

THE
SYRIAN QUESTION.

*From the Westminster Review for January 1841. The Article entitled,
'The Anglo Turkish War, Egypt, and Syria.'*

WITH A
POSTSCRIPT,
*In reply to an Article in the Edinburgh Review, entitled
'France and the East.'*

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1841.

THE SYRIAN QUESTION.

1. *Histoire de la Guerre de Mehemed Ali contre la Porte Ottomane en Syrie et en Asie Mineure*, 1831-33. Par M. M. de Cadalvene et Barrault. Paris, 1837.
2. *Report on the Commercial Statistics of Syria*. By John Bowring. (Parliamentary Papers.) 1840.
3. *Cairo, Petra and Damascus*. By J. Kinnear. Murray. 1840.
4. *Life of Mohammed Ali*. E. Churton. 1840.

IF governments would keep two maxims in view—the *respite finem* and the *carpe diem*—if they knew themselves what they meant, and seized the fit occasions to give effect to their meaning, politics would not be the chaos of absurdities and contradictions which they are.

An empire which, some hundred years ago, was great, alarming, invading, conquering, has, in the course of irresistible events, been tottering to pieces. The Turkish power, which was long the terror of the Christian world, has, under the weight of its own corruptions and oppressions, been gradually sinking into helplessness. Some provinces have been wrested by ambitious neighbours, others have fallen into uncontrolled anarchy; some have become mere deserts by depopulation and decay; some have been emancipated from the Osmanli intruders by the more vigorous hands of their native races; while others have been separated by negotiations and protocols, though left seemingly connected by the flimsy thread of dependence upon Ottoman sovereignty.

Whatever may have been the policy, it has been the practice of the various states adjacent to the Turkish empire to seize upon and to appropriate such portions as they could detach, and either to make them integral parts of their own dominions, or to break