinet Council and also a Council of State occasionally, and a Levee on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Such Englishmen who have been presented at their own Court in England, are entitled, on producing authentic documents thereof, to presentation at any of the Continental Courts. Those who have not had that advantage, whether English or natives of other countries, and who wish to be presented, will find it necessary to obtain the introduction of the Ambassador of their respective Courts.

Here is also an Heralds Office, to register the titles of Nobility, to arrange the ceremonies of all Public Entries, and State Processions.

The Netherlands have experienced very considerable changes in their forms of Government; having become subject in succession to Spanish, Austrian, French or Dutch dominion; but excepting some few

short intervals, they have uniformly possessed a considerable portion of rational freedom, to maintain which they have, from time to time, been found nobly and successfully struggling against tyranny and oppression.

The King has, by an Edict, dated 30th April, 1815, established the Order of WILLIAM, as a reward of valour and military services rendered to the Sovereign and the Country. The Monarch is perpetual Grand Master.

This Order is composed of four Grand Cross Knights-Commandants, and Knights of the third and fourth Classes. The insignia of which consist of a white Cross and the Crown enamelled with eight corners of Pearls and set in gold, inscribed—"Voor Moed, Beleid, Brouw."—"Valour, Prudence, Loyalty." There is attached to this Order also the Cross of Burgundy; composed of branches of Laurel, with garlands of the same encircling a W.

The States General have also, on the proposition of his Majesty, created the Civil Order of the Belgic Lion; designed to distinguish in an honorable manner, all those subjects of his Majesty, who have given proofs of their patriotism, zeal and fidelity in fulfilling their duties as citizens, or of extraordinary abilities in arts and sciences.



The King is also perpetual Grand Master.

This Order is divided into three classes. Those of the first Class bear the title of Grand Cross Knights, the 2d of Commandants, and the third that of Knights only. The appointments rest solely with the King as Grand Master. The Insignia consist of an enamelled white Cross, having a gold W. between each of its branches, and bearing an escutcheon of blue enamel, with this motto in gold—"Virtus Nobilitat."—"Virtue ennobles;" and on the reverse the Belgic Lion, placed as an escutcheon in the arms of the kingdom, surmounted by the Royal Crown in gold. The Ribbon is blue of Nassau, with two stripes of Orange. The Brethren of this Order enjoy, from the time of their election, an annual pension of 200 florins, of which, the half, in case of their decease, is continued to their widows during life. This Order when once conferred, is only lost by a sentence of disgrace.

There is no more powerful way of appealing to the human heart than by taking an interest in its concerns; by thus distinguishing valour, fidelity, virtue, and genius with honours which are equally open to all who may merit them, the Sovereign will range all true hearts around him, ready on all occasions to stand forward in his defence. This was the talisman which, with magic power, enabled Napoleon to encircle himself with heroes, exhibiting attach-

ments to the extent of which, the history of mankind affords no equal example.

His Majesty the King of the Netherlands is one of the Knights of the Order of the Garter; and the Prince of Orange of the Order of the Bath; both of which are British honours.

The States General are composed of two Chambers, and represent the Nation. The one which is denominated the first, or Upper Chamber, is composed of not less than forty, nor exceeding sixty members, named by the King for life, from among those who have been most distinguished by their birth, fortune or the services which they have rendered the state. The King nominates their President, and each member receives 3000 florins annually, to defray travelling expences; in attending the Court.

The other Chamber is composed of one hundred and ten members, named by the States of the Provinces. Persons who live in the Province which has the appointment, and who are not less than thirty years of age are eligible to be Candidates. They are elected for three years, and one-third of the whole number annually retire, but are immediately eligible to be re-elected. Their President is named by the King for one Session only. These members receive annually 2500 florins for the expences of removing to attend the King, either at the Hague or Brussels

where the sittings are held. This plan is not dissimilar to that adopted formerly in England.

Each of these chambers bears the title of " Nobles, et puissant Seigneurs ;" they are required to assemble, at least, once in every year, when called together by the King. The regular Session commences the third Monday in October, but the King has power to call extraordinary Sittings at his pleasure. In times of peace, these sittings are to be held alternately in the Northern and Southern provinces of the Kingdom. On the death of the King they are required to assemble without being summoned. The Sessions are opened and closed in one of the Chambers of deliberation, by the King in person, or by Commission. All resolutions are passed by a majority of votes ; no motion can be passed unless half the members of the assembly are present, and, in such cases, when, by the fundamental law the two assemblies unite, the members sit together without distinction. The Legislative power is exercised jointly by the King and the States General ; the King communicates to the Second Chamber, either by a message or by a Commission, his reasons for bringing forward any motion.

The Sittings of the Second Chamber are public : if it approves and adopts the motion, it is forwarded in due form. If rejected, notice is given to the King in the following words : " The Second Cham.

“ ber of the States General testify to the King their  
 “ Zeal for the Welfare of the Kingdom ; and they  
 “ most respectfully solicit him to take the proposition  
 “ into his Ulterior consideration.” The First Cham-  
 ber possesses the same right of rejection. The Se-  
 cond Chamber, only, possesses the right to originate  
 any proposition to the King for the deliberation of  
 the States General, which, when they have determined  
 on, they send up to the First Chamber, and, if they  
 agree to it, they forward it to the King for his consent.  
 When the King adopts the resolutions of the States  
 General, he replies—*Le Roi consente*, if he rejects  
 them, he replies—*Le Roi deliberera*.

If experience should make any change necessary in  
 the fundamental laws of the Realm, the necessity  
 thereof, shall be previously announced; but no alter-  
 ation can take place without the consent of two-  
 thirds of the Members of the States General.

The first change in the Second Chamber, is to  
 take place on the 3d Oct. 1817, when one-third of  
 the members will retire, and the new members take  
 their seats.

One of the Ministers of State has the express super-  
 intendance of the National Instruction, and of the  
 Arts and Sciences. Monsieur Repelaer Van Driel  
 is the present Minister, who has, also, the superin-  
 tendence of every thing relating to the Protestant  
 Religion.

A Minister of State is appointed to the direction of all the Hydraulic works, as the Dykes, Sea-ports, Rivers, Water-courses, Bridges, Mines, Colleges, Palaces and Public buildings; he is called the Minister of Waterstraadt.

Justice is administered in all cases in the name of the King.

Here is a Supreme Tribunal, which bears the name of the High Court of Judicature, and of which, the members are chosen, as much as possible, from the several Provinces.

The High Court informs the Second Chamber of the States General, when any vacancy occurs, and the King fills the vacancy from three lists given him by the States.

The Members of the States General and the Administration, the Counsellors of State and the Commissioners of the King, in the several Provinces, are Members of this High Court by virtue of their functions.

This Court presides in the administration of Justice throughout the Realm; examines whether the other tribunals have justly applied the laws; and either annuls or confirms their judgment.

There are also Courts of Justice for the several Provinces, which take cognizance of civil affairs only.

The King names to the vacancies amongst the Judges in these courts, from a triple list presented to him by the Provincial States.

The King has recently, by virtue of the authority vested in him, banished the Editors of several French newspapers, viz. *Le Constitutionnel*, printed at Antwerp, of *Le Vrai Liberal*, printed at Brussels, and of the *Journal De La Flandre*, printed at Ghent.

The Councils of War, or a High Tribunal, takes cognizance of all offences, Military or Naval, committed on land, or on the seas.

There are in the Southern Provinces, and will continue to be, until the Judicial organization, which is to compose the basis of the new Constitution, now under consideration, is completed, two Superior Courts, one at Brussels and the other at Liege. The jurisdiction of the former extends over the Southern Provinces of Brabant, east and west Flanders, Hainault and Antwerp, and the latter over Liege, Namur, Limbourg and Luxembourg.

These Superior Courts are empowered to decide

finally, upon the appeals brought before them from the Provincial courts, and also upon the appeals brought before them from the tribunals of Commerce.

The decrees of the Superior Courts must be given by not less than five of the Judges.

The Superior Courts are empowered to take cognizance of criminal matters, as well as of those of police generally. The Assize Courts are composed of a President and four Assistants. The Special Courts are composed of a President and four Counsellors. There is in each principal town a Chamber of Commerce, which takes cognizance of Commercial Causes only.

The Code Napoleon, with some modifications, particularly in reference to divorce, (the divorced parties not being allowed to marry again), is at present in force in Belgium; but a Commission has been appointed to organize a code of laws adapted to the genius and habits of the people, in which very considerable progress has been made.

Criminal Justice is administered exclusively by the Provincial Courts, and such other criminal tribunals will be established as shall be found necessary.

The Judges in the High Court of Judicature, in

the Provincial Civil Courts, and in the Criminal Courts, have their appointments for life.

In the Chambers of Commerce, Merchants are the Judges ; experience may, perhaps, hereafter make it apparent that they would act better as Jurymen, as in England, where the verdict of a Special Jury is seldom complained of by the unsuccessful party.

The person of the King is inviolable ; the Ministers are alone responsible for mal-administration.

All arbitrary arrests are forbidden ; the Judges are independent ; all judicial sentences must be pronounced in public, with the reasons on which they are founded. In criminal cases trial by Jury formerly existed, but is now abolished ; the Bench of Judges decide after hearing the pleadings and the evidence.

It is impossible to read this short abstract of the nature of the Constitution, Laws, and Government of this Country, without perceiving that it is in many instances modelled after those of Great Britain, even to great exactness ; in some respects the Sovereign possesses more power than the King of England.

I shall conclude this subject in my next.



BRUSSELS, JUNE 3, 1817.

To resume the subject, the house of every person is declared to be inviolable; the liberty of the press is acknowledged, but the author is considered liable as in Britain to an action, if he injures another, or traduces the Government of any foreign state.

No imprisonment for debt is allowed, except on Bills; and the Creditor is obliged to make the prisoner an allowance in advance. In one of the large prisons in Brussels only five debtors are now confined, and they are kept distinct from the other criminals; a process for debt may be issued speedily against property, in which case the natives possess advantages against foreigners greater than against native subjects.

Great complaints are made, but with what degree of reason I cannot accurately judge at present, of many of the legal decisions; and in particular, that the contending parties are permitted to have intercourse with the Judges pending a cause—a mode which cannot be too strongly reprobated as subversive of all justice.

The King's Proclamation from the Hague, July

18, 1815, tends to throw further light on this interesting subject, and powerfully evinces the parental feelings which actuate him as the Sovereign of this Country.

**WE, William, by the Grace of GOD, King of the Netherlands, Prince of Orange Nassau, Grand Duke of Luxemburg, &c.**

When the Government of Belgium was given into our hands by the High Allied Powers, we had previously given our formal adhesion to the conditions of the Union of Belgium with the United Provinces of the Netherlands, which had been agreed upon at London by the Plenipotentiaries of the said Powers, in the month of June, 1814, and of which the following is the tenor:—

**ART. 1.** This union is to be intimate and complete, so that the two countries shall form one and the same state, governed by the Constitution already established in Holland, which shall be modified by common consent, according to the new state of things.

**2.** No innovation shall be made in the articles of this Constitution, which ensure equal favour and protection to all forms of worship, and guarantee the admission of all citizens to public offices and employments, whatever be their religious creeds.

3. The Belgian Provinces are represented in the assembly of the States General, whose ordinary sittings in time of peace shall be held alternately in a town in Holland and in a town in Belgium.

4. All the inhabitants of the Netherlands, being thus constitutionally assimilated among each other, the several Provinces shall equally enjoy all the commercial and other advantages, of which their respective situations are susceptible; nor can any obstacle or restriction be laid upon one, to the advantage of the other.

5. Immediately after the Union, the Provinces and Towns of Belgium shall be admitted to the commerce and navigation of the Colonies, upon the same footing as the Provinces and Towns of Holland.

6. As the burdens must be in common as well as the advantages, the debts contracted till the time of the Union, by the Dutch Provinces on the one hand, and by the Belgic Provinces on the other, shall be chargeable to the public treasury of the Netherlands.

7. Conformably to the same principles, the expences required, for the establishment and preservation of the fortresses on the frontiers of the new state, shall be borne by the public treasury, as result-

ing from an object that interests the safety and independence of all the Provinces of the whole nation.

8. The expense of forming and keeping up the dykes shall be for the account of the districts more especially interested in this branch of the public service, reserving the obligation of the State in general, to furnish aid in case of extraordinary disasters, all, exactly as has been hitherto practised in Holland.

The Treaty of Vienna, having since confirmed upon these same principles, the formal cession of the Belgic Provinces, to form, in conjunction with the United Provinces of the Netherlands, one kingdom, we have hastened to appoint a Special Committee to examine what modifications it would be useful or necessary to make in the Constitution already established in Holland. Citizens distinguished by their knowledge, their patriotism and their probity, have employed themselves on this important work, with a zeal worthy of the greatest praise. The project which they have just laid before us, contains honorable distinctions for the nobility; insures to all forms of worship, equal favour and protection, and guarantees the admission of all citizens to public offices and employments; it fixes the division of power; upon the basis of protecting institutions, which have been at all times dear to the people of Belgium. It recognises above all things the independence of the judicial

power; it reconciles the integrity and the strength of the Body Politic. with the individual right of each of its members, and lastly, it contains the elements of every gradual improvement, which experience and further study may deem to be necessary. However, before we proceed to introduce the new fundamental law, we desire to convince ourselves of the assent of our subjects to its principal regulations. For this purpose, deputies (notables) shall be assembled from every arrondissement in the proportion of one for two thousand inhabitants. We have ordered that the choice shall be made with impartiality, among the persons most estimable, and most worthy of the confidence of their fellow citizens. But in order to be certain that our intentions in this respect have been fulfilled, and that those who are going to be named deputies, are really deserving of the honour of being the organs of the general opinion; we further order that the lists shall be published and deposited for eight days in the chief towns of the respective districts. At the same time registers shall be opened in which every inhabitant who is the head of a family, may come and insert a simple vote of rejection of one or more of the deputies named. It is according to the result which these registers shall afford, that the lists will be finally determined on, and the notables convoked in each arrondissement to vote upon the plan of the fundamental law which will be laid before them. Each of these assemblages shall send its

*proces verbaux* to Brussels, and shall depute three of its members to attend in a general meeting at the opening of these *proces verbaux* (Journals of proceedings) and at the collecting of the notes of the notables. Such, Belgians, are the measures which we have judged the most proper for the establishment of a compact, which is to fix your destinies, and to hasten the moment when your Sovereign will be surrounded by a representation loyally constituted. Happy to reign over a free, brave, and industrious people, we are sure of finding in it that character for loyalty and frankness which has always so eminently distinguished it. All our efforts will be directed to cement the foundations of its prosperity and glory, and the citizens of all classes, and all the provinces shall have in us, a benevolent and impartial protector of their rights and their welfare. In particular we guarantee to the Catholic Church its establishment and its liberties, and we shall not lose sight of the example and moderation in this respect, which have been left us by our predecessors, your ancient Sovereigns, whose memory is so justly revered among you.

Given at the Hague, July 18, 1815, and the second year of our reign.

(Signed)  
By the King.

WILLIAM.

For the Secretary of State in his absence, the  
Cabinet Secretary.

(Signed) P. DE CROMBRUGGE.

(A true Copy.)

The Clerk to the Secretary of State.

L. VAN GOBBELSCHROY.

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In all public punishments such as the Pillory, and the Guillotine, for both are in use here, the name of the delinquent, and the nature of his crime, are written conspicuously, and placed over the head of the sufferer.

Governors are appointed over the several Provinces, who, in their absence, are represented by Vice Presidents chosen from among the members of the States of the particular Province. Registers of all public occurrences are kept and transmitted regularly to the Government.

In the administration of the Country are included two Ministers of State, appointed to take cognizance of every thing relating to the concerns of Religion and Education. Baron Gobbou is the present Mi-

nister of State for the concerns of the Catholic Religion, and Monsieur Pipelaer for those of the Protestant Religion, and for general Education. M. J. P. Charlier is the President of the Protestant Consistory at Brussels; M. Goedkoop holds the same situation at Ghent, and M. Winkel at Antwerp. Monsieurs Pauw and Rika are appointed the resident Protestant Ministers at Brussels.

Shakespear observes “uneasy lies the head that wears a Crown,” and experience proves this truth; It must be evident that to sway the sceptre of the Netherlands at the present crisis is not unattended with difficulty, the more so, divided as it is, and likely to continue to be some time to come, into Political and Religious Parties. But that moderation, wisdom and firmness which the King has shewn on all occasions, cannot fail to conciliate all hearts, and to obtain for him that reward—the affections of his people—which the general tenor of his administration tends to inspire.

I purpose, in my next, to hand you some observations relating to the present state of Religion in this country.



BRUSSELS, JUNE, 3, 1817.

It was my original intention, to have entered at some length into an examination of the present state of Religion in this country ; to have compared it with the Protestant faith, and to have pointed out the errors of the Church of Rome, and their tendency to produce infidelity ; but I shall limit myself to a few observations only.

It is not ascertained at what period Christianity was first promulgated in Belgium. Some writers are of opinion that it was introduced about the year 270, under the Pontificate of St. Denis, and brought to Tournay by Piat ; and it is stated, that after the Vandals had ravaged Germany with fire and sword, Nicause, Diogenes, and many others, here, suffered martyrdom, about the year 400.

In the seventh century, St. Amand preached Christianity at Ghent and at Antwerp, as did also some missionaries from Ireland and Scotland in different parts of the Low Countries. The names of St. Eloi at Antwerp, and St. Willebrod at Utrecht, are preserved as two of its early teachers.

Some writers indeed maintain, that St. Nazaire, a

Roman, who suffered martyrdom under the Emperor Nero, was the first who introduced Christianity into Belgium; others think that Egiste, one of the seventy-two disciples of Christ, was sent by Peter into Frise, and again others assert, that Pope Everiste, about the year 112, converted the people of this country from paganism.

Amongst so many opinions it is difficult to decide. Strong symptoms for a Reformation in Religion, similar to that which took place in Germany in the sixteenth century, discovered themselves at a very early period in the Low Countries. In 752, there was a great disturbance at Ghent, occasioned by the introduction of Images in religious processions. In 1135, many persons were martyred at Utrecht and other places for what were deemed their heretical opinions; and, in 1536, William Tindal, an Englishman, who had translated the Bible into his native language, was arrested at Antwerp, strangled, and burnt at Vilverde!

There is sufficient proof that in the middle ages the priests founded monasteries with considerable endowments; but their lives appear to have been in direct opposition to their professions.

Charlemagne, who died in 813, granted to the bishops of Cologne, Utrecht, and Liege, the sovereignty over their several districts.

In the sixteenth century, the principles of the Reformation obtained considerable influence in Belgium; religious animosities were enkindled, and produced the most dreadful effects: for nearly four years the Catholic worship was suppressed in Brussels, and the Images were broken and destroyed; but the partizans of that persuasion at length prevailed, and numbers of the Protestants suffered martyrdom. The first confession of faith, drawn up by the Protestants in the Low Countries, was in 1561.

By the frequent recurrence of feasts, ceremonies, and processions, the public mind and feeling are kept in a state of constant excitement. Every morning two or three priests and sometimes more, perform service in their respective Churches; each parish has its particular celebrations; and besides the several annual magnificent processions, which have a powerful effect upon the multitude, scarcely a week passes without some pageantry to excite the devotions of the pious, and contributions from the wealthy.

Happily for the interests of the country, and of the world, an enlarged and liberal spirit of toleration now prevails. The divine author of Christianity, when upon earth, most clearly and positively distinguished and separated spiritual from temporal concerns. Governments have no right to domineer, nor even to interfere in matters of Religion, unless by overt acts, under the mask of religion, the State is endangered: over

opinions they can have no control. In 1515, the Diet of Augsbourg recognised this maxim by an edict, which declared that *all* the inhabitants of the German empire, should be allowed to judge for themselves in religious matters, and to join themselves to that Church, whose doctrine and worship they thought purest and the most consonant with Christianity ; and that all those who should injure or persecute any person under religious pretences, or on account of their opinions, should be declared and proceeded against as public enemies of the empire, as invaders of liberty, and as disturbers of the peace !

In the report of Lord Macartney's embassy to China, published under the sanction, and partly at the expense, of the British Government, this axiom is also, fully recognised, as appears by the following extract. " The progress of the doctrines of Fo, is not obstructed by any measures of the Government of the country, which does not meddle with mere opinions, it prohibits no belief, which is not supposed to affect the tranquillity of society ; there is in China no State religion, none is paid, preferred, or encouraged by it. The Emperor is of one faith, many of his mandarins of another, and the majority of the common people of a third."

The numerous fasts and festivals which the Catholic Religion has established, operate materially to the prejudice of national industry ; almost every day

of the year has its particular Tutelar Saint. During my stay at Bruges a Jubilee Procession took place, which occurs but once every fifty years, in honour of the celebrated Francis Xavier, a Jesuit who suffered martyrdom as a missionary in India, in 1567. The day was fine, and the houses in all the streets through which the procession passed were tastefully decorated with boughs of trees of various descriptions which were fastened against the walls to the very attics—Orange trees, Arbutus's, Laurustinus's and other shrubs in tubs were disposed around the doors, and several of the fine pictures from the churches were brought out, and fixed in such places, where it had been previously arranged that the procession should pass. It commenced in the afternoon, preceded by a number of boys ringing bells, and bearing flags; these were followed by different corporate bodies with their appropriate ensigns, carrying long flambeaux lighted; then followed a number of young females attired in white and other divisions of the corporation, next came a Priest bearing an image dressed sumptuously in blue and silver representing the Virgin Mary; more young females and men carrying flambeaux were succeeded by a Priest bearing a silver hand, in which, is said to have been enshrined part of one of the thumbs of the said Francois Xavier; this relic was surrounded by priests with Flambeaux, Incense and a Band of Music, the whole terminating by a priest splendidly attired, bearing the Host under a Canopy of velvet, attended by

the military. The procession lasted for several hours, the spectators were numerous all of whom, at the approach of the Host knelt down in the streets. It halted at the several places appointed, and a short service was performed at each place.

The most splendid procession takes place the day of the Grand Kermess, the Sunday immediately succeeding the 13th day of July, in every year at Brussels, to commemorate the restoration of the sixteen miraculous Hosts, said to have been stolen. The following is the tradition :

That in 1369, Jonathan, a rich Jew of Enghien in Hainault, prevailed upon John of Louvain, who had been recently converted to Christianity, to steal several of the consecrated Hosts, by promising him sixty golden pieces. On the 4th Oct. he broke into the Church of St. Catherine, and robbed it of sixteen, one of which, was a Grand Host ; when he took them to Jonathan, he, with the other Jews exulted over them. Jonathan was soon after stabbed in his garden by an unknown hand, and his son took to flight. The widow took the Hosts to the Jews, who met in their Synagogue, April 12, 1370 ; when assembled, they stabbed the Hosts, and blood is said to have issued from them. They then agreed with a woman named Catherine, who had been a jewess, and still kept up some connexion with them, to carry the Hosts to Cologne. She discovered the whole to Peter Van

Heede, and returned them. Whether this story be true or false, it was laid hold off to persecute the Jews: some say three, others say five were executed; great confiscations of property followed, and the Jews were banished. Three of the said Hosts are now shown in the Cathedral Church of St. Gudule, and are carried in annual procession.

As you purpose to visit Brussels this Summer, I hope you will be there in time to witness this Ceremony, so very different from any thing you see in England.

I am anxious that the remarks which I have made, and may still have to make on the Churches of the Netherlands, and the Statues, Altars, Pulpits, Pictures and Decorations with which they are adorned, may not be interpreted as countenancing or sanctioning the custom of decorating the temples of Religion; the beauty of Christianity is its purity and simplicity,

Adieu for the present.

BRUSSELS, JUNE 6, 1817.

It is a fact which is not generally known, that whilst the Netherlands were under the dominion of Napoleon, a Protestant Minister was supported at Brussels by the French Government.

Two Churches are now appropriated for the use of Protestants in this City : the one is adjoining La Musée, called La Chapelle de la Cour, near the Place Royale. This is used by the German, French, and English Protestants, who alternately perform their respective services here. It is a neat elegant structure, fitted up as all Christian places of Worship ought to be, without distinction of pews; appropriated to the Service of the Members of the Establishment of the Church of England, and supported by annual or quarterly subscriptions; one of the galleries being assigned for those who cannot afford to contribute. The Rev. Mr. Willoughby is the present Minister. Three distinct services of different persuasions of Christians are performed under the same roof. Thus is realized in the Netherlands, the wish which Frederick III. of Prussia in vain endeavoured to accomplish within his dominions, namely, that the same walls should witness the prayers and praises of the several different sects of Religion.



The other Church is St. Augustin's, situated in Rue St. Augustin, and appropriated for the use of the Dutch Protestants in the morning, where the King, the Prince, and the Royal Family attend; and at noon for the use of British residents; it is attended by persons of different religious sentiments, but, who voluntarily unite in public service, and in the administration of the Sacraments, on the broad principle of mutual forbearance, this may be viewed as the triumph of liberality over bigotry, and toleration over prejudice. It was occupied in 1406 by the Monks of the Order of St. Francis, and improved in 1642 after the design of Wincelous Coebergher. The service is similar to that of the established Dutch Church, which is without a ritual, and to that of the Church of Scotland, and the Dissenting services of England. The Rev. Dr. Tracey now officiates here.

In this Church was performed the Baptismal Ceremony of the Hereditary Prince of Orange.

A circumstance connected with this subject I ought not to omit here: When this Church was ordered to be prepared for this ceremony, the architect had elevated the Royal Pew six steps above the floor. When the King saw it, he expressed his disapprobation, and ordered the steps to be removed; when the ceremony was performed, the King and Royal Family had their seats arranged in the parquet, before the

Royal Pew, on a level with the congregation, thereby recognizing this valuable maxim—that in the house of prayer there is no distinction; all are equal in the view of that Being who made of one blood all nations of men on the face of the earth. When Monarchs thus recognize by their example just principles of Religion, the happiest results may be anticipated.

The birth of an Hereditary Prince in the Netherlands cannot be regarded without peculiar interest: it must have a strong tendency to unite more firmly these countries with Great Britain, and operate to preserve that balance of power, which has by many been considered as a great desideratum in European politics. With these sentiments I attended the ceremony of the christening of the young Prince of the House of Orange, and rejoiced to see such numbers of British visitors, present on the occasion.

He was born on the 19th February, 1817, and christened on the 27th March, 1817, by the name of William, Alexander, Paul, Frederick, Louis, and is distinguished as the Hereditary Prince of Orange.

I know no country, if I except America, where the true principles of religious liberty are better understood, and practised, as far as regards any interference of the Government, than the Netherlands. The following is an extract from the fundamental law of the Kingdom on this subject:—

“ Equal protection is given to all the religious  
“ opinions which exist in the kingdom. Every sub-  
“ ject of the King, without any distinction created by  
“ their religious opinions, enjoys equal rights, both  
“ civil and political ; and is equally eligible to all  
“ employments and honours whatsoever. The pub-  
“ lic exercise of every Religion is permitted, if it  
“ does not disturb the general tranquillity. The sa-  
“ laries and all other advantages which different  
“ Ministers of Religion may obtain or possess, are  
“ guaranteed unto them.

“ The King guarantees to every one by the fun-  
“ damental law, that he shall not be disturbed in  
“ the exercise of his Religion.”

Baptism is performed in the Catholic Church by  
sprinkling, in the same manner as in the Church of Eng-  
land. Marriage, although one of the Sacraments of the  
Romish Church, must here be previously performed  
before the Civil Magistrate. Notice of all marriages  
intended to be celebrated must be affixed on the Ho-  
tel de Ville for public inspection, and after being  
performed and registered there, the parties usually  
repeat the ceremony at their respective Parish  
Churches, but it is not compulsory on them so to do.

The Marriage of British Protestants must be cele-  
brated by a Clergyman, in the house of the British

Ambassador, which is considered as a part of the British dominions. A register of all the Births, Marriages, and Deaths of British Protestants, is kept at the English Church, near La Place Royale.

No Burials are permitted within the walls : they generally take place within forty-eight hours after death. The bodies of persons of respectability are deposited without shrouds, and generally without any covering but a common coffin ; they are taken away by night to the burial grounds, without the town, unattended, and many are carried together on a hearse, which resembles a car drawn by one horse. The ceremony which usually takes place in the Churches is over a complete Cenotaph.

The revenues of the Priesthood in Belgium having been alienated, many of the Churches have been destroyed, and their treasures sold during the French Revolution ; the Clergy are now supported by the Government ; they receive very moderate incomes, except what they obtain from voluntary donations ; all the Sacraments are administered free of expence, except the burial service. Whatever is given at Christenings, Marriages, or Confessions, is wholly gratuitous.

Examine at your leisure how intimately the invention of printing is connected with the progress of the Reformation. It is the natural course of events that

light should dispel darkness, but I have now before me one of the pamphlets published in 1807, advocating the re-establishment of the Jesuits in this country.

If an estimate was made of the present state of the Catholic Religion in the Netherlands, from exterior appearances, that estimate would be favourable. The bells sound for Matins at six every morning, and on some occasions earlier; the attire of the priests, the incense, the decorations, the altars, the paintings, the statues, the magnificence of the spacious Churches built in a grand style of gothic architecture, venerable from age, are all impressive circumstances. Until noon every day numbers are going in and out, and on the Sunday mornings all the Churches are crowded; chairs occupy the places of pews or forms, the poor and the rich are equally accommodated, without distinction; the service is performed in Latin, which must be unintelligible to the majority of the Congregation.

The Protestant feels the deepest concern to see that homage paid to images, and the host, which is due alone to the one God. He issued from Mount Sinai a decree, obligatory on the world, forbidding man to make to himself any graven image, or the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters, to bow down to them, or worship them; the Protestant cannot reconcile this command, with the Catholic practice.

There is a glaring impiety in the Roman Catholic system, which I cannot avoid noticing with the most marked disapprobation: in many of the churches the Pictures, and Statues, represent the Deity as a man creating the world! Shall mortal man dare to represent the Omnipotent God?

Ere the Catholic Religion was on the decline, of which there are strong evidences in the Netherlands, a midnight mass was celebrated on the eve of Christmas, with extraordinary splendor, commencing at twelve o'clock at night; it now begins in the several Churches at five o'clock in the morning of Christmas day. The Cathedral of St. Gudule, the last anniversary, was faintly illuminated, and thinly attended: the reflection of the glimmering lights, through the magnificent painted glass of the ancient Gothic structure, in the cold and darkness of the morning, offered a most impressive scene for the Painter or the Poet.

I presume not to unravel the mysteries of that Providence, which, in many cases, is to us inscrutable; but the histories of empires have exhibited some most striking and wonderful coincidences: it was on *La Place Louis Quinze*, in Paris, that Charles IX. issued his mandate for the massacre of the Huguenots, on which very spot was erected the Guillotine, by which Louis the XVI. and Antonietta, his Queen, suffered. It is not less worthy of remark, that the very means which the papal power adopted, to perpetuate its do-

minion, by building St. Peters at Rome, was one of the causes of its humiliation. To defray the expences of this Church, the number of Indulgences were increased, which operated powerfully to accelerate the Reformation.

Plenary indulgences are still offered in all Catholic countries, and the Pope wished to have had a resident Nuncio at Brussels, which was refused.

Christianity is either the most ingenious delusion that was ever practised on mankind, in the most astonishing manner, through a series of successive ages, without any concert between the witnesses by whom it was propagated, who must have been actuated solely by pure benevolence; or, it is a Revelation from Heaven, bearing the impress of its divine author.

Fearless of the results, I invite the Catholic, I invite the Infidel to serious enquiry, and investigation; when satisfied of its divine authenticity, to the volume of inspiration, and not to human edicts, or to human laws, let every appeal be made on all subjects connected with religion.

The advocates of infidelity in our own country, have so often been beaten out of the field of controversy, that they cease to wield the weapons of argument, and have recourse to the sarcastic sneer, or the dismaying doubt; and is it not to be regretted, that

some of the poetical luminaries of modern times, by the countenance which they afford to vice and infidelity, should mingle with the garlands of roses which they entwine the poison of the deadly night-shade? I can only compare the colouring which glows in their strains, to the fascinating Aurora Borealis of Northern Regions, or the Ignis Fatuus, that lures only to destroy. Shall the senseless oak remain invulnerable to the northern blast? shall the clods of the earth on which I tread remain, and the active mind of man become extinct? No—it cannot be, I feel a principle within me, so unconnected with matter, which tells me I shall live when the Stars are dark, and the Sun expires: Inspiration comes in aid of this principle, and brings life and immortality to light.

Christianity built on the immutable basis of Eternal Wisdom—venerable by age—lovely by its purity—and the only true solace of suffering humanity, has long withstood the assaults of its enemies, and the injuries it has sustained from its pretended friends.

If Judas endeavoured to prevent its entrance into our World—if Julian apostatized from its faith—if Rousseau environed it with doubts—and Voltaire discharged against it the shafts of infidelity; it ranks amongst its defenders far nobler names than these. Grotius and Abbadie, examined into its evidences and maintained its truth, the philosophic Bacon became its disciple; Hale directed towards it, the deep re-



searches of his strong intellect, and believed; the pious Paschal lived and died in its faith; the character of the amiable Fenelon was formed upon its maxims; Boyle, Locke, and Addison were amongst its advocates. The mighty mind of Milton enkindled at the sacred flame, and the lofty genius of Sir Isaac Newton became prostrate at the foot of the Cross.

These with numerous others, amongst whom will be found the wisest and the best of our race, rise to upbraid us, if at any time we blush to rank ourselves its disciples.

Man is a compound Being formed to exist in two Worlds; it is his best wisdom to secure the greatest amount of happiness in both. With these considerations I conclude.

BRUSSELS, JUNE 10, 1817.

HAVING in my former letters pointed out to you the several objects worthy of notice in the course of my Tour, I shall now furnish you with a few general remarks on the state of Society and Manners in those Cities of the Netherlands through which I have passed; confining myself more particularly to Brussels, where by a long residence, I have had the best opportunities of making Observations. Experience authorises me to assert, that comparing the prices of House Rent, of Provisions, of Dress and of Education, with those of the Cities of England, the relative proportion is, as about three is to five, in favour of the Netherlands; but there are many towns in Great Britain, in which a family may be supported as reasonably as in this part of the Continent, enjoying all the satisfaction and advantage of residing in their native country; and I trust, I shall not be chargeable either with prejudice or partiality, in saying, that whether the object of the travellers pursuit be picturesque scenery, or substantial comfort, Britain will be found unrivalled. I also feel confident, that the majority of the numerous visitors, who, since the return of peace, have travelled on the Continent, will have learnt duly to appreciate the superior advantages which England affords.





Whether travelling in the Netherlands by Land, or on the Canals, distances are estimated by time ; thus, in reply to the question, What is the distance to such a place ? the answer returned is, some certain number of hours.

The Inns are, in general, good and the charges moderate, the beds are placed against the walls, which render them inconvenient.

The Streets for the most part, are spacious and in the evenings well lighted, the annoyance experienced from the rattling on all sides of Hackney Coaches, Cabriolets and other Carriages, is so great, that eyes and ears are both required to be on the alert, and for personal safety, it is, sometimes, necessary for to take refuge in the first shop which offers, there being no distinct pavement for the protection of foot passengers.

In several of the Belgian towns, Dogs of the Wolf species, harnessed four or five abreast, are employed in drawing very considerable burdens. In Antwerp Oxen very much supply the use of horses.

The Shops in the principal Streets of Brussels make a very respectable appearance ; the Shopkeepers generally, are wealthy and independent, and seldom submit to make much abatement from the prices they demand ; many of them endeavour to take ad-

vantage of English purchasers, but with some few exceptions, the latter are treated with courtesy.

Very few new houses are to be seen; an extensive depopulation, and the precarious state of the country, which has so often been the seat of war, accounts for this; should peace continue, security will be re-established; and the once magnificent cities of the Netherlands may be expected to increase in population, and resume in some degree their ancient splendor. It strikes an English traveller with surprize that Houses of a superior class, having in front, on each floor, from ten to fourteen plate glass windows, are frequently found in secondary Streets, and even in Lanes; and in the best Streets large buildings adjoin others of a very mean appearance, such as Cabarets or Public Houses, and inferior shops.

Some few of the Houses are built of Stone, but the major part are built of Brick, covered with Plaster, which requires to be annually re-coloured. This is done with some taste with an argillaceous earth, of a light tea-green hue, found near Namur, which, when properly prepared, produces a pleasing effect.

The Cities of the Netherlands are kept very clean; every Saturday afternoon the servants wash before their respective doors, and the water runs copiously down the streets. The numerous public fountains

contribute greatly to the health and cleanliness of its inhabitants.

The long alliance that has subsisted between France and Belgium, has had considerable influence on the habits and manners of the latter. The Belgians are fond of appearances, and magnify every object connected with their own country. In their degrees of comparison they make great use of the superlative.

The Cities are divided into Sections ; but the Houses are numbered with such apparent irregularity, that without a very clear direction, it is difficult to find an address.

In Ostend, Bruges, Ghent and Brussels, the Flemish and French languages are principally spoken, but very little English. At Antwerp the Dutch and Flemish languages are most in use. The price of Bread is regulated by the magistrates, and the variations affixed on the Hotel de Ville.

These Cities abound with beggars, who are found at every corner, and are very importunate to the British in particular, they have arrived from all parts of the Continent, and many of them appear to be objects of extreme commiseration ; they have been forbidden to beg by the Police, and rarely apply to the natives. The Government has employed the

male poor the past winter, in labour on the Ramparts and elsewhere.

Few Gypsies are seen here; there exists an ancient edict, by which they are punishable with death on entering Brabant: this law is not now enforced.

The females are very fond of dress; they are peculiarly nice about their feet.

You would be surprised at the ignorance which Shopkeepers of some respectability evince in reckonings, in some instances it becomes very troublesome, for even if you cast up the amount for them, they show strong marks of suspicion. The Education of the Peasantry, and the lower classes of society, is greatly neglected; even in the more opulent classes, Females are not sent to School until the age in which they should be taken from it. Cards are considered to be a necessary branch of Education; at some of the principal Schools, they engage in them on the Sunday, on their return from Mass.

Females take the greatest share in the management of Shops. In domestic and agricultural branches also they are very active, and may be said to possess a tolerable share of beauty: but although at first sight they appear pleasing, upon more minute examination, they will be found to want that refine-



ment which is produced only by a liberal education; further insight into their character confirms this observation. But they are very lively, and free from that form and consequence which is too conspicuous in the exterior of the English character.

Much has been said and written upon the licentiousness of the female character in the Netherlands. That there is some reason for the remark must be acknowledged—but with numerous honourable exceptions: and although I would not be thought to be the apologist for vice, yet it receives some palliation from a defective education, and the vicious habits of the male sex, which are well known, and alledged by females in their own excuse. A pernicious custom prevails extensively. The husbands or fathers spend their afternoons in Societies at Estaminets or Drinking Houses, to the neglect of home, and by the incorrectness of their own manners, shew a bad example to their families.

Their own writers admit that the inhabitants of the several Cities possess an insulated provincial character and much local partiality, which links them together by the place of their birth, rather than by that of their nation.

Expect a continuation of these observations on the Manners and Customs of the inhabitants of this country in my next.

BRUSSELS, JUNE 13, 1817.

MANY of those follies and vices which prevail in Paris have found encouragement here. The Subscription Houses where Gaming prevails are much frequented, and occasionally, very large sums of money have been lost, with all the ruinous consequences usually attendant thereon. Billiards are a very favorite amusement: Rooms for this purpose are connected with all the Coffee Houses, and on Sunday Evenings they are mostly frequented; they have too often proved the portals to the higher species of gambling. The spirit of gaming is much increased by the Roullet Tables in the Streets and Market Places; where children are tempted to adventure their small pittances.

The seeds of vice thus early implanted, are nurtured by the constant excitement of the Royal Lotteries, greatly resembling, in their organization, the well-known and destructive system of Insurances in England, now happily prohibited. The Lotteries are drawn publicly every Saturday Morning, in the Hall of Administration, near the Grand Sablon. Five Numbers only are drawn each day, and again returned into the wheel. The Prizes fall to those

who chance to have chosen the successful numbers; and are paid according to the amount staked upon them.

If Governments would accurately estimate, the importance of moral principle to the well-being of Kingdoms, they would abolish Lotteries, and prohibit every species of gaming by severe penalties, affixing as a punishment some public shame and ignominy : it undermines human happiness, and saps the foundations of Empires and States. Brussels has recently exhibited some of its fatal effects : a gambling House was established here, where the nightly orgies were constantly kept. The amount of ruin was great, and the Government has very properly interfered; shut up the House, and fined the owners in heavy sums, so that they have fled the country. Many who have lost their properties there, have also left Brussels in disgrace, and brought a stain upon the British character. Rouge et Noir was the favourite game.

The disputes which have originated at these Houses have occasioned several duels. Strange insatiation ! which dignifies as an affair of honour, what infinite wisdom and unerring justice, will punish as an act of murder. Why do not governments interfere, and, by proper regulations, prevent such atrocities. Restraints upon the bad passions and evil actions of the unprincipled and the proud are requisite : let Courts of Honour be established in every Province, with full

power to inflict disgrace, and even banishment in flagrant cases.

- This criminal custom extends here, to the lowest ranks ; frequent duels occur with the common soldiers, who fight with swords until blood is drawn, when vengeance and honour are considered to be appeased—but during the last month a duel was fought in l'Allée Verte by two Soldiers, one of whom was killed. Duels were unknown among the Romans until the period of their decay ; the lives of their Citizens were carefully guarded by their Laws.

Music and dancing are the favourite amusements of the Belgians of all classes. In the summer-evenings, there are frequently “ *Grand Balls*,” admission one placquet or three pence half-penny each, at the Cabarets and Gardens, surrounding the towns : and at the several Table d’Hotes in the city, bands of musicians play during dinner, and collect their rewards from the company : in every public house music is heard ; and such is the fondness for dancing, that it is followed as a passion rather than as an amusement : it is no uncommon thing for a man of forty years of age and upwards to take lessons in some new step ; the dancing master assumes the rank of artist.

In the winter season, after Christmas, several Balls and Concerts among the higher classes are given at the Concert Noble in an elegant style : but although

the Belgians shew great fondness for music, they do not appear to possess much natural taste or elevated feeling for it ; it is practised rather as a fashionable amusement, in imitation of the French : they have few if any composers, it must be acknowledged, however, that they have contributed greatly to the revival of the art in Europe and itinerant musicians on the violin—wind instruments and even on the harp, abound.

The rooms where the Concert Noble is held, are decorated in good taste, and the company is select.

Archery was formerly a favourite amusement here, and regular Societies were established to practise it.

Here are two Theatres, the small one in the Park, was sometime since occupied by an English Company, but did not meet encouragement ; the other is situated in the lower part of the town.

The Kermeese or Village Feast, is maintained with as much spirit as in the days of Teniers and Ostade, every Cabaret in the vicinity of the cities exhibit it repeatedly ; there is every reason to believe, with great injury to the virtue and domestic habits of the inferior classes, more particularly.

A select Society of English gentlemen of the highest

respectability, have been amusing themselves the past Winter with private Theatricals.

In most of the principal cities of the Netherlands, the newspapers of Britain, France and Germany are taken; there are, also, daily papers in French, and at Brussels, is an English newspaper, published weekly.

In Brussels, the Clocks strike the hour that is approaching half an an hour before it arrives, so that every hour is struck twice, which occasions great confusion in time. At half-past eleven o'clock each night, a bell sounds that every public house may be cleared, which is an excellent regulation.

In severe Winters, a species of amusement takes place here, unknown in Britain. The Prince, the Nobility, and the Gentry, purchase or hire sledges properly fitted up, and expensively decorated, named *Les Traineax*, and drawn by one horse, in which they proceed daily in procession about the Park and the principal Streets, and present a novel, but very lively agreeable Spectacle; they are let out on hire by the hour, and are very expensive.

Here is a school for pugilistic instruction in the English manner, and also a menagerie, where dogs are trained and instructed in a variety of tricks and fancies. Poodle dogs are highly esteemed, from re-

spectable authority I state an instance of sagacity in this race, which indicates a near approach to the faculty of reason. A young Poodle dog had observed that when his master rung the bell, the servant always entered, without further instruction, the animal acquired the habit when he wanted to quit the room to ring the bell.

A most prejudicial custom prevails here in the management of infants, they are bound hands and feet in swaddling cloaths for some weeks, and sometimes even three months, scarcely suffering them to be moved or to be well shaken ; it becomes a question how far this state of inaction in the earliest hours of life may generate or produce a degree of apathy or heaviness in the future character.

A very favourite amusement in the summer season with the Belgians, is to make parties to the Cabarets without the cities, where thousands may be seen in the afternoons, among whom are persons of respectability, who sit in the air, outside the houses, taking refreshments.

Riding is considered a necessary accomplishment in the Male sex, it is thought disgraceful not to ride well. Horses are fixed in frames when shod, greatly to their annoyance.

There is every reason to hope, that a few years will

give a new impetus to the National Character, at present, it must be admitted that in Arts, in Sciences and in general Education, the inhabitants of Belgium are a century behind Great Britain.

Dancing is an amusement highly esteemed. Quadrilles and the Waltz are the favourite movements which are performed with great spirit ; with sincere regret I notice that many of our own fair countrywomen, have caught the contagion, and exhibit publicly in the Waltz ; that dance so blighting to female modesty, so dangerous to female virtue, there was a period when its introduction into Britain would have been most severely reprobated ; let me remind my beloved countrywomen, that luxury and vice will subdue a nation that cannot be conquered by arms. The Soldiers of Hannibal braved the dangers of the Alps and conquered opposing Roman Legions, they lost their Virtues, and were subdued by the luxuries of Capua.

The Wedding ring here is worn on the third finger of the right hand ; rings are a favourite ornament, the fingers are often seen full of them.

The traveller who has been much in South Wales, will recognize in the manners, features and exclamations of the peasantry here, a great similarity to that part of Great Britain.



Drunkenness does not appear to be a prevailing vice of the Netherlands, fewer instances of it are seen here than in England. The drinking rooms of the Cabarets or Public Houses, are larger and have a much more respectable appearance than in Britain.

Those who are accustomed to the noise and bustle of the streets of London until a very late hour every night, the stillness which prevails in the several cities of the Netherlands surprises; about dusk, even in the winter, the shops are shut, very few are open at candle-light, and at eight o'clock in Winter and ten in Summer, scarcely an individual is seen in the principal streets; that unhappy class of females so numerous in the cities of England, are not allowed to perambulate here: they are under the regulation of the Police, and any flagrant irregularity would be speedily noticed. But a custom prevails, yet more reprehensible, young boys, who attend the Diligences and Barges to carry luggage, and guide strangers about the cities are the pandors of vice, and offer to point out the residences of these unhappy creatures, thus, early initiated in vice, they are not likely themselves to become very valuable members of society. This subject demands the interference of authority,

The National Character partakes greatly of irritability—and has ever exhibited itself in ardent exertions in favour of freedom; under judicious management, the people may be easily governed.

A marked distinction divides the ranks of society, neither the lower classes of Tradesmens wives or daughters, farmers wives, those who attend the markets, nor female servants are seen to wear hats or bonnets. They use a veil of printed linen, of black stuff, or of a rich costly black silk introduced originally by the Spaniards, called "*La faille*" and worn as seen in the Madona heads of the pictures of Salsà Farrata, or Carlo Dolce; they are very becoming, much more so than many modern dresses which fashion has substituted.

A general air of comfort and independence appears in the features; the connoisseur will trace among the females, the models from whence Rubens drew his ideas of feminine beauty.

Certain nameless acts of indelicacy are occasionally exhibited in public, by females of the lower classes, unpleasant to an English mind. A habit prevails of emptying water out of the windows into the streets, which renders them offensive in warm weather: this custom, indeed, does not take place in La Place Royale, the Park, and some few of the principal streets, but prevails extensively, and is highly disgusting in many parts of the city, even from houses which are very respectable, and where numerous servants are kept. The Police might, surely prevent this.

The servants will be found by the English very





troublesome and difficult to manage ; they are industrious, active and cleanly, but very obstinate ; wages indeed are moderate but they will take every possible opportunity to deceive, by giving away Coals, Bread and Provisions to their friends or relations ; this is universally complained of, even by the native inhabitants.

The Eastern and Southern sides of the City are said to abound in Minerals ; from the character of the soil, I deem this doubtful. Naturalists affirm that no venomous snakes are known in the Netherlands. Monsieur Burtin possesses a collection of Natural History and Fossils, many of which were found in the environs of Namur.

The mode of warming the rooms is very disagreeable ; the chimnies are closed, and wood is principally burnt in iron Stoves, which project into the room and a long iron pipe goes up the chimney ; after a company has been some time in a room thus heated, and the door closed, it becomes quite suffocating and unwholesome.

The Theatre in the Place de La Monnaie, was built in 1700, and is one of the most ancient edifices of the kind in Europe, which has never experienced an accident ; the interior is well laid out, the whole exhibits a pleasing effect. It cannot boast of

its Actors ; it is supplied principally, from the French Theatres, and except when any Actors of eminence are here from Paris, the performances go off heavily.

The best plays are generally selected for the Sunday Evenings, and on those nights the Theatre is fullest of company.

A new Theatre is about to be built not far distant from the other ; and an Italian Opera is to be got up immediately in the little Theatre in the Park, by subscription. So that comparing the present state of Brussels with what it was previously to the battle of Waterloo, and when under French dominion, and the advantages which it has derived from a connexion with Britain, will very forcibly appear.

Previously to the period of the French Revolution, the English Character on the Continent was held in the highest estimation for its integrity ; with real concern I notice, that so many instances of injustice have occurred, within the last twelve months, in the Netherlands, as to have brought a stigma on the British Nation. I am willing to hope, that necessity, arising from extensive National calamity may have been the fundamental cause, in most instances, of this complaint, for Britains are educated in, and possess high principles of honour and justice ; with the return of prosperity, the cause will be done away and

the effect, will no doubt cease, for although heavy clouds are rolling through the political hemisphere of Britain, I trust, there is a brightness above the storm which will yet disperse them, and once more elevate our beloved country to its own pre-eminence. I must observe also, that it is not equitable to estimate National Character by the few instances of delinquency ; amongst the residents in the Netherlands is found some considerable amount of virtue and of worth.

If this Letter is long, I trust its various subjects will have preserved it from being tedious.

BRUSSELS, JUNE 16, 1817.

THE earliest records describe Belgium as possessing extraordinary fertility. Pliny mentions the excellence of its Fruits, and Guicciardini in 1582, describes very fully the abundance of Vegetables and Grain which it then produced.

Previous to the year 1500, it supplied England with considerable quantities of Vegetables and since that period the Gardens and Pleasure Grounds of Britain have received great additions from the Low Countries. Wall-flowers, Carnations, and the Provence Rose, were brought from thence to Norwich in 1567, and Sallads, Cabbages, and Gooseberries at a much earlier period, it is supposed about 1509. Britain learnt her first Agricultural Lessons from Belgium.

The Monks were among the earliest cultivators of Flanders. The several Princes who have in succession governed that country, have been uniformly found to afford most liberal encouragements to Agriculture, considering it as the original source of all national wealth. When the vast forests of Belgium were converted into fruitful plains, the possessors enjoying the



advantages of a free Constitution, and the undisturbed possession of what they acquired, were stimulated to great exertions, and the fertility of the country became proverbial. No extent of territory within the same degrees of latitude, can be found to possess more natural advantages than the United Netherlands. A rich Soil, a mild Climate, for the most part, an extensive industrious and opulent Population, equitable Laws, great Cities, numerous Villages, &c. are important advantages; when to these are added the good Roads, the majestic Rivers which intersect or bound these countries, and the extended line of Sea Coast which they possess, we trace the causes of their great prosperity.

The Vine was once cultivated in Flanders and Brabant, but never with any great success. Amidst the numerous wars which have destroyed the Towns, ruined the Commerce, decreased the Manufactories, and greatly lessened the Inhabitants of the Cities, Agriculture has flourished, and the population has increased in the Villages.

Agriculture was carried, in the 15th Century, to much greater perfection in the Low Countries, than in any other part of Europe; each successive year, the fields were loaded with Grain. The lands were, and still continue to be divided into small farms, seldom exceeding fifty Acres; except in Brabant; about

Wallon, where they are leased out in Farms of several hundred Acres. The States of Hainault made a Law to prevent more than one hundred and fifty Acres being let in any single Farm. And if a bold Peasantry, “ their Country’s pride,” or, in other words, if an increasing, healthy, happy population be considered, as it surely must be, one of the most valuable sources of national wealth, it will be most promoted, where the lands are divided into Farms of such an extent, that the Proprietor or Farmer can manage the whole, without that anxiety and cupidity which ever accompanies extensive concerns. It is an object deserving of serious enquiry, how far that system which has of late years prevailed in Great Britain, of leasing out Lands into large farms may not have very considerably encreased the present distresses under which she labours? and which is daily forcing her population to seek in other countries those means of subsistence they strive for in vain, in their native Land.

Flanders exhibits powerfully the effects of human industry. In the twelfth Century it was covered with vast woods, where now is seen the verdant meadow, the waving Corn, the cultivated Garden, the comfortable Cottage, and the happy Peasantry; a national Education and emancipation from Superstition is all that is wanted, to render this people truly happy.

An ingenious Continental author, in 1784, describes the soil of Flanders as inexhaustible, und containing within itself the true principles of vegetation, composed “ of a blackish colour, sometimes inclining “ to dark brown, the particles infinitely diviseable, “ reducible to a very fine powder, mellow to the “ touch, and which preserves an equal degree of “ temperature.” The soil of the Netherlands, compared with that of Britain, may be considered as much lighter, and not possessing such staple qualities.

An examination into the Grain, the Bread, the Beer and the Vegetables of this country, confirm the truth of this observation. I have seen scarcely any clay, in the several districts which I have travelled, but the upper or alluvial Soil is of considerable thickness. Although the Farmers may not be said to possess great wealth, they bring up their families with industry, and in that happy state of mediocrity which guards them from the dangers of riches—few instances of indigence are to be seen except in the cities. The Wives and Daughters attend the markets, which by this means, are supplied with abundance of Poultry, Butter, Cheese and Eggs at a moderate price.

A weekly Market for Cattle is fixed in each principle City—in Brussels it is from 9 to 12 on Thurs-

day mornings near the gate of Lacken; the Cattle are not of a large description or very fat; but they are healthy. The breed of Cows are remarkable for having small heads—the best come from Germany.

The Horses are good, Carriage Horses more especially, and may be purchased from forty to sixty Napoleons the pair. The draft horses are strong, but many of them too hollow in the back. Flanders Mares are well known in England.

The breed of sheep is small, and the wool is coarse. I have observed only one flock of Merinos in the country. The Meadows on the borders of the Senne derive great fertility from being flooded from the river, during the Summer they are remarkably dry.

Except in the lowest and marshy parts, fogs are seldom seen—in Brussels rarely, and never of long duration.

The crops of Clover are remarkably fine, and grow to a great height. Before the Wheat crops are carried off the ground Turnips are sown, but they do not grow large. Wheat, Rye, Oats, and Barley are the usual successions of crops, followed every fourth year by Clover, or some other green crops. During the eventful period of the Revolution, for the last twenty years, many of the great proprietors have been com-

pelled to leave their extensive Demesnes, some of whom have suffered greatly in their properties. This has occasioned a considerable degree of misery in those districts : numbers who were employed under the former proprietors are now idle, but this is a partial evil, and by no means an extensive one. The abolishing the law of Primogeniture will in process of time operate powerfully to increase the number of small farms, and promote population.

It is very customary to hire Farm labourers by the year, giving them their food and from eight to ten Nobles annually, equal to about six or eight Pound Sterling. Many of the principal Farmers are very opulent. But no Agricultural Society exists, nor is there any great spirit of improvement sought for or encouraged.

No Wheel Ploughs are seen; a light short Plough, drawn by two Horses is generally used, which is guided by the Ploughman, and the Boy is employed to drive the Horses.

The Drags or Harrows have all wooden teeth. Iron Harrows are unknown, nor does the soil render them necessary.

Lime Stone is not much used as a manure ex-

cept about Namur, in the vicinity of the Lime Rocks.

Brabant is more hilly than Flanders, but not less fertile. It presents numerous cottages, and a vigorous, healthy population : the Province of Hainault is rich in Meadows, Hills, and Vallies. The Lands of the Netherlands, lie in such extensive level plains, with so few Hills or Mountains, that in favourable seasons they yield crops far beyond the natural consumption of the country ; which, if not exported, would serve for several succeeding seasons ; but so great is the similarity of the soil, that throughout the whole district, crops are generally good, or generally bad, with few exceptions. The paved Roads, the Canals and the Rivers, afford the greatest facilities for taking produce to market, and obtaining manures in return. The Mildew is said to be unknown, which is attributed to a custom of steeping the Corn into a light preparation of Sulphate of Copper with Water. Corn Fields of considerable extent are sometimes seen in the Champaign Countries. Much care is used in selecting the seed, and changing it from time to time.

On the banks of the Canal, the farms are seen to be divided into very small fields ; this may be done for shelter during the very severe Winters to which they are sometimes exposed, or to procure early

crops, for manure is laid on here with great profusion. I cannot find that the Compost Heaps are prepared with much judgement—very few are to be seen. Dung is used green or fresh; Here are no waste Lands, every acre is under cultivation, but the Farmers are not equally provident of human labour. Several men are employed to do the work of one, but the price of labour is moderate—from eight to ten Sous per day. It may be remarked that few Cows or other Cattle are seen grazing in the meadows; they are kept up in Stalls or Farm Yards, and their food is cut and carried to them, which greatly increases manure, and prevents waste, but the Cattle have the less range for exercise. The divisions of the Lands are used as drains.

Oil cakes and grains are much used in the fattening of cattle, which do not attain to great size or weight, as in England; with an œconomy there unknown, the potatoe-parings, the cabbage-leaves, and the residue from all other vegetables, are collected from the market and elsewhere, and constitute in part the food of the cattle.

Whatever perfection the Agriculturists may have attained here, it is wholly the effect of practical knowledge, for of theoretical they know nothing, there exists not a single volume, scarce a single pamphlet,

which treats upon the subject even in the papers of the academies. The principal crops consist of wheat, barley, oats, flax, rye, tobacco, hops, turnips, chiccory, clover, &c. Dutch clover is known to be excellent. Fallows are rarely employed in these fertile countries, with such depth of soil they are unnecessary.

The implements of husbandry are ill contrived, and the carts and waggons awkward and unwieldy; the one horse cart used in farming is very heavy, but sand is carried to the towns in one of a good construction.

In the Pays de Waes the wild cabbage grows upon a stalk of prodigious size, and the Sarasin wheat, so humble in many other countries, attains a height here which is surprising. A great quantity of turnips are grown for the horned beasts and carrots for horses and pigs. The soil is so light that it is easily laboured, and excellently adapted for the growth of carrots.

Cows yield extraordinary supplies of milk; as might be expected where the country is so fertile, land is brought to great perfection, and obtains a very high rent, in some places 500 florins or 45 nap. per bonnier, or about  $2\frac{1}{4}$  English acres, and both in value and in cultivation, this district offers a striking contrast to the country of Les Pays Wallons.



In Brabant, about Wallon, are some very extensive Farms ; but in the other districts the lands are leased out into small farms, possessing such natural fertility, that fallows are unnecessary. In Flanders the farmers are numerous, but labourers are few. In Wallon and Namur the farmers are few, and the labourers numerous.

In the neighbourhood of Courtray, Flax is cultivated to high perfection ; a considerable part of the thread for making the fine laces is grown there.

Abbé Man, in his view of Brussels, states that he gathered in 1791, one ear of white wheat which contained fifty-four grains ; another of red wheat which contained forty-nine, and another of bearded wheat with forty-four grains, each of which were well filled. In 1783 he gathered an ear of wheat which contained seventy grains, and in 1785 he gathered one which contained eighty-four grains. This year, 1817, an ear of barley has been gathered near Alost, which contained one hundred and ten grains.

The district of Luxemburg is the most uncultivated and has the smallest population : Namur abounds in minerals, and is mountainous, but very fertile ; the Meuse, a picturesque and beautiful river, contributes in no small degree to benefit the adjoining territories. In the province of Limbourg are many very rich pastures, and on the lands of the Northern coasts

the marshes are found to fatten with great rapidity, the lean cattle which are brought from Germany, from Denmark, and other places; these marshes have been reclaimed from the sea.

But perhaps no part of this country exhibits greater symptoms of the high state of Agriculture, than the lands about Nivelles, Tirlemont, and the Pays de Waes, between Antwerp and Ghent; the numerous neat and comfortable cottages, the little gardens, and the fields, exhibit a character indicative of the good system of husbandry practised. A peculiar manner of draining the lands is adopted here which deserves attention.

It is beyond a doubt that a great part of the Netherlands was originally covered by the sea: Fossil remains have been found in numerous districts. The coasts are greatly exposed to the winds from the North Pole, crossing over the sea without the intervention of any lands, which accounts for that nipping cold experienced in severe winters. Brussels is colder than Paris, and warmer and less humid than London, both in winter and summer; this has not been the case at Brussels for the past winter, for it has been much more humid than London. It is stated that rain falls usually about 150 days in each year here, and that the summer heat of Brussels is about  $25^{\circ}$  above, and winters cold  $10^{\circ}$  under the freezing point of Rheamur. North West winds are most

prevalent: they bring thunder storms in summer, but earthquakes are unknown in the Netherlands.

In so extensive a district, it must be evident that great varieties of Soil will be found. Its general characteristic, however, is a deep, sandy loam, and very absorbent. The climates vary greatly between the southern parts of the Interior, and the northern coasts.

In the vicinities of the several cities, Vegetables are produced in abundance, in the cultivation of these crops, in succession, great judgment is shewn; the same piece of land yields three or four crops each year as in England, but the gardeners are not accustomed to force early crops, as they are exhibited in the London markets, nor would they be rewarded by a liberal price for their labours, expense and risk; every thing comes on in its season, and in plenty; and peas which are very fine continue unusually long, they are to be had in the markets in November. Potatoes are planted whole from the small ones, which in Britain are given to the pigs, and although they do not attain to the size they do there the soil is favourable to them and they boil mealy and well. Vegetables, in winter, are dearer here than in England; no hand glasses are made use of to shelter the forward crops: garden labour may be obtained from 10d. to 16d. per day. The garden tools are awk-

ward machines; the spade is no other than a common shovel, the soil is so light that the use of the foot is unnecessary. In the gardening grounds manure is used chiefly in a liquid state, it is prepared in holes dug for that purpose, which are filled with water and kept supplied with all sorts of refuse, which is taken out and used to water crops copiously from time to time, until the holes are emptied and their contents dug into the Lands.

The seed crops suffer greatly from worms, a peculiar method is adopted to counteract this injury straw is cut into chaff and scattered thickly over the ground, which the worms feed on, and the seed springs up.

Asparagus and many other vegetables are cultivated in the open fields; the red cabbage grows very large and heavy. A species of Kale, said to be indigenous to this country, which throws off from its stalks small shoots about the size of a walnut, resembling very small cabbages, called Brussels sprouts, constitutes an excellent Autumnal vegetable; it degenerates soon in other countries.

The garden hoe is on a good construction, I do not remember to have seen any similar to it in England.

The lateral branches of trees are kept pruned close,

by which means, the trees attain height and make good sticks of timber ; but are without side boughs for a considerable part of the trunk ; this, with the lightness of the soil makes a walk in the woods here, much more dry than in those of England.

Standard fruit trees are trained in the like manner, in small gardens this may be advantageous, but I have some doubts whether it is calculated to produce fine fruit or great crops ; as it is well known, that the finest fruit is found towards the extremities of branches.

Double Pomegranates, Laurustinus's, Arbutus's Bays, Roses, Jessamines and other ornamental shrubs are budded here upon thick upright stems, so as to form large round heads. The first sort resemble young orange trees, at a distance, the whole produce a pleasing effect.

The Farmers and Gardeners in the Netherlands are not burdened with a weight of taxes, enormous Poores' Rates, nor the greivous exaction of Tithes, causes which in England have operated to ruin so many thousands of its cultivators, and have driven its peasantry in such numbers to the Western Continent ; the total amount of Taxes do not exceed ten per cent, on the Rentals,

Leases are sometimes granted for 27 years ; the customary terms are 6, 9, or 27 years.

The result of my Agricultural and Horticultural observations amounts to this, that although England was indebted originally, to the Netherlands for instruction ; the pupil has far exceeded her instructors they have been stationary, whilst she has made such rapid progress that they are now, at least, half a century behind her.

My limits will not admit of entering into more minute details on this subject, and it will be required the less as I purpose in an Agricultural tour through Flanders, Brabant and the Southern districts, now in preparation to enter more fully into the subject.

BRUSSELS, JUNE 19, 1817.

IF seven Cities of Greece put in their respective claims to have been the birth-place of Homer, is it wonderful that several Cities of the Netherlands, contend for the honour of giving birth to the inventor of the invaluable Art of Printing, which has diffused, and is still diffusing its benefits around the world.

Haarlem claims this honour in the person of Laurence Koster or Coster, who died in 1440 and who, it is said by some, discovered this art some years before his death.

Mayence or Mentz contends for it in favour of John Guttenberg, assisted by his Son-in-law Schaeffer, and John Faust or Fust. The first Work by the new method of metallic types is believed to have been "*Durandi rationale Divinorum*," 1459. Soon after appeared "*Catholicon Joannis Januensis*," which was followed by two beautiful Editions of the Psalter; and, in 1462, by the Vulgate edition of the Bible.

Guttenberg is said to have attempted to establish this Art at Strasburgh, from 1436 to 1440. He was born at Mentz in 1400, and died there 1466.

It is ascertained that this invaluable Art was introduced into England in 1471, by William Caxton, a Mercer, who had a Press in Westminster Abbey, until 1494.

Caxton resided for several years in the Low Countries, previous to his coming over to England, and published there a Work entitled "The Siege of Troy," in French dedicated to the Duchess of Burgundy, Sister to Henry IV. of England.

Mons. Des Roches, the Historian of the early ages of this Country, but not a native, in his enquiries into the origin of Printing, asserts that Brabant has the best claim to this honour, and after some lengthened details on the subject he draws the following results :—

I. That the Characters which constitute the modern system of Printing, were invented at Mayence by Peter Schoeffer de Guernsheim, and that the first book printed with these characters was "*Rationale Durandi*," 1459.

II. That the engraved characters in copper or other metals were invented by Guttenberg, Genfleis,



Mentel and Faust, which served them for impressions of their Bibles without dates, and also other books, as “ *Alexandri Galli Doctrinale Petri Hispani Tractatus Logici*. It is thought that these books were produced between 1440 and 1457 and that Fust and Schoeffer added for the first time the date and notice of the Printing Office to their *Psalmorum Codex*. The dates in certain Books as “ *De Conceptione Immaculata B. Virg.*” 1314, and others are considered as false dates.

III. In 1442, the Printers formed at Antwerp a Society which made part of the Brotherhood of St. Luke, unless they mistake the date of their admission.

IV. Long before this Epocha there existed in the Low Countries Printers on Wood of Books and Figures, School Books, and Books of Devotion; the most ancient examples that exist of them, give reason to think that they used moveable Letters as well as fixed.

These Books are without date, but the manner in which they are executed clearly evince that they are anterior to all the works of Germany. The character of the whole, and the language in which they have been printed, prove that the Low Countries have the only just claim to them. Every thing favours the opinion that they belong to the 15th Century.

Gibbon, the Historian of Rome, observes in a Note, in Chapter 26, “ That after several years of anarchy and despotism, the dynasty of the Han of the Northern Regions of the Eastern World, 205 B.C. was the æra of the revival of learning. The Fragments of ancient Literature were restored, the characters were improved and fixed, and the future preservation of Books was secured by the useful invention of Ink, Paper, and the Art of Printing. Ninety-seven years before Christ, Sematsien published the first History of China. His labours were illustrated, and continued by a series of One Hundred and Eighty Historians. The substance of their works is still extant; and the most considerable of them are now deposited in the King of France’s Library. (Vide the Chou-King, with the Preface and Notes of Mons. Guignes, Paris 1770, and several others.)

This may be correct so far as relates to the Art of engraving Plates: it cannot relate to the Art of Printing with moveable Types, which could not have existed during so long a period without finding its way into Europe, sooner than the fourteenth Century.

But the circumstance the most probable is that which is advanced by the Rev. Wm. Morrison, the indefatigable and learned modern Chinese translator, who states, that “ so early as the Eleventh Century, immoveable types for Printing were made of Clay,

hardened by burning, and, about the same time the people of Pelang, in Chekeans, used moveable Types of Lead."

What, though no Corinthian Pillar has been erected to perpetuate the memory of him who first invented this most invaluable art, he has a monument in the heart of every friend of science, and a grateful posterity will never cease to pay to him their votive tribute of gratitude.

After the fire in 1731, which burnt down the Palace, the Books and Manuscripts which were saved, were deposited in one of the subterraneous vaults. In 1754, they were removed into the great hall in the Rue d'Isabelle, then unoccupied; this was the commencement of the Royal Library of Brussels, which was made public on the 16th December, 1772, when Maria Theresa, the Empress Queen of Austria, by Letters patent from Vienna, erected the Literary Society established at Brussels, in 1769, into a permanent body, under the title of "The Imperial and Royal Academy of Belles Letters;" granting to the Academicians, the distinctions and prerogatives, attached to the state of personal nobility, assigning them the rooms in the Royal Library, which she ordered to be opened also for the use of the public.

In Article III. of its formation, it is declared, that it shall be composed of thirty-six Academicians, of

which ten shall be honorary. An annual meeting shall be held in every year to adjudge the two prizes in the classes of Science, and of Belles Lettres and fix on the Questions for the following year; five volumes of their transactions have been published in quarto, which may be inspected during Library hours, besides several volumes which contain the prize dissertations.

The Library is placed in a square building, which was built in 1625, with an interior Court-yard, at the expense of the King of Spain, by order of the Infanta Isabella; and is opened to the public, from the 1st of April to the 15th Oct. from nine in the morning until noon and in the afternoon from three to half-past five; the remainder of the year from nine in the morning until one. Thursday mornings and public holidays excepted.

For several years during the French Revolution this Institution ceased to exercise its functions. His Majesty the King of the Netherlands has re-established it by an edict of the 7th May, 1816, under the title of the Royal Academy of Sciences and Belles Lettres; it consists of Sixty Academicians of which twelve are honorary members, and it has for its object to research into the Sciences both Physical and Mathematical, Ancient Literature, History, Laws, Natural History, Chemistry, Geography, &c.

Public Lectures are read every morning, vacations

excepted, and to which strangers may be admitted on proper application to the professors. Mons. Le Baron de Feltz is the President, and Mons. Van Hulthem, the provisional Secretary.

The following are the Prize Questions for the year 1818. The dissertations are required to be written in Latin, French, Dutch or Flemish, and delivered free of expense before the 1st of February, 1818, to M. Van Hulthem, Register of the Second Chamber of the States General and Provisionary Secretary of the Academy at Brussels. The Society requires the utmost accuracy in all quotations; the editions and pages must be marked whence they are extracted. The authors names are not to be annexed to the dissertations, but to accompany them sealed up with the same mark.

**Question I.**—Trace out in an accurate and historical description, the state of the Sciences, and of Letters in the Netherlands, between the years 1792 and 1815; marking particularly all the various causes which have contributed to their prosperity or their decline.

**Question II.**—What has been the state of servitude or vassalage in the Netherlands, from the most distant periods to the close of the thirteenth century; by what means became it extinct, and what remnants

of it existed up to the period of the introduction of the New French Laws ?

Question III.—What has been the state of the Population, the Manufactures, and the Commerce of the Provinces of the Netherlands during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries ?

Question IV.—What are the defects attributable to many species of our bricks ? what are the materials and methods made use of in the Northern Provinces of the Kingdom, for making certain species of bricks not made here ?

Question V.—Is it possible, after sufficient experiments drawn from the causes deduced from the doctrine of fixed proportions, to assert, that the basis of muriatic acid is a simple composition, or is it not more probably a simple body. In case this is not determined, which is the best method to simplify the theory of Chemical facts ?

Question VI.—The paper made in France, and the pasteboard made in England, being superior to those of other Countries. It is required to ascertain in what their superiority consists—and on what causes it depends—whether that of local advantages—materials or hand labour, and how it can be attained in this Country ?

The Academy propose for the year 1819, this question also : Determine in a given space, and during a given time, the volume of water in a river, of which, the breadth, the depth, and the declivity is given? Determine in the same space, and during the same time, the variations which will take place in this volume, when the breadth of this river is progressively restrained?

The prize to be awarded for the best answer to each of these questions, will be a Gold Medal, weighing twenty-five ducats. The answer to the last question must be delivered in, previously to the first November, 1818.

La Bibliotheque was originally instituted by the Duke of Burgundy, and contains many valuable Manuscripts and Books from his Library, together with numerous other curious and rare Manuscripts, Missals and scarce specimens of the early art of printing, many of which are splendidly illuminated, or illustrated with miniatures, in a superior style; they exhibit a degree of science in delineations of costume and character, scarcely surpassed in Modern Art, and are in fine preservation, among others L'Evangile of the ninth century.

Flemish Bible in 2 vols. 1360.

Liber Secretorum fidelium crucis de sanato, 1320.

La Somme des vices, 1450.

Histoire du Hainault par de Guise Ms. 3 vols. folio,  
1460, with fine miniatures.

La Flur des Histoires, 3 vols. 1470, ditto.

Pontifical Romanorum, 1470, superb.

Missale par ordre de Matthias Corvinus King of  
Hungary, 1485, elegant.

Psalterium, blue and gold.

Livres des Guerres.

Cantus Missæ, (ancient music).

An ancient book of dancing with the figures described.

Antient manuscript copy of the Koran.

Among many rare works are to be seen several fine specimens of the first books printed in the cities of the Low Countries, as follows :

First Flemish Bible—printed at *Delft*, 1477, 4to.

Dionysii de Leuwis, alias Rikel speculum conversionis  
peccatorum, Theodoricus Martens—*Alost*, 1473,  
4to.

Petri de Crescentis opus ruralium commodorum,  
Joannes de Westphalia. *Louvain*, 1474, folio.

Theasurus pauperum, Theodoricus Martens, *Anvers*,  
1476, folio.

Bocace du dechiet des nobles hommes et cleres  
femmes, Colard Mansion, *Bruges*, 1476, folio.

Les freres de la Vie commune, Arnoidi Gelthoven  
Gnotosolitos, *Bruzelles*, 1476, folio.

Rhetorica divina Guillermi.

Parisiensis, Arnoldus Cæsaris, *Ghent*, 1483, 4to.

Biblia sacrapolyglotta, 1514, and numerous copies of



the sacred Scriptures in the Hebrew, the Malay and other languages.

Monsieur Van Hulthem, the respectable Secretary, of the Bibliotheque with a prompt attention, although a stranger, devoted a considerable portion of time, and took great pains to furnish me with every requisite information respecting the Library, and to point out the several rare and curious manuscripts and books which it contains. His own private collection of Prints, Medals, and Coins, contains several rare articles. Among many others—

*Speculum Conversiones Peccatorum*, Printed at Alost, 1473, 4to.

*Speculum Nostra Salvationis*, first edition, without date.

*Biblia Pauperum*, complete, with 40 Plates, Pfister, small folio, without date. Earl Spencer's copy has 17 plates only.

He is acquainted with a method to restore old books that are yellow and discoloured, so as to bring them to their colour and, to exhibit them as in the highest preservation.

Great numbers of the manuscripts and rare books of the public Library were taken to Paris, and mark-

ed with the letter N. but are restored in splendid bindings, and are now inscribed with the letter W.

The Library contains also several fine copies of the ancient Fathers, and of the Classics. The King of the Netherlands has lately sent several valuable additions thereto, and has testified his desire to maintain and to increase it.

Among other Works for general Reading or Instruction will be found—

Denons Voyage dans la basse et la haute Egypt. Imp. Folio. 1802.

Hindoo Customs. 10 Vol. Fol.

Voyage pittoresque de Naples et de Sicilæ. 5 Vol. 1781.

Lavaters Physionomie.

Encyclopedie Francoise. 35 Vol.

Morier's Persia. 2 Vol.

Philosephical Transactions.

With numerous Volumes on Theology, Laws, History, Arts, Sciences, and other subjects.

The Laws are highly favourable to Authors in the Netherlands, on delivering three Copies of any Work printed there to the proper Officer, the Copy Right vests in the Author and his Widow and Heirs. Should the Manuscript be stolen or lost, and another

person publish it, the profits would still vest in the Author, and if published in another country and brought into the Netherlands the copies would be seized by the Government, and sold for the benefit of the Author or his family. No License is necessary, but every Author is responsible for his Work, if it contains libellous or treasonable matter.

In the Cabinet of Natural History is found specimens of Fossils, Minerals, Beetles, Shells, Butterflies, Birds, Reptiles, and the skin of the horse, which carried off the Duke of Alva, in safety, from the siege of Ostend; it bore him six miles after it had been shot in two places, the holes are seen in the skin; here is, also, the coat of mail of Charles I. of England.

Among the Mathematical instruments, are two small Orreries, several Air pumps, Electrical machines, Magnets, Optical illusions, and an ingenious surgical Machine for the cure of contracted muscles.

Free Lectures are given from time to time on the higher branches of the mathematics, and on natural philosophy. Lectures are also given on Medical science, and in one of the apartments of the Hotel de Ville lessons are given gratis in Painting, Sculpture and Architecture.

It is to be hoped, that the new order of things established in the Netherlands, will call forth some la-

tent sparks of genius in Literature and Science ; hitherto, they have little to boast, if we except Froissard, Cambray, and the voluminous author of the *Lives of the Saints*, in fifty volumes folio.

When we contemplate the stately edifice, or the lofty column, we know, that time will crumble the one into ruin, and hurl the other from its base ; but when we peruse the volumes, which transcendent genius has transmitted to posterity, time has only served to render them more venerable, and the study of them is daily calling down some new blessings for mankind ; like the Phœnix, they rise from their ashes and live through succeeding ages.

Let me exhort you to cultivate Literature, whatever your occupation or destiny ; it affords satisfactions which adversity can never deprive you of, you well know, how it has cheered my path of life in those severe reverses which I have encountered.—  
Adieu.

BRUSSELS, JUNE 21, 1817.

RESUMING the highly interesting subject with which I concluded my last, I proceed to observe that, until the revival of the Universities in the Southern provinces of the Kingdom, the public seminaries of Instruction were in a very low state ; they have undergone a complete revision and new regulations for their organization have been adopted, which are published, and to which I refer you for minute details. The Kings Edict is issued 19th February, 1817 ; and announces, that the subordinate colleges are to be named l'Athenee, and are to be established at Brussels, Maestricht, Bruges, Tournay, Antwerp, Luxembourg and Namur ; in the latter will be established a chair of Mineralogy and Metallurgy.

The objects of Instruction, more particularly attended to, will be

The Greek and Latin Languages,  
History—Geography—Mythology,  
Elements of Physics and Natural History,  
Mineralogy and Metallurgy.

A complete course of study is calculated to occupy six years.

The Commissary-General of the division is empowered, by a Special Commission, to inspect these Colleges and to report to the Police.

The new regulations are appointed to commence in October, 1817.

The Royal School at Brussels, in Rue Namur, now called La Lycee, contains about 150 boarders, among which, are 25 English and about 200 day scholars.

There are to be three Universities established in the Southern Provinces at Louvain, Ghent, and Liege, which will be empowered to confer degrees, and to be open to the admission of Protestants and Roman Catholics, the objects of instruction will be divided into five departments, Theology, Laws, Medicine, Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Philosophy and Belles Letters. The degrees will consist of Candidates and Doctors, the latter may also be conferred on strangers, who may merit it.

All the Professors are public Functionaries, and no one is to be received into either of the Universities, until after he has attended the Academical Lessons with the temporary Rector of the University as a Student, and produced a certificate thereof.

To each University is to be appointed five persons

as Curators ; the Presidents are to be named by the King, who are to reside in the cities, where the Universities are fixed.

Besides these Instructions, there are numerous Academies or Schools for education in Brussels ; two of which are under British superintendence, one for young Ladies under the care of Mrs. Hawksley, with the assistance of her two daughters, situated in Rue Marais, and the other by Mr. Biggs, for young Gentlemen, opposite the Church of St. Gudule.

I can, with truth and disinterestedness, bear witness to the care which is taken of the morals and education of the several pupils, who are placed under their care.

Mons. Le Roi, the painter, has established a school for design in Brussels, upon an excellent plan, his pupils have the liberty to attend his instructions for several hours every day.

The encouragement which Literature the Arts and Sciences receive, from the patronage of the Illustrious Family, which reigns over these Countries, must tend to produce correspondent effects.

In Article 226 of the Fundamental Laws of the Kingdom, it is expressly announced,

That Public Instruction is one of the constant ob-

jects of Government : the King requires an annual report to be made to the States-General of the several Universities and Colleges.

228.—The Institutions of Benevolence and of the Education of the poor, are regarded as an object not less exciting the attentions of Government ; and the King demands a report, on this head, to be made from time to time to the States-General.

This is commencing, with great propriety, at the true source ; the lower classes of the community, both in the Cities and Villages, afford the most glaring and melancholy proofs of the ignorance in which, they are involved : and, whatever the enemies of Instruction, and the friends of Superstition may advance, the Education of the poor must form a component part of all well-regulated Governments. It remains no longer a question of Theory, it has long since been practically solved in our own country. Compare the Peasantry of Scotland where all are educated, and almost every Cottage contains its little library, with the peasantry of Wales, of Ireland, or even of England, and say among which, the greatest degree of Industry, Frugality, Obedience to the Laws, Virtue, Piety and their usual attendants, happiness, will be found ?

The Members of the several Professions, and every shopkeeper are obliged to pay a sum for a patent be-



fore they can exercise such Profession or business, or commence any suit at Law.

Intimately connected with this subject is the law, which regulates Patent Inventions, to secure an exclusive right to which for five years, the Government receive 150 franks; for ten years 300 franks; and for fifteen years 650 or 750 franks; and for each transfer of property 9 franks, after which, it claims the right of giving publicity to the invention; this Law is injudicious, it checks genius and smothers many excellent Inventions, which it should be the policy of every wise Government, to encourage as much as possible.

The Low Countries claim the honour of having been the Cradle of the Arts, and their History justifies the claim so far as extends to their revival in Europe after the chasm made by the dark ages.

There was a period when they produced Artists whose works have received from posterity the just tribute of applause.

At that period their Commercial relations were very extensive, and the Arts will be found generally to accompany successful Commerce. The Cartoons of Raphael are said to have been designed by him for patterns for the Tapestry of the Netherlands.

John Van Eyck, or John of Bruges, who died

there in 1440, discovered, during his life time, by means of his skill in Chemistry, the Art of Painting in Oil Colours. One of his Pictures being taken to Italy, obtained him great honour. Anthony of Messina came to Flanders, and contracting a friendship with Van Eyck, obtained instruction in his Art.

Antwerp has been peculiarly distinguished as having been the School of Artists. In that City was exemplified the power of love, which, in the person of Quintin Metsys, transformed a Blacksmith into a Painter of renown. The Netherlands have to boast of Rubens, Vandyck, Teniers, Snyders, Paul Bril, Breughel, Champagne, Crayer, F. Floris, Frank Hals, Vander Meulen, and many others.

Decimal Arithmetic was invented at Bruges in 1602, by Simon Steven, and Diamonds were cut and polished there in 1489.

Weaving of Tapestry was originally confined to these countries; a very extensive manufactory existed at Louvain and another at Brussels. At the latter the six fine pieces of Tapestry exhibited annually at St. Gudule were made about thirty years ago. It is not now carried on in Brussels. Carpeting so much in esteem in England, was first invented here. The Netherlands possess several modern Painters of merit, but none whose works can enter into comparison with Rubens, Vandyke, Teniers, Ostade, and

several others which might be named. The liberal manner in which the several fine collections of Paintings are laid open to public inspection, must have a natural tendency to improve the Artists, if proper encouragement was given, and liberal prizes paid for their performances.

La Musée, near la Place Royale, consists of several Rooms, which contain some fine specimens of the ancient Masters ; it is opened Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays in each week to the public, and Artists who desire to make studies have great facilities rendered them by addressing their request to the Manager. It is a national Institution, under the direction of the Mayor and Municipality.

The principal boast of this Gallery is the several works of Rubens, No. 38\*—42\*—50—60—68\*, and of Van Dyck, No. 2\*—5—14\*—48. Those marked with an Asterisk have been returned from Paris. Had Rubens attained ideas of beauty and of grace equal to the inexhaustible stores of his imagination, strength and harmony of colouring, he would have ranked above all competition in the School of Painting. An annual exhibition of modern Artists is held alternately in Antwerp, Brussels, and Ghent. In compliment to the Royal Family and the Court who have resided at Brussels the past Winter an extra exhibition has been made out of the usual course at Brussels, to which the Artists of this City contributed,

principally, this being a partial exhibition only, ought not to be viewed as a fair specimen of the present state of the Arts in the Netherlands.

The Institution was originally founded by Charles Duke of Lorraine, and is aided in its Funds by voluntary Subscriptions; and by occasional donations. It is composed of upwards of five hundred Members, among whom is the King, and many of the principal Magistrates and Nobility.

On the Ceiling of the Stair Case which leads to the Great Rooms, wherein the Pictures are preserved, is painted the twelve signs of the Zodiac.

At the foot a very fine statue of Hercules executed in Marble, by Laurens Delvaux, commands attention. It is a noble work of Art; the lesser decorations corresponding with the finer parts. The dead Serpents have the marks of death strongly depicted in their forms and attitudes.

The Duke d'Areberg, with great willingness, permits his Mansion and collection of Pictures and Curiosities to be viewed. He has several fine specimens by Dietricy and other Masters. Here is also a Plan of part of his Domains carved in Wood; performed by himself with much ingenuity since his blindness; the several inequalities of surface appears as in nature. He possesses also a small Model of

## Mount Blanc, and the surrounding Alpine Scenery.

The admirers of the fine Arts will be gratified by viewing the collection of Paintings belonging to Mons. Conseiller Burtin, near the Church of Notre Dame de la Chapelle, at Brussels. They consist principally of the Flemish and Dutch Schools, with some few Italian Pictures, selected with discrimination. For seven years, during the Revolution, they were saved by the late Duke of Brunswick from spoliation, and restored to their present possessor, with some valuable additions.

I can only notice a few of those which have most met my ideas of excellence. They are arranged in five different apartments. Notice—

In Room I. A Flower Piece with Insects, by De Heem, in his best manner; three Portraits by Hans Holbein; and No. 39, the Intrepid Chevalier, by Alibert Durer, painted in 1513, as a satire upon Francois de Seckinghen, the great terror of the Protestants during the religious wars in Germany.

On entering Room II. observe—

No. 74. Landscape and Figures, by Karel du Jardin.

No. 119. The Annunciation to the Shepherds, by Pynacker.

No. 176. A Sea Piece, by the younger Vandevelde, 1654.

No. 168. The Vengeance of Terburg, painted by himself; intended to stigmatise his disciple Gaspar Netscher, and William III. Prince of Orange, for protecting him.

No. . The Purification of the Israelites, by Van Balen, and

No. . A Landscape, by Arthois.

No. 21. The Paladin Astolfe, Duke of England, about to destroy the enchanted Palace of Atlas of Carene, from Ariosto. It possesses a grandeur of design, which stamps it as a production of superior merit.

No. 175. Sea Piece by Vandevelde.

No. 178. The Feast with Simon the Pharisee, by Paul Veronese, in the clear tone of colouring of the Venetian School, a Picture of superior character.

No. 181. Sleeping Shepherdess, by J. B. Weenix, exhibiting all the beauties of this esteemed Artist.

No. 124. Isaac giving his paternal blessing to Jacob, by Rembrandt Van Ryn, from the Brunswick collection.

No. 146. Feast of St. Martin, in the best manner of John Steen.

The fourth Room is filled principally with Cabinet

Pictures, and of small dimensions, but, nevertheless, possessing a considerable share of real merit.

No. 66. A View in the City of Leyden, by J. Vander Heyden, and Adrian Vandavelde, has all those fine characters of truth, which characterise these great Masters.

No. 32. The Mountebank, one of the finest compositions of Dietricy ; a Picture which exhibits all the harmonious and rich colouring of the Italian Schools. This Picture is truly a Chef-d'Œuvre.

No. 94—97—98—99. Four beautiful Cabinet Gems by the Mieris's, possessing great beauty and very highly finished.

I am compelled to omit particularizing numbers of fine specimens of Caracci, Van-Aelst, Berchem, Dietricy, Everdingen—Carlo Maratti, Peter Neefs, Ostade, Polemburg, Rembrandt, Rubens, Ruysdael, and others.

You quit this Room and re-passing those you have before viewed, are introduced into the fifth and last. In this are only a few Pictures, but they are of a fine class.

The Marriage of Saint Catherine by Vandyck ; the style and colouring resembling Rubens, his master, of whom he has ever been considered the successful rival.

An Holy Family, Rubens, with whole-length figures, the female a Portrait of Helena Forman.

A Holy Family, Guido, possessing all the charms of his fine composition, and appealing strongly to the feelings. The character of the Virgin is chastened serenity.

Christ bearing the Cross, Leonarda de Vinci. Here the powerful passions of the soul are strikingly contrasted. The meekness of the Saviour bending beneath his cross; the ferocious and blood-thirsty executioners, who appear to triumph and exult over him; the pride and hypocrisy of the Chief Pontiff, are all successfully delineated. Not a picture in the whole collection offends the eye of modesty and virtue.

He permits his Pictures to be seen every day in the week, and employs two Servants extraordinary to attend the company, whose wages depend upon what they receive from Visistors.

The fine collection of Mr. Hennessey, at Brussels, in Rue d'Aremberg, contains many pictures of great merit and considerable value. My limits will not allow me to enter into that enlarged description of them which they deserve. Notice—

No. 9. Female Portrait, by Leonarda da Vinci, in the finest state of preservation, 1470.



3. Portrait, its companion, Hans Holbein.
10. Landscape, Rubens and Vanuden.
53. Boys eating a Pompink, Murillo, a fine specimen of the Spanish school.
21. Portrait, Rembrandt, in his fine broad style, bold.
57. Landscape, Ruysdael.
62. Hawking, Wouvermans. small, spirited.
45. Landscape, by Teniers, a small Picture, but painted in his fine silvery tone.
6. Landscape, Teniers, with Figures, large and truly excellent.

Of this picture it may be said you behold "Nature lovely as itself pourtrayed." Many other fine Pictures by Claude, Titian, Canaletti, A. Därer, Lombard, Snyders and others, deserve more particular notice.

There are no native Engravers of eminence in the Netherlands. An Englishman, Mr. Wm. Johnston, who engraved the Plates in this Volume, is about to publish six Views of Brussels and its Environs, in Lithography. He has also a fine Plate in hand, after a drawing of the Battle of Waterloo, taken in the evening of the day, at the time the orders were given to charge the enemy, which is publishing by subscription, and has received the approbation and sanction of the Duke of Wellington.

I have now to request your attention to the **MUSEE-LUPUS**.

This Musee, by the variety of objects which it embraces, in each class of which, is found articles unique and precious in their kind ; is a Repertory of all sorts of monuments of the Sciences, Belles Lettres and the fine Arts.

It presents in its extent, its riches, its arrangements, and its preservation, a most beautiful and magnificent coup-d'œil—it consists of eighteen parts.

I.—D'Une *Claviculaire*, or curious collection of Keys—Antique Gothic and Ancient, of all Ages, of all Countries, and of all forms.

II.—D'Une *Sigillaire* or collection of Seals, equally unique, which consists of matrices of Seals and Impressions ; and annular Seals, Antique, Gothic and Ancient.

III.—A collection of Caskets, Gothic and Ancient, of divers workmanship.

IV.—Various Rings antique, Gothic and Ancient.

V.—Cameos and precious Stones, Antique and Gothic.

VI.—*Manuscripts*, Antique, Gothic and Ancient—bearing date from the III. to XVII. century ; many of which are illuminated with Miniatures upon Vellum ;

among them are many of the Classics and unpublished works ; they are for the most part richly bound and fastened with gold clasps.

VII.—Several ancient Books printed upon Vellum with Miniatures and many others rare, on paper with and without plates.

VIII.—*Medallions* and *Medals*—Antique, Gothic, and Ancient.

IX.—Small Bronzes, Antique, Gothic and Ancient.

X.—Arms and Armour, Antique, Gothic and Ancient.

XI.—Enamels, Antique, Gothic and Ancient.

XIII.—Miniatures, Gothic and Ancient.

XIV.—Pictures, Gothic and Ancient.

XV.—Sculptures, Antique, Gothic and Ancient.

XVI.—Engravings, Chased Works, Antique, Gothic and Ancient.

XVII.—Numerous Objects of Natural History.

XVIII.—Miscellaneous Specimens.

This highly valuable Musee has not been long in Brussels, and its continuance here any length of time, is uncertain.

Le Chevalier Primat Lupus, to whom it belongs, in the most liberal and condescending manner, invites the Cognoscenti and Amateurs of all Countries to inspect it ; he has authorised me to express his peculiar partiality towards the English Nation, for to use his own words, “ I have always found that they cultivate the Sciences, the Belles Lettres and the Arts, with the greatest ardour and ability, and are, in general, the truest friends.”

I feel confident, that my Countrymen will be gratified by the estimation in which they are held by this highly respectable and intelligent Nobleman.

This Musee has been accumulating for several generations in his family—after his death, it will, probably be disposed of, long may he continue to enjoy the contemplation of it ; but, whenever the period arrives, that it shall be to be purchased, I hope, that the British Nation may have the offer of it, to add to the stores of the British Museum ; it is truly Unique.

In this magnificent collection are the following curious and interesting articles :—

A whole length of Cleopatra, by Correggio.

Specimens of Oil Paintings, in the earliest infancy of the Art.

A most beautiful carving in *Slate*, representing the

Crucifixion; in this inimitable piece of Sculpture, in which a number of figures are introduced, the expressions of grief and horror in the countenances, of the Characters attendant on our Saviour, are delineated in so exquisite a manner, as must strike every beholder with astonishment considering the fragility of the material.

Parts of the Imperial Diadem of Constantine, consisting of three most beautiful Onyxes, in their original gold mountings, representing a Roman Eagle, trophies of conquest, and the Head of our Saviour. The two former from the beauty of their execution, are concluded to have been executed at or about the time of Augustus, the last, no doubt, was added by Constantine himself upon the occasion of his receiving the Christian Faith.

A beautiful Gold Ring with the Head of Caliphurnia in Onyx, supposed to have belonged to Julius Cæsar.

A most beautiful Onyx bearing the Head of Zenobia.

A Ruby weighing  $54\frac{1}{2}$  Carats.

A numerous collection of Keys from the earliest ages, including specimens of Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Punic workmanship.

A large assortment of Ancient Seals,

A Library consisting of 280 Ms. on Vellum, containing some works most splendidly illuminated with Miniatures, also, some very ancient copies of the Classics.

Previous to the French Revolution, the Netherlands possessed numerous other fine Collections, many of which, have found their way into Great Britain.

The following are the names of the principal modern Artists, who are now exercising their professions in the Netherlands :—

Autisseir,	Miniature painter,	Brussels.
Boens, Leopold	Portraits,	do.
Bertels	Sculptor,	do.
Blomaerts,	Portraits,	do.
Brue, jun.	Do.	do.
Cels, C.	Historical,	do.
Coene,	do.	do.
De Latour, Madame	Interiors,	do.
Ducorron,	Landscape	Ath.
Desprets,	Flowers,	Brussels.
De Roi, J. B.	Landscape & Cattle,	do.
De Medts, Mad. <sup>lle</sup>	Historical,	Ghent.
De Landtsheer,	Historical,	Brussels.
François,	Historical,	do.

Godecharle,	Sculptor,	Brussels.
Harens,	Historical,	Antwerp.
Malaise,	Portraits,	Brussels.
Navez,	Historical,	do.
Noel,	Historical Landscape,	do.
Odevaere,	Historical,	do.
Paelinck,	do.	Ghent.
Van Assche	do.	Brussels.
Smolky,	Miniatures,	do.
Van Bre,	Historical,	Antwerp.

There are one or two Artists of eminence at Antwerp, whose names I have not been able to obtain to include in this list.

This Letter contains so much interesting matter that I shall not apologize for its length.

BRUSSELS, JULY 6, 1817.

THE World has existed long, but Wisdom is slow of growth, and mankind have much to learn; there are some philosophers, indeed, who, not satisfied with the narrative of Creation attempt, like the Chinese, to extend the age of the world to millions of ages: but for what cause I know not, except to proclaim a greater extent of folly. Six thousand years have nearly expired, and how little has been effected! How much is yet to do! How many ridiculous prejudices yet remain to be subdued. In some countries, Trade and Commerce are deemed servile engagements, in others, their Merchants are Princes, and ranked among the honourable of the Earth: when Wisdom is universal, every man will be respected whatever his rank or occupation in life, in proportion, only, as he conducts himself honourably, virtuously and usefully.

Commerce commenced in Asia, the Phœnicians—the Merchants of Tyre traded with the whole of the world, then known, and Tyre and Sidon were renowned: by their natural situation they united Asia to Europe. Alexandria afterwards became the key of Indian Commerce by means of the Red Sea; and Carthage was a great Commercial Nation. The



States of Italy, Venice, Genoa, Florence and Pisa, were, in turn, the principal emporiums of trade with Europe, and acquired great riches and celebrity.

The City of Hamburg was founded by Charlemagne; it united with Lubec in the 12th century, to form the celebrated Hanseatic League for the protection and extension of Commerce. Sixty of the principal Commercial Cities of Europe were united in this League, among which were included Ostend, Antwerp and Bruges; the latter was fixed upon to be the great depot for Naval Stores, and the Italian Merchants brought there also the rich treasures of India. The League had its regular Code of Laws, and became of such great importance that it was courted by the most powerful nations.

In 1301, Philip le Bel surprised at the opulence of Bruges on his visit to that city, exclaimed, I “thought I was the only King in Flanders; here are a hundred Kings.”

Writers of the sixteenth Century speak in raptures of the magnificent carpets; the rich Sattins, Velvets, Damasks, Woollens and Embroidories of the Low Countries.

The Count of Flanders in 1301, revoked many of the privileges previously granted to Commerce, and after the tumults which agitated the Low Countries

many of the manufacturers removed to England, from Louvain in particular.

The rapid improvements in the manufactures of Britain ; the great increase of her Commerce and foreign Relations ; the discovery of the Southern passage to the East Indies, and of the Western Continent, all conspired, in the sixteenth century, to turn the streams of Commerce into new channels.

In the beginning of this century, Bruges declined, and Antwerp increased in its consequence. The river Scheldt was so crowded with large vessels, that they could not be discharged quickly enough, and all kinds of East India goods, as well as those of other countries abounded there : the English had a factory there.

In 1316, the English carried on a greater Commerce with the Netherlands than with the whole world besides ; she sent her wool to be manufactured into Broad Cloth ; this Commerce so advantageous to the Low Countries subsisted between them for many years ; and although occasionally broken in upon by ruptures, of short duration, between the Governments, it does not appear to have interrupted long their Commercial relations. In 1446, a Treaty was entered into between the Duke of Burgundy and the King of England, with a most unlimited extent

of traffic—Artillery and Gunpowder were the only articles excepted.

Scarce a Nation in Europe but had its Consul and Storehouses in Bruges ; and the Low Countries attained a most extraordinary degree of splendour.

From the period of the death of Charles the bold, before Nancy in Lorraine, in 1477 ; the Commerce of the Netherlands began to decline, Charles the Fifth and his Successor contributed, very powerfully, to hasten its destruction by their bigotry, superstition intolerance and persecution, they drove away the manufacturer and the Merchant to other nations, and depopulated the Low Countries.

The immense fortunes, said to have been accumulated by individuals at this period, almost exceeds belief. Charles the Fifth, having expressed his wish to dine with a rich merchant of Antwerp named Daens, a sumptuous repast was provided ; the Merchant is reported to have thrown into the fire at the close of the entertainment a bill of 2,000,000 of Ducats, which he had lent the Emperor, observing, I am fully repaid by the honour your Majesty has done me this day. The Emperor is reported to have replied—“ The Nobility ruin me, men of Science instruct me, but it is the Merchants who enrich me.”

In 1522, the Emperor with 180 sail of vessels joined the English fleet, under the command of the Earl of Surry.

The introduction of the Inquisition in 1550 into the Netherlands, contributed greatly to the downfall, of their commercial consequence.

Camden, in his History of Queen Elizabeth, states that in 1564, the trade of England with the Netherlands, amounted annually to twelve millions of Ducats, five millions of which were for cloth alone.

In 1584, the Spaniards shut up the navigation of the Scheldt, which gave a death blow to the commerce of Antwerp and the Low Countries, and Amsterdam rose upon the ruins.

In 1719, when the Netherlands became subject to the House of Austria, an attempt was made to revive commerce, by the establishment of a Company trading to the East Indies, which so excited the jealousy of other European States, that it was abandoned in 1731.

The following is copied from an authentic document of the amount of imports and exports to and from Englands and the Netherlands at two distant periods, in sterling money :

	Imp. into Brit.	Exp. from Brit.
From 1700 to 1701—	65,123 19 2	270,564 6 6
1754 1755—	91,623 14 1	463,173 19 9

In 1703 the Chamber of Commerce at Brussels was instituted.

The Emperor Joseph II. desirous to revive the commerce of the Netherlands, in 1786 made Ostend a free port, improved the harbour, and endeavoured, but in vain, to obtain from the Dutch the free navigation of the Scheldt.

During the late revolutionary war the Commerce of the Netherlands experienced the utmost stagnation, the grass grew in the streets of Brussels, and many other of their principal cities, and the rents of houses were considerably reduced ; the decrees of Napoleon had nearly produced ruin to the general commerce of the Netherlands ; in their internal intercourses some articles advanced to an enormous price. Sugar and Coffee were sold at seven and even ten francs per lb. Peace is restored, the commercial relations with Great Britain and the other nations of Europe are happily renewed : a new Tariff has been published of the rates for which the several articles of merchandize may be imported which varies from one to ten and even in some cases to thirty-five per cent.

Feeling, with other countries the dreadful effects

of a long protracted war, there is no doubt but that a great stagnation prevails in many branches of manufactures, particularly in cotton, and that many hundreds of workmen are out of employ, but this evil is the same in all other countries. Peace is not a magician with its wand, to change desolation into prosperity at a touch. Time and patience are necessary to restore every thing to its proper level, when it will be found that the relations which subsist between Great Britain and the Netherlands may be made mutually advantageous.

My next letter will probably conclude the observations which I shall have to make on trade and commerce.

BRUSSELS, JULY 1, 1817.

LACE constitutes a material article of contraband trade from the Netherlands. It employs a great number of hands in most of the principal cities, and is brought to great perfection : it is sometimes more valuable than gold of the same weight ; an ounce of Flanders fine thread has been sold in England for four Pounds, which converted into Lace, would be valued at forty Pounds—ten times the value of an ounce of gold.

Considerable quantities of flax are grown in the Netherlands, which is manufactured into Linen of excellent quality, and some of which is very fine and durable. This is not what is known in England as Hollands Linen.

Tobacco is also grown here in very considerable quantities, and manufactured for use much mixed with foreign.

Here are also manufactures of Paper, Paper Hangings, Cloths, Soap, Starch, Porcelain, Printed Cali-

coes—Cotton, Worsted Stockings, and at Namur, Tools and Cutlery.

The Black Silk, and the Dye of Antwerp, and the Bleachings Grounds of Ghent are much celebrated.

England receives from the Netherlands Grain, Flax, Seeds, Linen, Cheese, Butter, Books, Pictures, Prints, and supplies them with Blankets, Flannels, Stuffs, Cotton Stockings, Tools, Cutlery, &c.

The balance of trade is in favour of Great Britain.

In the Netherlands are several Paper Mills and Manufacturies for Ornamental Papers.

The Paper Hangings are shewy, many of them in good taste, and remarkably cheap. Pasteboard, Writing Paper and Leather are far inferior to the English. Broad Cloths are as dear as in England, better in colour, and durable; they wear well to the last; and the stuffs made at Leige are said to rival the English. Furniture is very moderate in price, and elegant.

Labour is so very low, that Linens is rendered cheaper than in Britain, and Printed Linens also, except where science and taste are requisite, and where numerous colours are combined. The Manufacturers do not give encouragement to genius in their



workmen ; they are all paid the same price, nearly, and consequently improvements go on very slowly.—Linen for sheeting and shirting is excellent in quality, and moderate in price, but the manufactured Cottons are far inferior to those of Britain.

Tournay was long celebrated for its manufactures. It is situated on the confines of France, and the Scheldt runs through it. It still possesses some considerable concerns in Potteries, Earthenware, Stockings, Flax-spinning, and Carpetting several of which are in activity ; and in its environs considerable rocks of Lime-Stone are found, which produces an excellent cement, or species of Terris, much used in resisting Water ; and the burnt Lime is made use in the Southern provinces to manure both the Arable and Grass Lands.

The blue Linen for Frocks which are worn by the Peasantry in the Netherlands is made here.

The duty on Lace introduced into England is so considerable that the revenue derives little benefit from it ; the article is so convenient to conceal, and the temptation to evade the duty so great, that much is annually smuggled into England. Considerable quantities of Swiss Linens, in Gowns and Shawls, particularly, are sold here. The colours are excellent and manufactured to suit the Soap of this country better than the Printed Cottons of Britain.

The Leather is far inferior to that of England, which may be owing to an inferior mode of manufacturing it, or perhaps the Oak Bark does not possess the same strong qualities as it does in that country.

Those Articles in the Treaty of Peace which regulate the commercial intercourses between this country and Great Britain, seem to have excited great discontent in all the persons interested. A Tariff, it is thought, might be agreed upon, much more advantageous and satisfactory to both countries.

In confirmation of that article in the Treaty of Peace, which cedes the Island of Java to the King of the Netherlands, on 19th August 1816, it was formally given up to a Special Commission appointed to take possession of it on his behalf; a Proclamation was issued, and le Baron Van de Capellen appointed the Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of the land and sea forces east of the Cape of Good Hope. Two fleets have already sailed there and another to the Island of Curaco. How far a distant foreign commerce may operate to expand the ideas and give enlarged notions of Mercantile relations to the Merchants of these Cities, I presume not to foretel. It will be impossible for Belgium to become a great commercial nation without the most liberal notions and extensive capitals.

Ostend and Antwerp are the only seaports of any

consequence throughout the whole line of coast. Several vessels formerly sailed from the former for the East Indies. Ostend imports also considerable supplies of Articles from the Baltic, as Hemp, Iron, and Tar, and also various British manufactures. From this port considerable supplies of Poultry, Game and Fruit find their way into England.

Contraband trade is carried on to a considerable extent both to and from this port, and the manner in which duties are charged on merchandize, or other articles, proves a source of great emolument to the officers employed. If the importer has undervalued them, and they, in consequence are seized, the government derives little advantage thereby, the seizing Officer is most benefitted.

Bruges being an inland City, is limited in its commerce, but the Canal that runs through it from Ostend to Ghent, gives it the advantage of considerable transit trade ; and great quantities of Lace are made there of a very strong texture. It has few manufactories. Its quays are very commodious ; their extent confirms all that has been said of the ancient splendor of this City. At present it exhibits little vigour or activity, and is greatly dependent upon the reciprocal wants of its inhabitants ; but some considerable amount of money exchanges are done there.

Ghent is also an inland City, but by means of its

intercourse by its Canals, and its vicinity to the confluence of the rivers of the Scheldt, the Lys, and some other smaller streams, it connects itself with Bruges, Courtray, Tournay, Ath, Brussels, Dendermonde, (or Tirmonde) and Antwerp, and becomes a considerable depot. It still continues celebrated for its Bleaching Grounds, and has also several Cotton manufactories, Tanneries, Lace makers, &c.

Brussels, as the capital of the Netherlands concentrates principally those concerns which are connected with luxury. It has several Carpet Manufactories, Glass-houses, Coach-makers, Lace-makers, Cotton manufacturers, Tanneries, and other extensive concerns.

Artificial flowers are made here to very great perfection—many of them so correctly immitate nature both in flower and foliage, that even on close inspection the eye will be sometimes deceived. The Belgian Ladies are fond of this sort of ornament in their hats and bonnets, and when judiciously placed it is elegant, but it is worn here in such considerable quantities, and sometimes so ill chosen as to produce a contrary effect.

Antwerp, although it enjoys the advantage of having the Scheldt opened, cannot expect to attain her antient greatness, at that period Belgium had few rivals and double her present population, every

European State is now her rival: a foreign trade is recommencing, but, at a very gradual rate, there are but few vessels belonging to the port, and little or no ship-building. Great quantities of Baltic produce are brought in, viz. Hemp, Flax, Iron, and from the Western Continent, Hides, Tobacco, Coffee, Sugar and Rum.

From the Mediterranean, Wine and Fruit, and from the East, Tea and Spices.

The number of commercial establishments are at present about three hundred; but they entertain such a jealousy of all strangers, and are so deficient, or unacquainted with the great maxims of extensive Commerce, that Amsterdam will long maintain her superiority. During the short peace of Amiens the foreign trade of the Netherlands was considerable.

The Merchants and Traders live in the most frugal manner, if they obtain but little they spend but little, and great failures are rare, although on the Exchange at Antwerp a considerable extent of Exchange business is effected on small profits but large returns. Great part of the business of the Continent centers there.

Every European State of any consequence has

its Consul there. Great Britain for the first time, in the person of the Honourable Mr. Annesley.

The magnificence of many of the ancient houses at Antwerp, both externally and in their costly interior decorations, most powerfully confirm all that has been observed of the Opulence and Grandeur of the Netherlands in former ages.

The Commerce of the Country is carried on by specie, and Bills of Exchange; here are no national Bank notes, or national Banks. The specie of France and Holland is current here, in pieces of upwards of thirty different values which creates great confusion. A new national coinage is said to be in great forwardness, and is very much needed.

Two Ships from China have recently arrived, the one at Flushing and the other at Antwerp; being the first arrivals from that Country since the peace.

I have just learnt also that a Commercial treaty between this Country and the United States of America is nearly concluded.

The 109 article of the Congress of Vienna, declares that the navigation of every river from its

source to its mouth shall be free. Antwerp by its situation possesses great advantages, it seems to have been placed by nature as the key, to the interior of Brabant, Flanders, Germany and Switzerland; its Commerce has suffered considerably since the peace, by certain disputes at the Custom house which are adjusted; but great delays are still complained of, which have occasioned many goods to have been sent by way of Hamburg.

The sales of property in Lands, Houses, Furniture and other articles, are principally effected by Notaries, Brokers or Auctioneers, a Police Officer attends on the behalf of Government to regulate the duty; but in general the taxes are collected here at a trifling expense, instead of collecting them from house to house, notice is given of their being due, and every person who is chargeable thereto is obliged to take the money to the office of the Collector.

The United Netherlands are most advantageously situated for the purposes of Commerce. The fine rivers which serve to convey to them the various productions of the South of Europe, serves also to transport their own manufactures, whilst the extent of Northern Sea Coast which they possess and their several maritime ports connects them intimately

with Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Russia, and the North of Europe, and although it cannot be possible they should again attain the great eminence which they maintained in the 15th Century, whilst they have such powerful Kingdoms to rival them; yet a few years of peace may enable them to increase greatly their Commercial Relations, with all the benefits attendant thereon.



BRUSSELS, JULY, 13, 1817.

**THE** main object to be kept in view in all systems of Political economy should be to generate and increase human happiness.

The French and English writers on this subject are well known here. Adam Smith's Treatise is translated into French. But political pamphlets excite the greatest interest; on such subjects it is not unusual to publish and dispose of very large editions of approved Works.



I have already noticed to you the great fertility of the Netherlands ; abundance is highly favorable to population, and it will be found therefore to be on the increase. The population of several of the principal Towns and Cities, from the latest reports is as follows :—

**PROVINCE OF S. BRABANT, AND ITS  
CANTONMENTS.**

Brussels, - - -	212,429
Louvain, - - -	134,196
Nivelles, - - -	95,024

**PROVINCE OF ANTWERP.**

Antwerp, - - -	56,318
Malines, - - -	16,072
Turnhout, - - -	8,065

**PROVINCE OF S. FLANDERS.**

Ghent - - -	60,775
Oudenaude, - - -	5,084
Tirmonde, - - -	5,776
Ecclo, - - -	6,269

**PROVINCE OF W. FLANDERS.**

Bruges, - - -	33,632
Ypres, - - -	15,148
Courtray - - -	13,572

## PROVINCE OF HAINAULT.

Mons, . . . . .	20,217
Tournay, - - - . .	22,580
Charleroy, - - - . .	5,066

The Lands and Industry of the Netherlands are not encumbered with Tythes and Poor Rates, which press so heavily on the people of England ; the poor here, are not provided for by law ; the Streets of the principal Cities are crowded with Beggars, who are very importunate. There cannot exist a doubt but that the extent of misery is very great ; a large proportion of it, however, may be considered as springing from the combination of the same causes which have produced similar effects throughout the Continent of Europe, from its Northern shores to the Mediterranean ; the late protracted and ruinous war has pressed severely on the people. The sums which the several governments have drained from them, have been withdrawn from manufactures and commerce ; compelled to pay their several quota of contributions, they have not had wherewith to indulge in the comforts and luxuries of life. This has caused a great stagnation in commerce, thrown a number of people out of employ, and, in many cases, compelled them to seek alms. It should be also considered that the change which must necessarily be produced by the return of peace, after a war of such duration and inveteracy must inevitably have occasioned a revulsion,

which, in numerous cases must have involved great ruin and misery. Add to these the calamitous season of 1816 which prevailed so universally, and we are no longer at a loss to account for the accumulated distresses which we witness. Another observation strikes me forcibly on this subject. The beggars are principally strong healthy persons, capable of earning a livelihood by labour, were they to seek after it, or very young children trained to begging, and the notes of supplication are so similar and uttered in such tones, as give reason to suspect that begging is followed as a trade here as it is in England; and if report says true, it is not an unsuccessful one. A very small proportion of supplicants are aged or unable to work; those are ever real objects of commiseration.

The oldest inhabitants of the Netherlands do not remember to have seen the poor in such a state as at this time. I can observe a great difference within the last six Months, arising chiefly from the high prices of Meat, Bread, and Vegetables, the two latter constituting a material part of the food of the poor in these countries.

It would protract my letter to an unreasonable length, to detail to you the strong arguments against any laws for the provision of the poor, except, indeed, for very old age. Let National Schools of Education be established in every village, where strict

principles of morality, industry, frugality and piety shall be instituted. Let indolence and vice be punished—let Saving Banks be established at the public expence, and with public security. And if local circumstances shall at any time throw a great number of hands out of employ, let government be ready to set on foot some great undertaking, some extensive canal—some valuable structure—some new road, or convert the great heaths or woods into cultivated Lands; and the benefits to a Nation will be incalculable.

Scotland has no Poor Laws, and very few poor, the humblest of her peasantry feel somewhat of a virtuous independent national character.

But although there are no Poor Laws in the Netherlands, the spacious and ancient Convent of the Benedictines, near Ixelles, is converted into a Poor House, in which are upwards of eight hundred Persons of various ages, and of both sexes, with necessary attendants. It contains numerous Court Yards, well supplied with water, and a character of neatness which is praiseworthy; it is supported by, and does great credit to the government, and is denominated *Le Depot de Mendicité du Brabant Meridional, ci-devant l'Abbaye de la Cambre habité par les Benedictines.*

Rheumatisms, Declines and the Typhus fever are the

disorders most prevalent in Brussels, in the lower parts of the city more especially, which may be easily accounted for.

At Brussels, there is a school of Medicine, and public Lectures are regularly read on that subject, but many of the ancient prejudices still exist among the practitioners ; the fee for each visit of a physician is so trifling, that it is not likely to call forth the exertions of superior genius.

The population of the Netherlands, as near as I can obtain it, is about 5,500,000 persons.

Holland and its independencies	about 2,000,000
Belgium	3,500,000
	<hr/>
	5,500,000

The prices of grain have been so unusually high the last winter, that I will record them as they are reported, Jan. 3, 1817.

#### Francs.

Wheat - - - 18. 87. Le demi-hectolitre.

Rye - - - - 13. 86. do. do. do.

Barley - - - 9. 13. do. do. do.

Oats - - - - 5. 12. do. do. do.

Buck Wheat 11. 35. do. do. do.

The Law ordains, that within a few days after the birth of every child, the parents or friends of such child shall register its birth at the office of La Hotel de Ville ; this Law is equally obligatory on foreigners, and penalties are inflicted for neglect. Registers are also kept of all Marriages and Deaths, so that the Government is enabled with tolerable precision to estimate at all times the amount of the population.

From the annual returns for the city of Brussels for the year 1816, there was

579 Marriages,  
3128 Births,  
2808 Deaths.

It argues very favourably for the healthiness of the city, that the several ages of the twenty-nine persons who died there between 29th Dec. 1816, and 2d of Jan. 1817, added together and divided by twenty-nine leaves the average of age, thirty-five, a great average for the inhabitants of a city ; two persons were turned of eighty, and seven under one year old.

The Netherlands possess a most extensive line of Sea coast on the Northern Boundaries, which might afford a very valuable employ for numerous hands in fishing, many of which might be selected from the poor and be usefully employed, for want of this, the article of Fish is dear, especially at Brussels, except on particular occasions.

The Ocean is an inexhaustible store of wealth, and amply repays human industry. Fish is a cheap and wholesome aliment, and contributes greatly to the comfort and support of an increasing population; the Fisheries, therefore, should receive every possible protection in all well regulated States.

The inhabitants of Belgium, among many reasons which they have to congratulate themselves upon their emancipation from French despotism; have particular cause so to do, by being thereby freed from those oppressive laws of Conscription, by which, French armies were recruited. During the few last years of Napoleons authority, the prices of substitutes for the army arose to two and even three hundred Napoleons each person, besides a daily allowance, in one instance 10,000 francs was paid, the present price of a substitute being only from forty to sixty Napoleons each. To cement more strongly his authority and influence, he often interfered in a most arbitrary and oppressive manner, to compel the daughters of affluence to marry such of his Officers as he thought proper, and as best served his own interests.

Besides the regular troops, among which are a few companies of Cuirassiers, accoutred from the spoils of Waterloo; there are Militia regiments somewhat similar, in their organization, to those of Great Britain.

The following is, as accurate as I can obtain it, the present state of the National Land defence; but it must be observed, that several of the regiments are still incomplete.

17 Battalions of the Line	a 1000	- - -	17,000
51 Militia	- - - - -	do.	51,000
16 Foreign Troops	- - - - -	do.	16,000
11 destined for the Indies	- - - - -	do.	11,000
5 Artillery of the Line	- - - - -	800	4,000
3 Regiments Cuirassiers	- - - - -	1200	36,000
1 Militia	- - - - -	do.	1,200
2 Dragoons	- - - - -	do.	2,400
3 Hussars	- - - - -	do.	3,600
1 Marchause de Police	- - - - -		1,200
1 Regiment de Nassau	- - - - -		4,000
1 Battalion Infantry of the Line	- - - - -		1,200
1 Corps of Pioneers, Miners, &c.	- - - - -		1,000
10 do of Garrison Troops	- - - - -		400
			126,800

By the articles of the Treaty, not less than 110,000 are to be kept up for the Peace Establishment of the Netherlands.

In the course of my investigations into the severe



ral subjects connected with the Political economy of this Country, I have observed much to condemn, and somewhat to admire. Petty Larcenies are frequent, and may be attributed to that want of instruction in moral principles, which so extensively prevails. But great crimes are rare; for the three past years, only one public execution has taken place at Brussels, which was for murder.

The Police is strictly regulated. His Excellency Le Comte de Thiennes de Lombise is the Minister of State charged with its superintendence; He gives daily audience. Patroles perambulate the streets, The office of Mayor for the city of Brussels is now in commission. There are Judges des Pays in each Section of the city, who settle small claims and disputes in a manner somewhat similar to Justices of the Peace and Police Magistrates in England.

Commisaries are also appointed to attend the Markets who occasionally regulate the prices, and appear to exercise in particular emergencies, a summary jurisdiction in a way which would not be admitted in Brittain.

During the late war, the Police here was regulated upon the same principles and practice as that of France. Spies were numerous and active, and the Government prompt. This system is still main-

tained, but not extensively. The Police is partly civil and partly military. Each province has its chief Magistrate, whose duties correspond with those who were named "Les Intendants." There are also Military Commandants, Commissaries of Police, and the usual subordinate Officers for each of the Provinces.

A short time after the conquest of the Austrian Netherlands by the French, the new system of weights and measures invented by the natural institute of France, and adopted throughout that Country, was introduced into the southern provinces of the present Kingdom of the Netherlands. The inhabitants, attached to the customs of their ancestors, and habituated to the use of measures, familiar to them from their infancy, resisted for a time the innovation; but were at length obliged to comply, when by law it was enacted that the new system of measures weights and coins, was from that period to be used in every department or office of Government." Thus far, the use of the new system became general, throughout that part of the Continent, which was subject to the late Emperor of Gaul."

A few years before the French Revolution, the great inconvenience relating from the numerous and various weights and measures used in the different cities and provinces of France, induced the Royal Academy of Paris to take into consideration the means

of establishing the use of similar methods, and denominations for the application of the length, surface or solidity both of solids and fluids throughout the Kingdom.

“ In order to discover the desired standard, or prototype, they had recourse to the globe, and two members were deputed to measure the arch of the terrestrial meridian, extending from Barcelona to Dunkirk. The ten thousandth part of the one-fourth of the meridian, which was found to measure 3 feet, 11 lines, and 296 parts of the line, old paris lineal measure. This standard was denominated metre.

“ The metre once adopted, its compounds and subdivisions were easily deduced. Here, a new consideration, reflects great credit on those who suggested it, arose. In order to escape the tedious calculations of vulgar fractions, the decimal progression was selected.

Dix Millimètre ,0001

Mille Mètre - - - ,001

Centi mètre - - - ,01

Deci mètre - - - ,1

Mètre - - - 1,

Deca mètre 10,

Hecto mètre 100,

Myria mètre 1000,

Kilo mètre 10000,

“ Such was the scale established, of all the linear measures.

Secondly, from this linear standard or prototype, the measures of surface and solidity irradiate.

“ Two linear distances, breadth and length, gave the mètre. The square mètre being too small for the mensuration of lands, a square was chosen, called *Are*, the side being ten mètres, containing 100 square mètres.

Dix milli	}	<i>Are</i>	}	,0001
Milli				,001
Centi				,01
<i>Are</i>				,1
<i>Are</i> - - - - -				1,
Deca	}	<i>Are</i>	}	1,
Hecto				10,
Myria				100,
Kilo				1000,

“ Thirdly, three linear dimensions, length, breadth and height gave birth to the measures of capacity or volume. These measures required two standards, one for solids, the other for fluids. For solids. A small cube, the side one Centi mètre, or a Centi mètre cube of distilled water, at its maximum of density, about  $38^{\circ}\frac{1}{2}$  Fahrenheit, being weighed with the greatest possible accuracy, was found to contain 18<sub>grs.</sub> 83, old Paris poids de Marc. This standard for



“ To this system their coins and currency were adapted. The monetary unit or integer, being called a franc, a denomination which recalled to the minds of all Frenchmen, the remembrance of their ancestors. The franc weighs five grammes, and contains 0,9 pure silver the subdivisions are the decime or tenth part of a franc, and the centime or hundredth part.”

This System is denominated the Decimal System from its decimal divisions; it is also named the Metrical System, because founded on the metre, a measure equal to the one ten millionth part of the meridian, or of the distance from Pole to Pole. The terms used in it are five principal, and four to express increase and five to express decrease—the five principal are

Long and Square Measure	Mètre
Land Measure - - - -	Are
Wood - - - - - - - -	Stere
Measure of Capacity - -	Litre
Weights - - - - - - -	Gramme.

Four express increase, viz.—

Deca, which signifies	Tenfold
Hecto, do. do.	One hundred fold
Kilo do. do.	One thousand fold
Myria do. do.	Ten thousand fold.

Three express decrease.

Deci - - - - The tenth part

Centi - - - - The hundredth part

Milli - - - - The thousandth part.

The names of the different Weights and Measures are framed by the union of the principal terms with those of increase or decrease ; thus,

Kilogramme is Kilo (1000 fold) with

Gramme, and signifies 1000 Grammes.

To reduce the Weights and Measures of the several Kingdoms of the world to one universal standard is such an Herculean task, as will, probably never be accomplished, it would indeed be highly desirable if attainable, and would greatly facilitate commerce and promote equity ; by a general consent of all nations and the combined efforts of men of Science, this might be effected.

Accounts are kept and reckonings made here in the Decimal monies of France in francs and centimes ; and the French coins are equally current here with those of Holland and Belgium.

The French Gold and Silver Coins are as follows :

<i>GOLD.</i>	Weight	Taken at Par.
20 Franc pieces called Napo- leons ; compos- ed of fine Gold 9 parts—Alloy 1 part.	Grams. Centi. Gram. 6 45	And passes here for about 16s.6d. English money.
<i>SILVER.</i>		
5 Franc pieces, Silver 9 parts Alloy 1 part.	25	Four of these are given in ex- change for a Na- poleon, each at 55 Sous.
$\frac{1}{2}$ Franc	5	
$\frac{1}{4}$ Franc	2 50	The remainder in their several proportions.
<i>COPPER.</i>		
1 Sol, a piece of 5 centimes.	10	

Since the Peace, Louis XVIII. pieces at 23 fr. 25 Centimes have been introduced.



The following are the Names of the several Coins of Belgium, which have been furnished by a respectable friend who has examined into the subject with much attention.



## FLEMISH GOLD COINS.

	Fran.	Cents
Double Souverain...value....	33	80
Souverain.....	16	90
Ducats.....	11	42

## FRENCH GOLD COINS,

## CURRENT IN FLANDERS.

Double Louis d'Or.....	47	20
Louis d'Or.....	23	55
Double Napoleon.....	40	00
Napoleon.....	20	00

## FLEMISH SILVER COINS.

Ducatoon.....	6	30
Half Ducatoon.....	3	15
Quarter Do.....	1	57
Eighth Do.....	0	75
Crown.....	5	56
Half Crown.....	2	77
Quarter Do.....	1	38
Piece, formerly current for five Plaquettes, now.....	1	50
Double Escalin.....	1	20
Escalin.....	0	60

Piece de 5 Sous de Brabant.....	0	45
Half of do. or Piece of 10 Liards	0	23
Plaquette.....	0	30

The following Coins were struck in the year 1790,  
but have never been in general circulation :—

Ducatoon.....value.....	6	30
Florin, 20 Sous de Brabant.....	1	81
Half do. 10 Do.....	0	90

## FRENCH SILVER COINS,

### CURRENT IN FLANDERS.

Crown.....	5	80
Half do.....	2	75
Quarter do.....	1	50
Eighth do.....	0	75
Livre.....	1	00
Half do.....	0	50
Quarter do.....	0	25
Piece of 5 Francs.....	5	00
Piece of 2 Francs.....	2	00
Piece of 1 Franc.....	1	00
Piece of Half-a-Franc.....	0	50
Quarter Francs.....	0	25

## MEASURE OF CAPACITY.

10 Millilitre, 1 Centilitre,	,61028 Cubic Inches.
10 Centilitre, 1 Decilitre,	6.1028 Do.
13 Decilitre, 1 Litre, . . .	{ 61.028 Do. or 1 Pint; ,0113 Wine measure.
10 Litre, 1 Decalitre, . . .	{ 610.28 Do. or 2 gallons ,064 Wine measure.

The Litre will contain 1 Cubic Decimetre of Water, the measure being filled even with its rim.

The Winchester bushel being 2150.42 Cubic Inches, one hundred Hectolitres will be equal to 35 Quarters 3 Bushels, 6 Gallons, and 3 Pints; and the Quarter is about 2 Hectolitres, 8 Decalitres, and 2 Litres.

## SUPERFICIAL, OR SQUARE MEASURE.

100 Square Millimetre,	1 Square Centimetre.
100 Square Centimetre,	1 Square Decimetre.
100 Square Decimetre,	1 Square Metre.

## CUBIC MEASURE.

1000 Cubic Centimetre,	1 Cubic Decimetre,
1000 Cubic Decimetre,	1 Cubic Metre.

In measuring Wood the Cubic Metre is called a Stere; and the tenth part of a Stere is a Decistere.

The Decistere, in English measure 3.5317 Cub. Ft.  
The Stere . . . . . 35.317 Do.

## LONG MEASURE.

10 Millimetre,	1 Centimetre—	39,371 in.	Eng. meas.
10 Centimetre,	1 Metre,	—393,71	
10 Metre,	1 Decimetre	—10 yds. 2 ft. 9 in.	
10 Decametre,	1 Hectometre—	109	1 1
10 Hectometre,	1 Kilometre	—4 fur. 213 yds. 1 foot.	
10 Kilometre,	1 Myriametre—	6 mills. 1 fur. 156 ft.	

The Metre is equal to 3 feet 11,206, or nearly 3 ft. 1 inch, old French measure ; 6 feet 4 inch French, is 6 ft. 9 in. English measure. The French foot is longer than the English by about ,6579 or about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per Cent.

## LAND MEASURE.

10 Square Metre,	}	1 Deciare.	
or Centare,			
10 Deciare,	1 Are,	}	Each 3 Eng. Perch.
			& ,95 parts or 119
10 Are,	1 Decare,		sq. yds. & ,6016.
10 Decare,	1 Hectare,	}	Each 1196 sq. yds.
			Each 11,960 sqre.
10 Hectare,	1 Kilare.		yards, or about 2
10 Kilare,	1 Myriare.		acres 1 rood.

The old Arpent of France is to the new measure as follows :

100 Arpents, = 51 Hectares, 7 Ares, 20 Centimes.

An English Foot is equal to 304.7 Millimetre.

A Brabant do . . . 274.

1 Hectare & 20 Are . . . is 1 Bonnier ; or

20 Brabant square feet . . . is 1 Verge.

20 . . . square Verges . . . is 1 Bonnier.

43 Are 11 Centimes & 92 Milliare is 1 Eng. mile.

The following are the new French measures in Weights, calculated on the Decimal system :—

10 Milligramme, 1 Centigramme =, 154 of a Grain Troy

10 Centig. . . 1 Decigramme =, 1544 do. . . do.

10 Decig. . . 1 Gramme = 15 grains, & 4440 do.

10 Gramme, . . 1 Decagramme } 6 pwts. 10 grs. & 44 do.  
or 5 drs. Avoirdupois

10 Decag. . . 1 Hectogramme, 3oz. 8½ drs. Avoir.

10 Hectag. . . 1 Kilogramme, 2lb. 3oz. 5 drs. do.

10 Kilog. . . 1 Myriagramme, 22lb. 1oz. , 15 do.

10 Myriog. . . 1 Quintal Metrique, 220lb. 10oz. 1 dr.

10 Quin. Met. . 1 Millier Metrique, 1 ton, less 33¼ lb.

The Gramme is equal in weight to a Cubic Centimetre of pure Water ; the Kilogramme to a Cubic Decimetre of pure Water.

It is not unusual to sell goods by the Demi Kilogramme (1 lb. 1oz. 10½ drs. Avoirdupoise,) a weight found very convenient because of its near approach to the old French pound.

The following is the Proclamation of the King of the Netherlands, for the use of these Weights and Measures in this Country :—

**WE, WILLIAM**, by the Grace of God, King of the Netherlands, Prince of Orange Nassau, Grand Duke of Luxemburg, &c.

Wishing to proceed to the execution of what is prescribed by Article 17 of the law of the 21st of Aug. last, respecting the names of each measure and weight, and the multiplications and subdivisions of the same ;

Taking into consideration, that the said measures and weights are already known through the Southern Provinces by systematic names, and that, consequently, the stating of these systematic names will tend to make the inhabitants of those provinces the better understand what measures and weights are meant by the new names ;

On the report of our Minister for internal Affairs, the Council of State being heard,

Have found the undermentioned names fit and proper to be adopted and confirmed for the new measures and weights, and also for the divisions and multiples thereof, and to be employed on the introduction of the

new system : the systematic names being only added in the present decree for explanation.

Art. 1. Conformable to the law of the 21st of Aug. 1816, the name of Ell is adopted for the same unity of measures of length which, according to Article 6, was described and known under the systematic name of Metre.

2. The names for the subdivisions of the Ell are :

Palm, for the 10 part [the decimetre.]

Duim [inch], for the hundredth part [decimetre.]

Streop [line], for the thousandth part [millemetre]

3. For the multiples of the ell :—

Roede [perch], for the tenfold [decametre.]

Mijle [mile], for the thousandfold [thilometre.]

4. The name of vierkante ell, for the foundation of measures of superficies.

5. For the squares of the subdivisions of the ell :—

Vierkante palm [square palm], for the square of the tenth.

Vierkante duim [square inch], for the square of the hundredth part.

6. For the squares of the multiples of the ell :—

Vierkante Roede [square perch], for the square of the fourfold of the ell.

Burder [acre] for the square of the tenfold of the roede, or of the hundred fold of the ell, which is equal to ten thousand square ells [the systematic hectare.

7. The term kubicke elle for the cube of the ell, as the foundation of all measures of capacity in the gross. [Sterc or metre cube.]

8. For the cube of the subdivisions of the ell :—

Kubicke palm for that of the tenth.

Kubicke duim [cubic inch], for that of the hundredth of the ell.

Kubicke streep [cubic line], for that of the hundredth of the ell.

9. The term Wisse for a load of faggots one ell long, one ell high and one deep.

10. The term Kan [pint] for the unity of the measure for liquids being the cube of the palm (litre).

11. The term Moatze (measure), for the tenth part



of the kan (decilitre.) And Vingerhoed (thimble,) for the hundredth part (centilitre.)

12. The term Vat, (cask) for the hundredfold of the kan (hectolitre).

13. The term Kop (cup), for the unity of the measure for dry wares, being the cube of the palm (litre.)

14. Maatzi (small measure), for the tenth of the kop (decilitre).

15. Schepel (bushel), for the tenfold, and

Mudde for the hundred fold of the kop (decilitre).

The name of Zak (sack) shall be given to no other quantity besides the hundred kops or the mudde.

Last, for a quantity of three thousand kops, or 30 mudde.

16. The name of Pond (pound) conformable to art, 15 of the before-mentioned law, is given to the weight of the quantity of pure distilled water which can, in a state of compression, be contained within the square cube of the palm (kilogramme.)

17 Ons [ounce] for the tenth part of the pond.

Lood, for the hundredth part.

Wightie, for the thousandth part [gramme.]

( Korrel (grain), for the ten thousandth part.

This Decree shall be printed in the Official Gazette.

Given at Brussels, March 29, 1817.

WILLIAM.

By his Majesty's Order,

A. L. FALCK

Institutions for the relief of human suffering are the genuine fruits of Christianity, if they existed at all previously thereto, it was in a very limited degree; and whilst the humane mind contemplates with satisfaction, even the small number which are found in the Netherlands; a Briton, with an exultation—an almost justifiable pride, contemplates in his own country, numerous establishments for the relief of every species of misery to which humanity is liable. The benevolence of Britain, springing from a pure motive, environs her with a more impregnable fortress than the waves which surround her coasts, the wooden walls her natural defence, or the bravery of her sons, whilst these have enabled her to resist the combined efforts of enemies leagued against her, the former has invoked the guardianship of Heaven, and has, in a most eminent degree given to her Fleets and Armies Victories which will be ranked by posterity with those of Greece and Rome.

With satisfaction I record, that at the suggestion

of the Duke of Richmond, a British Charitable Fund is established at Brussels, for the relief of those of our Countrymen whose misfortunes and deserving characters render them fit subjects for assistance. A weekly meeting of the Committee is held every Thursday, between the hours of twelve and two o'clock, at the house of Dr. Sayer, the Treasurer, Rue de douze Apôtres, to examine into the cases of those who apply, and to manage the concerns. The discretion and tempered liberality with which the funds are applied, entitles it to the aid of all those whose means may enable them to contribute to it. Sixty-three persons have received assistance from this Institution between the 1st of January and the 30th of June last, many of whom have had weekly allowances, and above fourteen hundred Francs have been distributed. The following Gentlemen are the present Committee of Management :—

His Excellency the Earl of Clancarty, Ambassador to his Majesty the King of the Netherlands.

His Grace the Duke of Richmond, K.G.

Lord Thurlow.

Honourable Colonel Parker.

Sir Grenville Temple, Bart.

Sir Richard Borough, Bart.

Admiral Donnelly.

Colonel Dyke,

Lieutenant-Colonel Houlton.

A. Sayer, Esq. M.D. Treasurer.

J. Doratt, Esq.

W. E. Northey, Esq.

Nowell Twopenny, Esq. Sec. [gratuitously.]

Independently of their individual contributions, the Duke of Richmond and the several Members of the Committee, personally visit the claimants, when necessary ; thus rescuing, in some measure, the British character from that obloquy which the misconduct of some individuals have unfortunately brought upon it in this country.

It is almost unnecessary to record instances of the liberality of His Grace the Duke of Richmond ; his life has been marked by a series of generous and benevolent actions ; those who best know him want no assurance from me of the amiableness of his character. The uniform patronage which I have experienced from him demands from me this public acknowledgement.

Honoured by the personal attendance of himself and his illustrious house, on the several Courses of Lectures which I have recently delivered in this City,

I felt such patronage a most flattering and powerful stimulus to my exertions.

I considered myself addressing those who were placed by birth and education on the watch-towers of Britain, as the guardians of her welfare, and who would hereafter be called upon to assist in the Councils of their Sovereign, or in the Senate of the Nation,

The Great Kingdoms of Antiquity passed under review : we traced Babylon, the Mother of nations, to her fall—Nineveh, until her place was known no more—Tyre, until the palaces of her Merchant Princes became the tents of Fishermen—Egypt until she was debased and enslaved. We followed the Israelites from their Exodus until the destruction of their Temple and their dispersion. We contemplated polished Greece until her splendid cities became ruins—Carthage until Rome exulted over her ; and Rome until abandoned unto a similar fate.

The result of our enquiries established this maxim. That national crimes have, throughout all ages, invoked national punishments ; and that Luxury, Vice, Idolatry or Infidelity have been the powerful causes which have hurled the great kingdoms of antiquity to destruction, scarcely leaving a memorial to point out where they stood.

Should I have been, in any degree successful in sowing the seeds of truth and virtue, I shall rejoice that I have not lived in vain.

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BRUSSELS, JULY 26, 1817.

I HAVE now to call your attention to a subject which has awakened a most lively interest in the Sons and Daughters of Britain, to the extremities of her wide extended Realms—you will anticipate that I refer to the Battle of Waterloo of the 18th June, 1815.

The Field of Waterloo and its vicinities had been thrice the theatre of contest previously to that great great conflict, which may well claim to rank with the most sanguinary battles of Classic pages; once during the wars of the Duke of Marlborough, early in the eighteenth Century; and for the second time in 1794, when a division of the combined armies leagued

against France crossed the Sambre, attacked the French redoubt and took 500 prisoners. The French marched from Waterloo with 900 infantry and 100 cavalry, and obliged the Allies to retire, but were, themselves, in turn, compelled to retreat.

The French army of the North having crossed the Sambre and seized the town of Birche, attacked General Kaunitz, on the 14th May, when they were repulsed with the loss of 5000 men, and several pieces of Artillery; Lieutenant-General Otto drove the French from Waterloo, and pushed forward to Turcoing. On the 18th the French attacked the posts of Furcoing, and at the same time a column of 5000 men advanced from Lisle, and another corps having forced General Otto's position near Waterloo, attacked the British in the rear.

The Hanoverians are charged with having been the first to retreat, and the British troops suffered in consequence thereof, considerable loss. The details of this campaign are peculiarly important as deciding the fate of the Netherlands.

It is impossible to retrace the events connected with the battle of Waterloo, without experiencing feelings of the most lively interest. On the part of Napoleon, it was known throughout Europe that he had to play a hazardous game, for his last stake. Empire, hung suspended upon his sword.

He had well calculated the magnitude of the approaching warfare, and he hoped, by the rapidity of his movements, to be able to vanquish the British forces, before they could form a junction with the numerous armies which were marching against him. By pushing on by the high roads towards Brussels, he was enabled to bring up his powerful train of artillery, by the help of which he trusted to have effected his purpose.

The Duke of Wellington waited the motions of an antagonist, whose military fame had exalted him to the rank of a Hero. By some inadvertence, information of the movements of the French army was first communicated to the Prussians, and from them to the Duke—making a difference of twelve hours in the time in which he ought to have received the intelligence; it reached him late in the evening of the 15th June, whilst partaking the well known hospitality of the Duke of Richmond. It informed him, that the French troops had passed Charleroi, and were rapidly advancing. With that coolness, for which this great General is remarkable, and to which in some measure may be attributed his uninterrupted successes, he retired with the Prince of Orange and the Duke of Richmond into another room, and opening a map, fixed his finger on the spot where the battle was afterwards fought, saying, “there we will give them their beating,” observing at the same time, that on his road from Paris the preceding year as Ambassa-



dor, that situation had appeared to him highly advantageous for the erection of a fortress for the defence of Brussels.

So much has been said and written on this subject, that although what remains can be but the gleanings, yet be it remembered, they are gleanings of the field of Waterloo.

We have contemplated British bravery as it was displayed at Cressy, at Agincourt, and more recently, under Marlborough with exultation and admiration. These sentiments have acquired additional interest from having been presented to our minds at that period of life when feelings are most ardent, and the impressions most durable, but they become faint when compared with those which are excited by contemplating the field of Waterloo.

The Duke of Brunswick left the entertainment to join the army, immediately after the arrival of the news that the French were advancing, and the next morning was killed in the action at Quatre Bras.

The Duke of Wellington having given the requisite orders for the dispositions of the troops, reached the field the following morning.

The Duke of Richmond was with the Duke of Wellington a considerable part of the day, and two

of his sons, the Earl of March and Lord G. Lennox attended in their military capacities, displaying great activity and courage, and his nephew Lord Apsley was employed by the Duke of Wellington as Aid-de-Camp, he having volunteered his services.

Another son of the Duke of Richmond was a spectator during a great part of the action.

When the battle commenced on the right on Goinmont, about half-past eleven in the morning, the Duke of Wellington took his first station within sight of the gate leading into the field, greatly exposed to the fire from the enemy's batteries. He ordered some cannon to be so placed as to enfilade their troops as they came up to the attack, which was most successfully effected, and great slaughter took place. He kept Goinmont continually supplied by fresh troops to replace the killed and wounded. About half-past one o'clock, with a keenness of eye for which he is remarkable, he said, "they have nearly done here," on its being observed that fresh troops were marching on Goinmont, with a thorough insight into the plans of his antagonist, he replied—"If he intended to keep up this attack, he would have dispatched double that number;" and so it proved, for in order to conceal the main attack which Napoleon was about to make on the British centre, he commenced a vigorous discharge of cannon, nearly along the whole of his line. Goinmont had become a scene of dreadful car-

nage ; three divisions of the French, having, in vain, attempted to occupy it, or dislodge the British from that position.

Part of the farm and the wood indeed had been taken and retaken, but the troops within the gardens and buildings defended themselves with such determined courage ; as to be unconquerable

It was now that Napoleon, ordered an attack to be made on the centre of the British, but so admirably had Wellington disposed his line, that no cavalry could penetrate his left wing, nor could the fire of any artillery take effect. The Duke of Wellington now took his second station near the tree which bears his name. Ponsonby's division had been successful in taking thirty pieces of cannon, but being surrounded by some of the French Lancers of the 4th Brigade, his horse could not extricate himself from the mire, and he fell on the field. The French succeeded for a short time to force the British Line, but were soon repulsed with the loss of two of their eagles. They repeated their attacks, with most unexampled determination, with their cavalry, which, in vain, attempted to break the squares opposed to them. The division under Gen. Halket was charged eleven times by the Cuirassiers and Lancers, and one of the batteries from La Haye-Sainte produced dreadful havoc among the British and Belgians. The 42d had been long annoyed by an attack from a body of the enemy,

without being able from their low and disadvantageous position to act with success, when the Scotch Greys were ordered to charge, and passed by them, feeling the fullest confidence in their countrymen, without waiting for command, they followed the cavalry to the charge; what the cavalry spared the bayonet destroyed, and the destruction became complete.

So terrible were the Scotch Greys to the enemy, that the French Officers were often heard to admonish their men to stand firm against them.

The French succeeded in forcing the centre of the British Line near La Haye-Sainte, in consequence of the regiment which defended the farm-house, having expended its ammunition and its communication with any fresh supplies being cut off; an evil which might have been prevented by breaking down the wall on the right, which would have afforded the means of regaining fresh supplies. The soldiers within the farm were almost all put to the sword-

At a quarter past two, the Duke of Richmond saw the first division of the Prussian troops under Bulow coming up, which subsequently engaged with the French troops near the Wood on their right flank.

About three o'clock, Napoleon took his second position near the main road, having made an excursion on his right to rally and advance his artillery.

Between 5 and 6 the desperate crisis began, Napoleon had ordered a colossal attack to be made by his grand body of Reserve, consisting of upwards of 10,000 of his best troops, with their powerful train of artillery. On marching into action they exhibited the most ardent enthusiasm and cries of *Vivè l'Empereur* rent the air; but the necessity of bringing them forward, is said to have tended much to dismay the other troops. The British Officers were seen to be very active at this moment, animating the men, as well by approbation, as by example. When Wellington witnessed so much determined courage, taking out his watch about half past six, he observed, "we shall beat them yet."

At 7 o'clock Napoleon took his third and last station when he alighted from his horse and pointed some of the Cannon himself. "Avance" was his constant reply to every communication made to him; about 8 o'clock the second Corps of Prussians under Field Marshall Blucher came up, then it was that the combined Army which had during the whole of the day, acted on the defensive, received orders to advance. What language can describe the sensations which must then have animated every bosom. The Heroes had stood during the whole of the day like the solid and immoveable Rock, which repels every roaring Surge that rushes on its base;

they had seen their brave companions fall by thousands at their side, they were engaged in their Countrys cause, and had no time to indulge in private feelings; but when orders were given to charge and the Trumpet of Victory sounded, ask every Soldier who survived that day, if he did not feel his bosom bound with joy, from a consciousness of having done his duty.

Let us save the Eagles, became the cry of the French, and Napoleon retreated, by his own report of the Battle, in extreme confusion.

Among the errors committed by Napoleon on that day, to him so disastrous, was, his neglecting to possess himself of the Wood on his right; his not sufficiently supporting his Infantry by his Cavalry, and above all, his fatal self-confidence. During the action a Colonel of the French Army was taken prisoner, who being brought to the Duke offered to impart the plans of Napoleon; but he refused to listen to him.

At the commencement of the Action the lines were formed, at about 1,200 feet distant from each other. The British were greatly deficient in heavy Cavalry, their numbers are estimated at 10,000 Cavalry and 53,000 Infantry. I am authorised by high authority to assert, that not more than 50,000 were ever called into Action during the whole of

the day. The French numbers were between 80 and 90,000, say about 85,000 of which 22,000 were Cavalry, and 300 pieces of Artillery.

During the whole of the day the Duke of Wellington exhibited the most cool determined courage, and gave his orders with the greatest precision. He was exposed to much personal danger, for the enemy having discovered his station, directed their fire towards it, and a large proportion of his Staff was killed or wounded around him.

He conversed during the Action respecting the situation of the Russian Forces, and observed, he thought they would cross the Rhine that very day. He uniformly felt confident that he should be able to maintain his position until the Prussians came up, which he estimated must be that evening or the next morning, and expressed his determination to bivouac on the ground that night.

After the Action at Quatre Bras and that retreat which evinced the consummate Generalship of the Duke, he took a few hours sleep at a house on the road, which was occupied by Napoleon and his Brother the succeeding evening.

When the British took possession of the Farm and Buildings of Gomont previously to the commencement of the Action, they had some difficulty

in persuading the inhabitants to quit it; one man they suffered to remain, whom they armed, when the French attacked the troops stationed there under the command of General Cooke, this man was seen to fire upon the British, from an upper window of the Farm house, upon which they fired at him and one of the bullets passed through each of his cheeks, the marks of which are still to be seen.

A British Officer who has since the Battle, frequently visited the field, speaks highly of a peasant who lived near Mont St. Jean, who was with Blucher on bringing up his troops, and who is very communicative and intelligent.

It is worthy of remark that on the day after the Battle a number of horses which were wounded, were seen herding together with sympathetic feelings.

Since that day which decided the fate of Kingdoms, Britons have contemplated the Plains of Waterloo with a degree of national pride bordering upon enthusiasm; they have been resorted to by such numbers, that the visit may be considered as a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Valour, and although no National Monument records the desperate contest to hand down to posterity the names of the brave



men who fell on that day; yet their memory has been embalmed by many a falling tear.

Near the celebrated "tree of Wellington" a monumental pillar on a pedestal of Marble is erecting by a disconsolate Sister and five surviving Brothers, to the memory of Lieut. Colonel the Hble. Alexr. Gordon, Knt. who fell on the 18th June, in the 29th year of his age. This will serve to mark the spot, until Great Britain and the Netherlands shall unite to erect some more substantial record.

Some farther observations on this subject will engage your attention in my next.

**BRUSSELS, AUGUST, 7, 1817.**

I AM authorised by high authority to assert that the interview which took place between the Duke of Wellington and Marshall Blucher, in the darkness of the night succeeding the Battle, was near a small Bridge called, Le pont Jemappe, near Le maison de Roi about a mile distant from La-belle Alliance, and not at the latter place as has been stated.

In grateful acknowledgement of the eminent services rendered to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, by the Duke in addition to his former honours, he was created Prince of Waterloo and lands near Quatre Bras and Nivelles, were assigned over to him of an annual value of 2000l. or thereabouts He was also invested with the Grand Cross of the Order of William.

When the Duke of Richmond was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Duke of Wellington was Secretary to the Embassy, and was offered the rank of Lieut. Colonel in the Army; from that diffidence which is often found to accompany great abilities, he had actually written a letter to decline the promotion, if happily for himself and for the military glory of his Country, the Duke of Richmond had not judiciously persuaded him to burn the letter, which advice he complied with and accepted the rank offered. It may be truly said of him that he bears his "blushing honours thick upon him" few individuals can boast such accumulated Honours and Titles.

It would be a great injustice whilst on this subject to omit to notice the bravery and good conduct of the PRINCE of ORANGE: throughout the whole of this eventful day, he was seen vigorously animating his Troops and foremost on every occasion of danger or of duty. He received his wound in the left shoulder in the evening whilst charging the Imperial Guards, and nearly escaped being taken prisoner.

As a just tribute to his Gallantry the King, his Father invested him with the Grand Cross of the Military Order of William, and his grateful Country have voted him the Domain of Tervueren

in the Forest of Soigny, (where a new pavilion is to be built) and also the Palace in the Place de la Loi, on the North side of the Park.

Monsr. M. Odevaere, Historical Painter of Brussels, has chosen for the subject of a large picture, which has recently been exhibited in this city, previously to its departure for England, that moment when the Prince had received his wound, and when his horse had received also a wound which proved mortal. Baron Constant de Villars is seen offering the Prince his horse. The Prince is supported by the Earl of March, eldest Son of the Duke of Richmond, who was one of his aide-camps, the brave Francis Stiles appears in the fore ground, bringing in one of the French Eagles.

The Grouping is excellent, the colouring is rich and harmonious, the whole picture does great credit to the modern Flemish School of painting.

During these events the utmost consternation took place at Brussels, hopes and Fears alternated as the partisans of the two powers felt their individual interests affected, for there were some who were attached to the cause of the French and anticipating a Victory, had prepared splendid entertainments for Napoleon that evening.

On the Friday which was the day of the engagement at Quatre Bras, and on the whole of the Sunday the day of the Battle of Waterloo, the continued roar of Cannon was not only distinctly heard at Brussels, but even at Antwerp. All was tumult and confusion, on the Saturday many of the wounded were brought in, and great preparations were making for the departure of the English. On the Sunday the British inhabitants were removing out of Brussels in every direction, the Rue de Madelaine, one of the principal streets exhibited one continuous unbroken chain of Carriages, and such was the noise, tumult, and the hum of voices that they were heard on the other side of the Park near the courts of Justice a distance of 1,800 feet. About nine this evening upwards of 2,000 prisoners were brought in.

Several waggons were so overladen as to break down; and such were the crowds of persons surrounding the Canal that one waggon (by the road which leads to Antwerp) with its horses was forced into it; and many persons were in danger of being drowned. Not a Carriage of any sort could be obtained on the Sunday, every thing in the nature of a conveyance being in requisition. The wounded, both British and French, were brought in, in great numbers, but in spite of the most active exertions they had suffered greatly from lying on the ground in the rain and cold. By

9 o'Clock on the Monday morning the peasantry had stripped the whole of the dead, who were lying naked in heaps. I learn from a Gentleman who visited the spot about that hour, that he only saw one English Officer who had any clothes left on.

The British suffered greatly from not receiving their supplies of food regularly. The waggons of provisions were pillaged on their way to the field.

The most ardent enthusiasm pervaded the ranks of the French—they fought with fury, and formed a striking contrast to the cool intrepidity of their opponents. “When Greek meets Greek then comes the tug of war.” This was never more powerfully exemplified than on this eventful day, when, for the first time Napoleon and Wellington, the Hannibal and Scipio of modern times, were opposed in arms, nor did the feelings cease to vibrate when the contest was over. The Hospitals and the Churches were filled with the wounded, but scarcely a groan was heard among the sufferers! an intense national feeling survived the moments of action—when one of the French had a ball extracted from his body, near his heart, he observed to the Surgeon “If you had cut a little deeper you would have found Napoleon.” When another had his leg amputated, he threw it into the air and exclaimed “Vive l’Empereur.”

As early as 4 o'clock on the morning after the battle,

the news of the victory was placarded in the streets of Brussels.

To detail the numerous instances wherein the fine feelings of our nature were called into action would occupy Volumes, but I cannot resist narrating one which came to my own knowledge. The young wife of a British Officer, possessing no common portion of loveliness, on the day after the battle hastened to the field, and sought among the dead for her husband, for whose fate she had reason to be alarmed, with no other support than a few crusts of bread, which she had provided; She traversed the field of battle for three successive days; it was nearly a month before she found him severely wounded in one of the Hospitals.

On this occasion the humanity which was displayed by the inhabitants of the City of Brussels to the wounded and the sick, deserves to be noticed with the most distinguished marks of approbation.

All ranks volunteered their services—Lint, Medicines, Cordials, Food, Raiment, Shelter, Personal attendance were administered with the most liberal profusion, without fee or reward. Scarcely a house but had its Bulletin at the door to notice to the Surgeons that it contained a certain number of the sick or of the wounded; Rank forgot its elevation and admitted within its portals the suffering and the dying.

Females were seen in every direction visiting the wounded and performing acts which have immortalized their characters.

The Belgium Newspapers of that period are filled with accounts of the great kindness and attention shewn by particular individuals to the sufferers. The King issued an address containing most excellent instructions relative to the treatment of the wounded, and appointed a special commission for their relief.

These are records which will redound to the honour of Brussels, when all her lofty spires, her massy structures, her splendid monuments have crumbled into dust and shall be forgotten.

But whilst we thus do justice to that valour, which, on the plains of Waterloo defeated an enemy, who would have rejoiced to have deluged the shores of Britain with blood, we cannot but observe with concern that, although the peaceful maxims of Christianity have been announced for upwards of 1800 years, Empires, professedly Christian, urged by false notions of honour, or desirous of conquest, combine to destroy each other, with a malignity not surpassed by Savage or Pagan ferocity.

When Napoleon was borne impetuously along on the current of success, every eye looked up to him with astonishment; His elevation was contemplated



as the aspirings of a lofty mind, gaining its native pre-eminence. But when the plains of Waterloo recorded his defeat in blood, and St. Helena re-echoed with his complaints, the Hero was found to be but Man. His errors became magnified into crimes, his victories were overlooked or forgotten. How short-lived is human applause? How like the ephemeron of the Summers day?

But it is time that I conclude ; on some future occasion I shall resume my pen, if you shall have found either amusement or information in the present Correspondence.

## ERRATA.

PAGE.	LINE.	
2.	6.	for <i>penerate</i> , read, penetrate.
6.	5.	for <i>prevail</i> , . . . . . prevails.
21.	3.	for <i>wood</i> , . . . . . wooden.
41.	22.	read <i>Fame et Bella</i> .
42.		Read line 7 before line 6.
45.	18.	for <i>command</i> , read commands.
	25,	for <i>from a full in hunting</i> , read, from an accident in a shooting party.
48.	8.	for <i>was</i> , read were.
63.	1.	. . . . . of read by.
79.		. . . . . the . . . . . he.
97.	23	for <i>Jenappe</i> , . . Jemappe.
112.	19.	<i>it is</i> , . . . . they are.
150.	18.	<i>virtues</i> , . . . . virtue.
159.	27.	<i>principle</i> , . . . . principal.
162.	27.	<i>proucre</i> , . . . . procure.
163.	21.	<i>market sand</i> , . . markets and.
168.	4.	<i>chiefly</i> , . . . . . often.
192.	25.	<i>appears</i> , . . . . appear.
199.	2.	<i>ware</i> , . . . . . are.
227.	11.	read, by which the French.
228		for <i>Cuirasiers</i> 36,000, read 3,600.
229	14	<i>Judges</i> , read' <i>Juges</i> .
230	10	<i>natural</i> , . . . . national.
251	5	<i>ia</i> , . . . . . in.
[ . . . . .	. 7	<i>Birche</i> , . . . . Binche.
[ . . . . .	13	<i>Furcoing</i> , . . Furcoing.











