The Daily British Whig.

"Optimo per Orbem Bene."

THURSDAY MORNING, OCT. 28, 1858.

From Our London Correspondent.

LONDON, October 15th, 1858.

The secret of the coming Reform Bill is still tolerably well kept, and, with one little exception, Ministers have been ~~perfectly~~ undemonstrative. Lord John Manners touched—and only touched—upon the topic at the meeting of the Waltham Agricultural Association on Friday last. The little which he did say sets one part at rest—that there is to be a Tory Reform Bill. 'By one of those curious turns of the wheel which mechanizes modern politics,' he says, 'it seems to be reserved for a Tory Government to render less anomalous, and to make better adapted to the growing intelligence, property, and numbers of the community, the Whig Reform Act of 1832.' With this mission before them, Lord John Manners pledges his political chiefs 'to enter upon that most serious task, with the single earnest endeavor so to mould the representation of the people in Parliament, as to secure the best electoral body which can be obtained for the people of this country.' In the meantime the country is rapidly making up its mind as to the basis on which the new reform is to be built. Three things will be demanded—reconstruction of electoral districts, large extension of the suffrage, and the ballot. To a certain extent, therefore, the country is preparing to exert itself independently of Lord Derby's bill, whatever that may be. Indeed, as Sir Geo. Cornwall Lewis said at the late dinner of the ROSCHIRE Agricultural Society, 'In whatever form a Reform Bill may be introduced into the House of Commons, it will come out of that House a real Reform Bill, increasing the popular character of the Legislature.' But while the bill is preparing, and Ministers speak not concerning it, all kinds of rumours are flying about as to how and by whom it is, to be supported. These rumours point particularly at Lord John Russell. He, too, maintains a rigid silence, and friends and opponents are reduced alike to the bare belief that he has some political plan of his own. The party of the late Ministry have been active in spreading a report of confidential communications passing between the Premier and the 'Father of Modern Reform,' and within the last day or two they have given a more decided character to these reports. They have bruited it, that Lord and Lady John are to go on a visit to Knowsley. Something may happen to clear up the mystery in which the hereditary leader of the Reformers of 1832 chooses for a time to veil his intentions with respect to the Reform Bill of 1859. Vast changes have taken place since the passing of the former, and none of those changes have been more remarkable or important than the condition of the working classes, influenced to a great extent by the multiplication of such institutions as those which Sir John Pakington eulogized at Worcester on Wednesday last. His son, Mr. J. S. Pakington, some time since suggested the issue of fourteen of these institutions. Ignorance, as Sir John pointed out, is the thing most to be feared in a country by citizen, philanthropist, and politician, and it is therefore the duty of all to assist in doing away with the dangers of headstrong passions and prejudices which have their source in popular ignorance.

The news from abroad is various and interesting, the chief point being the settlement of the Prussian Regency. The King himself has charged the Prince of Prussia with full powers until the restoration of the King to health. The unfortunate question of the amount of revenue which the Regent is to receive will turn an important item in the arrangements to be made. Pending that settlement, the Prince is to act according to his views. As the King's restoration to health is almost physically impossible, this amounts to a permanent recession.

Another topic of interest is the Imperial agitation in Russia on the subject of serf emancipation. Two years ago, the Emperor initiated the changes which, so he has wisely foreseen, must take place in the laws relative to serf labor, but he then left the nobles of Moscow his will that they should set about preparing the way. These nobles, the proudest in the land, have done nothing to meet the Emperor's views, and he has now fairly warned them. The tribune, he tells them, is not 'that next room from above, that it may not come to a being.' A commission is shortly to sit in St. Petersburg, for the purpose of definitely settling the machinery which is to be employed in setting the millions of bond slaves free; and before this commission the serf proprietors are invited to send two of their body from each Government of the Empire. If the nobles are not blind to their duty, and to the chances of the hour, the sitting of that St. Petersburgh Conference may be remembered as the first recording of a Russian Parliament.

Rather a serious difficulty appears to be brewing between Portugal and Portugal, though it is to be hoped that it may be got over in a friendly manner. The cause is this:—a French ship entered Mossamedes ostensibly for the purpose of general trade; took on board a cargo of negroes as free laborers; was boarded by a Portuguese man-of-war, an outrage both the merchants of Portugal and the Paris trade journals in that port, and was towed to Lisbon. The French Government treated the affair on the ground that it is an act of war to seize her, and that the state trade journals were not justified by taking on board free laborers. Two French ships of war have been sent down to Lisbon, and did not salute on their arrival—an offence which the French Capitains are said to have explained on being questioned.

On Tuesday, the marriage of Member Pelissier, Duke of Malakoff, was celebrated at Paris. After the usual constant cant about national joy, the religious ceremony was performed, at the Church of St. Clotilde, the Emperor and Empress, and a numerous and brilliant assembly being present.

The statistics of French trade, just published by the French Custom House Authorities, may be referred to as evidencing a very satisfactory degree of commercial prosperity and progress, that notwithstanding the gold crisis which has so seriously affected trade in Europe, the exports and imports of the Imperial Government, for the year ending 31st December last, have exceeded those of any previous year, by a considerable amount. In concurring with the statistics, a very important step has been taken by the Imperial Government. The Government has been made with the French Steam Company—the last advance of LOANS—the Company undertaking to carry the French Government to Portugal. The proceeding shows the security of the French Government to provide for its troops, as well as Commercial activity. A correspondent, which is the history of politics. One good turn gives to the public of France, in the politics of the Imperial Government, this security to the Emperor, to grant those contracts to companies—the Railway Companies—and to the Government of public, from which result those to which the public is indebted.

The opening of the Normal School of Fontainebleau, under the Direction of M.