

POLAND.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE BRISTOL MIRROR.

SIR,

It was with much pleasure that I perused in your Journal of the 5th instant, a letter addressed to you by "An Old Inhabitant of Bristol," as I also recal the period to which he refers, as presenting to this part of the kingdom the great Polish hero Kosciuszko, now no more, accompanied by his confidential friend and compatriot, his companion in misfortune as in glory, the enlightened Niemcewicz, the man of science and of literature, the poet, the scholar, and the statesman, whose name holds so distinguished a place in the political history of his country.

Their arrival at an earlier hour of the day than had been expected, alone defeated the intention of public escort, to have been attended by some of the Corporation, and other leading characters, who had determined on proceeding in their carriages a short distance on the London road, to meet and conduct them into this city; but well do I remember, as they advanced towards the house of the late Mr. Vanderhorst, in Queen-square, the carriage of these noble Poles, surrounded by admirers, eager to behold patriots of no common stamp, who were, while contending for the independence and the rights of their King and of their country, supported by an entire people, prepared for victory or death, in a cause involving all that was dear to them, against the power of a perfidious and *foreign Despot*, who commenced and ended their subjugation solely by the influence of treachery, and the brute force of numbers, while the unhappy but brave Poles were deserted then, as now, by the mistaken policy of nations, who had contented themselves in silently praying for their success.

"An Old Inhabitant" refers to the Belgians and the modern Greeks, who have met with a better fate—but neither modern nor ancient history records deeds of such exalted and persevering heroism and suffering, unalloyed by corruption, as the Polish nation has evinced.

I recal the respect which was devoted to these visitors by distinguished members of the civil and military authorities, as also by the inhabitants of this city. A deputation from the latter, by permission, waited upon, and presented to the General an elegant service of plate, with appropriate inscription, delivered with an impressive address, and received by him in a manner not to be forgotten by those, who were like myself, so fortunate as to be present among the deputation.

It having been during our late war, when Bristol was a garrisoned town, a military band, I recollect, by order of the commanding officer, played at the accustomed hour of dinner daily before the house during his stay. The high and respectful compliment also of a review had, as I learned, been offered to him, but was with his characteristic diffidence declined, as was also the invitation to a dinner, proposed to have been given to him by the Sheriffs. He equally declined a well meant compliment paid him by the Theatrical Manager, in a proposal to prepare a stage box for the reception of himself and companions, and those friends whose guests they were. Ill health indeed, increased by the sufferings he endured from his many wounds, tended doubtless to prohibit the acceptance of these attentions.

Having myself been honoured by frequent interviews, from being well acquainted with most of those who were in his society,

and being thus an eye witness of the occurrences of that period, which, from being scenes of my early youth, became indelibly impressed upon recollection. It is with great gratification I remember, upon his departure for North America, although in consideration of his weakened state of health, the time of embarkation was as far as possible concealed, that, at an early hour of the morning, Queen-square was thronged with a multitude of respectable persons, while many officers in garrison, attended with his other friends, to escort him to the river side.

The invalid warrior, seated in a sedan chair, was, as he proceeded onward, greeted by the spectators in the most flattering and affectionate manner. On each side of him appeared a Captain of Dragoons in uniform; one hand resting on a pole of the chair, while each held in the other his helmet—their heads remaining uncovered till he reached the boat, and on the instant on which, accompanied by his immediate friends and attendants, the boat drew off, a simultaneous burst of general and repeated cheers from the shore, evinced the heartfelt wishes of enthusiastic Englishmen for the future welfare of the hero and his compatriots.

In the ardour of my youthful feelings, I, with many others, resolving to see the last of them, proceeded down the river to the vessel then lying in Kingroad. Several of the ships in the harbour were manned, their colours flying, and as we descended on the stream, every honourable demonstration of respect and regard was perceptible from its banks. Amongst other testimonials of this feeling, a boat approached from a private landing-place at the foot of a handsome lawn, bearing a profusion of the choicest hot-house fruits and other delicacies, a present from the well-known, wealthy, and respected proprietor, accompanied by a tender of his best wishes; no doubt gratefully acknowledged by the heroic Pole, the memory of whom and of whose country and their misfortunes, aided by the influence of these early scenes and impressions, is now so powerfully revived, that on reading the letter of "An Old Inhabitant," I could not resist the impulse of offering in this slight sketch, an evidence of the interest I take in the subject, and how ardently I cherish a hope for the regeneration of Poland and her heroic children.

I have described the enthusiasm which I then witnessed. Such were, and such must have been the feelings of all who merit the name of Englishmen, valuing as we do, and ever shall, the dignity and independence of a legitimate ruler and King, and the institutions of our country, for which cause alone the Poles bled, and the integrity of which alone they have ever required. *Legitimate Monarchy*, and a free constitution, like our own, of which we so justly and so proudly boast, had been their "being's end and aim." They had been neither revolutionists, anarchists, nor levellers, but true and loyal subjects, fighting for the only sovereign they could as patriots acknowledge, a King of their own, free and independent of foreign dictation. All they have more recently demanded and contended for has been that independence for their country which had been guaranteed by the nations of Europe, of which Great Britain was amongst the foremost.

I now ask—Is there a Briton who would not in his heart respond to their call? If there be one, let him declare himself. But there is not one!

AN INHABITANT OF BRISTOL.

Bristol, May 11, 1832.

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